

MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting of Woodham Walter Parish Council.
Held at 8pm in Women's Club, Top Road, Woodham Walter.

Monday 12th December 2011

Present:

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

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Parish Clerk)
Cllr. Henry Bass (District Councillor)
Joanna Symons (Parish Councillor Applicant)

Public: 22

592. Welcome Cllr. Durham welcomed those present to the meeting and explained the procedure.

593. Apologies For Absence apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. David Potter and Village Agent Christine McDonald.

594. Register of Declared Interests Cllr. Mark Durham declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in agenda item 9.2 re: Herbage Park due to his direct involvement in the application. Cllr. James Bunn, Cllr. Andrew Newland, Cllr. Gill Orford and Cllr. Peter Warren declared personal interests in agenda item 9.2 re: Herbage Park in that they live in the village and the plans if passed could affect them in some way, also that they know Mark Durham as a friend/acquaintance and who is a member and Chairman of the Parish Council.

Cllr. Andrew Newland also declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 9.4 re: Albany Orchards as the application has been submitted by his neighbour.

The register was duly signed by all councillors.

595. To Co-opt a Parish Councillor

Cllr. Durham explained that the position of Parish Councillor has been duly notified in the correct manner. Only one applicant has come forward. Councillor James Bunn proposed Mrs Joanna Symons be co-opted onto the Parish Council, this nomination was seconded by Councillor Peter Warren and all councillors were in agreement. Mrs Symons was duly elected to the position of Parish Councillor and was welcomed by Cllr. Durham.

Clerk explained that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be completed at the next meeting when Mrs Symons will also need to submit a Register of Member Interests form. Clerk to provide information and notify Maldon District Council of the appointment.

596. Public Forum

Cllr. Durham explained that as he has a Personal and Prejudicial interest in the Herbage Park application, he would step down from chairing the meeting for the Public Forum, but he would exercise his right to remain in the room during the public forum. Cllr. James Bunn took the Chair of the meeting and explained that the public forum provides an opportunity for those present to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about an item on the agenda or other village matters. Those present were asked to introduce themselves and make their comments concise and not repeat comments which have already been expressed.

Marita Keremezo: As a Herbage Park owner she is opposed to the application. She expressed her annoyance that she had not been officially and personally notified of the application and feels the owners of the lodges should have been directly consulted. She considers the application is flawed in that it states the site is for self-catering purposes but in fact most of the units have been sold to private owners and are not available to rent. The application is misleading regarding the Olympics; it is unrealistic to think the park will be used for this purpose. She considers the swimming pool facilities are already too small without the addition of more lodges. She is also sceptical about the timing of the application in the run up to Christmas. She feels that she has been mis-sold her property and is looking into the legal ramifications of this.

Derek Renaud: The Parish Council should see by the large number of lodge owners in attendance at the meeting, the strength of feeling that this application has ignited. They feel that they have been mis-sold their properties. The application seems to be infilling into the existing areas. He is interested how the Parish Council decision process is done. He can see that there may be some benefits to the village and he supports the village and its good community.

Cllr. Bunn explained that the Parish Council would be making their deliberations and decision on how to respond to the Maldon District Council consultation later during the meeting and that the public are entitled to remain in the meeting room to listen, but that the meeting would be closed to further comments from the public after the public forum. He also asked that comments relate to planning matters.

Russell Forde – Smart Planning – Agent for the application : The professional view is that the environmental capacity has not been achieved in this 40 acre bowl site. Of the current permission for 48 lodges, 20 lodges are on site and a further 20 have been sold. The timing of the application is due to continuity of building works and is not cynical in terms of the Christmas period. He does not think that the Olympics connection has been overstated and there are many tourism related benefits. It is a balance of judgement on how many is too many. A further 26 has been concluded as being cost effective as it relies on existing infrastructure.

Richard Marston: We were sold a dream by Dream Lodge Group who were disorganised at the start. He had been led to believe that the site was lucky to have been granted permission for 48 and told that there would be no further development. Owners have paid in excess of £150,000 and feel misled. Phase 1 is not completed yet and there are several maintenance issues.

Cllr Bunn asked that members of the public keep their comments relevant to the planning application.

Leslie French: Commented that the application form asked the question how sewage would be disposed of and that the answer was unknown. Surely if it is to go in the existing system there is a problem and the application is therefore flawed. He also commented that he has had difficulty in gaining insurance due to it being a high flood risk area. He asked that the Parish Council object to this application.

David Wheeler: Of the proposed additional lodges some would be directly in front of existing plots. Do views count as far as planning is concerned?

Cllr. Bunn responded that in terms of normal planning procedure you are not entitled to views.

Cllr. Durham exercised his right to answer the question regarding sewage at the site and informed that the original sewage system was designed and specified for 80 lodges.

Cllr. Newland commented that the subject matter of some comments were not relevant considerations for the Parish Council discharging its duty to consider a planning application.

Andrew Vesey: Commented that as a village resident he was opposed to the original application and will also be opposing this application. Regarding the environment of the park it should be noted that there is a broader environment with the village. There are approx. 700 residents in Woodham Walter with 150 properties in the centre of the village. In his opinion the proposed extension of the park could house another 100 residents, therefore up to 400 people could be occupying the lodges and this could therefore have a significant influence on the village. He does not accept Smart Planning's view on the environment. Many issues have been highlighted tonight which the Parish Council should take into account. He has grave reservations why sewage was put in for 80 when they only applied for 48. Are the original 29 objections from Woodham Walter residents still valid?

Cllr Bunn responded that this is a separate application and that individual letters need to be written to Maldon District Council again.

Richard Marsden: the Olympics is an unrealistic reason for the proposed additional lodges.

Christine Wheeler: Most lodges are owner occupiers. Only a small percentage are rented out so she doubts whether holiday makers will be using the village as is suggested in the application. The application supporting paperwork includes details of wedding functions at the Warren requiring accommodation but with most lodges in the ownership of owner/occupiers the validity of such a claim is unrealistic.

Lynn Dillon: Asked if English Nature have been consulted regarding the badgers and other flora and fauna.

Sheila Young: explained that she had been on the original Maldon District Council Committee which made the decision to approve the application for 48 lodges. She commented that nobody buys a view. She thinks that 48 is quite enough on the site in order to have validity of being a unique site, the proposal puts the lodges too close together.

Jean Arker: The original brochure showed the locations of the lodges and she bought hers in good faith having specifically chosen the location.

Cllr. Bunn thanked those present for coming and giving their points which would be taken in to account by the Parish Councillors when the agenda item is reached later in the meeting.

The public forum was then closed at 8.30pm.

Mrs Sheila Young left the meeting room but all other public remained.

Cllr. Durham re-took the Chair.

596. To approve the Minutes Of Parish Council Meeting Held On 14th November 2011. The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and duly signed.

598. Matters Arising

598.1 (443.1) Village Footpath Map. Update, carried over to next meeting.

598.2 Tadpoles trees. Cllr Durham reported that there was no room available for any trees and very little room for hedging plants at Bell Meadow. Cllr's agreed that they could accommodate some Blackthorn plants in the hedge. Clerk to contact Tadpoles. Clerk had also contacted Essex Wildlife Trust regarding spaces at Woodham Walter Common but they had responded that there was not anywhere for trees to go there.

598.3 (589.2) MDC Saturday Garden Waste Collections. Cllr Durham reported that MDC have decided to discontinue the Saturday Garden Waste Collections in favour of a reduced price and scraping of the set up charge of the green garden wheelie bins. Therefore as the decision has already been made by MDC the questionnaire is not required.

599. Joint Waste Development Document – Preferred Approach (November 2011)

It was noted that the consultation deadline is 19th January 2012 and this item to be carried over to the January Meeting. Cllr. Durham to read the circulation and forward to other councillors.

Ref: Tyndales Farm, Danbury/Woodham Mortimer

600. Planning – APPLICATIONS

600.1 HOUSE/MAL/11/00841 Jasmine House, Blue Mills Lane

Placement of two brick piers to support wooden gates.

After discussion councillors concluded that they had no objections. Clerk to write accordingly.

600.2 FUL/MAL/11/00953 Herbage Park, Herbage Park Road

Proposed addition of 26 new timber holiday lodges plus associated infrastructure within the existing Herbage Park Holiday Park.

Cllr. Durham having declared a personal and prejudicial interest left the meeting room at 8.40pm. Cllr. James Bunn took the Chair.

Councillors commented on some of the claims in the Design and Access Statement including that the site has had a beneficial impact on local businesses (shop and pubs). Councillors had visited the shop and two of the pubs and all said that under 1% of their trade can be attributed to Herbage Park. They had not been consulted previously or with this application. Councillors concluded that even though this was an unscientific collation of information the economic benefit to the village seems fairly minimal and overstated.

There was concern that the infill made for a far denser development which was not apparent in the original 48. As there are currently only 20 lodges on site, the village do not know what the impact of 48 lodges will be let alone 74.

The documentation in the application does not show a need for further development. The comments regarding the Olympics are not relevant.

More lodges would equate to more occupants to be managed and anecdotally the policing of the occupation conditions has raised questions locally.

How many are/will be owner occupied and how many are/will be rented? This question makes a big difference to the application. The original concept was for rental but it seems that now most of them are owner occupied negating some of proposed need for tourism accommodation.

MDC should be asked to take into account concerns that the lodges are not, do not and cannot become permanent residences. MDC/the management should be asked how it will be conditioned and enforced.

The village can only cope with holiday lets.

Councillors concluded that they are strongly opposed to the application. Clerk to write a letter and liaise with councillors.

Councillors also discussed that many in the village did not necessarily know about the application and that they felt they have a duty to inform people, including those that objected originally in 2005. It was agreed that an information sheet should be produced and distributed. Clerk to arrange and liaise with councillors.

At 9pm the remaining public thanked the Parish Council for its time and left the meeting room.

Cllr. Durham re-entered the meeting room and re-took the Chair.

600.3 HOUSE/MAL/11/00955 Ambleside, Rectory Road

Proposed erection of single storey oak framed garage, incorporating two bays for vehicles, one for domestic workshop/store.

Cllr. Orford carried out the neighbour consultations. 2 had no objections but others felt it was too big and there is already an existing garage and concerns were raised regarding if it was for domestic or trade use.

Councillors conclude that they object to the application on the grounds that it is too big, visible and detrimental to the street scene and it would be an overdevelopment of the site.

600.4 FUL/MAL/11/00982 Albany Orchards, Old London Road

Change of use of land to form new residential driveway and gates onto Old London Road.

Cllr. Newland declared a personal interest.

Councillors object very strongly to the change of use of agricultural land. The existing driveway seems adequate, there is no need for a bigger statement and they can see no need for the application. The proposed entrance/exit onto Old London Road is too close to the busy and dangerous cross roads. Concerns were raised that lighting may also be used and they would object to this. It was noted that a neighbouring property had recently had an application for change of use from agricultural land turned down and councillors look to Maldon District Council to refuse this application which is for a change of use of an even bigger parcel of agricultural land. The drive would destroy the green area. Councillors concluded that they object to the change of use and to the location of the opening which may not have originally been a field access. Clerk to write accordingly.

601. Planning - DECISIONS None

602. Other Planning Matters

602.1 Falconers Lodge. It was noted that an MDC Planning Officer and English Heritage have met with the new owner to discuss future plans at the site. No further information is available. Cllr. Durham will continue to liaise and attend future meetings if it was felt appropriate. It was noted that the road had not been too bad and that the work was progressing well, the site looks neat and it was thought a good job was being done.

602.2 Conservation Area – it was noted that a response had been received and Cllr. Durham will keep councillors informed of progress.

602.3 MDC re: Hoe Farm – it was noted that the requirements of planning permission have now been met.

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

603.1 e-on –Monthly DD

603.2 A&J Lighting Solutions – Monthly DD

603.3 Clerks Salary + Allowance/Expenses and HMRC payment

603.4 SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Membership Renewal £83

604. Other Financial Matters

604.1 Bank mandate - new signatory. It was noted that confirmation of the new authorisation arrangements has now been received from Barclays.

604.2 Outsourcing the Payroll. Following on from last months resolution to appoint Douglas Tonks Ltd clerk had prepared some forms which were duly signed including a contract, direct debit arrangement, authorisation and information sheets.

604.3 MDC – Parish Precept 2012/2013 – Councillors discussed the Draft Budget and felt that the proposed 25% reduction in precept requirement didn't allow enough contingency. It was proposed that the figures be re-worked with a 15% reduction; it is possible that next year a further reduction could be made if the contingency levels were still increased. There are a number of possibilities that could result in expenditure including proposals for a WWII Memorial and a Village Footpath Map. Clerk to update the figures with a view to approving the final budget/precept requirement at 9th January meeting.

604.4 Grass Cutting Tender – clerk had collated information on the tender process. Councillors concluded that the existing contractor, plus 3 others who have expressed an interest plus 3 others who quoted during the last tender process and the Maldon District Council contractors be written to. If they want to tender for the contract then they need to provide a trade reference in the first instance and then the tender documents will be issued. Councillor Peter Warren agreed to be the lead councillor on the grass cutting tender. Clerk to arrange necessary paperwork.

Councillors also instructed clerk to request a price from Andrew Macmorland to reduce the height of the Bell Meadow Hedge by 18". This is not part of the tender process but a one-off requirement as Mr Macmorland has previously carried out this work on behalf of the Parish Council. If the quote is acceptable it can be approved at the next meeting.

604.5 Councillors approved and signed the E-on Direct Debit.

604.6 EALC Roles & Responsibilities Course . Councillors approved Joanna Symons attends the course at Great Dunmow. Clerk to arrange.

605. Report Of The District Councillor Cllr Durham informed that the District Council is currently budgeting. The Saturday green waste collections will be discontinued and there will be changes to the green wheelie bin charges. Councillors asked if the individual bags are still available to purchase, D.Cllr Durham and D.Cllr Bass did not know about the bags. It was also noted that Head of Planning Services, Jennifer Candler is leaving MDC and the position is being advertised. Cllr. Bass also noted that the housing department would like to know about any empty properties in order that owners can be encouraged to bring them back into the housing stock.

606. Highways

606.1 Ref: 3047205 Salt bin. Audit planned for Aug/Sept when bin will be refilled.

Clerk told the bin would be refilled but this has not so far happened, it has been chased on numerous occasions. Cllr's suggest that clerk informs Essex County Councillor Penny Channer. Councillors reiterated annoyance that the bin had been purchased from ECC on the basis that it would be refilled.

Cllr. Henry Bass left the meeting room at 9.55pm.

606.2 Winter Salt Bag Scheme. Cllr Bunn to ask Ken Rennie re: risk Assessments. Cllr. Orford has had agreement from some volunteers and will inform Cllr. Bunn and Cllr. Durham who will distribute the salt accordingly. Clerk to provide information sheet for volunteers.

606.3 Ref: 1634088 Footpath, Rectory Road. Awaiting response/Clerk has chased again. Village Agent has been to visit and has also written to Highways.

607. Local Issues

607.1 **Bell Meadow/Playground.** The inspection book was duly signed. It was noted that some litter had been cleared. Cllr. Durham has purchased and will plant the replacement tree.

607.2 **Footpath Officer Report** Cllr. Warren reported that 1) A large elm tree came down in high winds on FP19 beside the school, completely blocking the path, bringing down the power lines and putting most of the village in darkness for the night. Thanks to Lee Hughes and his chainsaw the path was cleared within 48 hours. Cllr's commented that they were impressed with the speed at which the electricity supply was re-established and also noted that as a result some of the other electricity poles in the village had been replaced. It was also noted that an ECC Tree Surgeon had visited the school to assess remaining trees; there is an ash which is to be felled but the Elm in the decking will remain.

2) ECC is erecting waymark posts to clarify the junction of FP16, FP19 and FP37 south of Whitehouse Farm.

3) Councillors asked about some barbed wire which has recently been put at the side of the field on FP16. Cllr. Warren to investigate.

- 607.3 **One Place On Wheels - Woodham Walter.** Next visit including mobile police vehicle – January timetable tbc.
- 607.4 **School Report** It was noted that OFSTED have inspected the school and given an “Outstanding” report. Governors are due to begin the Headteacher appointment process again.
- 607.5 **Allotments Report** Cllr. Orford is in the process of organising a meeting re: renewal agreement with land owner. Clerk advises that a proper review needs to be conducted in accordance with our 2009 resolution to support the allotments. Councillors proposed that a note in the January magazine stating that in principle they are in full support of renewing the agreement as the project has proved to be very successful. It is understood that the land owners are happy, the allotment holders are happy and there are currently 2 on the waiting list.
- Over the period that allotments have been up and running no complaints have been received by the Parish Council. Clerk to include that this will be discussed at the January Parish Council meeting and any comments can be made via the clerk prior to this or at that meeting.
- 607.6 **Queen’s Diamond Jubilee** Cllr. Durham outlined that a proposal to organise a village event had been put forward by Angus Neale and supported by all councillors however since his resignation as a councillor there needs to be a new volunteer to take the lead. Joanna Symons volunteered to take on this role and Jacky Bannerman also volunteered to join the committee. Other councillors are happy to help and support the event.
- 607.7 **Diamond Jubilee Village History Project** Cllr. Durham is awaiting responses to his article in the magazine. Other councillors noted that they had received many positive comments and that there was lots of interest. A date will be arranged after Christmas.
- 607.8 **Community Speed Watch** It was noted that an update had been received from Essex Police which showed the scheme to be a success in the county. Clerk has written to volunteers to arrange some more sessions in the village.
- 607.9 **Litter** No reports. Clerk to liaise with Colin Warner and arrange a date for the February litter pick.
- 607.10 **Broadband** Awaiting repeater transmitter to be fitted which should bring further areas of the village under the coverage of Fibrewifi.
- 607.11 **Village Agent** Clerk reported that the village agent had been leafleting the village with information about the services offered.
- 607.12 **Emergency Planning** To be carried over to the next meeting. Update from Cllr. Newland
- 607.13 **Police Reports** – various traffic reports inc. Christmas Drink Drive Campaign
- 608. Correspondence**
- 608.1 Mobile Library timetable – website updated, also on notice board.
- 608.2 MDC – Housing Targets for the Heart of Essex – consultation workshop. Cllr’s declined to attend.
- 608.3 RCCE – Neighbourhood Planning Training Session. Councillors felt that it was too soon to consider a plan but that with the introduction of the Localism bill this may change. A village strategy has got some merit but the process is considered an extremely time consuming and expensive procedure. They conclude that at the present time it is not necessary but it may become so in the future, councillors will continue to monitor.
- 608.4 Langham Parish Council re: traveller sites in Essex. Request for information on the way the traveller site in Woodham Walter is perceived by the Parish Council. Councillors concluded that they have a generally positive view of the Wood Corner site which has been under good management. Clerk to invite councillors from Langham Parish Council to a future meeting if desired.
- 608.5 MDC – forthcoming Parish Council Planning Workshops. Cllr. Newland volunteered to attend the sessions.
- 608.6 MDC – Local Highways Panel – Highways Localism Programme. To be circulated.
- 609. Points Of Information**
- 609.1 Cllr. Newland noted that the ECC website had recently been updated with information on evaluation criteria regarding the Minerals Development Document.
- 609.2 Cllr. Warren noted that the Environment Agency had been attending to the river between Ferndale, The Street and Blue Mill Lane. They spent 4 days clearing and the stream now flows very well.
- 610. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 9th January 2012 at 8pm in Womens Club Room, Top Road.**

Signed

Dated

Meeting ended at 10.40pm