

MINUTES

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

Monday 12th July 2010

Present:

Mark Durham (Chairman)
James Bunn (Vice Chairman)
Angus Neale
Claire Robinson
Peter Warren

Others: Jacky Bannerman (Clerk) District Councillor, Sheila Young

Public: 4

269. Welcome Cllr. Durham welcomed those present to the meeting.

270. Apologies For Absence Apologies were received and accepted Councillor Colin Warner and Councillor David Potter.

271. Register of Declared Interests There were no interests declared and the register was duly signed.

272. Public Forum There were 4 members of the public present, Cllr Durham opened the meeting up for comments.

Patricia Herrmann (PH) was in attendance to comment on the Meadows Barn Appeal Decision. PH is very concerned and asked if the Parish Council intended to take up anything with the Planning Inspectorate. PH felt that Cllr Colin Warner had presented the case for the Parish Council very well at the hearing. PH concerned that the inspector was satisfied that holiday lets were distinct from permanent use. But PH sighted an appeal case in Kent where residential use had been granted when holiday lets had not been successful. PH requests the Parish Council ask the Inspectorate to confirm in writing that the decision distinguishes holiday lets and is not able to become residential. PH commented that the District Council have policies on change of use and have kept to these in the past e.g. The Bell PH but in this case they have not been followed, PH requests the Parish Council write to Maldon District Council and ask them to explain why they didn't follow previous procedures in this case. PH felt that the MDC appeal report was weak and that the original refusal to the 6 holiday lets was weak so that they couldn't add to the reasons for refusal when the application was for 4.

Mr Frank Herrmann (FH) commented that the Planning Department at MDC had been very poor. The Parish Council should take up the matter. It is unfortunate that planning in our village has been a victim of a poor district council. FH cited recent reports in local newspaper regarding a staff questionnaire. He asks what is happening in MDC to put things right?

Cllr Mark Durham confirmed that the Parish Council do have concerns about the performance of the Planning Department at MDC but that the council have not met since the decision and would be discussing any response later in the meeting.

District Cllr Sheila Young pointed out that the council did refuse permission to the application but she acknowledged that that the Planning Department were poor. DC Young has spoken to the new head of Planning Services, Jennifer Candler and expressed concerns at the lack of preparation of the MDC officer at the appeal. She suggested inviting Mrs Candler to a Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Mark Durham confirmed that we would invite Jennifer Candler to a future meeting to raise our concerns.

Mrs Sue Williams (SW) agreed with comments from Mr & Mrs Herrmann. She was also concerned that the occupancy condition 17 in the approval document would be put in place and closely monitored.

Mrs Herrmann also commented on the Government's plans to hand more power down to Parish Councils. It would be a tremendous burden for the Parish Council to bare and she asked if Parish Councillors feel they need to learn more about planning? She suggests we ask our new MP what the plans are.

273. Minutes Of The Parish Council Meeting Held On 14th June 2010. The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and duly signed.

274. Matters Arising

274.1 (257.1) Annual Register of Member Interests – Cllr Durham & Cllr Bunn submitted forms, clerk countersigned and duly filed.

274.2 (257.2) Standing Orders – Currently still circulating to all councillors with view to adopting at the next meeting. Cllr Durham commented on the importance of this document for all councillors.

274.3 (257.3) School Playground – clerk informed that the school have now had approval from Essex County Council regarding their insurance. Chairman Durham introduced Mr David Lawton who was attending the meeting on behalf of the Governors to discuss the dual use agreement. He advised that the existing agreement can continue in force with a written variation including a list of the new equipment. The school owns the playground so is covered by their own insurance so he does not consider there is any insurance issue. Mr Lawton will contact the Head Teacher Mrs Matthews and suggest the playground should be reopened. Clerk has met with Ken Rennie to discuss carrying out risk assessments, he is working on these over the next few weeks. It was noted that the school caretaker had recently had to remove disposable BBQ equipment and cigarette butts from the school field, this is obviously unacceptable and to be monitored. Clerk informed that a quote from Universal Services regarding technical inspection is £33.50 for goal posts at Bell Meadow. Councillors in agreement, clerk to arrange.

274.4 (255.4) War Memorial Shelter. Cllr Warren had visited the shelter with Mr Harlow. Other Cllr's had also inspected it. The fascia was found to be rotten and some slates are missing. Cllr James Bunn volunteered to have a look and seek advice and ascertain likely repair costs.

275. Planning – APPLICATIONS

275.1 FUL/MAL/10/00368 & LBC/MAL/10/00369 The Cats PH, Blue Mill Lane
New window to west elevation.

Application circulated to all parish councillors prior to the meeting and no objections were raised. Due to deadline arising before meeting, clerk has written accordingly.

275.2 HOUSE/MAL/10/00508 1 Redbrick Cottages, The Street
Proposed drop kerb, modified entrance to off road parking. Erection of three pergola beams above parking area.

Cllr. Warren carried out neighbour consultations and there were no formal objections although some concerns that the pergola beams could result in a car port and the remaining concrete posts were untidy. Councillors discussed and conclude that as the original reasons for refusal had been addressed there could be no objections. Clerk to write accordingly.

275.3 ECC/MAL/10/00545 Woodham Walter CofE Primary School
Construction of new classroom with link to existing school via new corridor and new head teachers office and associated landscaping.

Cllr. Neale commented that as the extension is to the rear of the building there will be very little impact on neighbours. Whilst he has concerns if the school expands due to a resulting increase in traffic, he feels that the survival of the school in our community is essential and encourages plans for the school to continue to thrive in even at expense of increased traffic. Cllr Neale therefore strongly supports the application.

District Councillor Young commented that she had spoken to Mrs Matthews the Head Teacher and been informed that the extension is not in order that the school can increase numbers but to provide better provision for reception children.

Mr David Lawton confirmed this was the case. He also outlined the catchment area is for Woodham Walter but that pupils come from a wide area including surrounding villages but also many children come from Heybridge and Maldon.

Councillors conclude that they support the application. Clerk to write accordingly.

276. Planning - DECISIONS

276.1 Meadow Barn - Appeal by Mr Derek Nicholson

APPEAL ALLOWED

Decision: "I allow the appeal and grant planning permission to convert the barn into four holiday lets with associated external alterations"

Cllr Bunn commented that even if the Parish Council can't reverse the decision we should still write to MDC informing them that their policies are weak and ambiguous and not robustly pursued or followed up. He supports the decision to invite the new Head of Planning to a future meeting to discuss our concerns and ask how we can make sure this does not happen again.

Cllr Durham commented that we can't go to judicial review as this would be prohibitively expensive. He is concerned that MDC have not had continuity of staff in the planning department over several years and that the Parish Council and village had been poorly served by MDC. The file on The Meadows goes back some 19 years and this should have been part of the evidence in this case. MDC should insist the conditions are robustly monitored and we should ask them how they intend to do this. He is concerned that the occupancy condition will be very difficult to police. He confirms that the parish Council should also write to the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr Neale commented that for the officer to go unprepared to an appeal hearing was unacceptable. Councillors conclude that we should write to MDC and the Planning Inspectorate. Clerk to liaise with Chairman and Mrs Herrmann who agreed to help with her expertise in this area.

276.2 LDE/MAL/10/00309 Albany Farm, Old London Road **REFUSE**

Claim for lawful development certificate for the existing use of an area of land as part of the residential curtilage of Albany Farm.

“The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to substantiate the applicant’s claim that, on the balance of probability, the land has been used as residential curtilage for a period in excess of 10 years prior to the date of the application.”

276.3 FUL/MAL/10/00324 Jasmin, Blue Mill Lane **APPROVE**

Demolition of bungalow and erection of house. (With conditions)

277. Other Planning Matters

277.1 Falconers Lodge. Nothing further to report.

277.2 Woodham Walter Hall Ruins. Nothing further to report. Clerk has written to MP and she will be attending the August Parish Council meeting.

277.3 MDC letter re: Consultations to Parish Council – periods for response. Clerk/Chairman are working on a response to this. Clerk/Chairman raised concerns at the increase in time and costs for the parish council who would have to meet on additional occasions just to discuss planning applications. District Councillor Young would also voice concerns to Head of Planning.

277.4 MDC – Maldon District Conservation & Design Awards 2010. Nominations sought. Councillors discuss sites in the village and suggest Hoe Mill Barns would be a good project to nominate as it has been a great building conservation development. Cllr. Durham discuss with owner, as per next item.

277.5 (243.4) Hoe Barns site visit – Cllr. Durham trying to arrange.

278. To Authorise Any Payments Due The following payments were approved and Cllr. Durham duly signed cheques. Clerk to arrange for Cllr. Potter or Cllr. Warner to countersign.

278.1 e-on – Monthly DD

278.2 A&J Lighting Solutions – Monthly DD

278.3 Clerks Salary + Allowance/Expenses

278.4 P.H.Williams (Blackwater Landscapes) £140

Annual Grants Payable to Local Organisations

278.5 Woodham Walter Women’s Club £133.00

278.6 St Michael’s Church £172.00

278.7 WM&H Parish News Magazine £140.00

278.8 Woodham Walter Village Hall Assoc. £181.00

278.9 Silver Threads £214.00

278.10 Essex Wildlife Trust £95.00

278.11 Bell Meadow Village Assoc. £500.00

279. Other Financial Matters

279.1 End of financial year – Audit. Clerk has submitted information to Auditors.

279.2 Clerk had received the paperwork for new signatories on bank account. These were duly signed by Chairman and Vice Chairman. Vice Chairman to visit branch of Barclays bank and submit relevant ID and return form to clerk. Clerk to arrange for Cllr. Warner to sign form. Clerk will then send off.

279.3 Receipt of monies for hire of party tents. Councillors commented on the very positive increase in bookings this year.

279.4 Quarterly Finance Check (April – June) – Cllr Durham/Cllr Bunn. Clerk to submit paperwork when payments for this month have been made.

280. Report Of The District Councillor

Mrs Young informed that MDC are currently being audited by PKF for the period 2009/10. She commented that Planning is not a science but an art and rules can be manipulated in all sorts of ways which is what has happened at The Meadows. She expects and hopes that the dismal planning department will be improved over time. MDC are in a good financial position, they don’t owe any money, however as is the case generally, investments have been performing poorly.

MDC made some cuts already including the community grants and they are looking at ways of hiving out certain things much like they have done with their solicitor as they now draw on the legal team at Essex County Council.

At 9.40pm DC Sheila Young, Mr & Mrs Herrmann and Mrs Williams departed the meeting.

281. Highways

281.1 (194.16) New road enforcement signage outside School on The Street. Nothing further.

281.2 For info: Cllr Durham spoke to MDC regarding flailing hedges.

281.3 A drain cover had been stolen on Little Baddow Road but had now been replaced. Several along The Ridge also disappeared one night and in Southend over 100 have recently been stolen.

282. Local Issues

282.1 **Playground/Bell Meadow Rota.** The rota was duly signed, there were no reports of any incidents.

282.2 **Footpath Officer Report** It was expected that ECC would do a cut at the end of July but that due to the dry weather footpaths were not too overgrown. Cllr Warren will investigate funding for a footpaths map with P3 organiser.

282.3 **PCSO Crime Report for Woodham Walter** No report received. Clerk has requested.

- 282.4 **Neighbourhood Action Panel** Date of next meeting: tbc
- 282.5 **School Report** Other than playground discussions which took place previously there was no further information to report.
- 282.6 **Allotments Report** No information to report.
- 282.7 **Community Speed Watch** No information to report. Cllr's discuss transferring rota organisation back to clerk from September.
- 282.8 **Litter** Tyres & dead badger at Strawberry Corner reported to CBC (Ref: AF 46168E), tyres removed within a couple of days.
- 282.9 **Village Agent.** Clerk had received a report on heatwave advice which would be left at the shop. Cllr's commented on the huge effort that Mrs McDonald puts in to promoting the service and this was much appreciated by councillors. She had attended the village festival at the weekend.
- 282.10 **Mike Woodcraft Report** Clerk is awaiting a response from Mr Woodcraft's son. Clerk to enquire price for printing 100 copies in time for Bell Meadow Day.
- 283. Correspondence**
- 283.1 Viking Community Transport – letter requesting assistance to establish if there is a need for service. Clerk to ask if Cllr Warner or Potter would be interesting in this role.
- 283.2 ECC – Bus Service – Tender Round 2010. Alterations to bus service for Woodham Walter. Clerk is seeking further information on the changes. The MALBUS 4 continues on Thursday (renamed 5 with new operator, Regal) but on Saturday the service is being amalgamated with the 31A service. The route and timings appears to have altered slightly and clerk is clarifying precise changes.
- 283.3 ECC – Changes to Concessionary travel passes
- 283.4 Correspondence from Priti Patel MP's office that she would like to accept our invitation and attend the meeting on Monday 9th August. Councillors ask clerk to write and confirm nearer the time and advise on the subjects likely to come up. (MDC Planning/Devolvement of Power to parish councils/Woodham Walter ruins.)
- 283.5 Invitation to attend 8th Maldon Oyster Festival.
- 283.6 Maldon District Local Highway Panel – information to be circulated.
- 284. Points Of Information** None
- 285. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 9th August 2010.**

Signed

Dated

Meeting ended at 10.10pm