



## OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### Parish Council Newsletter – March 2024



#### Kent County Council

- KCC have had their budget meeting which was difficult. The most expense has been on record levels of investment in Adult and in Children's Social Care. Home to school transport for children with special needs is also expensive. KCC is trying to be as efficient as possible.
- The weather has been extraordinary, and Highways have put aside £8m to deal with it. The Government has given more funding. A KCC Cabinet Member is looking into quick and effective ways to deal with potholes.
- Companies need to come and mend leaks of gas or water etc in the highway and they are meant to book this work in advance, giving a good reason why it is needed. A new Cabinet Member is looking at ways to improve this system.
- Rural Officers working with Kent police recovered £400,000 worth of vehicles in one month.
- Kent Film Office handled 88 filming requests in the last quarter of 2023-2024 and logged 79 filming days. This brought £820,000 into Kent and Medway. Filming activity generates more than £5m per year for the Kent and Medway economy. KCC also raise money through weddings. Oakwood House has been refurbished as a venue for weddings and citizenship ceremonies. From April 23–January 24 there were 6,304 ceremonies in Kent.
- TMBC have refused the application for a new 24 hour lorry park at J2A of the M26, Wrotham Heath.
- There have been many problems with Ford Lane being closed due to a huge water leak. Work will be finished by Friday.
- The Trading Standards team have been working hard to stop illegal vapes coming into the country. The latest seizure was of over 1,000 boxes of illegal vapes. The legal limit of a disposable vape is around 600 puffs. Illegal vapes seized have 1,500 puffs so are seriously dangerous.
- KCC are running out of Government funding for buses. They don't have to do anything about school buses until 2025.
- 141 fewer people applied for a secondary school in Kent this year. This meant that 96% were offered one of their 4 choices, which is higher than normal.
- <https://kentroadsafety.info/road-user-types/mature-drivers/> - There is a club for mature drivers in Kent

#### Highways

The Parish Council has had a virtual meeting with Kent Highways on the Highways Improvement Plan. Results of traffic tests in the Village did not put Offham into the right band category to be considered for a 20mph limit. It is hoped Speedwatch will reduce speeds in the Village so that a 20mph zone can be considered by Kent Highways.

If not, other possibilities can be considered including Traffic Calming. Funding would need to be found for this, and measures such as width restrictions would need street lighting.

It is believed that the majority of the village would support a 20mph speed restriction.

White lines and road markings will be refreshed throughout the village to encourage drivers to slow down.

Aldon Lane will be closed for up to one day on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 for work to be completed by OpenReach. Details are later in the newsletter.

### **Speedwatch**

There are 13 volunteers for Speedwatch and the first session has taken place on the 60mph stretch of Teston Road past Spadework. In an hour at 3.30pm on a Monday, 225 vehicles left the village with a similar number travelling into the village. No cars were found to be speeding and drivers were supportive of the scheme. This is a very positive start.

Cllr Steer will continue to work with the volunteers and the police and more sessions will run when the weather is better.

If you would like to take part or would like more information, please contact [fred.steer@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:fred.steer@offham-pc.gov.uk).

### **Wellbeing**

The Men's Shed has proved very successful in the Village. Cllr Fred Steer has now set up a womens group – The Shedettes – who meet in the Kings Arms every Tuesday from 10 – 11.30am. The first meeting had 13 attendees who had a great morning.

### **Number 70 Bus Service**

KCC Financial support for this bus was withdrawn on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

Borough Councillor Mike Taylor has worked with Nu Venture to make sure villages have a continuing service once a week. For the last year he has been able to secure funding from KCC to pay for this. Funding has not yet been forthcoming for the year ahead.

Offham Parish Council has agreed to pay its share of the cost, £214.30, to make sure the bus service continues to run for residents.

### **Recreation Ground Refurbishment – Phase One**

Phase One of the Works to the Recreation Ground has been funded entirely by a s106 grant from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, for which Councillors are extremely grateful. The money has had a very positive impact and will greatly benefit residents and users of the Recreation Ground.

Track works (tarmac) are completed. Work by Eibe to install equipment for the football pavilion, climbing frame chess table and agility trail will commence on 18<sup>th</sup> March and will take 7-10 days. Unfortunately the closure of some spaces in the Recreation Ground car park are needed and more details are later in the newsletter. Graphics will be added to the track on 27<sup>th</sup> March and will take about half a day. Phase One will be completed before Easter.

Due to the weather, the contractor hasn't been able to fully finish the track and there are dips where the earth is not level with the track. Any work done now will be damaged when the equipment is installed, so it was decided to wait. Cllr Marchant will seed the area and when it is settled he will dress it later in the summer with top grade soil. The Parish Council will pay for this with money raised from project funding, to make sure the Recreation Ground is left in a good condition.

The gate to the Recreation Ground needs a new post. It was agreed that the Parish Council would Pay for this, using money raised for project funding.

### **Play Area Refurbishment – Phase Two**

The FCC Environment Board meet on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March to consider the Parish Council's

application for funding for stage two of works to improve the enclosed Play Area.

### **Hayes Lane**

The verges either side of Hayes Lane form part of the Village Green, which is owned by the Parish Council. It has been noted that cars parking on the verges have created holes, and Councillors were mindful of the need to keep the area safe.

The Parish Council has arranged with the contractors carrying out the track works in the Recreation Ground to use some leftover aggregate to fill the holes and keep the area flat and safe. This is a simple and cost efficient remedy, until there is funding for a long term solution. Although it does not look as good as grass it is hoped this will be longer wearing.



### **Offham Solar Park**

[www.offhamsolarpark.co.uk](http://www.offhamsolarpark.co.uk)

### **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](mailto:clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk) by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**.

### **Parish Council and Village Events**

- Annual Parish Meeting – Offham Village Hall – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Offham Parish Council Race Night, with Malling Lions – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – **ticket price now includes a Fish and Chip Supper**
- May Day – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- Offham Society Lazy Sunday Jazz 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- Offham Garden Safari – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- Shedettes – the Kings Arms, every Tuesday 10am – 11.30am
- Men's Shed – The Kings Arms, every Thursday 10am-11.30am
- Offham Food Bank – every other Monday from Kings Arms ([offhamvillagehall@outlook.com](mailto:offhamvillagehall@outlook.com))

**Contact the Parish Council** E: [clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.offham-pc.gov.uk) or [@Offham Parish Council](https://www.facebook.com/OffhamParishCouncil) on Facebook for further updates.

### **Offham Parish Council Meetings**

The next meeting will be **Tuesday 2nd April 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.**

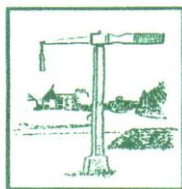
**Pictures must be landscape.**

**Please send images to**

**[clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk)**

**By 31<sup>st</sup> March**

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





Dear Resident

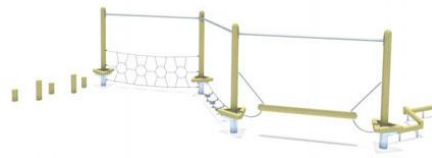
The Parish Council is delighted to have received £75,000 of funding from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council towards sports equipment and materials for the Recreation Ground. This money is being used for Phase One, which covers work to the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council is applying for funding, which if successful, will be used for Phase Two to improve the equipment inside the enclosed play area.

Work is almost finished to extend and improve the track around the Recreation Ground making it safer and more accessible. Concrete bases have been laid for various pieces of equipment. This equipment will be installed from **18<sup>th</sup> March**, by Eibe and Redlynch Leisure.

Careful consideration has been given to the location of the equipment, to make sure it is safe, will be well used, and will not harm the view for residents bordering the Recreation Ground. Adjacent to Teston Road will be a Football Shelter. This is partially open, with lower panels to protect users from bad weather. The lower panelling will be covered by the external hedges and will not be seen by residents. The agility net, while quite high, will not block the view as it is being positioned near to the enclosed play area, near the hedging which borders Council Bungalows. The other equipment will be located around the outside of the Recreation Ground Area.



Football Shelter



Agility Trail



Agility Net



Concrete Table Tennis Table



Chess Table

Graphics are also going to be added to part of the track to give residents a fitness trail and hopscotch – for young and old.

Works will take up to two weeks - please look at the Parish Council website [www.offham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.offham-pc.gov.uk) or [@Offham Parish Council](https://www.facebook.com/OffhamParishCouncil) on Facebook for further updates.



**Offham Parish Council**

# **Race Night**

**Supported by Malling Lions Club**

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April

7.30pm

At Offham Village Hall

£15 to include fish & chip supper

Bring your own drink and glasses

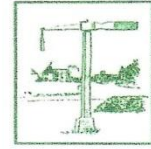
For tickets please call Sue Williams

07732 267121

All profits will go towards village projects.







# *Save The Date*

**Friday April 5<sup>th</sup> 2024  
Commences 7.30pm**

All residents are invited

To

## **OFFHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

At

### **OFFHAM VILLAGE HALL**

This is an annual meeting run by the Parish Council

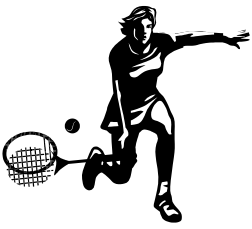
*Come and find out more about what's happening in our Village*  
Meet Offham Parish Councilors and representatives from various organisations and local companies

### **"Offham Village Meet & Greet Event"**

There is a change of format this year with a formal introduction and award presentation, followed by an informal evening of Village groups, clubs and local organisations who will be available to give our community information about themselves and their activities. (More information regarding participants to follow).

**Please note this is a Village Meeting and not the Parish Council AGM**

Clerk to Offham Parish Council Tel: 07563 606573  
Email [clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk) Website: [www.offham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.offham-pc.gov.uk)



# OFFHAM TENNIS CLUB



## *New members welcome at Offham Tennis Club*

### Annual Membership Rates 2024-25

**ADULT**  
£55

**SENIOR CITIZEN (65 + over)**  
£45

**JUNIOR UNDER 18 yrs**  
£25

**STUDENT (over 18 still in full time education)**  
£25

**COUPLE**  
£75

**FAMILY (2 adults & children under 18 yrs)**  
£85

**PART FAMILY (1 Adult & children under 18 yrs)**  
£65

**WHOLE HOUSE (2 adults & children over 18)**  
£100

Enquiries should be directed to:

Andrew, Captain (01732 780583) (07715 801101)

Or

Claire, Club Secretary; [clairesownaddress@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clairesownaddress@hotmail.co.uk)





## Guided group walks – April 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.

*Leeds Castle - 14 April walk*

For details of all upcoming walks and walk leaders, see our [Facebook page](#) or [www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk).

Sunday 7 April	Circular walk from Wateringbury along the Medway Valley then up over the hill past Roydon Hall and back down via Pizien Wells. Moderate difficulty.	6 miles
Sunday 14 April	Circular walk through parts of the Leeds Castle estate, across farmland and woodland paths through King's Wood and Broomfield. Return alongside the River Len, close to the moated Castle. Two stiles and short sections of wet mud are likely. Moderate difficulty.	5.5 miles or 2.5 miles (see website)
Thursday 18 April	Circular walk up the North Downs from Kemsing. Moderate difficulty	5.5 miles
Sunday 21 April	Leisurely walk from Five Oak Green climbing gently up through hop fields and orchards to a ridge looking over a valley. After Spring Grove Farm we make our way back through more orchards at Amherst Bank. A lovely Spring walk.	5 miles
Thursday 25 April	Circular walk from Barming passing through Oakham Woods and the East Malling Horticultural Research Station. Return through fields and ancient woodland with some fine views of the Kent countryside. Mainly flat but there may be some mud. Moderate difficulty.	6 miles

Sunday 28 April	Circular walk from Plaxtol Spout; moderate difficulty.	5 miles
Walks usually start mid-morning. There's a short half-way break (bring refreshments) and we usually finish near a pub. Most walks are dog-friendly (see website).		

### **Openreach - Temporary Road Closure - Aldon Lane, Offham - 9th April 2024 (Tonbridge and Malling District)**

Due to works planned to be undertaken by **Openreach**, it will be necessary to close part of Aldon Lane, Offham, from 9th April 2024 with estimated completion by 9th April 2024. Aldon Lane, Offham, will be closed outside Aldon House, between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30 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, Aldon Lane and vice versa.

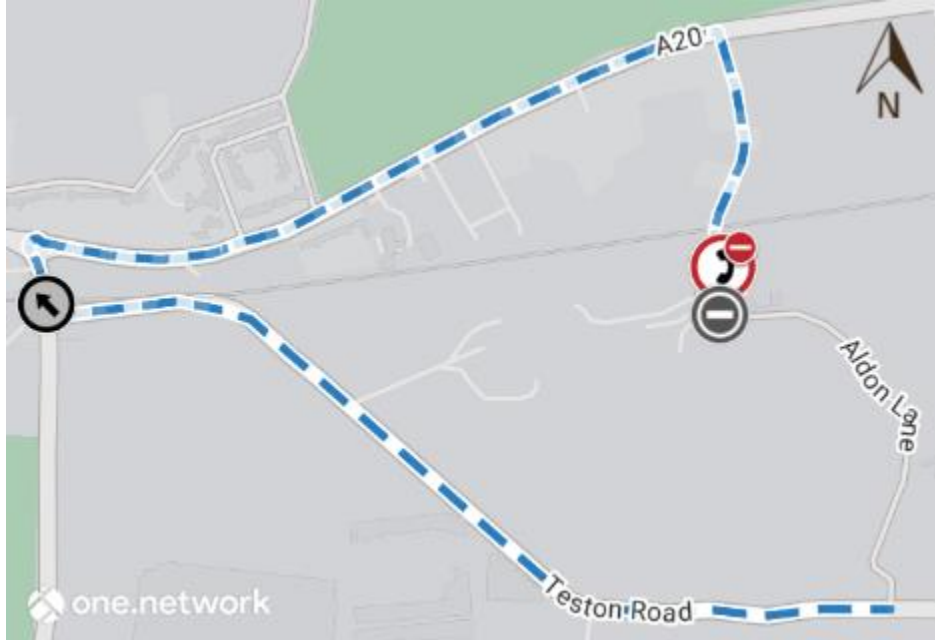
Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works.

The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce to allow Openreach 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=136808637>

For information regarding this closure please contact Openreach on 08000 282 229, who will be able to assist with the scope of these works.

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



# HELPING TONBRIDGE & MALLING GET DIGITAL



You could be eligible to access free:

- Gifted 2-in-1 laptop
- Digital skills sessions
- One to one digital support

This is available for **Tonbridge & Malling residents** over the age of 16 and digitally excluded, that meet one of the following criteria:

- In or at-risk of financial hardship,
- Not in education, employment or training, or
- Looking to develop skills to support employment or career development.

Full eligibility details and how to apply are available at [www.digitalkent.uk](http://www.digitalkent.uk) or call **03000 410 950**.



Funded by  
UK Government



## Snodland Library

15-17 High Street, Snodland. ME8 5DA

**Get Digital!** Whether you need support with using your tablet, the NHS app or just getting online. **We're here to help.**

**Third Tuesday of the month between 10am and 12pm on:**

- 16<sup>th</sup> April
- 20<sup>th</sup> August
- 17<sup>th</sup> December
- 21<sup>st</sup> May
- 17<sup>th</sup> September
- 18<sup>th</sup> June
- 15<sup>th</sup> October
- 16<sup>th</sup> July
- 19<sup>th</sup> November

To book onto a session and find out more, please visit [digitalkent.uk](http://digitalkent.uk) or call **03000 410 950**.

