



MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting  
Held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30PM in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

**Councillors Present:**

Cllr S Taylor (Chair)  
Cllr S Williams (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr P Bailey  
Cllr A Marchant  
Cllr Fred Steer  
Cllr C Stephens

**Also in attendance:**

Borough Councillor Tatton, 2members of public (1 left at 8.05pm), L 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 apologies from County Cllr Hohler. There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. **MINUTES** To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2024 for signature It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Taylor.

3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

a) County Councillor Hohler

Cllr Hohler has provided the following report:

- KCC continues to work hard to present a balanced budget for the next financial year which remains a challenge
- Pothole enquiries have been steadily rising over the past couple months in which we are still aiming to repair within 28 days. However, most locations where road widths do not allow adequate safety zones for the contractor to deliver, we are looking at mostly road closures. Highways estimate that 60% of pothole jobs require more in-depth liaison and planning works before a gang has even attended to repair which will have an impact in keeping with the 28-day guarantee. Where we are acknowledging this, we updating the members of public explaining the overrun and update when a job is due for repair.
- Regarding technology, at present Highways are using the traditional method's I.e. saw cut dig out and inlay which supports the tier 1 & 2 sub-contractors Amey use to help deliver our works. To support I am satisfied from positive Depot meetings that I hold on fortnightly basis that Amey are completing more jobs than before.
- The bus industry in Kent (as in most parts of the UK) remains privatised. Since the start of 2022 Government and other support has enabled KCC to protect around 50 school services that were at risk of withdrawal. These services continue to be funded using Government funding. The cost of these services is estimated at around £3m a year when accounting for the contribution made towards them from passenger revenue.
- These commitments have exhausted the funding available through Government, and KCC's own budgets for supporting bus services are also fully allocated. Unfortunately, we are starting to see bus service cancellations get presented to us again with no funding available. KCC are not in a position to protect them and if other possible operators do not view them as commercially sustainable then they will stop. These cancellations will include school buses.
- There has, during 2022, been a recovery of Kent's tourism and the hospitality sector which has meant more jobs and good news for Kent.
- The University of Kent, with a group of staff and student volunteers, have, during the autumn, collected 5,500 Kg of surplus fruit and vegetables from local farms and distributed them via FARESHARE UK to charities, food banks and community initiatives.
- The Business Investment Team has been processing over 100 pre applications from small and medium sized businesses in Kent and Medway for grants from £26,000 to £600,000 to grow and innovate.

- Hundreds of patients across Kent are now receiving care at home when they would normally have had to stay in hospitals thanks to Home First, the long-awaited integration of health and social care, now in action.
- Childrens, services in Kent have recently been awarded an outstanding rating.
- The Port of Dover and the surrounding area could be hit by major disruption later this year when the EU Entry-Exit system launches. KCC has made the Government aware of their concerns and how it is likely to cause long traffic queues.
- Dog owners in Kent are being urged to keep control of their pets in the countryside, following a rise in attacks on sheep.
- Our trading standards officers have been working very hard to stop the huge imports of illegal vapes. KCC had asked the Government to ban them, which they have now done. However, they remain a problem as teenagers are attracted by their bright designs and different sweet and fruity, flavours.

A summary of bus routes and how many people have used them has been circulated by Nu-Venture. They are looking at grants to fund this next year.

b) Borough Councillor Tatton

Borough Councillor Tatton reported:

- The Parish Partnership Panel takes place on Thursday and will cover the Agile planning system. Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, will be giving background on that and taking questions.

c) Police

Cllr Taylor met PC McElligott and discussed some of the issues affecting the Village. He will meet up with Cllr Steer and support Speedwatch.

He has also attended at School drop off time, at the junction between the field and North Meadow. This has encouraged people to obey the road signs and not travel the wrong way along North Meadow. Cllrs agreed this was a good deterrent.

d) Offham Society

Simon Mahoney addressed the meeting:

- The Offham Society has set a new objective
- To contribute more to the benefit of the Village, they want to liaise with other associations. They have a huge number of volunteers who do a huge amount of work
- They are happy to help the Parish Council with some of the jobs in its remit
- They have a large number of litter pickers and are providing equipment for them
- There are a lot of people volunteering in different ways on their own and they want to group them together to help
- The Offham Society want to work more closely with the Parish Council, Spadework, The Kings Arms, NSPCC, The Village Hall and local volunteers
- The Offham Society website is now live - [www.offhamsociety.co.uk](http://www.offhamsociety.co.uk). All events in the village will be included
- Every penny made by the Offham Society will go to the village
- They would like to commission some artwork for the bus shelter, with an illustration of Winnie the Pooh. They would need permission from the Parish Council who own the bus shelter. He will provide drawings for the Parish Council to consider
- They want to run an Offham in Bloom competition
- They are planning a Treasure Trail
- They have various talks in the Village Hall planned such as Bee Keeping and Gin Tasting.
- They will maintain any hanging baskets on the bus shelter, will carry out planting at the gateways and maintain those and will maintain the planting in The Well
- They are working with Clare I on an Offham Heritage website. This will be about history of the village and they are helping fund that site
- They are concerned about the unofficial Steam Rally event. There is a concern about how there could be an accident if it is not controlled. There is a view that there should be a road closure. Villagers are involved by default but there is no organiser. The event has built up over the years. The Parish Council cannot get involved, as they would then be responsible. It was suggested

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there needs to be a plan without endorsing or sponsoring the event. The Parish Council has provided signs about traffic problems and cones in the past

Cllr Taylor invited the Offham Society to the APM in April.

She discussed the Emergency/Resilience plan for the Village, which will tell everyone who to contact in an emergency.

She explained that the Parish Council has certain responsibilities and work it must carry out. People cannot assume the Offham Society is carrying out work for the Parish Council. But there is nothing to stop them working together.

e) Speedwatch

Cllr Steer met with Alan Watson from Kent Police who has delivered the final coaching session.

Speedwatch is now up and running. He needs to arrange volunteer rotas with 2-4 people each time.

Kent Police have loaned a Speed Indicator Device until our own one arrives which KCC have funded.

Cllr Steer asked if the Parish Council could pay for a vest cam for volunteers, at around £60-70. This could be paid for from project funding. He will get some prices.

9 positions on Teston Road and 3 in Church Road have been approved as Speedwatch sites.

4. **PLANNING AND LICENSING:**

a) New applications

i. **TM/23/03417 - Blaise Farmhouse, Tower Hill** - Demolition of existing bungalow, Annex and garage. Replace with a two storey 5- bedroom dwelling, and basement, to include associated landscaping  
There was a discussion. There was concern that traffic during the build will be disruptive for residents on Tower Hill. The Parish Council will ask for a traffic construction management plan to be submitted. There were **NO OBJECTIONS** to the planning application.

ii. **TM/23/03520/TPOC - Offham Manor, Teston Road** - 1 x large Lime (agent ref: T1) Pollard back to previous points between 3-4m height and spread to balance as grown too large for location. Thinning of tree by 15%. T27 of Tree Preservation Order  
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

iii. **TM/21/01259/RVAR - Land at Offham Landfill Site** - Details of a Permissive Footpath (Condition 8), Construction Management Plan (CMP) (Condition 9), Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (Condition 10) and Planting Details (Condition 12) pursuant to planning permission TM/21/01259  
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

b) Approvals

i. **TM/23/03246/HH - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Erection of a garage and home gym incidental to the main dwelling and creation of hardstanding (alternative to 23/01907/LDP)

ii. **TM/23/03428 - The Old Rectory, Aldon Lane** - 1 x Quince (labelled green T1 on agents plan)  
Fell and grind out to 200mm below ground level

c) Refusals

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.

d) Any other planning and Licensing matters

i. **To consider a Neighbourhood Plan**  
Cllrs will discuss this further.

ii. **To note Street Vote Development Proposals**  
This is a discussion at the moment.

iii. **TM/23/03361 - 7 Church Road** - Proposed side extension with new bi-fold doors to the rear and full refurbishment (No objections)

**5. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:**

a) Blaise Farm

- i. Quarry  
There was nothing to report.
- 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) Solar Park

Cllr Taylor and the Clerk met with the Site Manager. Works are due to start at the beginning of March and will take 4-6 months. There will be up to 6 trucks a day for a limited amount of time. There is a haulage plan for them to come in off Seven Mile Lane. If they come near the village they have asked us to tell them so they can speak to the haulier. They are very aware they have a relationship with the village and it will be a long relationship so it needs to be positive – they want to know what can they do for us to make it easier?

There will be noise from the piling to start with and they can work on Saturdays.

They were sensitive to fact they come into the village. We asked for them to have an open day when its finished and they will look at that. When the solar park is up and running there will be no one on site, it is run remotely.

d) Offham Village Hall

Cllr Williams was unable to attend the meeting.

The Village Hall are happy in principle to the Parish Council using the hall address and post box.

e) Offham Primary School

Cllr Stephens has spoken to the school and to Stephen Betts about whether they would be interested in moving the gate into the field used for car parking.

Stephen Betts has made it clear he would not approve of moving the entrance. It is possible the field will not be made available for parking in the future.

Cllr Taylor has met Emma Tilbury from Kent Highways. Offham Primary School is being used as a pilot scheme for Kent in road traffic management. New signage and markings will be trialled outside the school. This is very positive news.

f) Wellbeing

It was noted that Cllrs agreed to increase weekly subs to £2 from 1<sup>st</sup> March to enable it to be self-funding. Cllrs value and want to support the group which is important for Mental Health. No-one will be excluded if they cannot pay.

Cllr Steer is looking into a Ladies Shed and has several interested people. Matt Scullion has said the Kings Arms could be available on a Monday or Tuesday from 10-11am. This can be advertised.

The Parish Council would like to see this being self-funded from day one, at £2 for a cup of coffee and a couple of biscuits

Cllr Steer is liaising with Mike R about village social history walks. Spadework are also advertising walks. He is considering village walks to explain footpath routes to residents.

Cllr Taylor is meeting with a KCC Public Rights of Way Officer shortly.

Cllr Steer has met with a resident about Qi Jong groups.

He has spare bats and balls for the table tennis in the Recreation Ground, which Matt Scullion will keep in the pub.

**6. MATTERS ARISING**

a) To consider maintenance Contract Tender and Award Maintenance Contract 2024

Cllr Marchant left the room.

Cllrs discussed the quote provided by Cllr Marchant. Cllrs AGREED this represented good value for money. Cllrs did not want to seek other tenders. It was AGREED to accept Cllr Marchant's tender and offer him the maintenance contract for the village.



Cllr Marchant returned to the room.

Cllr Marchant reported that an application for a tree preservation order has been with TMBC for 12 months. Delays are caused by a general backlog. There is only one 1 Tree Officer and there are problems with the new Agile system. The Clerk will contact the Tree Officer.  
There was a discussion about fences and boundaries around the Recreation Ground.

- b. Highways Improvement plan, Highways Working Group and Speedwatch  
Cllrs Taylor and Bailey are meeting with Kent Highways to discuss the HIP.
- c. To consider Climate Change Strategy  
This will be discussed next month.
- d. To consider Parish Council's postal address  
This has already been discussed.
- e. To consider an Offham Resilience/Emergency Plan  
Cllr Taylor has started to put together an Offham Plan, using Addington Parish Council's as a template. Cllrs were asked to read through this and add any information.
- f. To consider D Day 80 – 06.06.24  
There was a discussion about ways to commemorate this event.
- g. Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 – Pre-Submission Draft (Regulation 19) Public Consultation (29.02.24)  
This was noted
- h. Cricket Club Request to cut back trees over the cricket pitch  
Cllr Bailey has spoken to the cricket club. Cllr Marchant will meet with them to discuss the work. The cricket club will pay for the work.
- i. TMBC Open Space Study 23.02.24  
This has been circulated to Cllrs.  
It is worth noting all the land the Parish Council Owns and any open space they do not own.

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

- A damaged sign by Aldon Lane was reported to Highways on 7<sup>th</sup> November
- There was a discussion about the book produced by Sue Y on the centenary of the First World War.
- Cllr Williams will speak to Jane J about the Church plans for D-Day 80

**8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST**

- a) To note any Highways, Footpaths and Footways problems ([www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem](http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem))  
There were no further issues to discuss.
- 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  
There were no issues to report.
- c) To receive Update – Phase 1 Recreation Ground Refurbishment  
Works to the extension of the track started 28<sup>th</sup> January and should be finished by the end of next week. The tarmac will be laid in the next week or two but is weather dependent. They will lay the concrete slabs next week for the chess table, table tennis table and football shelter. These pieces of equipment will be delivered on 18<sup>th</sup> March. So, after the track is finished, there will be a lull until the equipment arrives.  
When everything has been finished and swept, the graphics will be laid on the track.  
The bench which has been repaired is rotten at the base. It was agreed that this would be removed and re-installed, and Cllr Bailey will arrange to repair it at a later date.

There was a discussion about the location of the football shelter, benches and other equipment, to be as considerate for neighbouring residents as possible in terms of any effect on their view or possible noise.

Cllr Taylor circulated cost sheets for Phase One. We are receiving bills now, and are working with TMBC Planning Obligations about payments. TMBC have agreed to provide us with the money in chunks to manage the bill payments.

At the moment the scheme is £342 over the amount being provided by the Grant. It is possible the Parish Council may have to contribute that amount to the scheme.

d) To receive Update – Phase 2 Play Area Refurbishment

There has been further correspondence with FCC Community Action Fund and we have provided them with extra information. Their board meeting is 14<sup>th</sup> March when a decision will be reached regarding our application for funding .

e) 2025 Fund Raising Calendar

More entries are needed for the calendar.

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

a) Annual Parish Meeting 05.04.24

There was a discussion about the APM and village societies that we could get involved to explain what they do for the village.

b) Race Night with Malling Lions 27.04.24

Cllr Williams provided a report. The cost of fish and chips has increased enormously. Wendy W has kindly agreed to cook chilli if Cllrs can cook jacket potatoes. Cllrs need to get involved collecting raffle and auction prizes.

c) Offham May Day 04.05.24

This was noted.

d) Offham Garden Safari 14.07.24

Cllrs noted the date and gave approval for use of the Village Green.

e) Mens Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday

There was nothing further to discuss.

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 Taylor

b) To Note Donation from Offham May Day

It was noted that May Day have offered a £,4,500 donation for the play area. Cllrs expressed their gratitude.

c) To consider and approve invoice payments


<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<b>Payments – February 2024</b>		
SMLM Ltd	Kings Arms – February Men's Shed	£27.90
Steve Rickett	Reimbursement – Christmas Lights	£74.39
Waring Lawn Care	Lawn Treatment	£280.00
Clerk	February 2024 Salary	£800.25
HMRC	February 2024 PAYE and NI	£197.41
Clerk	January 24 Travel Expenses	£9.10
Clerk	Reimbursement - DropBox	£95.88

Cllrs Marchant and Bailey will approve the payments.

- d) To consider donations 2023-2024  
These will be considered next month.
- e) To approve appointment of Internal Auditor for 2023 – 2024  
The Parish Council agreed to appointment the existing Internal Auditor Lionel Robins.
- f) To consider any other financial matters  
Cllrs approved and signed the paperwork to remove Charles Unter as a signatory from the bank account.

**12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

There were no items. Date of Next Monthly Meeting – **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024**. The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed   
Dated 5/03/2024

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