

Minutes of **OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL** meeting
Held virtually on **Tuesday 2nd February 2021** at **7.30PM**

Councillors Present:

Cllr S Rickett (Chairman)
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr C Dyer
Cllr B Jones
Cllr A Marchant
Cllr R Taylor
Cllr C Unter

Also in attendance

L Mackie (Clerk)
County Councillor S Hohler (left at 7.50pm)
Borough Councillor P Montague (left at 8.00pm)
3 members of public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Borough Councillor A Kemp and PCSO Sears.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Dyer declared an interest in planning application **TM/21/00177/FL - Barn South Of Godwell Farm**, as she is a neighbour.

3. MINUTES

The minutes arising from 12th January 2020 were agreed by all Councillors and will be signed as approved by Cllr Rickett at the next available opportunity.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

a) County Councillor Hohler

- Following discussions with Cllr Matthew Balfour and KCC, independent monitoring of blasts at Blaise Farm Quarry has been agreed. The Parish Council will identify a number of residents who agree to monitoring taking place at their property.
- There are 105 cases of the South African Covid variant in the country, 1 being in Maidstone. Covid figures are reducing. Asymptomatic testing has been popular and the vaccine is being rolled out efficiently in Kent.
- Traffic from extra HGVs is lower than KCC were anticipating. They are asking for increased resources at Out of Kent Covid Test Centres. 2628 HGV drivers were checked in Kent last month. Almost 100 did not have the correct permits and were turned back and about 200 were given enforcement notices. 22 drivers tested positive and 34 are isolating at Wrotham Heath.
- The Cabinet has deliberated the budget and made some good adjustments but these have not been reported yet
- Vision Zero is the KCC ambition to reduce fatalities to zero by 2050 and reduce serious injuries on Kent Roads.
- 18,501 new businesses were set up in Kent in 2020 which is up 8.1% from the previous year which is encouraging
- Cllr Rickett thanked Cllr Hohler for her involvement with Blaise Farm AD Plant regarding the odour issues. These have not ceased but will continue to be an issue until the plant is fully operational with food waste.
- The potential application for the Solar Park on the Offham Landfill Site was discussed. This is a big issue for the village. The Landfill Site has affected the lives of villagers for decades who have had to

Signed

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endure quarrying, filling in, smells, seagulls and dust. Throughout, the Village has been assured it will be returned to a parkland setting and footpaths restored and these were part of the conditions of the planning consent. The proposal for an enormous solar park about the size of Offham (18.8 hectares) will impact a lot of people and cause concern. Cllr Hohler noted that she voted against the quarry on this site 32 years ago. The site is ecologically friendly, full of skylarks, and there is an ecological case to keep it as a nature reserve/park and amenity for villagers for all they have had to put up with. She was able to successfully help get an appeal turned down to extract sand from Foxes Bank in Ryarsh, arguing it would just make the village a spot in the middle of the site. Cllr Hohler was thanked for her support.

b) Borough Councillor Montague

- o Planning Officers have responded to the Inspector about the Local Plan. TMBC think the Plan is good and the Inspector is not following the guidelines issued to them in terms of what Government has asked them to do.
- o He noted that the size of the Solar Park may be a concern for some residents. Issues such as footpaths should be highlighted early on. He will make enquiries with planning officers.
- o A site meeting will be arranged for Cllr Montague to view the Landfill Site.

c) Police

There were no reports.

5. PLANNING

a) New applications

- i. **TM/21/00167/TNCA - The Green, Offham** - Pin Oak T1 to thin throughout tree of epicormic growth and raise lower crown to 2.4m.
This is an application made by the Parish Council for maintenance to the tree.
- ii. **TM/21/00177/FL - Barn South Of Godwell Farm, Church Road** - Demolition of existing redundant outbuildings and erection of a new 3 bed/6 person single storey dwelling together with a 1 bed/2 person family annex, garage accommodation and associated landscape works.

Having declared an interest, Cllr Dyer left the meeting. Following a discussion Cllrs agreed that:

- The zinc roof is not in keeping with the area and will look out of place. It doesn't blend in with the other buildings on the site and needs to blend in with adjacent properties more aesthetically. It will stand out significantly
- A hedge has been taken out already. The hedge screened the barn, and without it the site is more visible. The view to this site is iconic, across the fields. The bushes and trees were such that you couldn't see behind, and it is hoped that these will be replaced. The aspect is important. The removal of the hedgerow and screening should be reported urgently to TMBC.
- There is no objection to the construction in this place as such as long as these concerns are dealt with. If the concerns are not dealt with then the Parish Council objects to this application.
- This is in the 2nd conservation area in the village so it is important to pay more attention to appearance and design and setting.
- There is a detached annex. There needs to be a condition that the annex cannot be seen as a separate dwelling in the future. It must be seen only as one property.
- Godwell Farm is one of the manor houses and has very important links to Church Farm.
- Cllrs Kemp and Montague will be involved.

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b) Approvals

- i. **TM/20/02479/FL - The Old Rectory, Aldon Lane** -Demolition of existing garage/garden store and the erection of a replacement garage/store room
- ii. **TM/20/02062/FL - The Old Rectory, Aldon Lane** - Construction of timber decking cover over existing swimming pool
- iii. **TM/20/02024/RD - Packhouse, Aldon Manor, Aldon Lane** - Details of conditions 2 (materials), 4 (landscaping and boundary treatment) and 5 (demolition and construction) submitted pursuant to planning permission TM/19/01576/FL (Alterations and change of use to 2 no. dwelling houses)

c) Refusals

- i. **TM/20/02289/OA - Barfield House Teston Road** - Erection of 15 dwellings and new access to highway

d) Any other planning matters

- i. **TM/20/02684/DEN - Kentfield Farm, Tower Hill** - Prior Demolition Notification: Demolish 1950s farm workshop. Prior Approval Not Required.
- i. **TM/20/02786/AGN - Kentfield Farm, Tower Hill** - Prior Agricultural Notification: New replacement workshop for the 1950s original which is now leaking. PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED
- ii. **TM/20/02706/CR3 - Offham Quarry, Teston Road (landfill Site)** - Consultation by KCC: request for a Screening Opinion to determine whether a proposed solar park requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (KCC/SCR/TM/0252/2020). SCREENING OPINION EIA IS NOT REQUIRED.
- iii. **TM/20/00933/LDE - Church View, Teston Road** - Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Use as a dwellinghouse. CERTIFIED

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a) Election – to receive nominations and vote on appointment of Vice-Chairman
Cllr Dyer put her name forward to be considered as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded and Cllrs voted unanimously to appoint Cllr Dyer.
- b) Offham Solar Park Proposal
Arcus Consultancy Services are acting for Infinis and FCC and have been in touch with the Parish Council. The proposal is against all planning agreements and assurances made to the village about the reinstatement of the land and footpaths. There was a discussion and various issues were raised, including what effect the subsidence will have on the structure of the panelling. If the site is not safe to walk across now, how will it be safe to erect panels, and enable maintenance of the site and the panels.
The Parish Council will work with Mike Rowe, David Stretton and Clare Innes and will involve County and Borough Councillors for support. It was agreed that the village should be notified about this proposal. The conditions for reinstatement in the planning application will need to be clarified. This will be a KCC application.
- c) Preventing vehicles driving or parking on The Village Green
Kent Highways have confirmed there are no restrictions as to how close to the highway objects can be placed on private land. Kent Highways regulations allow them to install objects 450mm back from the edge of the highway.
To prevent cars driving over or parking on the Village Green, which is owned by the Parish Council, it was AGREED to place ragstone rocks/boulders at strategic intervals.
Vehicles parking on the Village Green at Hayes Lane will be considered separately.
- d) Farm Traffic
Following representations made about the problem of traffic from Betts Farm, the Parish Council has written to those residents. There is no further action the Parish Council can take.

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- e) Offham Christmas Lights
As previously discussed, the lights on the Pinoak need replacing. Cllr Rickett has worked with David Frankling who has sourced a set of lights for £413.33 + VAT which should last 6 or 7 years and includes spare bulbs. Cllrs APPROVED the purchase.
- f) KCC – Highways Improvement Plan
Cllrs will submit suggestions for the village to Cllr Unter who will compile them in a HIP.
- g) Licence to Cultivate – Teston Road, Spadework
This has been renewed with Kent Highways for another year, allowing the Parish Council to cultivate highways land in this location.
- h) Annual Parish Meeting
In person meetings cannot take place until May and NALC are looking into how Parish Council's can hold meetings. This will be reviewed when there is further guidance.
- i) Annual Review
It was AGREED an Annual Review was not necessary as information is sent out in the monthly newsletter and is available on the Parish Council website.

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS

a) Blaise Farm

(i) Quarry

Independent blast monitoring is being set up. The Parish Council will compile a list of residents who regularly report problems with the blast and approach them for permission to install the equipment. The Clerk will find out how many properties Amey would like to monitor.

(ii) IVC Waste Management

The temporary closure of the site in Sevenoaks means that more waste will be dealt with at the IVC site during February.

(iii) AD Plant

There is nothing further to report.

b) Offham Landfill Site

Cllr Jones has contacted Michael Ross from FCC Environment, who has said he will be in touch at the end of January/beginning of February to arrange a site meeting.

c) To receive reports about

(i) Offham Community Network

Cllr Dyer reported that some poorly residents were able to receive support from OCN at crucial times. Some residents are feeling quite hopeless having been restricted indoors now for some time. The OCN are looking at ways to help people's wellbeing during this time. Cllr Unter reported on plans for coffee or tea and cake on a monthly basis for OCN clients. Cllr Dyer was thanked for providing funding for much of this. Residents are encouraged to think of their own neighbours.

(ii) Offham Village Hall

There has been a delay in obtaining the material for the roof.

8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

a) To note any Highways, Footpaths and Footway problems

Cllr Taylor has reported to TMBC that the gutter needs sweeping again and dog waste bins need emptying.

Signed

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b) To consider General Data Protection Regulations and receive updates
The Data Protection Officer's newsletter has been circulated to Cllrs.

c) Website
The new Parish Council's website is live and looks modern and is user friendly. Information is being regularly added.

d) To receive reports about

(i) Maintenance contract

Cllr Marchant has carried out some litter picking and collected the branches which had dropped from the oak tree in the field. The first grass cut should take place this month when it is drier.

(ii) The Pond, Village Green, The Pound, Cosgrave Field, Recreation Ground and Play Area, The Book Box and Defibrillator

Pond – A working party is needed before the end of March.

Village Green – There is nothing to report

The Pound – There is nothing to report

Cosgrave Field – Details have been sent to the solicitor to start investigating whether the land can be leased to the cricket club

Recreation Ground and Play Area- Cllrs Taylor and Jones carried out their regular inspection today. There is nothing to report.

Book Box – Wendy Williams is managing the Book Box. Too many books are being left, some of which are unsuitable.

Cllr Bailey has arranged for the glass panels to be cleared of moss. When there is a sustained period of dry weather he will arrange to silicone the glass to keep the Book Box dry. Cllr Bailey was thanked for this work.

Defibrillator – There is nothing to report.

(iii) Trees

There is nothing to report.

(iv) Any other matters relating to Parish Land and property

A resident and his two children were congratulated for carrying out a litter pick in the village. The Parish Council would like to support village litter picks, taking into account the health and safety of residents and Covid Restrictions. The Clerk will contact TMBC to see if equipment is available. Cllr Rickett will contact a resident who has offered support for similar schemes in the past.

(v) Speed Indicator Devices

Kent Highways have indicated that the installation of a pole with two brackets on Church Road for the mobile SID will be in the region of £1500-£1900. Cllrs felt this was very high, but regulations mean they cannot source or fit their own equipment. Cllr Hohler can be asked for a contribution. Within the next 2 weeks a Highways surveyor will visit the proposed site for the pole to establish whether it will satisfy regulations. He will also determine whether the location of the pole will enable it to have 2 brackets fitted to it in order that the SID can be positioned so that it can face in both directions. If agreed a final costing will be given.

9. EVENTS

a) 2021 Fund Raising

No plans can be made at the moment due to Covid Restrictions so this Agenda item will run forward until the next meeting.

The Offham Society have arranged Afternoon Jazz for 18th July 2021.

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Cllrs would like to hold an event, such as an Afternoon Tea Party, to celebrate the end of Covid Restrictions.

10. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

a) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements (to be physically signed at the next available opportunity)

These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statements were approved and will be signed at the next available opportunity.

b) To consider and approve invoice payments

The following invoices were approved for payment and the payments will be authorised by Cllrs Rickett and Jones:

Payee	Description	Amount £
Clerk	January 2021 Salary, expenses, allowance	£691.83
HMRC	January 2021 PAYE + NI	£160.16

c) To approve the removal of a previous Councillor and add a new Councillor as signatories on Bank Account

Cllrs Agreed to remove Wendy Williams as a signatory and add Cllr Bailey.

d) To consider Parish Council donations 2020/2021

The Parish Council approved donations of £100 each to:

- St Michael's Church. Cllrs noted the enormous support they have provided to the OCN during the pandemic
- Offham Lunch Club. Although not able to meet at the moment, it is hoped they will be able to have a celebratory lunch when they return.
- The Scouts. It was noted that some families are struggling to pay subscriptions and the Scouts are not able to fund raise as they normally would. They are entirely self-funding.

e) To consider any other financial matters

There were no further matters.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

May Day.

The Meeting concluded at 9.50pm. Date of the next Parish Council meeting: **Tuesday 2nd March 2021** at 7.30pm

Signed

Date