

MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting

Held on Tuesday 6th September 2022 at 7.30PM in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr C Unter (Chairman)
Cllr R Taylor (Vice Chairman)
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr J Barnes
Cllr A Marchant
Cllr M Scullion

Also in attendance:

6 members of public, including Cllr Trudy Dean (KCC and WMPC). 2 residents left at 7.50pm
L Mackie (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** To receive apologies for absence and declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.
There were apologies from County Councillor Hohler, Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. **MINUTES**

- a) To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2022 for signature
It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of 5th July 2022 be approved and signed as an accurate record.

3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

- a) County Councillor Hohler

Cllr Hohler has provided a report:

- o Beware of a Citizens Advice SCAM
- o BUSES - KCC officers have been working hard with bus companies over the summer to secure routes to schools. Children going to Maidstone schools should have transport from the Aylesford area and to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells from the Sevenoaks area, which includes Wrotham. The bad news is that Arriva bus company have announced strike days on 5th, 16th, 20th and 30th September (if agreement is not reached). This will be very inconvenient for parents and children and it is likely that buses run by different operators will already be full. The better news is that those routes which KCC consulted on ending as they were being subsidised, notably the 58, will run until further notice so please continue to use them. Operators will accept Kent Travel Saver and other bus passes.
- o From October this year until March next year we have some emergency funding. We need to assess the extra funding from government and how it can be used to help.
- o At the time of booking at our 19 HWRCs, customers were asked if they would be prepared to answer questions as part of a survey: there were about 11,000 responses. 95% said they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied and that it was easy to book. 55% booked on the day as the public requested in an earlier survey. The new suggestion, which we are trialling, is for extra help for the elderly, disabled and pregnant unloading their rubbish (not with heavy builders' bags or hippo bags!) There is now a flag on the form when you book so staff will know, when they see the car, that extra help is needed.
- o In October we are also trialling furniture disposal in co-operation with 'Making a Difference to Maidstone' at our Tovil site. The furniture will either go to those in need or to a charity shop. Other re-use options are being examined, including books.
- o KCC's Waste Management Team has been shortlisted out of 307 local authorities as 'Best Team of the Year' by the Local Authority Advisory Committee.
- o We have just finished a survey asking the public for their ideas on energy saving at home. Further advice and ways to ask for help will follow.
- o The Local Government Association is calling on government to ban HGV drivers from using car sat navs as they do not give bridge heights, narrow roads and roads unsuitable for HGVs. I hope they have more luck than I have had with my campaign to government on this same issue!

b) Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague

There was no report.

c) Police

In the West Kent Team, Inspector Lizzie Jones has moved on and Chief Inspector Mark Stubberfield will be taking over this role.

4. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:

a) Blaise Farm

Two residents who border the IVC and AD plants and were affected by flies over the summer addressed the meeting. As the nearest they are the first affected by any problems.

- o From May the problems got worse, and were unbearable and constant – eg 10-20 flies on your dinner plate. This means that the problem of flies had begun several weeks earlier when they started to incubate. Problems with the processes and procedures will have occurred at site for 2-3 weeks before the increase in flies occurs. The flies will travel 1-2 miles from where they hatch.
- o The residents worked with Gallagher, the IVC plant and the EA but were not able to work closely with the AD plant.
- o Investigations by the residents indicated that the problem came from the Bio-Construct Anaerobic Digestion plant (AD). There was standing water around the site. Liquid from the plant was being pumped out and standing in pools outside.
- o The doors to the plant were being left open.
- o Food waste was not being taken by the AD plant last year, but is being taken there this year. The waste is being held in storage depots and allowed to stand before it arrives at the site, leading to more infestation when it arrives at the AD plant.
- o Gallagher's Quarry reported a problem with flies.
- o New Earth Solutions at the IVC plant reported a problem with flies.
- o Cllr Scullion confirmed that problems were experienced at the pub with flies.
- o The EA were able to carry out an unannounced visit. The AD and IVC plants have been recommended to carry out more knockdown spray treatment procedures. The AD plant should get rid of the standing water and provide a rainwater storage container.
- o The Parish Council liaised with the EA, and updated residents with details about who to contact.
- o It is essential that to prevent the problem getting this bad again, the whole village is notified. Reports of problems should be made by phone to the EA. The Parish Council agreed to circulate this information earlier in future years – in April/May. More complaints by telephone will encourage the EA to act.
- o The residents reported that compliance and openness were issues with the AD plant.
- o Cllr Unter will attend the Blaise Liaison meeting on 15th September and focus on these issues
- o When there is a full Parish Council, two Councillors will be allocated to work with Blaise Farm and a site visit will be arranged.
- o There is a Blaise Farm Liaison meeting on 15th September 2022.

i. Quarry

There was nothing to report.

ii. IVC Waste Management

This has already been discussed.

iii. AD Plant

This has already been discussed.

b) Offham Landfill Site

There was nothing to report.

c) Offham Village Hall

The next Committee meeting is on Monday. The cinema has started again with 45 residents attending on Saturday.

5. **PLANNING**

a) New applications

- i. **TM/22/01808/TNCA - Godwell Farm, Church Road** - T1 Yew - To remove significant sized deadwood from eastward side of crown. Encroaching lateral branches to be cut back on westward side of crown to allow a 1.5m clearance of building profile. G1 - Group of Hazel stools - Approximately 24 previously coppiced Hazel stools, regrowth currently at 6ft in height and 2.5cm girth. To remove and grind out stumps
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- ii. **TM/22/01780/TPOC - Land Adjoining Quintain Coach House, North Meadow** - T1 - Lime Tree: re-pleach back to previous points approximately a 25% reduction of upper and lower crown. T16 of Tree Preservation Order
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

b) Approvals

- i. **TM/22/00433/FL - 3 Bramble Hall Cottages, Comp Lane** - Demolition of single storey rear and side additions and garage. Erection of single storey rear extension and two storey side extension
- ii. **TM/22/01164/LB - Quintain House, Teston Road** - Listed Building Application: Single storey rear extension to provide a dining room and reconfigured kitchen; including reroofing existing flat roof extension; rationalisation of drainage pipework at the rear of the house. Amendment to TM/22/00055/LB
- iii. **TM/22/01198/FL - The Old Rectory, Aldon Lane** - Erection of a flat roofed wrought iron porch on the kitchen entrance
- iv. **TM/22/01199/LB - The Old Rectory, Aldon Lane** - Listed Building Application: erection of a flat roofed wrought iron porch on the kitchen entrance
- v. **TM/22/00630/RD - Luna Barn, Church Road** - Details of planning condition 5 (landscaping and boundary treatment) and condition 6 (Foul Water Drainage) submitted pursuant to planning permission 21/00898/FL (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)
- vi. **TM/22/01412/TNCA - The Green** - T1 Cherry tree - re-prune to previous cut back points as the tree is getting hit by tall vehicles- approximately a 20% all over reduction. T2 Whitebeam, cut back to previous cut back points- approximately a 20% all over reduction
- vii. **TM/22/01410/TPOC - Cover Point, Church Road** - T1 Sycamore tree, take down to ground level due to large cavity approx 8 feet up on the trunk
- viii. **TM/22/01400/FL - 12 Pepingstraw Close** - Demolition of existing garage and side extension behind, to be replaced with a 2 storey side extension, retaining side access, and a rear single storey extension to enlarge the kitchen/ dining area
- ix. **TM/22/01351/FL - Blue Hills, North Meadow** - Single storey side extension to connect to existing extension
- x. **TM/22/01334/LB - The Oast House, Aldon Lane** - Listed Building Application: Proposed replacement of 35 no. windows, 2 no. doors and 1 no. French doors

c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

d) Any other planning matters

- i. **TM/21/01259 (KCC/TM/0090/2021) - Offham Solar Park** - to consider response to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
We received confirmation that The Secretary of State has decided they do not need to make a determination about this application and it can be decided by KCC, who agreed on 15th June that they would approve the application. KCC have confirmed that lawyers are discussing s106 arrangements. The Parish Council has been preparing a submission asking for financial contributions for the village, but there is no-one to send it to as part of the process. Cllrs felt that there should be a financial benefit for the village. Infnis indicated to Cllr Unter at the KCC meeting that they would work with the Parish Council.

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- ii. **TM/22/01458/FL - 1 Quarry View Cottages, Comp Lane** - Demolition of existing out buildings and replace with new outbuilding garden office, storage and gym (No objections)
- iii. **TM/22/01590/LB - Quintain Coach House, North Meadow** - Listed building Application: Removal of existing felted flat roof to side porch and replace with a clay tiled pitched roof and addition of 2 casement windows to the side of the (no objections)
- iv. **TM/22/01718/LDP - The Retreat, Comp Lane** - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Erection of a single storey garage building_(no objections)

6. MATTERS ARISING

a) To receive details of Parish Councillor Resignation and Retirement

John Adams has reconsidered the time he has available and has resigned from the Parish Council since the last meeting. He apologises and hopes others have that time. The vacancy has been advertised.

Cllr Robin Taylor announced his retirement from the Parish Council. He has been on the Council for 3 ½ years, and has kindly stayed on an extra 6 months to help. Robin was thanked for everything he has done, and Councillors will miss him enormously.

Two residents at the meeting had indicated an interest in the vacancies. Another resident has expressed an interest by email. Cllr Unter will meet with those interested to discuss the role.

b) Appointment of representatives to external bodies and wardens

- o Recreation Ground, Play Area, Village Green, Bus Shelter – Cllrs Marchant and Bailey
- o Cosgrave Field – Cllr Unter
- o Village Hall – Cllr Unter
- o JPCTCG – Cllr Unter
- o Blaise Farm – Cllr Unter and Cllr Barnes
- o Offham Landfill Site – Cllr Barnes
- o TMBC Parish Partnership Panel – Cllr Unter. Cllr Barnes also attended the recent meeting.
- o Scouts and Cubs – representative no longer needed
- o Speed Indicator Device – Cllr Bailey.
It was reported that one of the brackets on the Church Road SID has been installed upside down. The Clerk will report this to KCC.
- o Wellbeing – Cllr Scullion
- o Trees
- o Book box - Wendy Williams
- o Defibrillator – David Frankling and Cllr Scullion

c) To discuss traffic exiting The Wright Event onto Teston Road

A resident has written about the exit from Ashtree Farm, closest to the junction with King Hill. Enquiries have shown there is a "no right turn" sign as you leave the property, but this is not an official sign. After the middle exit of Ashtree Farm, the road is in West Malling, so any changes need to be considered by WMPC. Cllr Trudy Dean noted the suggestion for a "concealed entrance" sign on Teston Road as you approach the Farm exit.

d) Licence to Cultivate Teston Road gateways at Aldon Lane and Spadework

The verges are owned by KCC and the Parish Council applies for an annual licence to cultivate. The application for a renewal is being progressed.

e) To consider resident's request for access across The Village Green

A letter confirming approval would be granted on payment of a £10 administration charge, with details about no driving or parking on The Village Green, making good any damage caused, and the approval being personal to the householder was agreed.

f) To receive details of repairs for The Well on The Green

Cllr Bailey has been unavailable to deal over the summer. He agreed to work with another resident on this. The Parish Council will pay for the materials. There was a discussion about paying a contractor for the work. Cllr Marchant has spoken to Birling Forge who will measure for the metal band when the well has been dug out and re-pointed. There will be an update at the next meeting.

g) To consider adoption of Kent Model Code of Conduct or TMBC Code of Conduct
This will be discussed at the next meeting.

h) To discuss Highways Improvement Plan

There was a discussion about the items KCC had agreed to pay for:

- o North Meadow – there were options to change the junction to make it safer and stop vehicles travelling the wrong way. KCC were to explore viable options in summer 2022. The Parish Council will chase for an update.
- o Teston Road, west end of the Village by Aldon Lane – KCC were to install a junction warning sign and a slow marking in July 2022. The Parish Council will chase for an update. 4th July it was edited.
- o Teston Road, east end of the Village by Spadework – the entrance to Spadework is in a de-restricted speed area. It would seem sensible to reduce the speed. KCC were going to provide some speed data to consider this further.
- o KCC have already put a lot of funding and work into improving the Comp Lane crossing
- o There are other items KCC were going to provide costs for the Parish Council to consider

i) To consider details of complaint about parking on Teston Road and the Village Green and Ball Games on The Village Green

There have been two or three complaints, about parents in the pub or pub garden who were leaving their children to play football on the Village Green, and concerns about children running into Teston Road to collect balls. There was a discussion. It was considered that parents, who included Parish Councillors, were monitoring their children, and making sure an adult collected a ball if it went into the road. Cllrs recalled that children have always played on the Green and that this is not just a recent occurrence. It is a public open space. The byelaws prevent golf and cricket but not ball games. Some children were climbing on walls, going into a portalo toilet and swinging on the pub gazebo. Cllr Scullion has spoken to the parents of the children involved. The underlying concern is from the speed of the traffic on Teston Road. The Parish Council does not have the power to do anything about that, but is working with the authorities who can take action.

j) To discuss complaint about Kings Arms

Cllr Scullion left the room while this matter was discussed.

Cllr Unter has received a complaint from a resident about the pub, late night noise and music inside and outside over a period of time. Complaints were also made about rubbish and the gazebo.

Cllr Unter has spoken to Cllr Scullion who has assured him they are very aware of the terms of their licence and do not believe they have breached it. The licence states there should be no significant noise from events after 11pm.

There was a discussion. Cllrs reported that the pub is kept clean outside and is well looked after. It is at the heart of the community and is a village pub. Cllrs and a resident at the meeting living nearby said they have not heard noise from the pub at night. Cllr Unter will respond to the resident and explain that there are a number of steps they can take if they have concerns, including the police, TMBC Licencing, Environmental Health and Noise Pollution. The Parish Council has no power to do anything, but can point them in the right direction.

Cllr Scullion returned to the meeting.

k) Fire Hydrant Inspections

The last checks were a year ago. The Clerk will circulate the map again for Cllrs to check the hydrants to see they are still there, visible and not damaged.

6. OPEN FORUM - Public Participation Session

Cllr Trudy Dean spoke to the Parish Council as West Malling Parish Council Chair. The new TMBC Local Plan will soon start to be consulted on. Over 300 sites have been submitted for consideration. Most sites are the ones issued last time. WMPC are concerned about retaining and protecting the Green Belt between West Malling and Offham. There are 3 sites on that area, which in the previous draft local plan were very large sites. The sites put forward would lead to 350 houses in West Malling which is an increase in size of the village of 40-50%. Sites for 69 houses have been put forward in Offham. The plans will be available when the consultation is released.

Cllrs agreed there was a benefit in the two Parish Councils working together.

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As County Councillor, Cllr Dean explained she is trying to get a 20mph scheme through Larkfield, East Malling and West Malling. The next stage is between West Malling and the boundary with Offham. Cllrs would like to work with WMPC on this, and on a 20mph limit through Offham. Cllr Barnes agreed he was happy to help with this.

A resident indicated he wanted to help with the traffic problem. Cllr Unter said he could work with Cllr Barnes to set up a group about this. The Parish Council tried to set up Speedwatch 7 or 8 years ago but couldn't get enough volunteers. It is important to get people involved.

8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

a) GDPR Updates

The Satwana DPO service is due for annual renewal.

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

There was nothing to report.

c) To receive update on Maintenance Contract

Cllr Marchant was thanked for providing the updated checklist. There has been no grass cutting since 13th July due to the dry weather conditions, but other work has been carried out under the contract. Cllr Marchant was thanked for mending the fence above the gate that goes into Pepingstraw. This is temporary and will need to be fixed properly. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

d) Reports about Parish Property and Land including The Pond, Village Green, The Pound, Cosgrave Field, Recreation Ground, Play Area, Book Box, Defibrillator, Speed Indicator Devices, Trees.

It was reported that as you drive onto the Village Green from Comp Lane, the hedge of the first property is too wide and needs to be cut back about 3 feet. The Village Green is being eroded as cars are pulling out past the hedge. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident.

Cllrs have taped a swing at the play area. Although it was considered safe to use, following an incident, Cllr Bailey has removed that swing from use. All 4 seats in the play area are to be replaced.

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

a) Men's Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday

This is very well received. The main concern is funding, as the Parish Council has been paying since the money donated by the OCN has run out. There is possible some help from Cllr Hohler. Cllr Barnes offered an amount of help, and Cllr Scullion agreed to run a fund-raising raffle at Steam Rally. Cllrs Barnes and Scullion will report back at the next meeting.

b) TMBC Parish Partnership Panel – 01.09.22

Cllrs Unter and Barnes attended and the Local Plan was very high on the Agenda.

c) Kent Churches Ride and Stride Event 11.09.22

The Village Green is not used as part of this event.

d) Race Night run by The Malling Lions – 17.09.22

This is run by the Parish Council with the help of the Malling Lions. Cllrs Unter and Scullion have been working with Wendy Williams. Cllrs were thanked for getting raffle and auction contributions.

e) Village Green Lawn Treatment – 22.09.22

Noted.

f) Steam Rally – 23.10.22

Cllr Marchant agreed to carry out the Risk Assessment of the Village Green prior to the event and will complete a checklist.

g) Photo Competition and 2023 Calendar

Following a delay, the calendar should be delivered by the end of the week.

10. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- a) To receive update on Parish Councillor Signatories with Unity Trust
Cllrs Unter and Bailey are set up to access the account and authorise payments. The form has been submitted to add Cllr Barnes as a signatory and his ID has been provided for Unity Trust to complete the process. Cllr Marchant needs to telephone Unity Trust to resolve access issues. Cllr Scullion is waiting for ID documents to complete the process.
- b) To consider future funding of The Men's Shed
This has been discussed.
- c) To consider and approve OPC insurance 30.09.22-01.10.23
The renewal documents have not arrived yet. The Clerk recommended continuing to use the current insurance provider.
- d) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements and to monitor budget
These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statements were approved and were signed by Cllr Unter.
- e) To consider and approve invoice payments
Since the last meeting, the following invoices have been approved and paid. Payments were authorised by Cllrs Unter and Taylor.

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments – August 2022		
King's Arms	4 Week's Men's Shed 04.08-25.08	£80.00
Maidstone Signs	Refurbish Sign and Post	£2,400.00
Wendy Williams	Reimbursement – deposit race night	£100.00
Waring Lawn Care	Early Summer Treatment	£43.20
Vision ICT	2 email addresses	£43.20
Clerk	August 2022 Salary	£693.52
HMRC	August 2022 PAYE and NI	£161.37
Clerk	Expenses - July	£4.55

The following invoices were approved for payment and will be authorised by Cllrs Taylor and Bailey:

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments – September 2022		
King's Arms	5 Week's Men's Shed 01.09-29.09	£100.00
Viking	Office Supplies	£163.76
Charles Unter	Reimbursement Expenses	£129.01
Viking	Cllr Expenses and Office Supplies	£127.92
Satswana	Renewal DPO Service	£90.00
Clerk	September 2022 Salary	£814.42
HMRC	September 2022 PAYE and NI	£214.31
Clerk	Expenses - August	£4.55

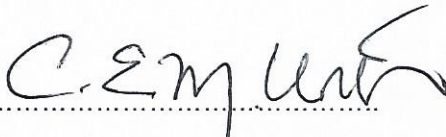
- f) To consider any other financial matters
Cllr Marchant will go ahead with approved work to the tree on the Village Green.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

There were no items raised.

The Meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

Date of the next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 4th October 2022 at 7.30pm

Signed 

Dated 4/10/22