

MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting
Held on Tuesday 4th October 2022 at 7.30PM in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr C Unter (Chairman)
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr J Barnes
Cllr A Marchant (left at 9.40pm)
Cllr M Scullion

Also in attendance:

County Councillor Sarah Hohler (7.30-7.55), Borough Councillor P Montague (7.30-7.55)
6 members of public (2 members of public arrived at 7.55), including Cllr Trudy Dean (7.45-9.45 - KCC and WMPC).
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 Borough Councillor Kemp. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. **MINUTES**

- a) To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2022 for signature
It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of 6th September be approved and signed as an accurate record.

3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

- a) County Councillor Hohler

Cllr Hohler reported that:

- o There was a Summer holidays reading challenge for children – 18,357 children took part and 8,000 finished the challenge.
- o 4 country parks in Kent were awarded Gold in the South and South East in Bloom Awards - Brockhill, Lullingstone, Shorne Woods, and Trosley, with Brockhill also winning the South & South East Country Park of the Year for the 5th year in a row.
- o There is a new director of highways and transportation, Haroona Chughtai, following Mark Simmonds retirement
- o Bus Service – KCC are trying to provide replacement to school service and that remains a priority. The 58 was withdrawn by Nu Venture but they will continue 558 and 557 during school times. Cllr Hohler will look at the status of the 508 bus that goes through Offham.
- o Cost of living crisis – Kent Together is a partnership of agencies. Contact details can be shared with residents for the Household Support Fund, Kent Community Service, Refer Kent, Helping Hands Scheme etc.
- o KCC have carried out a lot of roadworks. A lot of damage was caused by the heat, with poor pipes also causing flooding. KCC have treated enough roads in Kent to cover half the size of Monaco – the total area being 1 million sqm. September sees the road preservation programme which includes £10million on the “pothole blitz”

- b) Borough Councillor Montague

There was a Cabinet meeting this afternoon. The Local Plan document is comprehensive but a bit daunting and hard to navigate. TMBC may add links so it is easier to find the sites. The consultation runs until 3rd November 2022.

It is a call for sites and everything has to be included in the document. Just because a site is in there doesn't mean it has a chance to make it through the criteria that are applied. The Local Plan is for the next 50 years so it is worth the time to work through it.

There was a discussion about the Regulation 18 Questionnaire which is not straightforward or easy to answer. Cllr Montague said that if you were unsure what a question was about, please send him an email and he will ask for clarification from the Planning Officers.

- c) Police

There is no report.

4. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:

a) Blaise Farm

- i. Liaison Meeting 15.09.22 (next meeting 22.03.23)
Cllr Unter attended. The meeting included a discussion about fly activity. The Environment Agency have visited the AD plant several times and were reasonably happy with controls but had suggestions for improvements which were undertaken.
Cllr Dean has heard from KCC that the Environment Agency have made a detailed report. They do not believe that New Earth or Bio Construct are the source of the fly problems. There are suggestions it may come from farmland. If that is the case, it is for the Environment Agency to deal with the land owner.
- ii. Quarry
There was nothing to report.
- iii. IVC Waste Management
This has already been discussed.
- iv. AD Plant
This has already been discussed.

b) Offham Landfill Site

There was nothing to report.

c) Offham Village Hall

It was reported that the financial position of the Hall is slightly better than at this time last year..

5. PLANNING

a) New applications

- i. **TM/22/02046/TNCA - Fremfins Dell Comp Lane** - Applicant's references: T1 Larch, raise lower crown to 5m, T2 and T3 Scots Pine trees, deadwood, T4 and T5 Conifer trees, fell to crown level. Proposed work to allow more light into the bedded areas
Adrian Is contractor.
There were NO OBJECTIONS.

b) Approvals

- i. **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 porch
- 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

c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

d) Any other planning matters

- i. TMBC Local Plan – Regulation 18 Consultation
<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/2216/regulation-18-local-plan-2022>
Cllr Unter attended West Malling Parish Council meeting last night. The Regulation 18 Consultation is in two parts, to answer questions to inform what will happen and then to consider the sites. In Offham there are only 4 sites put forward but there are sites at West Malling which are adjacent to our boundary, particularly along Fartherwell Road.
Cllrs need to look at the documents and submit their views to the Clerk. Cllr Unter will summarise the information for Cllrs.
There was a discussion about how to engage the whole village, explaining not just the sites but also how to reply. The questionnaire can be submitted using the link provided by TMBC. Comments on the sites can be sent to TMBC by email – localplan@tmbc.gov.uk.
The questionnaire has over 50 questions. There is a link that takes you to a list of the questions so you have them in a smaller document.

Offham Parish Council wants to work closely with West Malling and East Malling Parish Councils. Anything that affects West Malling will have an affect on Offham residents who use the village regularly. Cllr Dean will provide OPC with their pack of information.

Regarding the Questionnaire, Cllr Dean felt there were 3 really important sections for residents:

- 1) Green Belt. There was a huge campaign to get the Green Belt boundary extended eastwards to run all the way to the western boundary with East Malling. As a historic town, West Malling ought to be surrounded by Green Belt. Last time this was a popular policy by TMBC. The questions offer three choices
 - o Extend the boundary to a new line.
 - o Do nothing
 - o Go for an anti coalescent strategic policy – which seems to mean TMBC will say they have a policy over this stretch of land but don't want to draw a line, so they have some flexibility.

98 out of 100 replies at the WMPC meeting were in favour of extending the Green Belt, which protects the historic towns of East and West Malling, protects ancient settlements, farmland and the green landscape. One of the rules of Green Belt policy is that if change the boundary you should do so in the expectation it will endure for a very long time. The Anti Coalescent Strategic Policy does not carry that strength or credibility. WMPC would like OPC to agree to extending the boundary Line

- 2) The other 2 questions are pretty obtuse. Residents can leave blank if they don't understand but just include their comments.

There is also an option about green spaces where you can put forward green spaces in your own parish which don't have a protected designation and ask them to be protected green spaces in the current plan.

- 3) Spatial strategic policies. There are 5 maps which illustrate how TMBC will decide how to distribute housing sites across the whole borough
 - Option 1 - not build anything on Green Belt land or AONB. But the effect is to put all building in one corner of the Borough and that is unacceptable
 - Option 5 – keeps a gap between East and West Malling. The other options assume that they all merge together.
 - Option 2 - puts all development in urban areas. This would be an infilling of green space and development along Aylesford, Ditton, Leybourne etc.
 - Options 3/4 – urban and rural spread out but maintain their integrity. Suggests Offham, and other small areas, will all grow a bit.

The option to keep the boundary between East and West Malling is one that WMPC favours, but this includes provision for a new town "remote from any existing settlement". WMPC probably won't opt for any of the options, but will say the 5th is their favourite but it is dangerous to establish a policy for a new settlement without saying where that will be.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a) To consider co-option of New Councillors

This will be considered next month when candidates will attend.

- b) To consider Offham Society request to act as a backing organisation for the Digital Heritage Project

Cllr Unter has previously met with the Offham Society about this. The Parish Council are supportive of the project but could not take it on contractually. The Offham Society have now organised the contract, but wanted to be under the umbrella of the Parish Council to provide insurance and data protection and a data controller. There was a discussion. The Parish Council is unable to take on the insurance and data protection responsibilities as it is not involved in the project.

- c) To consider access across The Village Green.

Cllrs approved letters to Cedar Lodge and 2 Swan Cottages.

- d) To receive details of repairs for The Well on The Green
Work has not yet begun. Cllr Bailey will speak to the neighbouring property to suggest possible alternative works, and this will be put back on the Agenda in two months.
- e) To discuss Highways Improvement Plan
There was a meeting with a KCC Officer in January, then a Highways reorganisation, and now an offer of another meeting next month.
KCC have agreed to fund a change in road markings at the junction and signs on Teston Road near Aldon Lane. They have also agreed to fund changes to the junction of North Meadow and Church Road. Cllrs have received draft plans and need to provide comments by the end of this week. At the meeting with Highways, Cllr Unter will ask about a 20mph zone in the village. Cllr Dean has achieved this in areas of Larkfield, West Malling and East Malling.
When previously discussed with Highways, they were going to provide us with traffic speed measurements but this hasn't been done yet.
There was a discussion about a 20mph limit through the village. This has not been agreed by the Parish Council and is not in the HIP.
Cllr Dean is arranging for the 20mph zone to be from West Malling to the hill on Offham Road, by Manor Farm entrance. The rest of Offham Road has been offered as a 30mph limit. It may be possible to extend this to Teston Road.
Consultations about 20mph have shown that people feel fear and are threatened by fast traffic. When creating a 20mph scheme, not everyone will travel at that speed but there will be a general drop in speed. KCC would not agree to a 20mph limit through the main routes in Larkfield. KCC will argue that the scheme should be self-enforcing. KCC will come out and you pay to have a design produced for you. This will go out to consultation before going to the Joint Transportation Board for a final decision. There is a significant consultation exercise. The scheme in Larkfield cost £30,000 for signs and road surface markings only (no engineered features) and £15,000 each for West and East Malling. There are traffic regulation costs as well.
Cllr Unter said that when we have got the information to work out what can be done and how, we can look at how to achieve a 20mph zone.
- f) To consider resident's concerns (1) possible effect of environmental enhancement scheme on their property (2) farm traffic during the night and early morning
A resident has reported that since the granite setts put in, water causes puddles around their property during rainfall. Kent Highways have agreed to inspect next time there is heavy rainfall.
There was also a complaint about farm Tractors from 4.20am. Cllr Unter will speak to the farm.
It was reported that lorries, presumably for the farm, were travelling past Church Road and having to reverse and turn around in Comp Lane. The Parish Council cannot control where the farm sends their traffic, and the farm cannot control the vehicles which are sent by contractors. The farm has done as much as they can to talk to contractors.
- g) Fire Hydrant Inspections
The Clerk will send the fire hydrant list for inspection to Cllrs again.
- h) To discuss maintenance contract 2023
This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- i) To consider KALC T&M Climate Change Questionnaire
Cllr Unter discussed the questionnaire. The matter of Climate Change must be addressed by the parish council.
- j) To consider adoption of Kent Model Code of Conduct or TMBC Model Code
Cllrs were asked to consider the documents and this will be considered at the next meeting.

6. OPEN FORUM - Public Participation Session

There were no questions.

8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

a) GDPR Updates

There was nothing to report.

- 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
An update from Cllr Marchant has been circulated to Cllrs.
- 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.
There was nothing to report.
- e) Replacement of damaged swings
Cllr Bailey was thanked for replacing the damaged swings so promptly.
- 9. EVENTS.** To receive reports on past events and to discuss events coming soon
- a) Village Green Lawn Treatment – 22.09.22
This was noted.
- b) Steam Rally - 23.10.22
This was noted.
- c) To discuss Remembrance Service and approve purchase of Poppy Wreath
Agreed
It was AGREED that the Clerk would purchase the wreath from RBLI. Permission was given for the Tommy Silhouette to be installed on the Green along with the poppy display. Cllrs will decide who will lay the wreath this year.
- d) To consider lighting of the Christmas Tree (4th December) and Carols in the Pub (14th 12.2 December)
Cllrs Bailey and Marchant will organise the lighting, working with David Frankling and Steve Rickett. The Parish Council agreed to donate £100 towards refreshments for both events.
- e) Postponed Race Night run by OPC with The Malling Lions
The event was delayed due to the period of national mourning. Cllr Unter is liaising with The Malling Lions and Village Hall to arrange a date in January.
- f) Men's Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday
An application for a grant from KCC is being made. Cllr Scullion will put out a box to collect donations from those attended. Cllr Unter would like to ask attendees for £1 a week.
- g) 2023 Calendar
The Parish Council expressed their thanks to Mike Rowe, David Stretton and Wendy Williams who have worked so hard to produce the calendar, which is now ready for sale. Patrick Bligh was also thanked for arranging sponsorships.
- 10. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**
- a) To receive update on Parish Councillor Signatories with Unity Trust
Cllr Marchant is liaising with Unity Trust to arrange access to the account. Cllr Barnes has been added as a signatory but is waiting to receive the access paperwork.
- b) To consider future funding of The Men's Shed
This has been discussed.
- c) To note renewal of OPC insurance 30.09.22-01.10.23
Cllrs have agreed to the renewal with Gallagher on a 3-year Long Term Agreement.
- 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.

Minutes of Offham Parish Council Meeting Cont'd

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 Bailey.

| <u>Payee</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| | Payments approved since previous meeting | |
| Wendy Williams | Reimbursement costs – calendar printing | £36.00 |
| Unity Trust | Service Charge | £18.00 |

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

| <u>Payee</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| | Payments – October 2022 | |
| Playdale | Play Area Spares | £632.40 |
| King's Arms | 4 Week's Men's Shed 06.10-27.10 | £80.00 |
| Netwise | Website hosting fees | £330.00 |
| Offham Village Hall | OPC Meeting Hall Hire | £104.50 |
| Marchant Garden Service | Work as per Quote 1 | £600.00 |
| Gallagher | Insurance Renewal to 30.09.23 | £1494.98 |
| Clerk | October 2022 Salary | £693.52 |
| HMRC | October 2022 PAYE and NI | £161.37 |
| Clerk | Expenses – September 22 | £4.55 |

f) To consider any other financial matters

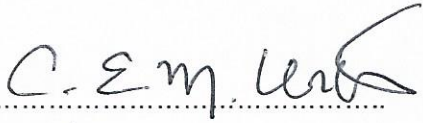
There were no other financial matters.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

There were no items raised.

The Meeting concluded at 9.55pm.

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

Signed 

Dated 1/11/2022

Initials..... 