



OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Newsletter – February 2022

Parish Council February Meeting

- The Parish Council is following government recommendations and has agreed that all attendees wear a face mask, and if unable to wear a face mask they will be asked to sit socially from other attendees (ie 2 metres). The windows to the room will be open for ventilation.
- Cllrs are obtaining quotes to repair equipment and safety surfacing in the play area, but are also looking at replacing equipment.
- In the next few months, two valued members of the Parish Council are planning on retiring. If you are interested in becoming part of the Parish Council, or would like further information, please speak to any Councillor or contact the Chairman Cllr Charles Unter for more details (Charles.unter@offham-pc.gov.uk).
- The Parish Council is pleased to award the maintenance contract for 2022 to Cllr Adrian Marchant. As a lifelong resident and long-time Councillor, Adrian cuts the grass and looks after the Village Green, Recreation Ground, banks along Church Road and Cosgrave Field, as well as a number of hedges.
- Cllrs have met with the Project Schemes Manager from Kent Highways to discuss the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) and had an extensive walk through the village. Kent Highways will say what measures are possible and which are not, some measures require drawings which cannot be done until April. Some projects may be funded by KCC but some would have to be funded by the Parish Council.

County Councillor Sarah Hohler

Cllr Hohler reported that Kent has 99 Libraries, more than any other county. There is a Public Engagement exercise which is moving onto phase 2 and can be accessed online until 7th March. KCC has saved £1.3m over the year in lockdown from recycling at Household Waste Recycling Centres increasing by 63% under the booking system.

KCC - Household Waste Recycling Centres

The booking system will be remaining at all HWRCs:

<https://kccmediahub.net/hwrc-booking-system-to-stay-and-on-the-day-bookings-introduced-across-kent745>

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in Offham Village Hall on the evening of Friday 8th April 2021.

Book Box



Thanks to Wendy Williams who is continuing to work hard to look after the Book Box, which is incredibly popular.

If you are leaving books, please do not pile them high on the top shelf, as there is a danger of someone getting hurt as some of the big books being left there are very heavy.

Contact the Parish Council E: clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk T: 07563 606573. The Parish Council Clerk works 12 hours a week, Monday to Thursday, and aims to respond to emails and phone calls within 5 working days. For more information, please go to our website www.offham-pc.gov.uk

Offham Parish Council Meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place in the committee Room of Offham Village Hall on **Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 7.30pm.**





New Dementia Services coming soon to Spadework:

Peer Support Group - for people with a recent diagnosis of dementia to get support, advice and information and to talk about their diagnosis with others in the same situation.

Activity Group - for people in the early stages of dementia. This may include arts and crafts, music, games, quizzes, woodwork and gardening.

Dementia Café (already running) - for anyone with dementia and their partner/carer/family member to meet others in the same situation, make new friends and share knowledge and information.

Carers Support Group - for people caring for someone who has a diagnosis of Young Onset Dementia.

For more information about any of these services or to make a referral please contact Julie Negus, Dementia Coordinator on 01732 870002 or by e-mail to julie@spadework.org.uk

Teston Road, Offham, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5NA

Hello all,

Following the successful relaunch of [The Hygiene Bank](#) in West Malling, I am thrilled to let you know that all the pre-Christmas donations were successfully distributed to our local community partners, helping to relieve the pressure for our local families, young people and those requiring assistance over the festive season.

I would also like to share with you all that the majority of donations received before Christmas were passed to the Bexley Virtual School for Looked After Children, an organisation that supports children approaching adulthood who are required to leave the care system at just 18 years old.

The school received donations and prepared 90 Christmas hampers which were gifted to these extraordinary children to make their Christmas just that little bit brighter. With the consent of these young adults and the community leaders they have sent me a few pictures to share with you all, along with their appreciation and thanks, please see attached.

I would also like to say a bit thank you to all those in our community who made donations, I often came home to see your generosity on my doorstep. Also, a special thank you to Angela Unter and St. Thomas More Church for appointing [The Hygiene Bank](#) West Malling as your chosen Christmas Charity.

Donations are still gratefully being received and there is a drop off point located in Boots pharmacy in West Malling High Street. If you would like to find out more about the charity either making a donation, volunteering or being a designated drop off location, please do get in touch.

All the best and thank you again,
Kirsty Scott
07843 623505

Councils crack down on fly tippers

A joint operation involving Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council and the Kent Police Rural Task Force has targeted unlicensed waste carriers involved in fly tipping and other environmental crimes.

The operation on Tuesday 9 February saw a large number of vehicles carrying waste stopped across the two boroughs. In total, three vehicles were seized, including a suspected stolen van, and one man wanted by West Yorkshire police was arrested.

The operation focused on areas in the north of the Tonbridge and Malling borough and parts of Gravesham where unlicensed waste carriers were believed to be operating and where fly tipping has been reported.

The stop-checks also allowed environmental enforcement teams to speak to licensed traders, who lose income and have their reputations tarnished by cowboy operators. Officers stressed the important role legitimate carriers can play by working with local authorities and the police to tackle fly tipping and other environmental offences.

Fly tippers often target households via social media or local advertising offering cheap rates to dispose of unwanted furniture, building rubble or garden waste. Householders or small businesses found to be using criminals to dispose of their waste can be issued with a fixed penalty notice of up to £400 per offence.

Householders should ensure they receive a written receipt or transfer note, including contact details, description of waste removed and details of where the waste is being taken for disposal.

Cllr Piers Montague, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's cabinet member for waste, said: 'Rubbish being carried by unlicensed operators all too often ends up being fly tipped in our rural areas. We want to send a clear message to the criminals involved in this activity that we are coming for you and will prosecute you.'

'We also want to remind householders of their duty to make sure any business they are using to dispose of rubbish has a waste carrier licence. Using an unlicensed carrier means they too could risk a hefty fine.'

Householders can check whether someone is licensed to carry waste on the [Environment Agency website](#) or by calling 03708 506506.

Fly tipping can be reported via the [Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website](#).



Flats recycling service set for full roll out

Service available to all by end of 2022

People living in flats across Tonbridge and Malling will get regular recycling collections for the first time after councillors gave proposals the green light.

Following a successful trial involving 500 flats in the Medway Wharf Road area of Tonbridge, the service will be rolled out in phases to around 2,500 flats across the borough. Residents will be able to sort their plastic, glass, metal and paper for collection from communal bin stores, rather than take it to public recycling banks.

Residents will be notified ahead of the service starting in their area over the course of 2022.

The proposed roll out timetable is:

- Hadlow, East Peckham and parts of Tonbridge – spring 2022
- Snodland, Borough Green, Walderslade – spring 2022
- Royal British Legion Village, Ditton, Eccles – summer 2022
- West Malling, East Malling, Kings Hill – autumn 2022
- Larkfield, Aylesford – autumn 2022

Members of the council's environment services advisory board met on Tuesday 8 February to review the trial results and proposals for the borough-wide roll out. A summary of lessons from the trial highlighted that engaging with residents was vital and helped deliver more than 10 tonnes of material for recycling in the three months to December 2021.

The proposals follow latest figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) showing Tonbridge and Malling to be the [**top area in Kent for recycling rates**](#). Following the introduction of kerbside collections in 2019, latest figures show residents recycled 51.6 per cent of their rubbish, compared to an average across Kent of 43 per cent and a national average for England of 42 per cent.

Cllr Piers Montague, cabinet lead on waste and recycling, said: 'Challenges posed by the pandemic and recent driver shortages have meant that residents in flats have waited longer than we'd have liked for this service to be expanded to reach them. I'm delighted we are finally in a position to go ahead with the full implementation and make it easier for them to recycle their rubbish. I'd like to thank the council team and residents who have made the pilot such a success and to everyone who is contributing to our record recycling rates.'

Tonbridge & Malling Police Community Safety Newsletter

Crime Prevention Information:

- As spring approaches the number of shed break-ins can increase. Items such as lawnmowers, bicycles, golf clubs, fishing tackle and power tools can all be kept insecurely in sheds and these can all be easy pickings for thieves to target.
 - The tips below can help to prevent you from becoming a victim of this crime.
 - Install a shed alarm, with a notice displayed to warn thieves that it is not worth the effort of breaking in. The alarms are easy to install and can be purchased at most DIY stores.
 - Make sure the door is always securely locked.
 - Ensure all valuable property is marked with your postcode. Post coding property makes your belongings very unattractive to a thief by making items easily identifiable and difficult to sell.
 - Lock up pedal cycles. Use bike locks and chain them inside to other large items or to the shed.
 - Keep a record of the make, model and ID numbers of bicycles and all other equipment and take photographs of unusual items.
 - Check your household insurance policy to ensure that the value of things stored inside is covered by your contents' policy.
-
- Please make all reports of ASB via 101, the online reporting form or 999 in an emergency.
 - The Community Support Unit can gain a better picture where reports have an official reference number so we can collate data effectively.



**Kent
Police**

For more information about policing in your area, visit www.kent.police.uk

To report a non-urgent crime online, visit www.kent.police.uk/contactus



Changes to the Highway Code starting 29th January

Good evening,

The Highway Code is changing and you need to be aware of the changes! The changes follow a [public consultation on a review of The Highway Code to improve road safety for people walking, cycling and riding horses](#). It ran from July to October 2020, and received more than 20,000 responses from the public, businesses and other organisations. Most people who responded were in favour of all the changes.

The changes will be made to The Highway Code from Saturday 29 January 2022. Click on the below link to find out the 8 changes that you need to know about:

[The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Stay safe,





March 2022

Guided group walks

Our friendly group is one of 13 Ramblers groups in Kent and part of the national Ramblers walking organisation. We explore the beautiful countryside of Tonbridge and Malling and surrounding areas.

You don't have to be a Ramblers member to try out a couple of walks with us, to help you decide if you'd like to join. If you are new to our walks, it's a good idea to contact the walk leader beforehand to check that their walk will suit you.

We look forward to welcoming you on a walk soon!

Sunday 27 February	A moderate circular walk to discover the new permissive footpaths between the North Pole and Barming.	5.5 miles
Wednesday 2 March	A moderate circular walk from Boxley with a steep ascent to join the North Downs Way. We join the Pilgrims Way at the White Horse Stone and return via vineyards and the remains of Boxley Abbey.	6 miles
Sunday 6 March	A leisurely walk from Matfield through orchards, fields and tracks. There will be two leaders, offering the choice of a 5-mile and 3.3 mile option.	5 or 3.3 miles
Sunday 13 March	Moderate circular walk from Ide Hill to Toys Hill and Emmetts. Great views to the South Downs walking through the early spring flowers	5 miles
Wednesday 16 March	Moderate circular walk from the North Pole(!) to the River Medway at Nettlestead.	5.5 miles
Sunday 20 March	A moderate circular woodland walk from Oldbury Hill with lots of hills; may be muddy. Good views from Raspit Hill. Half-way refreshment break, cafe and toilets at Ightham Mote.	6 miles
Sunday 27 March	Tunbridge Wells Rocks Tour: a moderate circular walk from Groombridge over Harrison's Rocks.	4.2 miles
Walks usually start at 10.00 or 10.30. There's a short break half-way through the walk (bring refreshments) and we usually finish near a pub. For start times and walk leader contacts, see the Upcoming Walks link at www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk or email info@tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk		