

MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting
Held on Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 7.30PM in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr C Unter (Chairman)
Cllr S Williams (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr A Marchant (7.30-9.35pm)
Cllr C Stephens (arrived 8.20pm)
Cllr S Taylor

Also in attendance:

County Councillor Sarah Hohler (7.30 – 7.45pm), Borough Councillor Roger Roud (7.30-8.05pm), 2 members of public, Lynne Mackie (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST.** To receive apologies for absence and declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest. Cllr Stephens has sent apologies as he will be arriving late. There were no Declarations of Interest.
2. **MINUTES** To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2023 for signature. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of meeting held on 6th June 2023 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Unter.
3. **CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER.**
This will be considered at the next meeting.
4. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**
 - a) County Councillor Hohler
 - She has met the new KCC Highways Manager for the area and driven around the division with Emma Tilbury the Highways Improvement Officer. They visited Offham and looked at the road by the school. They have discussed flashing "20mph" signs for when the road is busy to slow people down.
 - She has met with the new police Inspector, Terry Newman, and was impressed by his thoroughness.
 - In the National Libraries Connected Awards, Kent Libraries won an award for work taking place in Kent Prisons and were shortlisted for work with children.
 - Swimming lessons are important, particularly over summer. Kent has the highest rate of drowning in the UK.
 - The Rural Crime Task Force is interesting. Extra people are making sure equipment is not stolen and taken over the border. Rural crime has gone down. Cllr Hohler is on the Rural Committee for Kent.
 - The KCC Travel Saver helps save the cost of bus travel for children getting to school. The season ticket cost has been frozen. For additional children in the family the cost reduces and for children receiving a free school meal the cost is reduced. Applications run until 13th August.
 - The Kent Minerals Plan consultation has no allocation for soft, sharp sand and gravel so there is nothing in the immediate area. The hard rock site is in Aylesford.
 - Kent's Plan Bee and Environmental Policy has extended to cover new sites and many more acres of land, road verges and country parks
 - The footpath on the Dover Cliffs has been upgraded so it is safer to use
 - Explore Kent – KCC is promoting Public Rights of Way and the Countryside Code
 - There is a 6-month review of the Lower Thames crossing – work starts 2026
 - A recent audit found one district with food waste as high as 42% half of which was in its original packaging so had not even been tried
 - Police recorded speeding vehicles with hand held devices up from 6,659 per quarter to over 9,000 in the last quarter
 - She noted the Parish Council were interested in Community Speedwatch. You cannot do this on roads where the speed limit is more than 30mph. Speedwatch is active in Watlingtonbury.
 - Cllr Unter commented on the excellent Rural Crime Report circulated by the police

b) Borough Councillors Roud

Cllr Roud reported:

- He attended the housing and planning committee meeting where the main topic was the Local Plan.
- It looks like TMBC will refuse to accept the KCC parking suggestions from 2008 which recommended 1½ vehicle spaces per property in the Local Plan.
- It was decided to retain the existing timetable for the Local Plan, with an extra Regulation 18B consultation as there are new properties brought forward since the original call for sites. It will be submitted by April 2025 to the Secretary of State. TMBC need to inject an extra £33,000 to cover the cost of this, which can be spread out over a few years.
- TMBC have agreed a process to cover meetings with neighbouring authorities.
- Problem housing standards were discussed. If residents have any problems with their social housing, let Cllr Roud know and he can help. Clarion committed to visit 330 homes in Tonbridge & Malling which are suffering from damp and mould. Clarion owns 300,000 around the country
- TMBC are working with Planning Recruitment as there are not enough planners.
- Last week he went to a meeting with Gallagher at Hermitage Lane. Kent ragstone is a very sought after commodity, for example being used at Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London and Canterbury Cathedral. There are plans to extend the size of Hermitage Lane, not to increase production but to increase the time it operates, for another 20 years.
- He has reported the Parish Council's request for yellow lines at North Meadow, Pepingstraw Close and at the top of Church Road.

c) Police

Lisa Whitehead PC has been in touch, although unable to attend tonight's meeting.

5. **PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:**

a) Blaise Farm (13.09.23) – CU and SW

- i. Quarry – Several larger blasts have taken place. One resident reported concerns about a large blast, but it was not one of the increased MIC blasts.
- ii. IVC Waste Management - There was nothing to report.
- iii. AD Plant - There was nothing to report.

b) Offham Landfill Site

There was nothing further to report.

c) Offham Village Hall

- Maz Ryan has stepped down as Bookings Clerk and is replaced by Kathy Kelly.
- The Village Hall Committee has reimbursed the Parish Council for the final legal fees relating to registration of the Village Hall.
- Kathy Kelly is taking over running the lunch club from Phyllis Jones. Cllrs asked the Clerk to write to Phyllis and thank her for the years of service she has given.
- The Malling Health Checks went well and extra dates were added.
- The new defibrillator has arrived and will shortly be installed outside the Village Hall.

d) Offham Primary School

There was nothing to report.

6. **PLANNING AND LICENSING:**

a) New applications

- i. **TM/23/01295/FL – Woodmans, Teston Road** – Proposal to reinstate the existing house after fire damage, namely re-building the various roof forms over the property, making it structurally sound and habitable
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- ii. **TM/23/01307/FL - 7 Church Road** - Erection of side extension to enable snug/study and kitchen extension to be provided at ground floor level along with additional bedroom in proposed roofspace. Introduction of bi-fold doors on rear elevation of existing house
There was a discussion and there were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

- iii. **TM/23/01308/FL - Bulawayo House, Teston Road** - Construction of two storey side and front extensions, alterations to roof including dormers to front and rear, construction of single storey rear extension, and extending existing ground floor rear/side utility/garden incorporating a swimming pool/changing/plant room extension. Associated external alterations
There was a discussion. There were **NO OBJECTIONS**, but attention should be drawn to the fact that approval has already been given for a large garage on site, which does not appear on the plans for this application.

b) Approvals

- i. **TM/22/02873/FL - Kingscot, Tower Hill** - Demolition of existing single storey side extension and replacement two storey side extension. Refurbishment, conservation and repair works to listed property including replacement of asbestos garage roof, new driveway gate and associated landscaping. Demolition of existing shed and replacement single storey detached annexe
- i. **TM/22/02874/LB - Kingscot, Tower Hill** - Listed Building Application: Demolition of existing single storey side extension and replacement two storey side extension. Internal alterations, refurbishment, conservation and repair works to listed building. Replacement of asbestos garage roof, new driveway gate and associated landscaping. Demolition of existing shed and replacement single storey detached annexe
- ii. **TM/23/00776/LRD- Orchard Place Cottage, Comp Lane** - Details of Condition 4d (method statement) pursuant to planning permission TM/22/02202/LB (Repairs to timber frame, replacement of cement render with lime render, replacement of windows, improvement of thermal properties by the introduction of vapour permeable insulation, rewire and provision of electric heating, provision of wood burning stoves, roof recovering, replacement of concrete and suspended timber floor with limecrete floor, provision of a first floor shower room and repairs to lime plaster and wattle and daub)
- iii. **TM/23/00948/LDP - Cornerways, The Green** - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension. **CERTIFIED**
- iv. **KCC/TM/0040/2023 and TM/23/00703/WAS – In-Vessel Composting Facility, Blaise Farm Quarry** – Construction of new storage bays and workshop building (part retrospective)

c) Refusals

- i. **TM/23/00920/LDP - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Erection of a detached garage incidental to the main dwelling and driveway to provide vehicle access

d) Any other planning and Licensing matters

- i. **TM/23/01150/RD - Warren Wood, Seven Mile Lane** - Details of condition 4 Preliminary Ecological Assessment condition 5 (Ecological Enhancement Strategy) 7 and 8 (Arboricultural Impact Assessment) pursuant to planning permission TM/22/01240/FL Erection of a single storey outbuilding. The PC had no objections.
- ii. **TM/23/01228/LDP - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Erection of a detached garage incidental to the main dwelling and driveway to provide vehicle access (Resubmission of TM/23/00920/LDP). Cllr Taylor left the room while this was discussed. The prior application was rejected, one of the reasons being the size. This new application has the same building size but at a new location on the other side of the driveway. A response has been submitted with an objection, that it will significantly and adversely impact on the street scene in the centre of the Aldon conservation area. Cllrs AGREED this response. Cllr Taylor returned to the room.
- iii. **Kentfield Farm – Licensing**. We received details from the owner listing the number of events taking place. He believes that he has complied with the clause of his license by providing just the number of events each month and not the dates or types of events. The Clerk has been in correspondence with the Licensing Officer. Although that information is not strictly part of the license, it would help the Parish Council to provide information to residents.

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. Parish Councillor Responsibilities

This will be re-considered at a later date.

- b. Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and Draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan – Regulation 18 Public Consultation 13.06.23 – 25.07.23

There was no response.

- c. TMBC Parish Councils Infrastructure Statement

TMBC have asked for details of possible expenditure on Parish Council land that may benefit from s106 monies. Cllrs discussed and AGREED the following suggestions:

Replace Play Area equipment and basketball area £200,000, Cosgrave Field new fencing £6,000, Benches for Cosgrave Field £2,000, new track around Recreation Ground £20,000, new gate and step from Teston Road into the Recreation Ground £4,000, new map and board £1,000, new Notice Boards £3,000,

- d. Highways Working Group and Highways Improvement Plan

The new Highways Improvement Plan will be circulated. Emma Tilbury is in charge of the whole of West Kent, but has also taken over Offham.

Highways has accepted there is speeding on Teston Road, Church Road and Comp Lane. The figures put us close to being considered for a 20mph zone. Cllr Hohler is keen to install and pay for "Wig Wags" outside the school -lights that flash on and off during school opening and closing time that can be managed by the school. Highways will look at ATC tubes to provide speed data past the school on Church Road, at Comp Lane and on the approach to the village from West Malling. Restrictions cannot be installed if the speed is too fast. It is hoped we will be able to reduce the speed limit to 30 or 40mph from Offham Road. One side of that part of Teston Road falls in West Malling Parish and the other side falls in Offham Parish.

At the Aldon Lane end of Teston Road, Highways have said the signage is fine but the horse warning sign needs to be moved. They were asked to paint SLOW in the road but not done this yet.

There was a recent incident at the Gateway entrance where someone drove into the gateway and destroyed it, writing their car off. Thankfully there were no injuries. The damage has been reported to Kent Highways to repair.

Last year there was a plan drawn up to change junction of North Meadow and Church Road at the triangle. Cllr Unter had raised the suggestion of moving the gateway onto the field further down Church Road, but Highways said this would involve a lot of legal work. They have said they will let us know more details.

There was a discussion about traffic travelling the wrong way along North Meadow. Some travel from the bottom along the whole road the wrong way, and some enter the right way for deliveries and then exit the wrong way. There are no arrows in the road to show it is one way.

Cllr Marchant discussed moving the gate into the field away from the North Meadow junction. There is the cost of a dropped kerb with Highways, but Cllr Marchant offered to carry out the other work.

Cllr Stephens reported that the School has started a walking bus. Cars park at Spadework and volunteers walk the children to school and back.

- e. Update - Village Green Lease (SGN)

The Heads of Agreement was approved and signed by Cllr Unter. SGN will have to give us notice to carry out work and will have to reinstate the ground properly, which they did do last time.

- f. To Consider TMBC Climate Change Strategy

This is deferred until the September meeting. Cllr Taylor will work with Cllr Unter on this.

- g. The Well on The Green

This has been on the list of projects for over a year, requested by a neighbouring resident who wants to plant flowers in it. There was a discussion about contractors to approach to ask to do the work. The Clerk will make enquiries. The Well needs the soil inside taking out, mending and filling again with soil. Cllr Marchant will also approach a contractor for a quote.

- h. Flies

There were a couple of complaints two or three weeks ago but no recent reports.

- i. Parking on pavements in the Village

A request has been made by resident to ask people not to park half on pavements. This request will be included in the newsletter. Cllrs will have notices they can use carefully on vehicles.

Cllr Williams has looked at the damage to the Village Green by Hayes Lane with Cllrs Bailey and Marchant. They think the best solution is to put something solid – concrete or granite setts – over the edge of the Green on the pub side of Hayes Lane. There is a hole in the road and broken concrete edging. If cars parked in Hayes Lane then other vehicles would have to drive on the Village Green to get past.

Laying concrete or cobbles or granite setts would create a solid place to drive on. There was a discussion about widening this area from 400mm to 800mm. It would need to be formalised so that cars can park on the opposite (south) side of the lane without mounting the Village Green.

The Clerk will investigate whether the area can be covered over as it is a registered Village Green.

There was a discussion about potential costs. Setts would look better but could cost £6-7,000.

Concreting would cost in the region of £2,000. This is not included in the budget.

j. Approval for purchase of Christmas Lights

The purchase of new lights was approved some time ago, but the lights were not purchased at that time. David Frankling has provided a new quote Christmas lights in the region of £400 + VAT. Cllrs approved the purchase.

8. **OPEN FORUM - Public Participation Session**

- The first defibrillator session was cancelled. There is a session in July which can be advertised now the village email list is working. Cllr Williams will look at another training date.
- There was a discussion about improving the entrance to the Recreation Ground from Teston Road. A resident felt the gate meant children could exit onto the pavement before the adult could get through. A Councillor explained the gate was to allow bikes to get through. Improvements could be made to the gate and step which could be considered as part of the Infrastructure Statement.
- The 30mph speed sign on Teston Road opposite Spadework is obscured by vegetation. This will be reported to Kent Highways.
- There was a discussion about Speedwatch. A resident offered to knock on doors and ask for volunteers. Requests have been put into the newsletters, and the scheme has been discussed at the last two APMs, but no volunteers have formally come forward. The cost of purchase of the equipment or a share in the equipment needs to be considered.

9. **MONTHLY CHECK-LIST**

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

There was nothing to report.

b) 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

- o Bench – Cllr Bailey has not been able to source benches cheaper than Kedel. Cllrs Agreed to spend £1,500 on 2 small benches for Cosgrave Field. Cllr Unter will liaise with Cllr Bailey
- o A resident has offered to make up slats for the bench that would need to be fitted. Cllrs said at least one, and perhaps both, of the benches are concrete. Cllr Bailey will speak to the resident about the slats.
- o The Parish Council has been sent an email, asking for an update about the request to further cut back the Oak Tree at Pepingstraw Close. Under the Tree Management Policy we do not need to do any work to the tree. Cllr Marchant said the tree is perfectly safe. The Parish Council has already undertaken work to the tree which was quite costly. Further work does not fall under our Tree Policy and the tree has no dangerous boughs.

c) To discuss play area repairs and replacement plans

Cllr Bailey reported from his monthly checks of the play area that it is deteriorating fast and it is getting a lot of use. It may be 3 or 4 months before the two main play frames need to be removed from use. He has spoken to Playdale today who charge £150 +VAT to do a review of work needed, and will deduct that from anything we purchase. The Annual Inspection provided an itemised report, but Playdale can decide which items need immediate attention and can make and replace individual parts. Cllrs agreed to Cllr Bailey meeting Playdale for the review.

It was reported that some trees need cutting back from the basketball areas. Cllr Marchant will be asked what work he thinks needs doing and for a quote.

Cllr Marchant has provided a quote to cut back the hedge around the Play Area. The most recent maintenance contract indicates that this work forms part of the contract.
A request for volunteers to help clear up the play area will be included in the Newsletter.

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

- a) Introduction to Planning – KALC Training (Cllr Taylor)
Cllr Taylor highly recommended the training courses and will circulate details.
- b) The Dynamic Councillor – KALC Training (Cllr Taylor)
Cllr Taylor reported as above.
- c) Mobile Health Clinic Offham Village Hall – 3rd and 10th July
Noted.
- d) Defibrillator Training – 22.07.23
This will be advertised. It was not possible to advertise the first training session as the Village emails were not set up with Mailchimp.
- e) Offham Society Lazy Sunday Jazz in Cosgrave Field 23.07.23
Cllr Unter will carry out a risk assessment of Cosgrave Field this week.
- f) Mens Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday
This continues as before and there is a need to sort out ongoing grant funding.
- g) 2024 Calendar
Cllr Williams is waiting for delivery of the remainder of the calendars and the invoice. The phone number for the Kings Arms is being corrected.

11. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- a) 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.

- b) To consider and approve invoice payments

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments – July 2023		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms- July Men's Shed	£28.00
KALC	Dynamic Councillor Event 29.06.23	£60.00
KALC	Planning Event 21.06.23	£84.00
S Taylor	Mileage Claim – KALC Event 21.06.23	£13.65
Clerk	July 2023 Salary	£757.49
HMRC	July 2023 PAYE and NI	£179.02
Clerk	Expenses June 2023	£4.55
Offham Village Hall	Hall Hire January – June 2023	£226.50
P Bailey	Reimbursement – May Day Donation	£70.50
KALC	Membership 2023-2024	£414.96

Cllrs Bailey and Williams will approve the payments.

- c) To note the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights as selected by the Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer (03.07.23-11.08.23)
Noted.
- d) To consider any other financial matters
Offham Open House has made a generous donation of £650 towards the playground modernisation.
Cllr Unter has thanked Suzanne Young who was at the meeting.
Cllrs Taylor and Stephens agreed to work together to discuss renovating the play area and funding.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Play Area Funding, Neighbourhood Plan

The Meeting concluded at 10.00pm.

Date of next Meeting - Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Signed C. E. M. Lunt

Dated 5/9/2023