

Waltham Parish Council

EST. 1894

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

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 4th of February 2025 at Waltham Village Hall

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

Present: Parish Councillors Jane Robinson (JR) (chair), Yolande Barnes (YB), John Hockley (JH) and Hugh Robinson (HR)

In attendance: Cllr Mike Bland and RFO Tracey Block

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm

JR welcomed all to the meeting

1. To receive any apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr John Barry. These were approved.

2. To receive Declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests.

There were no declarations of interest to be received.

3. To approve the minutes of Motions and Resolutions of the meeting held on the 3rd of December 2024.

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

The ownership of the Recreation Ground is under the control of the 2 trustees. YB wondered if it might be useful to investigate the Community Land Trust/Community Right to Bid. YB to discuss with a colleague. KCC have an Officer who deals with Community Land Trusts, Mike Bland to request that the Officer attends a PC meeting. JR needs to contact Rebecca Booth at CCC for funding.

4. Public Session: To receive representations questions and evidence from members of the public.

There were no public in attendance.

5. Chairman's Report: To receive an update on current issues:

No receipt was received.

6. To receive reports: from County and City Councillors.

Mike Bland said he is very aware of the site at Anvil Green and the application was refused. He is awaiting news from Planning Enforcement. Utilities have been connected at the site but he is following this through. Mike Bland has been advised that Enforcement actions take an awful long time to resolve but is hoping that this will soon be dealt with. Mike to liaise with the Clerk.

Mike has also asked for Enforcement update regarding Dene Meadow, he will liaise with the Clerk. An appeal was turned down on the application for a second barn.

Mike explained about the situation for CCC and Devolution. KCC and Medway met and voted to work with the Government to become Unitary Authorities. District Councils did not have a vote but overall agreement meant that Kent applied by Government to be one of the first areas to be devolved. The idea is to have a Mayoral leader of a Strategic authority in Kent. This authority will take decisions on all services that are delivered. There will be a Deputy Mayor. This will look very much like Manchester. Then there will be a margining of District Councils into Unitary Authorities, the size of these is not yet decided, this may make decision making more streamlined. There will be fewer Councillors, early-stage discussions mean that there will either be 3 or 4. North, East and West Kent, the fourth being South Kent. The existing boundaries do not necessarily meet the requirements. The contracts will have to be rationalised.

The timescale means that, if the KCC are allowed to delay elections that should be held in May, then the KCC Councillors will not take place and the Mayor will be elected in 2026. This is the current outline. This will need to be sorted quickly. 2027, would be when the setting up of Shadow Unitary Authorities and the actual Authorities will be set up in 2028 and all strategic authorities will be ready to be in operation.

There will be a moment of public consultation at some point along that route but, as yet, the proposals have not yet been drawn up. The proposals are looking at how the combinations work together. Canterbury feels positive about the East Kent collaboration.

There is already the beginning of the roles of Town and Parish Councils, some of the early discussions have looked at the running of some services, resources need to be looked at in depth. There is some discussion and thought about merging of Parish Councils.

YB wanted to return to the planning issues, she has concern that these set a precedent and really want this to be dealt with. This type of developer may see Waltham as an opportune area. There is also concern about the environmental detriment of the land, can this be tackled/curbed. Reports have been made to CCC and nothing has been undertaken. CCC is short of Planning Officers and ultimately Enforcement Officers which makes the problem an issue. There is a concern about patterns and issues this brings with it. JR suggested looking at neighbouring authorities working together.

Mike Sole's report was circulated.

7. Planning: To receive any outstanding planning applications and to approve a response as necessary.

To include the connections of utilities to the site in Anvil Green. It is noted that the neighbours grow impatient with CCC's handling of the application. The matter was covered by Cllr Mike Bland.

To note that the Planning Inspectorate has dismissed the appeal against the refusal of permission to application CA/24/10007. City Councillors asked for progress in relation to previous complaints about the original barn. The matter was covered by Cllr Mike Bland.

An update on the Flat in Richdore Road was received.

8. Finance:

a) To **note** year to date receipts and payments.

b) **Payment Schedule:** To approve payment transactions for January 2025.

c) To note that the service level agreement for winter needs to be reviewed, to be undertaken in the Spring.

9. Parish Plan

YB has taken the results of the survey that relate to the plan. Sustainable transport is concerned very important. This is things like car-sharing, green buses, EV charging points. This did pick up on quiet lanes.

If the Parish Plan is developed, this should not be around housing and should in fact relate to quiet lanes and sustainable transport. The evidence is re-presented, possible actions are sought around these findings.

Maybe we should phrase the consideration of development of new housing units, in a specific way.

This document will start the discussion and sees what the implications of the questionnaire responses are. There are some areas that need more probing. YB has been involved in Community Surette's in the past. This could be a process to use. There are some very useful handbooks available.

It was agreed that this would be discussed again but expectation must be managed due to devolution of the Councils.

10. Dates of meetings:

To agree meeting dates for 2025 as follows:

Tuesday 4th March 2025

Tuesday 1st April 2025

Tuesday 6th May 2025 (JR and HR not available)

Tuesday 3rd June 2025 (JH not available)

Tuesday 1st July 2025 (JR and HR not available)

Tuesday 2nd September 2025

Tuesday 7th October 2025

Tuesday 4th November 2025

Tuesday 9th December 2025

To agree Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 15th April 2025 (Easter day is 20th April)

The meeting closed at 8.50pm