



OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Newsletter – January 2024

Offham Parish Councillors



Cllr Sue Taylor
Chair



Cllr Sue Williams
Vice-Chair



Cllr Phil Bailey



Cllr Adrian Marchant



Cllr Fred Steer



Cllr Chris Stephens



Vacancy

Parish Council Work

Offham has always been, and continues to be, a very active Parish Council. Parish Councillors are unpaid and give their time for the benefit of the village.

Councillors check the play area equipment, carry out maintenance and cleaning of the play area, check that litter and dog bins have been emptied, check the defibrillator, check the Book Box, report faults and issues to TMBC and KCC, attend meetings with other organisations such as TMBC, KCC, Blaise Farm, Offham Village Hall etc.

The Parish Council owns the Village Green and Cosgrave Field. Councillors are responsible for checking the areas are safe and for grass cutting and maintenance. Cllr Adrian Marchant carries out checks of these areas.

There are many trees on the land owned by the Parish Council, which require checks and regular maintenance to be carried out. Cllr Sue Williams is the Tree Warden for the Village and Cllr Adrian Marchant is able to give advice and carry out any work needed.

The Recreation Ground and Play Area are owned by TMBC and leased by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is responsible for checking the safety of equipment and for any repairs and maintenance. Cutting the grass and hedges is also the responsibility of the Parish Council. Cllr Phil Bailey carries out regular safety checks of the play equipment and carries out some repairs. He will be helped by Cllrs Williams and Stephens.

The Parish Council owns the Book Box, which is well looked after by Wendy W and Rachel G. This is a much used and popular facility.

The Parish Council also owns the Bus Shelter, Notice Boards, map board, quintain, stone etc. These are checked and maintained as needed.

The Parish Council works closely with Kent Highways to achieve highways improvements in the Village. Progress can be slow and difficult as they have severe budget restraints, but we have been able to achieve better road markings at the Teston Road/Aldon Lane gateway this year. Unfortunately, it has not been able to progress our proposal for a 20mph limit through the village, but this is still a goal for the Parish Council. Charles Unter has led negotiations with Kent Highways. Cllr Phil Bailey is now taking the lead on this.

Speedwatch has been set up. Although co-ordinated by a Parish Councillor, Fred Steer, this is run independently of the Parish Council. The Parish Council has been able to help the group obtain a grant for the purchase of equipment and will support the group in any way it can.

The Parish Council set up the Mens Shed which runs every Thursday at the Kings Arms Pub. The Parish Council funded all costs for this for the first year, and this year contributions have been sought from those attending, with the Parish Council funding the balance. Contributions will continue for a few months more after which it is hoped this important group can become self-funding. Cllr Fred Steer has taken over responsibility as Wellbeing Representative for the village.

Recently, Cllr Phil Bailey has worked with Stuart M to repair and replace wood on the picnic benches in the play area and the benches in Cosgrave Field. Councillors are very grateful to Stuart for supplying the wood, and for giving up many hours of his time to work with Cllr Bailey to carry out the repairs. The benches look fantastic.

Cllrs were grateful to so many residents who attended the Clean Up sessions to help look after the play area, which took place in October to keep the equipment safe and lasting as long as possible.

This year, the Well was renovated by Stewart and Sally B, and this was funded by the Parish Council. The flowers for the well were supplied by The Offham Society.

The Parish Council was pleased to be able to donate £1,000 this year to the Village Hall towards the work they carry to look after this much used facility.

The Parish Council purchased new Christmas lights and equipment this year. Thanks are given to David F and Steve R who plan the Christmas lights, and to Cllr Marchant for installing them.

A donation of £100 was made for refreshments for the Christmas Lights Ceremony and for Carols in the Pub.

Councillors run fund raising events, to enable them to carry out more project work. Cllr Sue Williams was responsible for the fantastic 2024 calendar which made a profit of £677. Thanks are given to Patrick B for obtaining so many sponsorships for the calendar. Entries are being sought now for the 2025 calendar and details are later in the newsletter. Last year the Race Night was a great success. Run by the Offham Society and Councillors, the evening made a profit of £1,817. The next race night will be held on 27th April 2024. Cllr Williams is planning the event.

This year, there are two main projects. Phase One is for work to the Recreation Ground outside the enclosed play area. The track will be upgraded, new equipment added, and new equipment provided for the footballers. Cllr Taylor has worked hard to achieve a fantastic grant from TMBC of £75,000 which will pay for this work to be done. Councillors are extremely grateful to TMBC for this support.

Phase two is to upgrade the equipment in the enclosed play area. Cllr Taylor has worked with contractors and the Parish Council has approved a plan. Costs are being kept as low as possible, but the accepted quote is for £83,375. The Parish Council has applied for funding, but even if successful that will only cover up to 90% of the cost. We will find out in April if the grant is successful. If not, we will be looking at different funding sources.

Councillors are very grateful to May Day, Offham Open House and the Jubilee Organisers who have made valuable donations towards the play area refurbishment, and to residents who have supported the project by purchasing calendars or attending the Race Night.

The Parish Council hopes to achieve its big plans for the enclosed play area this year, while carrying on other maintenance and enhancement work in the village.

2024-2025 Budget

The budget was agreed as follows:

Employment Costs	£14,409
Clerks Travel	£200.00
Cllr Expenses	£150.00
Training	£560.00
Office Supplies	£300.00
Professional Fees and Admin	£1325.00
Hire of Hall	£300.00
Churchyard Gardening	£1,000.00
Open Spaces	£7,320.00
Play Area and Recreation Ground	£164,857.72
Insurance	£1,700.00
Audit	£450.00
Traffic Calming, SID and Speedwatch	£1,250.00
Parish Property	£2,675.00
Contingency	£2,000.00
Annual Parish Meeting	£150.00
Donations	£1,280.00
Bus Funding	£220.00
Subscriptions	£450.00
TOTAL BUDGET	£200,596.72

2024-2025 Precept Request

Parish Councils issue a precept each year, which is the amount of money they require from Council Tax payers in their area. TMBC work out the amount for each tax band, which is shown on your bill with the percentage change from the previous year. TMBC collect the precept with the Council Tax and pass that on to the Parish Council. Offham Parish Council AGREED that a precept request of £27,137 be made. The payment per Band D property will be £67.23pa. This is an increase of £4.69 or 7.5%. The average payment per Band D property in Tonbridge & Malling in 2023-2024 was £70.80. The Parish Council is very active and wants to continue to carry out as much work for the improvement of the Village as it can.

The Parish Council has £75,324 funding agreed from TMBC for Phase One of the Recreation Ground works. The Parish Council has applied for a grant of £75,000 towards Phase Two of the planned works to the enclosed play area. If this application is unsuccessful the Parish Council will look at alternative sources of funding. The balance of £14,011 will be funded from Parish Council reserves.

KALC and Offham Village Community Awards

Thank you to those residents who made nominations. The recipients of the awards have been agreed and the presentations will be made at the Annual Parish Meeting, which will be held in the Village Hall on Friday 5th April 2024.



Kent County Council

Councillor Hohler reported:

- Eurostar have announced that they will not be stopping in Kent in 2024
- There has been a huge increase in potholes: from 1,959 from October 1st to December 19th in 2021 to 5,510 in the same period in 2023.
- Making Space for Nature, Kent and Medway's nature recovery strategy, has been launched and is aimed at drawing on widespread partner and public participation to help tackle habitat loss, protect ecosystems and ensure diversity in the county's natural environment



Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Councillor Roud reported:

- The 2021 application for Ashtree Farm for a permanent marquee has been approved. There are a whole host of conditions, including about noise.
- There was a discussion about a number of planning applications in East and West Malling which will have an impact on the local area, particularly on traffic. The sites included Clare Lane, Winterfield Estate, Wateringbury Road and Hermitage Lane.
- Parking charges are being discussed at the TMBC meeting.

Highways

The Parish Council continues to work with Kent Highways on the Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr Bailey is leading this.

Speedwatch

Speedwatch is operating independently of the Parish Council. Cllr Fred Steer is the co-ordinator. He is making great progress and if you would like more information about the group he can be contacted at fred.steer@offham-pc.gov.uk.

Kent Highways have generously offered funding to purchase Speedwatch equipment for the Village.

Play Area and Car Park Closure

Phase One of the Works, which will improve the Recreation Ground, will begin at the end of January/beginning of February. Works to the perimeter track will take 2-3 weeks. Unfortunately, some spaces in the car park adjacent to the play area on Teston Road will not be available for one day in the first week of February 2024. As soon as we know the exact date we will let you know, but it is weather dependent. More details are later in the newsletter.

The rest of the equipment should be delivered and installed at the end of February/beginning of March. A short closure of the Car Park will also be needed by the contractor at this time, and we will send out information as soon as we have more details.

The football equipment has already been delivered.

2025 Offham Calendar

Cllr Williams has started work on the 2025 Offham Calendar – details later in the newsletter.

Please send any suitable photos, which should be **landscape**, to clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk by **31st March 2024**.

Parish Council and Village Events

- Annual Parish Meeting – Offham Village Hall – Friday 5th April 2024
- Offham Parish Council Race Night, with Malling Lions – Saturday 27th April 2024
- Murder Mystery Evening – Kings Arms – Saturday 3rd February 2024
- Men's Shed – The Kings Arms, every Thursday 10am-11.30am
- Offham Food Bank – every other Monday from Kings Arms (offhamvillagehall@outlook.com)

Contact the Parish Council E: clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk T: 07563 606573. The Parish Council Clerk works 12 hours a week, Monday to Thursday, and aims to respond to emails and phone calls within 5 working days. For more information, please go to our website www.offham-pc.gov.uk

Offham Parish Council Meetings

The next meeting will be **Tuesday 6th February 2024** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall Committee Room.

OFFHAM VILLAGE CALENDAR 2025

We are looking for photographs of Offham to use in the 2025 calendar.

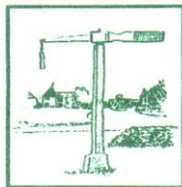
Pictures must be landscape.

Please send images to

clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk

By 31st March

**All proceeds from the calendar will go
towards Village Projects**



Dear resident

We are writing to let you know that some spaces in the car park adjacent to the play area on Teston Road will not be available for one day in the first week of February 2024. As soon as we know the exact date we will let you know, but it is weather dependent.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council own the car park and we have notified them about these spaces being unavailable for a short time.

The spaces being used are abutting the recreation ground entrance, so the disabled bay and 4 other spaces will be out of use from 7am - 5pm for one day. The map exert from the contractor shows the spaces that will not be available for parking. The contractor will be erecting signage in advance for regular users.

We apologise for any inconvenience this will cause, and ask for your co-operation to park elsewhere for this time.

The Parish Council has been able to secure funding from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council which is being used for some exciting work to the Recreation Ground. The car park is needed by the contractor carrying out this work.

If you would like to provide me with your email address, I can keep you updated when we have an exact start date from the contractor - clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk. If there is anyone else you think we should notify, please let us know.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once again, the Parish Council apologises for the inconvenience this will cause, and is very grateful for your support which will enable the Recreation Ground works to be carried out.



Surfacing works

Tarmacadam lorry to be parked as highlighted.

Lorry to remain in place whilst operatives collect material from the chute.

Material transferred around the track via manual wheelbarrow through the park gate.

Access in/out of the car park will remain throughout the works period. Banks man present.

**Posts**

About

Videos

More ▾

Saturday 3rd of February - 7:30pm- 10:30pm we have our first Murder Mystery night held at Offham Village Hall 🗡️ 🩸

The show will consist of a live interactive performance from a group of actors..

Limited to 60 tickets..so be quick!! Book by messaging us or visiting us at the Pub.

£30 a ticket which includes a two course meal (main, desert) and a bar available 🍺

Can you solve the murder??



Home



Ads



Notifications



Menu



The Parish Council is very grateful to Stuart M. He has provided all the A1 grade timber, bolts and nuts – and given up his time – to repair two of the benches in the village with Cllr Bailey.

Openreach - Temporary Road Closure - Aldon Lane, West Malling - 31st January 2024 (Tonbridge and Malling District)

Due to works planned to be undertaken by **Openreach**, It will be necessary to close part of Aldon Lane, West Malling, from 31st January 2024 with estimated completion by 1st February 2024.

Aldon Lane, West Malling, will be closed from Aldon Manor to Aldon Farm House, between the hours of 08:00 and 16:00 only. To the extent indicated by signs and barriers on site.

The alternative route for any through traffic is via Aldon Lane, Teston Road, B2016 Seven Mile Lane, A20 London Road and vice versa.

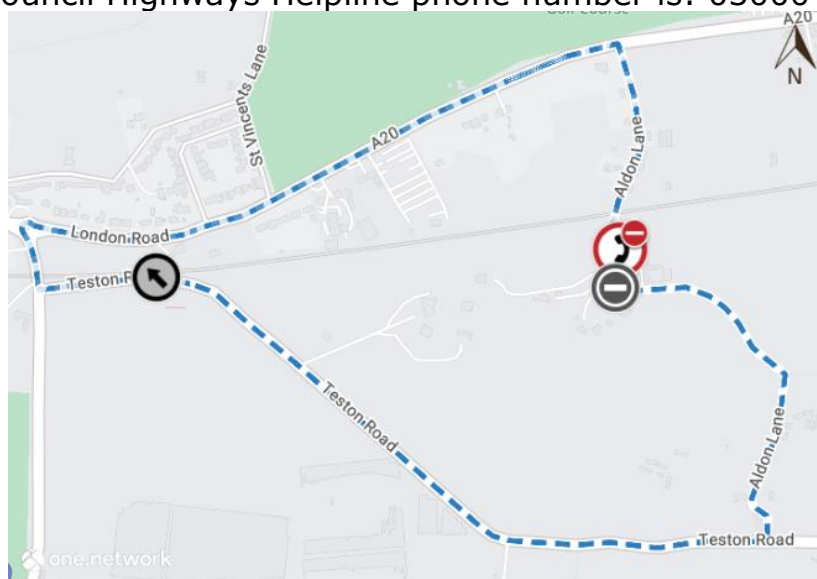
Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works.

The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while allowing fibre works to be carried out, works are undertaken by Openreach.

For the most up to date information on these works please visit: <https://one.network/?tm=135762796>

For information regarding this closure please contact Openreach, who will be able to assist with the scope of these works.

The Kent County Council Highways Helpline phone number is: 03000 418181



Map data © [MapTiler](#) © [OpenStreetMap contributors](#)

This bulletin contains public information and can be forwarded to any other road users who may be affected. Every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information, but no liability can be accepted for any changes or errors.

Road names are taken from the National Street Gazetteer, which can be viewed on [one.network](#), with alternative names given where known.

For details of roadworks, please see [One.Network](#)

Regards,
Streetworks West Central Team
03000 418181 (9am - 5pm)
03000 419191 (5pm - 9am)

WALKING WEDNESDAYS AT SPADEWORK

Our walking groups now take place every Wednesday, between 10am and midday. Walks start at Spadework and are circular.

Everyone is welcome to join, although advanced booking is required.

Our walking groups are part of Spadework's wellbeing services, bringing local people together.

Please call the team on 01732 870002 to find out more or to book your place.



Spadework, Teston Road, Offham, Kent, ME19 5NA. Registered Charity No. 291198



Guided group walks – February 2024



Our friendly group is one of 13 Ramblers groups in Kent and part of the national Ramblers walking organisation.

We explore the beautiful countryside of Tonbridge and Malling and surrounding areas.

You don't have to be a Ramblers member to try up to three 'taster' walks with us. If you're new to our walks, please contact the walk leader to check that their walk will suit you.

View from the Greensand Ridge – see 4 February walk

For details of these and other upcoming walks and walk leaders, see our [Facebook page](#) or visit www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk.

Sunday 4 February	Circular walk from Ide Hill to Bayley's Hill along the Greensand Ridge. Moderate difficulty.	4.8 miles
Thursday 8 February	An interesting walk over the hills from the Westerham to Chartwell with good views of the North Downs on the return. Moderate difficulty.	5.5 miles
Thursday 15 February	Circular walk from Stansted on footpaths and quiet country lanes, passing through the hamlets of Fairseat and Hodsell Street. Three ascents and ten stiles; walking poles recommended. Moderate difficulty.	6.5 miles
Sunday 18 February	Circular walk from Wadhurst to Bewl Water. Moderate difficulty.	6 miles
Wednesday 21 February	Circular walk from Mereworth church. Moderate difficulty.	5.5 miles
Thursday 29 February	Circular walk from Harrietsham along field paths and tracks with some slopes. Includes part of the North Downs Way with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. Quite a few stiles, mostly in good order. Moderate difficulty.	5.9 miles