WOODHAM WALTER PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Dear Sir/Madam

I give notice that there will be an Extra Ordinary meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council to be held at Woodham Walter Women's Club, Top Road, Woodham Walter CM9 6RQ on Monday 2nd November 2026 at 8.00pm. All councillors are hereby summoned to attend. Members of the public and press are cordially invited to attend.

Signed *John Brown*
CHAIRMAN TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

Members are reminded that they should declare an interest with regard to items on the agenda when appropriate. There will be a session at the meeting when parishioners can discuss items on the agenda or other village matters. If any persons present intends to record and/or photograph the meeting they should inform the Chair or Clerk of the meeting. Before each meeting starts, the Chair will ask if anyone intends to record and/or photograph so the public may be advised.

1. Welcome

2. To report, approve and record apologies for absence

3. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations

a To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs), Other Registerable Interests (ORIs), or Non-Registerable Interests (NRIs) relating to items of business on the agenda having regard the Code of Conduct for Members. (Members are reminded they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

b To receive and consider any requests for dispensations.

4. Public Forum

5. Planning Applications (To consider the Parish Council response to the application)

5.1 26/00638/FUL Land adjacent to 1 Hop Gardens, Hop Garden Lane
Change of use of agricultural land into a dog walking field

6. Points of Information

7. Date of Next Parish Council Meetings:
Ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Monday 9th November 2026 at 8pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club.

8. The Chairman to close the meeting.

Dated: 27th October 2026

Mrs Jacky Bannerman (Clerk to the Parish Council)
PO Box 12797, Woodham Walter CM9 9FG
Email: parishclerk@woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk Tel: 01245 373686 (before 6pm)
www.woodhamwalter-pc.gov.uk

Statement from applicant re: Dog Walking Field (30th October 2026)

Good evening,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our key considerations relating to our planning application.

We appreciate that the Parish Council has a responsibility to consider planning proposals carefully, particularly those in a rural setting such as Woodham Walter. We ask that our application is considered on its own merits, taking into account the nature of the proposal, its location and the practical measures we intend to put in place.

There are several important points we would like to clarify.

Firstly, no land is being permanently lost from agricultural production.

The proposed dog walking field would be located in an existing field that can readily be returned to crop production when agricultural market conditions, including crop prices, make that a viable option again. We are not proposing a permanent development that would prevent the land from being farmed in the future.

Farming is a business, and like any business it must adapt to changing economic circumstances to remain viable. There are times when the cost of growing crops does not provide a reasonable return. We believe it is sensible to consider an alternative use for part of the farm during these periods, while retaining the ability to return the land to food production in the future.

Secondly, our ecology report identifies environmental benefits from the proposed use.

We believe it is important that this application is considered not only in terms of land use, but also in terms of its ecological impact. Our ecology report concludes that the proposed dog walking field would be a more diverse and less intensive use of the land, providing opportunities for improved grassland management, reduced reliance on agricultural inputs and the potential to enhance biodiversity through appropriate planting and habitat improvements.

We ask that this professional assessment is given proper consideration when the application is evaluated. The proposal offers an opportunity to make alternative use of the field while providing ecological benefits, alongside retaining the option of returning it to agricultural production in the future.

Thirdly, this is a controlled and managed facility, not an unrestricted public space.

The field will be fully enclosed, with locked gates. Customers will book private sessions in advance and receive access codes to enter the facility. This means access can be controlled, use can be managed and customer numbers can be regulated through the booking system.

This arrangement also allows us to establish clear rules for customers and set appropriate operating hours. We intend to be considerate of our neighbours and to manage the facility responsibly, with particular regard to noise, parking, cleanliness and the behaviour of customers and their dogs.

Fourthly, the location has been carefully considered.

The field is situated in an area of the farm with relatively few neighbouring properties and a public footpath adjacent. There is also an existing hard-standing area accessed from the road that can be used for customer parking for a maximum of two cars. We can therefore make use of existing infrastructure without needing to create a new parking area on agricultural land. No new infrastructure, for example lighting, is being proposed.

We believe these practical considerations demonstrate that the proposal has been thought through carefully, with regard to its rural setting and the people who live nearby.

Ultimately, our intention is to create a safe, secure and well-managed facility that provides a useful service to dog owners while helping to support the viability of our farming business.

We understand that not every planning application will receive unanimous support. However, we hope you will recognise the particular circumstances of this proposal: a reversible use of an existing field, the retention of its future agricultural potential, the ecological benefits identified in our report, controlled access through private bookings, existing parking provision and a location with relatively few neighbouring properties.

We are asking that the proposal is judged on the evidence, its actual characteristics and its likely impacts, rather than on a general objection to an alternative use of farmland.

We are happy to engage constructively with the planning authority and to consider reasonable measures that would help ensure the facility operates responsibly.

We respectfully ask the Parish Council to consider our application fairly and to show support for the proposal.