

Waltham Parish Council

EST. 1894

Website: <https://waltham-pc.gov.uk>

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 2nd of July 2024 at Waltham Village Hall

In line with the Transparency Code all public documents relating to the meeting are published in an agenda pack on the parish council website. Please note that the minutes remain in Draft form until approved at the next meeting.

Present: Parish Councillors John Barry (chair), John Hockley (JH), and Yolande Barnes (YB)

In attendance: one member of the public and Clerk / RFO Tracey Block

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm

JB welcomed all to the meeting

24/25.138 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Cllr Robinson (holiday) and Cllr Alister Brady.

24/25.139 To Declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests on any agenda items:

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

24/25.140 To approve the minutes of Motions and Resolutions of the meeting held on the 4th of June 2024:

The title of the minutes was amended to strike out the "Annual" and then the minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

24/25.141 Public Session: To receive representations questions and evidence from the public on agenda items:

The member of the public had no comments to raise.

24/25.142 Chairman's Report:

- a) Tony McCord resigned at the end of May and served his notice until 10th June. The Parish Council thanks Mr McCord for his work since 2018 and wishes him well for the future.
- b) Tracey Block was welcomed to the PC as the new Clerk.
- c) The notice board cracks are creeping across the glazing. JB has the glazing and will replace the old for new. There is no ingress of water at present. The quality of the noticeboards is disappointing. JH offered to assist if necessary. **Action: JB**

- d) CFF – no funding yet received but this is expected in due course.
- e) Ongoing administrative issues, have highlighted that there are penalty notices that are outstanding. The outgoing Clerk is aware of the issue and has offered to put the matter right from his own pocket.
- RESOLVED:** Clerk to contact HMRC and pay the penalty if necessary. It is considered the responsibility of Waltham Parish Council. In future, the Clerk will forward the submission email.
- Action: Clerk**

24/25.143 Reports from County and City Councillors:

Councillor Mike Sole had circulated his report. Members noted the content.

24/25.144 Planning:

No applications have been received since the last meeting.

24/25.145 Highways:

Following the discussions at the last meeting regarding the gateways, Kent Highways have looked at whether there is any design wriggle-room and they are not able to amend this. YB expressed concern about the “urban look” of the gates, they are part of the road furniture. YB expressed disappointment that Kent Highways is not taking advice from Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

YB drew Councillors attention to the road document where a natural surface is shown re: Waltham Church.

Resolved: To go ahead with gateways and horse sign at Sarness Farm.

Action: Clerk

24/25.146 Finance:

Financial statements were approved. Budget over expenditure circulated. The payment schedule approved and signed.

24/25.147 Rural Housing:

A draft Rural Housing questionnaire had been circulated for consideration at the last meeting of the Council. Although some questions on this subject had been asked in an earlier questionnaire the view was expressed that specific questions are needed in order to find more detailed answers. YB would like a statistical pack in order to find detail of who is living in the area. Questions need to be general in the hope that they would not “skew” the answers. YB felt we should try to find out what the views are on housing in the village as a whole.

The member of the public asked, why is this on the agenda? JB explained there was a matter brought to the attention of the Council a few months ago by the Clerk. He explained he had received a communication from a person apparently representing the landowner of

the field opposite the Hall. Subsequently that same person telephoned JB enquiring as the PC's attitude/policy towards affordable housing. The chair's response was polite and noncommittal. This contact was subsequently mentioned at the APM.

The previous Clerk's interest in particular stemmed from his hope that he could undertake some study of the subject of affordable housing as part of his degree course. And it was in this context that the matter arose at the previous Parish meeting.

Of course the feelings at the APM were that the parish plan needed to be progressed in order to enable a stance to be taken should anyone come forward hoping to build on the field.

The chair advised that the current draft City Council plan does not envisage any development in the villages including Waltham.

As regards progress with the village plan the chair reported no further research has been undertaken as yet other than the village survey last summer. This asked a number of questions amongst which was one that enquired whether it was desirable for the number of houses in the village to be increased, to which the answers received were mainly 'no'.

Concern was expressed about whether the PC is making progress to address possible concerns regarding any future development in the village. Although it was noted younger people might be encouraged to live in the village if more affordable housing was available. The resident in attendance wondered if the term 'affordable' gives the impression of higher density development. Consideration would be needed regarding the quality and quantity of any additional houses.

YB asked whether the PC should consider purchasing the land opposite the hall using 'community right to buy' as an 'Asset of Community Value'. This would stop it being developed in the future. Meantime there has been no contact about the field since February.

Moving to the more general issues it was concluded the PC needs to decide whether/how to continue with a Parish plan, which might be a plan to do nothing in the area of housing. The PC should also consider how the quality of village life can be improved. Suggest looking at how we deal with verges, potholes, litter etc. How do we produce a village we are proud of? Suggest taking housing out of the title of any future questionnaire.

RESOLVED: JH to look at the existing data with YB to see what can and should be the next steps. This will be brought back in September as an agenda item of Parish Plan.

Action: JH & YB

24/25.148 Date of meetings:

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday **3rd of September 2024.**

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Chairmans signature:

Date: 3rd September 2024