

MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting
Held on **Tuesday 6th December 2022** at **7.30PM** in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr C Unter (Chairman)
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr J Barnes (left at 9.15pm)
Cllr A Marchant
Cllr M Scullion
Cllr C Stephens
Cllr S Williams

Also in attendance:

County Councillor Hohler (7.30-7.45pm)
One member of public
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 Councillors Kemp and Montague. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. **MINUTES**

- a) To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2022 for signature
It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of 1st November be approved and signed as an accurate record.

3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

- a) County Councillor Hohler
Cllr Hohler reported that:

- KCC is trying to sort the budget out. Over half of budget is spent on social services and it is difficult to make savings on that.
- Country Parks are in her portfolio. Lots of activities are taking place in the Parks over Christmas. Shorne Woods, Brockhill and Lullingstone now have Changing Places – a building with shower and disabled changing facilities.
- There has been a lot of trouble with buses and KCC have been able to do something now, and certain groups can apply for funding through a Community Transport Grant. There is £450,000 available for local services. The deadline is 15th January 2023.
- Kent Money Advice Hub – there is a website and phone number (0800 808 5622) - free and confidential support and advice.
- An Environment Conference in Canterbury a couple of weeks ago was amazing with very good speakers. Plan Bee is about increasing pollinators.
- She has been asked to be the Rural Champion for Kent.

Cllr Unter said other Councils have commented that £450,000 for transport is not enough and parishes need to work together. The number 58 bus links the BART villages and there is a lot of concern that will go. He asked how Offham Parish Council could register their interest in this?
Cllr Hohler said rural buses are expensive and it is a difficult problem.

- b) Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague
There was no report.

- c) Police
There have been no reported crimes in Offham for the last month.

4. **PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:**

- a) Blaise Farm
i. Liaison Meeting (22.03.23)
There is nothing to report.

- ii. Quarry
There was nothing to report.
 - iii. IVC Waste Management
There was nothing to report.
 - iv. AD Plant
There was nothing to report.
- b) Offham Landfill Site
There is a site tour tomorrow, 7th December. Cllr Unter is attending. The power station at the edge of the site was making some noise recently and this is an opportunity to see what they have done. Cllr Bailey will also try and attend.
- c) Offham Village Hall
First Registration of Village Hall – the Land Registry have asked the value of the hall/land. The Parish Council recorded this as a nominal amount, £1 for audit purposes, as it has no sale value. The land must be used as a Village Hall and cannot be sold. The Clerk will liaise with the solicitor about this response.
Legal Fees for First Registration – the Parish Council has paid all legal fees to date. There are two parcels of land being registered and the Parish Council agreed to pay half the fees for registering the parcel with the Village Hall. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask the Village Hall Committee for their share of the fees.

5. **PLANNING**

- a) New applications
- i. **TM/22/02489/FL - Land South West Of Fre Mel Farm, Comp Lane - Extension** to existing workshop
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
 - ii. **TM/22/02618/FL - Spadework Ltd, Teston Road - ME19 5NA** Extension of existing farm shop and office to provide enlarged farm shop, store/goods-in area and medical/trainee room
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- b) Approvals
- i. **TM/22/00606/FL - Godwell Oast, Church Road** -Conversion of part Barn to 4 bed dwelling, addition of glazed link to existing disconnected Oast Kiln, changes to internal arrangements to existing Barn conversion to dwelling, replacement of all external window and doors, demolition of existing external store and garaging building and replacement with new external store and garaging building
 - ii. **TM/22/02046/TNCA - Fremlins 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
 - iii. **TM/22/01718/LDP - The Retreat, Comp Lane** -Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Erection of a single storey garage building (certified)
 - iv. **TM/22/02045/TNCA - Junipers, The Green** - T1 Sycamore, dismantle to crown level due to its size and how much of the garden it is taking over -replant with an Oak or Field Maple. T2 Horse Chestnut, raise lower crown to 6 metres to allow more light onto the seating area and shrub beds underneath
 - v. **TM/22/02200/TNCA - The Oast House, Aldon Lane** - G1 - Leylandii hedge to be reduced in height from approx. 50ft to approx. 8ft. Where previously done before. G2 - Group of 3 Leylandii Fell. G3 - Group of 2 Leylandii Fell. T1 - Leylandii Fell. T2 - Leylandii Fell
 - vi. **TM/22/01307/RM - Barfield House, Teston Road** - Reserved Matters application pursuant to conditions 1 (Layout, Appearance, Landscaping & Scale of the development) of outline planning permission TM/19/01531/OA (erection of 7 no. dwellings and new access to highway). Reserved matters and details.
 - vii. **TM/22/01240/FL - Warren Wood, Seven Mile Lane**- Erection of a single storey outbuilding

- viii. **TM/22/01205/FL - Wrotham Heath Golf Club, Seven Mile Lane** - Demolition of existing compound buildings and replace with overflow carpark. Erection of a storage barn
- c) Refusals
- i. **TM/22/02219/LB - Teston Cottage, Teston Road** - Listed Building Application: New enlarged roof to create a loft bedroom over existing kitchen, new traditional dormer to garden side, new flat roof to extend over existing utility, forming distinct separation between historic front house and new rear extension
- ii. **TM/22/02218/FL - Teston Cottage, Teston Road** - New enlarged roof to create a loft bedroom over existing kitchen, new traditional dormer to garden side, new flat roof to extend over existing utility, forming distinct separation between historic front house and new rear extension
- d) Any other planning matters
- i. **TM/21/02922/FL – White Ladies, Teston Road**
The Parish Council made a response to the second application last year. The two main concerns were noise from the Power Station behind, and the close proximity to the bend on Teston Road with the yellow sign that Cllr Hohler put up for us. We repeated these concerns in our first and second objections. The applicant has now responded through their agent Stephenson-Halliday. Cllrs discussed the response. There is still concern about gas leakage from the site and gas pockets which are dangerous and Cllrs remain concerned about the other issues raised in their previous objections. Cllrs consider that an up to date independent gas risk assessment must be provided.
- ii. **TMBC Local Plan – Regulation 18 Consultation**
<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/2216/regulation-18-local-plan-2022>
The Parish Council's response has been submitted by Cllr Unter.
- iii. **TM/22/00784/FL- Offham Methodist Church, Teston Road** - Proposed change of use and remodelling of existing church to create single dwelling house (Resubmission of TM/19/01349/FL). **APPLICATION WITHDRAWN**

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a) To consider appointment of Vice Chairman, Councillor Responsibilities and Duties
Vice-Chairman - Cllrs will consider the position. Cllr Marchant is willing to put his name forward. This will be dealt with at the next meeting and a Vice-Chairman appointed.
Village Green and Bus Shelter – Cllr Bailey and Cllr Marchant
The Pound – Cllr Williams
Cosgrave Field – Cllr Unter, liaising with Cllr Marchant
Recreation Ground and Play Area – Cllr Bailey and Cllr Marchant
Village Hall – Cllr Williams
KALC (T&M) – 3 monthly meeting – Cllr Unter. Second Cllr to consider attending.
Blaise Farm Liaison – Cllrs Unter and Barnes
Offham Landfill Site – Cllr Barnes
TMBC Parish Partnership Panel – Cllr Unter and Cllr Stephens
SID – Cllr Bailey
Wellbeing – Cllr Scullion
Trees – Cllr Williams
Book Box – Wendy Williams
It was reported that the light is still out but the defibrillator is working. Cllr Bailey will contact David Frankling about this.
Telephone box – Cllr Bailey and Cllr Marchant. Thanks were given to Cllr Bailey for making sure it is in good order and not leaking
Defibrillator – Cllr Scullion will work with David Frankling. New training courses are necessary - Kathryn Frankling and Cllr Williams to be asked.
The Pond – Cllr Marchant, David Frankling and Steve Rickett
Offham Primary School – Cllr Stephens
- b) Warm Spaces Project
Rev'd David Green sent an email about this project. It is for people who feel they need to keep warm because their homes are not warm. It is happening in other local parishes. The Village Hall

Committee are prepared on a Friday afternoon to open the hall and fund tea, coffee, biscuits, cleaning and heating. It needs volunteers to help set up, clear up, serve drinks, befriend, advertise etc. Cllr Unter has thanked Janette (Village Hall Committee Chair) on behalf of the Parish Council and directed her to discuss with Rev'd Green. We will see where the Parish Council can fit in. Cllr Unter has also discussed with Suzanne who runs Open House to see if their members might support in some way, perhaps through volunteering.

- c) To consider KALC Civility and Respect Project: Take the Pledge
Cllrs have seen details of this project. The principle is that in meetings and discussions with each other, behaviour should be respectful and understanding – that is behaviour in meetings and amongst Cllrs. The second thing is that we are employers – we all employ the clerk. So, it is a requirement that Cllrs have some understanding of the HR issues.
Cllr Unter will circulate some more information to Cllrs, and it can be decided whether to sign up to the Pledge at the next meeting.
- d) TMBC Local Elections and 6 month rule
If there is a vacancy, a new Cllr cannot be co-opted as we are within six months of the election.
- e) To receive update about Oak Tree – Pepingstraw Close
Cllr Marchant has completed this work.
There was a discussion about vegetation from a property blocking a footpath in the woods. Issues relating to footpaths can be reported online to KCC Public Rights of Way Office.
- f) Play Area Annual Inspection – 2nd November 2022
Cllrs Bailey and Marchant carried out the October inspection, Cllr Marchant carried out the November inspection and Cllr Bailey carried out the December one yesterday.
Cllr Bailey reported a number of repairs he has carried out, including fixing timber bolts, clearing the playground of leaves, brambles and litter. Moss is a particular issue on the safety surface. Cllr Williams will find out the products used to clear the moss before.
Cllr Stephens attended the Annual Inspection with Cllr Unter. It is clear that the play area is 20 years old; it is worn and tired, and the flooring is raised in places.
There was a discussion. A new play area is expensive and requires grant funding, and needs someone to take this on as a project to plan and fundraise. Another option is to plan to replace pieces of equipment one at a time, every few years, to spread the cost and time needed. Maintenance will be needed as well. Cllrs Unter, Marchant and Bailey agreed to meet on site to discuss the Annual Inspection Report.
It was noted that the football pitches are being used a lot, creating divots. Cllr Bailey will move the goals regularly to prevent this happening, but a more durable surface in front of goals to be considered.
- g) To receive details of repairs for The Well on The Green
Cllr Unter has spoken to Steve Rickett and asked him if he would meet Cllrs Bailey and Marchant to help manage the project. It was noted that due to the weather this could not be done until Spring, but the Well will be ready for planting then.
- h) To discuss Highways Improvement Plan
Cllr Unter and the Clerk met Highways last month and they have revised the plan which has been circulated to Cllrs. The HIP includes speeding on Teston Road, work to the gateways at either end of the village, the North Meadow Junction and potential speed limits approaching the eastern gateway.. Cllr Unter will re-consider these with David Frankling and any interested Cllrs.
- i) To approve terms of reference for Highways Working Group
Cllr Barnes will be leading. The aim is to have three councillors and two residents involved. The group will report to the Parish Council, who will be the liaison route to KCC Highways. The Group will work on the HIP and should develop a long-term view of it. Cllrs Stephens and Bailey will be part of the Working Group with Cllr Barnes. The aim is to meet every 4-6 weeks.
One of the roles would be to work with residents and have activities they can lead that are not part of the Parish Council activity such as Speedwatch and other initiatives. The idea of 20mph in the next 12 months will not happen so we need to be strategic in how we approach that. The Group can work

with West Malling Parish Council and others and be a source of better communicate with the village. Behind all of this is funding. The Parish Council does not have the money to fund this. Cllr Unter has requested KCC to measure speed in three locations on Teston Road, areas where assessment of speed will help to inform developing plans.

- j) To receive an update about JPCTCG
The JPCTCG has held meetings for the last ten years, set up and led by David Stretton. The group has now disbanded and Cllr Unter has thanked David for his involvement.
- k) Boundary Commission for England 2023 Boundary Review (05.12.22)
Offham remains in Tom Tugendhat's Parliamentary Constituency, to be renamed 'Tonbridge'. West Malling, East Malling, Wateringbury and Kings Hill will be in a new Maidstone and Malling constituency.
The Borough Council boundary does not change but the ward boundaries will change as TMBC reduces the number of borough councillors by ~25%. Offham will be in a ward together with East Malling and West Malling.
- l) Fire Hydrant Inspections
Cllrs who have not completed the visual inspections should carry these out and notify the Clerk.
- m) To consider and approve change of date of January Meeting to 10.01.23
The change of date was agreed.

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)
Kent Highways have renewed the Cultivation Licence for the Spadework and Aldon Lane Gateways.
 - c) To receive update on Maintenance Contract
Cllr Marchant has finished the contract, but will carry out a further cut of the Recreation Ground if it is dry enough. Cllr Unter asked Cllr Marchant to remove the cut grass from the path around the Recreation Ground and to the Play Area as it gets slippery.
 - 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.
- 9. EVENTS.** To receive reports on past events and to discuss events coming soon
- a) Remembrance Service
The service went well and Cllr Marchant laid our wreath.
 - b) Lighting of the Christmas Tree (04.12.22)
The event went well. The lighting on the tree near the Well was not replaced this year, but will be completed by next year.
The Kings Arms was thanked for fantastic mince pies and wonderful mulled wine.
 - c) Carols in the Pub (14.12.22)
This is coming up shortly.
 - d) KALC (T&M) meeting 15.12.22
This was noted.

- e) Race Night run by OPC with The Malling Lions 14.01.23
Cllr Williams reported that 65 have been tickets sold and up to 80 can be sold. Cllrs will help set the hall up from 5.30pm. Cllr Stephens and Cllr Marchant gave their apologies for the event. Cllr Marchant was thanked for his auction prize of logs and Cllr Stephens offered a prize. Cllr Bailey has obtained many of the raffle prizes and Cllr Scullion has done a lot of work for the event.
- f) Coronation Celebration
If anyone is interested, they can work with the May Day Committee about a Coronation Celebration.
- g) Men's Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday
This continues to be well attended. About half the costs are being collected in donations.
- h) 2023 Calendar
Wendy Williams is continuing to sell calendars. Cllrs took seven calendars each to sell and return proceeds.
- i) Borough and Parish Council Elections 04.05.23
Noted.
- j) APM 2023
Cllr Unter will email Cllrs about this.
- k) KALC and Offham Community Awards 2023
Cllrs agreed to take part in the KALC Awards Scheme and to run their own Community Awards Scheme again. Nominations will be considered at the January meeting.

10. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- a) To receive update on Parish Councillor Signatories with Unity Trust, to approve addition of Cllrs Williams and Stephens
Cllrs approved adding Cllrs Williams and Stephens as signatories. The paperwork was signed to add Cllr Williams as a signatory. Cllr Stephens will provide details to complete the paperwork to add him as signatory. Cllr Scullion will provide the ID documents to complete his authorisation.
- b) To consider future funding of The Men's Shed
About half the funding is being raised through donations from those attending.
- c) 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.
- d) To consider and approve invoice payments
The following invoices were approved for payment and will be authorised by Councillors Bailey and Marchant. It was noted that one of the payments is to Cllr Marchant, and it was agreed by Cllrs that Cllr Marchant could counter authorise the payment.

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments Approved since last meeting		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms – Mens Shed Payment	£39.00
Mr and Mrs Butler	Race Night Refund	£60.00
ICO	GDPR	£35.00
Payments – December 2022		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms – Mens Shed Donation	£50.00
Heart of Kent Hospice	Donation	£100.00
Vision ICT	Email Hosting (6 accounts)	£129.60
Vision ICT	Email Hosting (2 accounts)	£43.20
Marchant Garden Service	Tree Work	£480.00
Ryarsh PC	Half Share Printer	£133.33

Clerk	December 2022 Salary	£1,056.86
HMRC	December 2022 PAYE and NI	£364.57
Clerk	Expenses – November 22	£4.55

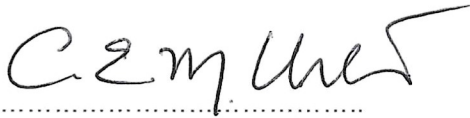
- e) To consider NALC 2021-2022 National Salary Award
The Clerk left the room while Cllrs discussed.
It was agreed that the Clerk’s Salary be increased in line with the NALC salary award, to be backdated to April 2022.
- f) To consider Clerks Home Office Allowance
The Clerk left the room while Cllrs discussed.
It was noted that the Home Office Allowance has not changed since 2011. It was agreed to increase the allowance to £86 per month, in line with the CPI increase.
Cllrs want to consider the Allowance annually.
- g) To consider draft budget and precept request 2022-2023
The clerk has produced draft budget figures for Cllrs to consider. The budget and precept request will be considered and approved at the January meeting.
- h) To consider donations for 2022-2023
Cllrs will consider whether to make the £1,000 donation to the Village Hall next year, depending on their funds situation. Cllrs want to support the Village Hall, but are also mindful of the repairs and modernisation needed for the play area.
- i) 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 9.40pm.

Date of the next Parish Council meeting: Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 7.30pm

Signed 

Dated 16/1/23