

MINUTES

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.
Held at 8.00pm in Woodham Walter Women's Club, Top Road, Woodham Walter.
Monday 11th November 2013

Present:

Cllr. James Bunn (Chairman)
Cllr. Peter Warren (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Mark Durham
Cllr. Angus Neale
Cllr. Andrew Newland
Cllr. Gill Orford
Cllr. Joanna Symons

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)

Public: 7

1051. Welcome Cllr. James Bunn welcomed those present to the meeting.

1052. Apologies For Absence There were no apologies.

1053. Disclosure of Interests/Consideration of Dispensations To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 6-10 inclusive of the Code of Conduct for Members. (Members were reminded they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

Cllr. Mark Durham declared non-pecuniary interests anywhere Maldon District Council should be mentioned as he is a Member of Maldon District Council and further to this he reserved the right to keep an open mind when discussing planning applications. There were no other interests declared and the register was duly signed.

1054. Public Forum To receive the views of members of the public on items of business on the agenda or other village matters to be considered by the council. Cllr. Bunn explained the procedure of the meeting to those present.

Sarah Maxted was attending the meeting in her capacity as the Village Hall Association Chairman in order to comment on the proposal that the Post Office use the village hall for an outreach service. The VHA are happy with the practicalities but financially they do not want to be out of pocket. The proposal so far is for a fee of approximately £100 per year for 2 mornings a week but this may not cover the costs to the village hall. The annual electricity bill is in the region of £1500 per year, the usual hire fee for the hall is £6 per hour. So the Village Hall would need to look at ways of covering costs. Mrs Maxted also suggested that the Women's Club room may be an alternative which could be investigated.

Ursula Lawton was attending the meeting regarding the curved section of Little Baddow Road between Bunsay Downs and Stivvy's Road which has narrowed considerably over the years and she asked if there is anything the Parish Council can do about this. Councillor's noted as per minutes of June 2013 ref: 962.5 that this had been reported to Highways earlier in the year but did not meet investigatory levels and no action was taken. Cllr's agreed that the road has narrowed and that clerk should re-report the problem, Mrs Lawton was also advised to report it herself using the Essex County Council Highways on-line reporting tool. Mrs Lawton then left the meeting room at 8.10pm

There being no other comments the meeting was closed to the public.

1055. To approve the Minutes Of Parish Council Meeting Held On Monday 14th October 2013

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and duly signed.

1056. Matters Arising from Minutes of 14th October 2013

1056.1 (1044.2) Controlled Airspace consultation. Cllr. Bunn queried if there was likely to be any effect on private pilot licence holders as he had received some information that indicated there could be a significant detrimental effect on Woodham Walter airspace because the Controlled Airspace could prohibit private plane traffic. Cllr. Bunn to review and forward to Cllr. Neale for consideration. It was noted that the deadline for the consultation is 13th December.

1057. Reviews & Adoptions

1057.1 Employee Annual Review. Cllr. Bunn and Cllr Warren reported that the Parish Staff Appraisal Policy and Job Description have now been completed and the documents were duly adopted. They had carried out a Staff Appraisal and this was being finalised. Cllr. James Bunn proposed that the clerk's salary scale be raised from SCP 26 to SCP 27 backdated to April 2013. This was seconded by Cllr. Gill Orford, all councillors in agreement. Councillors thanked the clerk for her hard work and dedication to the role.

1058. Planning – APPLICATIONS

1058.1 FUL/MAL/13/00967

Chapel Stores/PO, The Street

Change of use from store/post office classified as A1 into a term time sessional children's nursery classified as D1, and associated alterations.

Clerk read out two letters which had been received from residents regarding this application.

Cllr. Symons summarised the neighbour consultations which had found that the community is generally sad at the loss of the shop. Throughout her discussions, parishioners indicated that they had hoped the Parish Council would have represented the community more actively on the shop issue. There was some support for the application as people would rather see the building being used than fall into disrepair and the new premises would be an improvement for the nursery. Nursery parents were supportive and the Queen Victoria Pub owner had no objections. Objections largely were regarding the parking issue which is already a major problem in the village and any increase in cars will be detrimental. Other concerns included average speed of traffic through the village; safety and child protection issues; loss of the shop is detrimental to house prices and the heart of the village and community feel which the shop provided will be lost; concern was expressed that the toilet extension runs too close to the boundary of the neighbouring property.

Cllr. Durham explained that many of the objections were not material planning considerations, the only objection which was relevant in the context of this planning application was the highways issues. He reported that he had spoken to the planning department regarding the Draft Local Development Plan Policy E3 Community Services and Facilities and had been informed that this was an emerging document and not current policy and that even if it had been adopted it would not have any effect on the proposed change of use as the nursery is seen as a community asset. There is no policy in place which would protect this change of use. The E3 policy in the LDP, when adopted would only provide protection for a change of use to residential.

Cllr's discussed that even though it is understood there is at least one person interested in running the building as a shop, the landlord has decided on a nursery and it is not for the parish council to seek to be involved in this commercial decision. The only discussion that could take place was the application which has been submitted for a nursery.

Disappointment at the loss of the shop should be noted even if it is not relevant to the planning authority in terms of material planning considerations, because to acknowledge this is the right thing for the village and the parish council has a duty to be supportive of and reflect parishioners views which makes up the broader conclusions for the Parish Council when determining planning applications. The emotion of a decision merits noting along with the legal material planning conclusions.

Cllr's discussed the highways issues which are the only material planning considerations which are relevant. They were concerned not to take into account any verbal agreement which the nursery have with the Queen Victoria as this is not future proof or legally binding and only a good will gesture. Cllr's do not support the suggestion for extending the zig zag lines as this could make the problem worse.

Cllr's concluded that the reality is that a shop is not going to happen in the location of Chapel Stores so to make use of the building in the long term is in the best interest of that part of the village. Cllr's would be interested to support members of the parish if a proposal for a shop came forward in an alternative location and they would be happy to provide positive action to promote a shop in the future.

Cllr's had no objections to the proposed alterations detailed in the application.

To conclude after a drawn out and difficult debate councillors lament the loss of the shop but wish to support Tadpoles in enhancing their business. Clerk to write letter of support which also addresses concerns over highway issues and refer to the Draft LDP policy E3 to note that in future the parish council would look for applications to demonstrate viability of existing community services before a change of use could take place.

5 members of the public then left the meeting room.

1059. Planning – DECISIONS No outstanding applications.

1060. Other Planning Matters

1060.1 St Michael's Drainage Easement – Cllr. Bunn continues to look into this.

1060.2 Royal Oak Quarry meeting – Cllr. Warren reported that work on the extension to the quarry which will border the Woodham Walter parish boundary along Herbage Park Road is not expected to begin extraction until 2025 so it is currently not relevant to Woodham Walter.

1061. Woodham Walter Village Design Statement Working Party Cllr. Durham, Cllr. Newland and Cllr. Bunn reported that the latest version of the questionnaire is more acceptable and the balance of questioning is improved. Some further fine tuning would take place and it is understood that a representative from the VDS working party would be attending the next parish council meeting on 9th December.

1062. Payments The following payments were authorised and cheques duly signed.

- 1062.1 e-on –Monthly DD
- 1062.2 A&J Lighting Solutions – Monthly DD
- 1062.3 Douglas Tonks Ltd - Monthly DD: re: Clerks Salary/Allowance/ HMRC/Payroll services.
- 1062.4 D Wallace (DW Maintenance) re: grass cutting & hedge
- 1062.5 Andrew Macmorland re: Rectory Road hedge
- 1062.6 Royal British Legion (Poppy Wreath)

1063. Other Financial Matters

1063.1 Summary of Accounts to date

DATE	ACCOUNT / TRANSACTION DETAIL	AMOUNT IN	AMOUNT OUT	BALANCE
Business Reserve A/C				
14-Oct-13	Balance			6991.80
11-Nov-13	Transfer to Community Account		400.00	6591.80
Community Account				
14-Oct-13	Balance			450.97
23-Oct-13	HMRC VAT refund	472.24		923.21
11-Nov-13	Transferred from Business Reserve Account	400.00		1323.21
11-Nov-13	November Debits		709.15	614.06

1063.2 Clerk has prepared the accounts and files for internal control measures to be completed by the Chairman in due course.

1063.3 DHGPC. Councillors decided not to renew the affiliation with the DHGPC as it is focussed on the Dengie which has little relevance to Woodham Walter.

1063.4 Budget. Clerk reported that the parish council budget and precept requirements for 2014/15 need to be arranged and initial paperwork would be prepared for discussion at the December meeting with a view to approving the precept requirement at the January meeting.

1064. Other Council Matters

1064.1 Standing Orders. Cllr. James Bunn proposed and Cllr. Angus Neale seconded adopting the new Model Standing Orders document from the NALC (National Association of Local Councils). All councillors in agreement.

1065. Consultations/Questionnaires

1065.1 Maldon District Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2013. Discussion concluded that there were no infrastructure proposals.

1066. Report Of The District Councillor

Cllr. Durham reported that there had been about 3000 responses to the public consultation on the Local Development Plan. Some changes were currently being assessed by the council.

Cllr Durham also informed that the planning department is concerned that the delegated rate is currently 60% and the national average is 80%. This is costing the council too much money and savings are being investigated. This will probably mean that the parish council trigger to submit applications to the Planning Committee for a decision will become more stringent. Parish Councils will be required to provide material planning considerations when objecting to applications.

Cllr. Bunn commented that firm guidance will be required. Cllr's also commented that surely it is the duty of the parish council to reflect the views of the parish and that the parish council should still be able to say what they feel and it is then up to planning officers to determine what are material planning considerations. This may include emotive views which are important to parishioners and they should be offered the opportunity to try to influence a decision as a matter of principal as had been shown with the planning application which was discussed earlier in the meeting.

1067. Highways

1067.1 Ref: 2214310: Water on highway/BT inspection chamber – The Street – adjacent to Ferndale. This has re-occurred and been photographed and re-reported.

1067.2 Ref: 2207327: Little Baddow Road – blocked or broken drains adjacent to Ranworth to Top Road due to tree roots. This has re-occurred and been photographed and re-reported.

1067.3 Ref: 88880: Curling Tye Lane – drainage. This has re-occurred and been photographed and re-reported.

1067.4 Ref: 2235961 Little Baddow Road – drainage adjacent to Chamberlain Cottage. This has been referred on as it is not the responsibility of Highways authority.

1067.5 Ref: 2235941 Broken finger post at junction of The Warren.

1067.6 Ref: 2275631 Broken finger post at junction of Blue Mill Lane/Rectory Road.

1068. Local Issues

1068.1 **Bell Meadow/Playground.** A large tree fell at the top of Bell Meadow during the recent storm. Clerk to seek quotes for its removal. There were no other issues reported and the book was duly signed.

1068.2 **Footpaths Report** Cllr. Warren reported that many paths had been affected by the recent storm with many trees initially blocking paths. Some 20+ trees had fallen in the Wilderness alone. He has so far walked 19 of the 33 paths in the parish and found 8 paths blocked, he was pleased to report that these have all now been cleared.

1068.3 **One Place On Wheels** - Woodham Walter. Next visit including mobile police vehicle – Thursday 5th December from 3.15-4.15pm. Village Hall.

1068.4 **School Report** Cllr. Symons reported that she had been interested to attend a Standards Committee Meeting.

1068.5 **Allotments Report** Cllr. Orford reported that there were now 2 taster plots available and that manure and new fencing were due to be done this month.

1068.6 **Community Speed Watch** Volunteers have been out on a few occasions. We now have two additional volunteers. Another training session is being organised in the coming weeks if any other volunteers come forward.

1068.7 **Litter** Clerk to report bags between Warren & Anchor.

1068.8 **Tree Management** Cllr. Newland is working on the policy. It was noted that there is a tree along Blue Mill Lane which is giving cause for concern, Cllr. Bunn to report to owner.

1068.9 **Village Shop** Clerk met with Post Office and Village Hall representatives to discuss a possible outreach service. The village hall are keen to facilitate the service although they are concerned at the financial costs – the annual rental income is likely to be in the region of £100 which they do not think will cover the additional electricity/heating costs. The post office are keen to provide a service and have suggested it would be for two mornings per week and that the village hall would provide a suitable location. It may be able to be up and running early in the new year if agreement/funding can be resolved. Clerk to seek an estimated cost to the village hall. The parish council to consider an increased grant to the village hall to address any shortfall, there may also be grants available which could be looked into. Cllr's noted the idea that the women's club room may be available once Tadpoles vacates but thought that the village hall location on the main road with car parking facilities is more suitable.

1068.10 **Essex Wildlife Trust** Clerk to invite Adam Rochester to the next meeting.

1069. Correspondence

1069.1 Silver Threads - thanks for grant

1070. Points of Information

1071. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 9th December 2013 Ordinary Parish Council Meeting at 8pm in Women's Club.

Signed

Meeting ended at 10.25pm

Dated