

MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting
Held on **Tuesday 5th September 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
Cllr C Stephens
Cllr S Taylor

Also in attendance:

Borough Councillor Michelle Tatton, 3 members of public including Fred Steer (2 members of public left at 9.15pm), 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. There were no apologies and there were no Declarations of Interest.
2. **MINUTES** To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2023 for signature. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of meeting held on 4th July 2023 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Unter.
3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**
 - a) County Councillor Hohler
There was no report.
 - b) Borough Councillor Tatton
 - Cllr Tatton reported on the discussions at the Parish Partnership Panel about the Local Plan. The new sites will be included in the Regulation 18B consultation.
 - S106 was also discussed, and the Parish Council should speak to Chelsea Honey-Bradfield.
 - She will send other information about climate change and listed buildings
 - She has spoken to the Chair of Area 2 Planning Committee about the White Ladies application, which TMBC hope to determine soon. There was a discussion about the Parish Council's continuing objections: (1) access and visibility issues. (2) Gas migration and Noise. Mechanical ventilation may also affect the property (3) it is development in Green Belt. Is it appropriate development and will it affect openness? (4) The Parish Council is concerned about the ground on which the house is built, what has happened after quarrying and the subsequent landfill and how safe it is. Proper gas mitigation would be needed at White Ladies and contamination of the land needs to be considered. It was AGREED that Cllr Tatton should call this application to Area Committee.
 - (2) Police
A report from Lisa Whitehead PC has been circulated. There were no reports for Offham. Cllr Unter has asked for speed monitoring to be postponed until the roadworks through the village have ended.
4. **PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:**
 - a) Blaise Farm (13.09.23)
Cllr Unter will attend.
 - i. Quarry
There have been no comments on the bigger blasts from residents.
 - ii. IVC Waste Management
There was nothing to report.
 - iii. AD Plant
There was nothing to report.
 - b) Offham Landfill Site
There was nothing to report.

c) Offham Village Hall
There was nothing to report.

d) Offham Primary School
There was nothing to report.

5. PLANNING AND LICENSING:

a) New applications

- i. **TM/23/01716/FL - Woodmans, Teston Road** - To change the roof orientation over the existing kitchen and downstairs bathroom to give a new master bedroom and ensuite in the new roof spaces at first floor level
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- ii. **TM/23/01736/FL – Orchard Place Farm, Comp Lane** – New storage building (cold store) following demolition of old store, coldstore and stables
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- iii. **TM/23/01820/RD – Cold Store East Of The Applehouse, Aldon Lane** - Details of Condition, 3 (Materials), 4 (Noise Assessment), 6 (Soft and Hard Landscaping and boundary treatment) and 7 (Parking Space surfacing and drainage) submitted pursuant to planning permission TM/22/02842/FL (Demolition of existing cold stores and erection of a two storey, two bedroom dwelling, office/store and garage)
Cllrs will look at the application and notify the Clerk if there are any objections.

b) Approvals

- i. **TM/22/02842/FL - Cold Store East Of The Applehouse, Aldon Lane** - Demolition of existing cold stores and erection of a two storey, two bedroom dwelling, office/store and garage
- ii. **TM/23/00624/FL - Wrotham Heath Golf Club** - Demolition of existing compound buildings and replace with overflow carpark. Erection of a storage barn. Installation of two Portakabins on existing concrete base (Revision to approved TM/22/01205/FL)
- iii. **TM/23/00725/MIN - Blaise Farm Quarry** - Consultation by KCC: Details of proposed trial blasts using 25kg maximum instantaneous charge (MIC) pursuant to condition 18 of planning permission TM/88/1002 (KCC reference TM/88/1002/R18A - TM/0051/2023)
- iv. **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
- v. **TM/23/01396/TNCA - Cedar Lodge, The Green** - T.1 Holly Tree - raise lower crown to approx 8 ft, reduce in height by approx 10 ft and shape. T.2 Beech Tree - dismantle to ground level (damage to trunk and leaning heavily over neighbouring garden). T.3 Holly Tree - dismantle to ground level (leaning over neighbouring garden and the adjoining fence) – No objections
- vi. **TM/23/01591/TNCA - Southern Water Pump House, Aldon Lane** - Removal of the Laurel hedge around the 2nd site Gate nearest to the pump house so the gate can be repaired - At present it won't close

c) Refusals

- i. **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)

d) Any other planning and Licensing matters

- i. **To consider a Neighbourhood Plan**
Cllr Taylor discussed a Neighbourhood Plan, to set in place an idea of what we think is acceptable to the village, trying to protect and scope out what you want to see and what is acceptable. She will circulate documents from the planning conference she attended.
- ii. **TM/23/01360/FL - Blaise Farmhouse, Tower Hill** - Demolition of existing bungalow and outbuilding; replacement dwelling, garage and associated landscaping (No objections) – **Application Withdrawn**
- iii. **TM/23/01456/FL - Raglands, Church Road** - Erection of a one bedroom single storey garden annexe (no objections)

- iv. **TM/23/00133/FL - Godwell Oast, Church Road - Removal of condition 6 (contamination)** pursuant to planning permission TM/22/00606/FL 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 – **Application Withdrawn**

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a. To consider co-option of a new Councillor
Fred Steer was introduced to the meeting as a candidate for co-option. Cllrs were invited to ask questions or make comments. Cllrs voted and unanimously agreed to his co-option. Cllr Steer was formally co-opted onto Offham Parish Council and welcomed.
- b. To note the sale of Church Farm
The farm has been in the Betts family for just over 100 years. Stephen Betts has decided to retire and the farm has been sold to his cousin Marion Regan, who is the owner and MD of the Hugh Lowe Farm in Mereworth. Cllr Unter will invite her to a future meeting.
- c. To discuss and agree laying the Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council – Remembrance Service
Cllr Unter said that laying the wreath is a Parish Council responsibility and should circulate among Councillors. Cllr Unter would like to lay the wreath this year.
- d. Highways Working Group, Highways Improvement Plan, and Speedwatch
The HIP was updated yesterday. Highways need to have formal Parish Council agreement before they can move onto the next steps.
- Highways Working Group. This was to comprise Councillors and others, with James Barnes to chair. Following James's resignation, this fell into abeyance. The Community Engagement Manager from Kent Highways has worked directly with Cllr Unter rather than through a group. The time will come soon when a working group will be important in terms of public engagement as there will be a number of consultations to take place.
 - There have been a number of speed assessment surveys.
 - Highways have looked at Church Road. Their assessment is that average speeds were too high for a 20mph zone to be self-enforcing (over 24mph). They also concluded that engineered build outs were not worth it as speeds are not high enough and there is no accident data. So, there will be no 20mph limit in Church Road.
 - KCC suggested "wig wag" lights outside the school. However, the Planning and Advice Team have determined there is insufficient electrical cabling in the area for these to be viable.
 - Highways have looked at Comp Lane. Beyond Thistledown Barn it is rural and Highways will not take any action. But from Thistledown Barn to Teston Road they are willing to consider extending any 20mph limit.
 - Highways propose looking at a 20mph zone for the entirety of Teston Road between the village gateways and for Comp Lane as far as Thistledown Barn. It will not include Church Road. Cllrs AGREED to this proposed area being examined further by Highways.
 - Teston Road to the East. We requested a 40mph speed restriction extend out of the village beyond Spadework. Measurements show average speeds of 39mph, so a reduction to 40mph would be feasible. However, they will not make any length of road restricted for less than 600metres, so this reduction would go at least 600m further along Teston Road towards West Malling. Cllrs AGREED to seek to reduce the speed limit along this stretch of road. KCC will be asked to review the suitability of a 40mph scheme along this section of Teston Road.
 - We would like to link to the restrictions proposed by West Malling Parish Council along that stretch. This would mean 20mph along Offham Road, then 30mph to Teston Road. At the moment it becomes unrestricted. Cllr Unter is asking for the junction to be part of a 40mph, extending that speed restriction all the way to the King Hill and St Leonards Street junction. If KCC see this as a rural area it will be an impossible task, but Cllr Unter is arguing that there are poor views and bends, particularly at the exit for the Wright Event.
 - Highways have noted that the Offham Road junction would be excluded from the 40mph section beyond Spadework and he needs to clarify this.
 - Cllrs AGREED these proposals, and hold the latest updated HIP with all the information.

Cllr Unter noted that these proposals are covered by traffic regulation orders which are complex and time consuming. Residents are quite rightly concerned about speeding, but the Parish Council is making headway. There will be a cost to these plans but we don't know yet what that cost will be.

The Offham Society have sent emails about this and Rob Hales is here as their representative. Cllr Unter has received a 30mph toolkit from KCC. He has given that to Simon M, and already stickers and signs have been put up around the Village.

The Parish Council will remain the formal engagement link with KCC although other community membership of any small working group will be welcomed. There has been a lot of hard work to reach this point. Updates will be included in the newsletter.

Speedwatch – Cllr Fred Steer has agreed to act as Co-ordinator. A number of volunteers have given their details to be shared with the co-ordinator. This group will work independently of the Parish Council. Cllr Steer confirmed he will make contact with the police as his main point of action. He is meeting with other Speedwatch groups.

- e. To receive update about KCC Licence to Cultivate Village Gateways
The Gateways are owned by KCC and we have a Licence to Cultivate them. The Clerk is applying for a renewal of the Licence.
Cllr Unter will chase up for an update to repairs of the Gateway that was damaged in an accident by Aldon Lane.
- f. Update - Village Green Lease (SGN)
SGN want a formal legal agreement to inspect and deal with the gas governor any time. They are willing to pay up to £2,000 for our legal expenses. Now they have sent a list of things they want to know about and the Clerk is liaising with our solicitor.
- g. To consider and approve contribution towards refreshments for Christmas Lights and Carols in the Pub
It was AGREED to make a donation of £100 towards mulled wine and mince pie refreshments. The Parish Council has already agreed to purchase new lights for the tree at the top of North Meadow. Cllr Marchant confirmed he is happy to install the lights up again.
- h. To Consider TMBC Climate Change Strategy
Details have been circulated and Cllr Taylor will discuss this at the next meeting.
- i. KCC Local Transport Plan Consultation (18.09.23)
This is available online. We are not making any comments as a Parish Council.
- j. To receive update on repairs to The Well on The Green
This has taken some time to get off the ground, but when asked Sally and Stewart Biggs said they would be willing to consider rebuilding it. Cllrs Unter and Bailey met them less than a couple of weeks ago. Rob and Sarah H have been generous – offering to plant the Well. Cllr Unter offered support for the replanting, but Rob said that the Offham Society are providing support. Cllr Unter also thanked Rob and Sarah for providing the ragstone pieces for the rebuilding. Enormous thanks were given to Stewart and Sally for the work, Rob and Sarah for everything they have done, and anyone else involved.
Stewart and Sally did not ask for a payment but instead asked for an appropriate donation to St Michael's Church. Cllrs AGREED to donate £100 in grateful thanks.
- k. To consider Parish Council Meeting November 2023
The Parish Council November meeting will be cancelled unless there is urgent business. There will be a locum Clerk available.
- l. To discuss Village Emails
Due to problems with bulk emails, the Parish Council started using a dedicated bulk email provider. There is a limit on the number of messages that can be sent using the free service. It was agreed that only urgent things be sent out immediately. Other information can be combined to work within

the limits of the service. At short notice, the Offham Society could be asked to circulate to their distribution list. It was noted that other Parish Councils do not send out village emails in the way that Offham does.

7. OPEN FORUM - Public Participation Session

- Cllr Marchant was asked when the hedge will be cut by Pepingstraw Close. He has cut it once this year, and planned to cut next month, but will try and carry out the work sooner
- Cllrs were thanked for their work on the road scheme, speed awareness and Speedwatch and for the Well

8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

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

On Church Road past the entrance to the farm at narrow section is a massive hole. This can be reported online.

A resident has encountered problems getting Public Rights of Way to carry out work, but it just needs reporting again to them.

- 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

- Dealing with the kerb edges on Hayes Lane – there is no progress. Finances are the issue. Cllr Bailey will look at costs so Cllrs can consider if this can be added to the precept as a project.
- Cllr Unter agreed with the road workers that they could use part of village green in front of the Well. The grass was covered by boards on which was much sand, but Cllr Marchant said it is already recovering. The workers had done a good job, worked hard and were tidy and respectful.
- Cllr Williams was thanked for painting the gate to the Pound and for gardening
- Huge thanks were given to Cllr Bailey for working on the benches in Cosgrave Field which look great. A massive thank you was also owed to Stuart from Tower Hill. He has provided all the timber and bolts and worked for three days with Cllr Bailey to repair the benches. Cllr Bailey is working on another bench in the play area.
- Cllr Marchant was thanked for cutting the laurel hedge at the back of the play area. He noted that it will re-sprout.
- Cllr Williams has filled in the holes in the football pitch.
- A big hedge from the first bungalow on Teston Road is pushing the adjoining fence on the recreation ground over. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident asking him to deal with the trees which are now quite tall.
- It was reported that the case on the Defibrillator is broken again. It is understood that David F is dealing with this.
- Cllr Steer has spoken to Kath Frankling about more defibrillator training and she was asking for younger members of the community to take part. Cllr Steer has 3 people interested.
- The SID has been pushed around. Cllr Bailey will check if it has been moved or has been hit and damaged.
- The property at the bottom of Church Road has reported flooding problems. It was noted that this was in Addington Parish, and the report should be made to Kent Highways.
- North Meadow problems were raised. Cllr Unter said this is no further forward in the HIP but he will get some more information. It is highly unlikely the other entrance will be agreed.

- c) To receive maintenance contract update

Cllr Marchant was thanked for providing the update.

- d) To discuss play area repairs and replacement plans

Cllr Taylor has carried out a large amount of work into replacing the current equipment, which is a future plan. Until that can be done, there are repairs and cleaning needed.

Cllr Bailey has met with an engineer from Playdale. He agreed most of the equipment will last for 18 months or so. If they will be replaced in that time there is less need to steam clean and decorate now.

On the main climbing frame most of decking needs to be replaced, along with a couple of timbers and ropes on the little climbing frame. The other approach is to clean and steam every bit of timber – the gate posts, gates and benches and not just the equipment, but the Parish Council may not have the money to do this.

There was a discussion about the Annual Inspection Report and the issues raised by the engineer from Playdale. A working party could be set up to clean, which Cllr Stephens has suggested, which would save money on paying someone to do this.

Cllrs Taylor and Stephens met representatives from play equipment companies. There were 3 or 4 areas to look at without spending a lot of money before the new equipment is in place.

Cllr Taylor confirmed this contractor was looking at equipment and not the gates, fences and posts.

Cllr Bailey was looking at the bigger picture including everything around the playground.

Cllr Bailey said that the bench in the far corner under the oak tree needs removing as it is rotten.

When the Playdale quote arrives this can be reviewed and considered at the next meeting.

Cllr Stephens will arrange a working party to help clean the play area. Cllrs Williams offered to help.

Cllr Taylor has met with 4 companies and given them the same criteria for work to update the play area. Quotes range from £70,000 to £125,000 for the different schemes for equipment within the enclosed play area. She has also looked into the procurement process. We would need to get in touch with the village and school and ask for comments. There would need to be a public consultation and survey. Once we agree a design we go through a tender process, and funding needs to be considered.

Cllrs Taylor, Williams, Stephens and Unter will meet to go through the designs in more detail. Cllr Taylor will look at funding.

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

a) TMBC Parish Partnership Panel – 31.08.23

Cllrs Unter and Williams attended. Meetings are available on You Tube. The s106 presentation was good. Cllr Unter will contact TMBC to discuss this.

b) NHS Health Checks – Offham Village Hall - 15.09.23

This was noted.

c) KALC Clerk's Conference 27.09.23

The Clerk will attend.

d) Steam Rally

This is likely to take place on Sunday 22nd October. A Risk assessment of the Village Green is needed.

e) Annual Play Area Safety Inspection – due November

We will wait for a date.

f) Christmas Lights 03.12.23

This has been discussed.

g) Carols in the Pub 21.12.23

This has been discussed

h) Mens Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday

The Parish Council is providing top up funding for about 45% of total and rest is met by those who attend. It was agreed to increase the suggested donation to £2 per attendee.

i) 2024 Calendar

Cllrs were each given ten calendars to sell.

j) To consider Fund Raising Event (race night) 2024

Cllr Williams offered to organise this. This will be on the Agenda for next month.

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

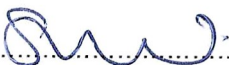
<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments – August 2023		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms- August Men's Shed	£57.00
Waring Lawn Care	Early Summer Treatment	£280.00
TMBC	Uncontested Election Costs May 23	£326.16
Clerk	August 2023 Salary	£757.29
HMRC	August 2023 PAYE and NI	£179.22
Clerk	Expenses July 2023	£13.65
Payments – September 2023		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms- September Men's Shed	£24.25
AJG Community Schemes	Insurance Renewal 01.10.2-30.09.24	£1,563.90
Clerk	September 2023 Salary	£757.49
HMRC	September 2023 PAYE and NI	£179.02
Clerk	Expenses August 2023	£4.55

Cllrs Marchant and Taylor will approve the payments.

- c) To consider and approve insurance renewal (01.10.23)
Cllrs considered the insurance quote and APPROVED its renewal.
- d) To consider any other financial matters
There were no other matters.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

There were no items.

Signed 

Dated 3-10-2023