

Minutes of **OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL** meeting
Held on **Tuesday 11th January 2022 2021** at **7.30PM** in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr C Unter (Chairman)
Cllr R Taylor (Vice-Chairman)
Cllrs P Bailey
Cllr T Benton
Cllr B Jones
Cllr M Scullion

Also in attendance:

County Councillor S Hohler (left at 7.45pm)
L Mackie (Clerk)
One member of public (7.45-8pm)

Cllr Marchant arrived but left before the start of the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Borough Councillors A Kemp and P Montague.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of **7th December 2021** be approved and signed as an accurate record.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

a) County Councillor Hohler

- She has read the Parish Council's response about the Solar Park which is clear and covered all the points. She has written to the Committee Chairman bringing attention to the Parish Council's request for S106 monies.
- The budget has been challenging. KCC were given a one-year settlement from Government when they expected three and there are other delays which could affect the budget such as the Levelling Up White Paper. They are making savings by reducing staff at County Hall and allowing some to work at home. They are trying to be more effective and modern and less bureaucratic to give good levels of service
- In Sittingbourne there is an application for a 290 acre solar park
- 28,431 Asylum seekers crossed the channel in small boats last year which is 3 times more than the year before despite large sums of money being paid to the French Authorities to help
- A group of lawyers are arguing to allow online meetings of Parish Councils
- She is chairing a Working Group on Country Parks. They are improving the children's play equipment. A strategy is being prepared, including more facilities for disabled people on a pilot basis. A car park ticket can be purchased for £52 pa for parking in all the Country Parks.
- KCC were so impressed with people working together in communities to achieve so much, they are supporting this going forward with a Civil Society Strategy
- Kent Together continues to support vulnerable people during this period
- There is support for business with Kent and Medway grants
- The Household Waste Recycling Centres Consultation received 10,000 responses. There are 18 HWRC, open 362 days a year. Respondents indicated they would like to book on the same day, and that is being considered. Since booking there have been fewer visits but people are taking more recycling – rising from 44kg per visit to 60 kg. Recycling has gone up from 63% to 69% which has reduced KCC's costs of disposal by £1.3m. Booking has also reduced vehicles waiting in the roads to enter the site which can be dangerous. Staff have time to help customers, who have commented how helpful and happy the staff are.

b) Borough Councillor Montague

There was no report.

- c) Police
PCSO James Robinson will be covering for PCSO Amy Sears who is on maternity leave.

5. PLANNING

a) New applications

- i. **TM/21/03319/FL - The Retreat, Comp Lane** - Conversion of existing building, containing a residential flat, workshop and storage barn, to 2 x two bedroom dwellings with associated works to provide curtilages and parking facilities
There was a discussion. Cllrs noted the property is on Metropolitan Green Belt and in line with other similar applications, it was decided to **OBJECT**. Such applications can be a way to put residential properties onto green belt, and once agreed this cannot be changed.
- ii. **TM/21/03355/FL - Offham Place Cottage, Teston Road** - Demolition of existing garage and side extension and erection of two storey extension to the rear and garden room
There was a discussion. Concern was expressed about the garden room, which is not described in the application but is shown on the diagram to have a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, and shower room.
Councillors had no objections to the extension, but did **OBJECT** to the garden room which looks as if it is being prepared for a residential use which does not form part of this application.
- iii. **TM/22/00029/TNCA – Paddock View, Aldon Lane** – Silver Birch (T1) – Fell because of close proximity to house and excessive height. This Silver Birch tree is approximately 3m from the house and approximately 20 meters tall
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

b) Approvals

- i. **TM/21/03102/TNCA - The Oast House, Aldon Lane** - Blue Lawson Cypress - reduce in height by approx 30% (2.5-3m) T2, Leylandii - prune branch away from roof to provide a minimum of 1m clearance. T3, Castlewellan Cypress tree - reduce in height by approx 35% (4- 4.5m) and trim inner side. T4, declining Goat Willow - pollard down to approx 3m above ground level by the removal of approx 6m of growth
- ii. **TM/21/02962/LDE - 11 Church Road** - Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Ground floor single storey rear kitchen extension (Certified)
- iii. **TM/21/02824/FL - Orchard House, Teston Road** - Single storey rear extension

c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

d) Any other planning matters

- i. **TM/21/02347/FL - Land South West Of Fre Mel Farm, Comp Lane** - Extension to existing workshop. APPLICATION WITHDRAWN
- ii. Local Plan Call for Sites Event Open until 07.02.22
This was noted.

6. MATTERS ARISING

a) To consider and approve Maintenance Contract Tender 2022

Cllrs agreed they would offer the tender to Cllr Marchant who is already undertaking the work. It was noted that in the past it had been difficult to keep control of external contractors, and with the extra checks providing details of work completed, they supported him continuing on a one-year basis, subject to price. Councillors were happy using someone from the village who could offer a better quality of service.

The maintenance tender has been slightly amended and Cllr Marchant will be asked to submit a quote. The hedge on Teston Road next to the Recreation Ground needs clearing out and this will be a separate piece of work.

b) Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (the Plan) Refresh - Regulation 18 Public Consultation (closes 09.02.22) www.kent.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste,

This was noted.

- c) To consider and approve recipients of KALC and Offham Community Awards
There have been a number of very worthy nominees. The recipient of the KALC Award was agreed, along with two recipients of the Offham Village Award.

7. OPEN FORUM - Public Participation Session

There were no members of public present and no questions submitted in advance.

8. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:

a) Blaise Farm

The Clerk was asked to find out the date of the next liaison meeting.

- i. Quarry
There was nothing to report.

- ii. IVC Waste Management
There was nothing to report.

- iii. AD Plant
There was nothing to report.

b) Offham Landfill Site

Cllr Jones has circulated a letter about footpaths and the landfill site.

c) 2022 Calendar

Delivery of the calendars is awaited and a competition is being planned for the summer. There was a discussion about advertising the calendar, which is late due to an error at the printers.

d) Offham Village Hall

Cllr Taylor reported on the recent Village Hall Committee Meeting. PAT testing has taken place and w- fi is installed. They are obtaining quotes to resurface the car park.

e) Wellbeing inc. Men's Shed

Due to Covid rates, the start of the Men's Shed has been deferred for a month or two.

9. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

a) To note any Highways, Footpaths and Footways problems (www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem)

There were no issues to report.

b) To receive reports about

- i. The Pond, Village Green, The Pound, Cosgrave Field, Recreation Ground and Play Area, The Book Box, Defibrillator and Speed Indicator Device
Cllr Taylor is waiting for catalogues of new equipment and is obtaining a quote to repair the wet pour play surface. There was a discussion about the Annual Inspection Report.

- ii. Trees
There is nothing to report.

10. EVENTS. To receive reports on past events and to discuss events coming soon

a) Annual Parish Meeting

The Village Hall have been asked for dates when the Hall is free for the APM. Agenda items can be discussed next month.

b) Race Night with Malling Lions 23.04.21

Cllr Benton has booked the Village Hall.

c) Queen's Jubilee Street Party 05.06.22

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Cllr Benton has circulated a rough budget and plan for the event. The Village Hall is booked and road closure request made to TMBC. There are a list of jobs to be carried out which Cllrs will put their names forward for. Cllrs will meet before the next meeting to discuss how to run the event, and report back at the February meeting.

9. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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

These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statements were approved and were signed by Cllr Unter. There were no budget issues to be reported.

- b) To consider and approve invoice payments

Since the last meeting the following invoices were approved for payment and were authorised by Cllrs Unter and Taylor

Payee	Description	Amount
Viking	Office Supplies	£37.03

The following invoices were approved for payment and will be authorised by Cllrs Unter and Jones. The invoice to Cllr Unter was authorised by Cllrs Jones and Taylor.

Payee	Description	Amount
	Payments for December 2021	
CE Unter	Reimburse – Community Award and Christmas Lights	£53.75
Wrotham Computer Care	PC Anti Virus 1 Year	£21.77
Unity Trust	Service Charge	£18.00
Clerk	December 2021 Salary, expenses, allowance	£692.03
HMRC	December 2021 PAYE + NI	£159.27

- c) To consider and approve budget and precept request for 2022/2023

There was a discussion and Councillors approved a budget of £37,360 for 2022/23.

Employment Costs	£11,800
Training	£500
Councillor's Expenses	£150
Professional Fees and Admin	£2,000
Hire of Hall	£300
Churchyard Gardening	£1,000
Open Spaces	£6,000
Play Area	£5,630
Insurance	£1,300
Audit	£350
Consumables	£300
Traffic Calming	£500
Parish Property	£1,350
Contingency	£2,000
Village Projects	£3,000
Annual Parish Meeting	£150
Donations	£225
Subscriptions	£805
TOTAL BUDGET	£37,360

It was AGREED that a precept request of £23,519.26 be made and the balance of £13,840.74 be funded from Parish Reserves. It was noted that this would mean there is an increase in precept of



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£1,633.98 or 7.5%. The payment per Band D property will be £58.18pa, which is an increase of £2,77pa or 5% which is roughly in line with inflation.

The precept request made by the Parish Council has not increased for two years. The last couple of years has been difficult for everyone with covid, and the Parish Council was not able to fund raise. Cllrs want to make sure they are able to be as active as possible, while continuing to put reserves aside for play area modernisation and towards the Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr Unter has spoken to the Chairman and Treasurer of the Village Hall. For one year only it has been agreed that the Parish Council will not make a donation of £1,000 to the Village Hall. Although there have been some difficult years recently, the Village Hall has been able to fund raise and has received grants. The intention is to put this money towards village projects, including the Play Area modernisation. The Parish Council is setting aside £5,000 each year in reserves towards the play area.

- d) To consider any other financial matters
There were no other financial matters.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

There was a discussion about recognising the co-ordinators of the Offham Community Network for the contribution they made to the village during Covid.

Cllrs were pleased to note that a villager has volunteered to take over the co-ordinator's role of Neighbourhood Watch.

The Meeting concluded at 9.20pm.

Date of the next monthly Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 7.30pm

Signed *C. E. M. Unter*

Dated *1/3/2022*