



MINUTES of **OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL** meeting
Held on **Tuesday 5th March 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 F Steer
Cllr C Stephens

Also in attendance:

County Councillor Hohler (7.40 – 7.55pm), 2 members of public, 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 Borough Councillors Roud and Tatton.
Cllr Taylor declared an interest in application TM/24/00209 - Stocketts, as she is a neighbour.
2. **MINUTES** To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2024 for signature. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of meeting held on 6th February 2024 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Taylor.
3. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**
 - a) County Councillor Hohler
Cllr Hohler was welcomed to the meeting.
 - 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
 - Cllr Hohler offered some of her Member Grant to Offham
 - b) Borough Councillors Dean, Roud and Tatton
There were no reports

c) Police
There was no report

d) Speedwatch
Cllr Steer reported the first session of Speedwatch has taken place, next to Spadework. There are 13 volunteers and 11 accredited to roadside monitoring. During the session, no cars did more than 32mph in the 60mph limit and slowed down when they saw the volunteers which was good to see. It has officially been the wettest February on record which has stopped teams going out. Sessions have to be booked online in advance. The SID was in operation at the same time, so he doesn't know if drivers saw Speedwatch or the SID. In one hour, they logged 225 cars travelling in one direction out of the village at 3.30pm on a Monday. There were an equal number going into the village, which is a huge number. Cllr Steer will attend all sessions until every volunteer has been out, so they are all familiar with the equipment and stationery.
He said there was no need to consider vest cameras as the moment as the response from drivers was positive, people slowed down and said the volunteers were doing a great job. If Speedwatch does slow people down, he will cut group sizes down from 3 to 2.
Cllr Steer asked for more bin speed signs from Kent Highways
Cllrs were pleased the volunteers felt safe and comfortable and were pleased with the positive news.
Cllr Steer was thanked for his hard work.

4. **PLANNING AND LICENSING:**

a) New applications

- i. **TM/24/00052 - Yew Tree Cottage, North Meadow** - Listed Building Application: Proposed remedial works to address damage caused by an escape of water
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**
- ii. **TM/24/00209 - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Removal of small section of modern boundary wall and enlargement of driveway to allow vehicle maneuvering.
Cllr Taylor left the room while Councillors discussed this application.
It was noted that the modern boundary wall referred to is in fact 100 years old, although this is much newer than the rest of the wall. Cllrs **AGREED** to **OBJECT** to this application. The wall should not be touched as it has been there for 100 years. The entrance is wide enough for removal lorries for example, which have been used when residents move in. Councillors could not see a reason why access is needed for vehicles larger than a removal lorry. This is a conservation area, and removal of even part of the wall will affect the street scene and change the nature of the village. There is a tree with a TPO on it and a public footpath near the entrance.
Cllr Taylor returned to the room.
- iii. **TM24/00167 - Orchard House, Pepingstraw Close** - Submission of Details Reserved by Condition - Details of condition 2 (external materials), 3 (finished levels) , 8 (bin store) and 9 (external Lighting) submitted pursuant to planning permission TM/20/01954/FL (Demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of four detached dwellings together with associated parking, access and landscaping)
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**. Consideration should be given to fencing which borders the Recreation Ground and a tree that the Parish Council does not want cut down. Cllr Bailey will look into the lighting details in the application to make sure the woods are not lit up at night.
- iv. **24/00233 - Teston Cottage, Teston Road** - Replacement of roof tiles and installation of PV Solar panels to garage
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.
- v. **24/00235 - Teston Cottage, Teston Road** - Listed Building Consent: Replacement of roof tiles and installation of PV Solar panels to garage
There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

b) Approvals

- i. **TM/23/00468/FL - Godwell Oast Church Road** - Conversion of part of existing barn for use with existing dwelling incorporating external alterations and replacement windows and doors.

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Conversion of detached Oast to ancillary habitable room with new windows and roof.
Replacement external detached store and garage

- ii. **TM/23/03361 - 7 Church Road** - Proposed side extension with new bi-fold doors to the rear and full refurbishment

c) Refusals

- i. **TM/23/03383 - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Remodeling and realignment of the existing access to allow vehicles to enter from the east, including replacement of the existing frontage wall and erection of new railings and electric gates

d) Any other planning and Licensing matters

- i. **To consider a Neighbourhood Plan**
Cllrs Taylor and Bailey will discuss this further.
- ii. **TM/24/00193 - Offham Quarry, Teston Road** - Consultation by KCC: 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/21/1259/RVAR (KCC/TM/0002/2024) (NO OBJECTIONS)
- iii. **TM/24/00073 – Comp Corner, Seven Mile Lane** - Change of use of land from agricultural to residential (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 and Solar Park

Works were due to start this week. Cllr Taylor will contact the Project Manager at Infinis.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. To consider Parish Council Vacancy

A resident interested in the vacancy is attending the meeting to observe.

b. To consider and approve Terms of Reference of Traffic/Highways Working Group

There was a discussion. It was decided there is no work for a Working Group at the moment so there is no need to agree a Terms of Reference and set up the group.

c. To receive update about meeting with Kent Highways on 21.02.24 and approve Highways Improvement Plan

Cllr Bailey updated Cllrs on the HIP virtual meeting which took place:

- It was reported that not everyone in the village wants a 20mph limit, so Cllr Bailey said that most people want a 20mph limit.
- There were positive things to come out of the meeting. Following tests, Offham did not fall into the right band category to be considered for a 20 limit. But now we are implementing Speedwatch, it could bring the speed down.
- KCC have agreed to re-test speeds in 4 months time
- We would have to find funding as well, but there is a possibility we can move forward on a 20mph zone
- Other possibilities include Traffic calming. Cllr Bailey said a lot of people want to see some sort of traffic calming in the village such as width restrictions, but the problem is you need street lighting for these. Most residents do not want street lighting. But you could put a light onto a telegraph pole. The Parish Council would need to work with the village on this. The telegraph poles would need to be load bearing and near the restriction.
- The first thing is to try and get speed limit down and maybe get 20mph that way. Focus on this at the moment, then work through it step by step. This is the priority on which we all agree.
- There was a question about lit bollards for street lighting. There would need to be power to these.

- It was noted that a lot of telegraph poles are in people's front gardens and not in the Highway. You would want approval of residents in the vicinity of that light.
- It was noted that the number of places where we could put width restrictions on Teston Road are limited. A high percentage of properties have their own driveways.

Cllr Taylor reported that one solution to help reduce speed was to refresh the lines and road markings throughout the village, which she has logged with Highways. This might encourage drivers to slow down.

Cllr Marchant reported that in the space of 10 minutes at the No Entry area of North Meadow he saw 5 vehicles going the wrong way. Cllr Marchant was asked to take photos to be passed onto the Police.

d. Number 70 bus service

Borough Councillor Mike Taylor has not been able to find funding yet for the 70 Bus Service which stops in Offham once a week. Cllrs **AGREED** to pay their contribution of £214.30 for the service to continue for a year. Cllrs discussed residents in the village who used the service.

e. New Parish Notice Boards – Grants and Donations

Cllr Taylor provided details of a 3 bay Notice Board which Cllrs considered. There was a discussion about whether this board could be sited in the same place by the Recreation Ground or in a new place where it may be seen by more people. An identical board could replace the one by the Book Box and Bus Shelter.

Cllr Taylor will approach Infinis to fund one Notice Board and ask if Cllr Hohler can put funding towards the second. There will also be removal and installation costs to consider.

f. To consider Village Litter Picking

The Offham Society are arranging litter picking, and the Parish Council have been asked if this can be covered by insurance. It was noted there is not a village insurance policy. It is a Parish Council insurance policy covering Parish Council activities. This is not a Parish Council activity so cannot be covered by the insurance policy.

g. Annual Review: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Bye-Laws, Media Policy, Complaints Procedure, Freedom of Information Act, Retention of Documents and Records, Tree Management Policy, Travel and Expenses Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, GDPR Action Plan, Grievance Procedure and Risk Assessments

Cllrs have received and had the opportunity to consider the existing policies and documents. They are unchanged from last year, and the Clerk did not believe any changes were needed. Cllrs **APPROVED** the documents.

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

It was reported that the sign at the top of Aldon Lane has been fixed

8. **MONTHLY CHECK-LIST**

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

Cllr Taylor reported that the contractors working on the track carried out an emergency repair of the hole on the Village Green at Hayes Lane, laying Type 1 Material. We have not received a bill yet but it will cost no more than £200. Cars are already parking on it. This is not a long-term solution, but is a good measure until there are funds to do something better. It keeps the area flat and safe.

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

Cllr Williams maintains The Pound. She requested that any works around the village carried out by the Offham Society do not include the Pound.

Cllr Bailey has spoken to the cricket club. They have a quote from Cllr Marchant to cut back trees overhanging the cricket ground where they want to put new nets and have asked if the Parish Council will pay half. Cllrs considered their Tree Management Policy, and did not believe work was required under the terms of that policy. There are no objections if the cricket club want to cut back the tree.

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c) To receive Update – Phase 1 and Phase 2 Recreation Ground and Play Area Refurbishment

Cllr Taylor reported:

- Track works (tarmac) are completed
- The table tennis table was delivered yesterday
- Work by Eibe to install equipment for the football pavilion, climbing frame chess table and agility trail will commence on 18th March and will take 7-10 days
- A letter to residents bordering the Recreation Ground will be delivered by Cllrs Steer and Stephens
- The graphics on the track will be installed on 27th March and it will take half a day
- Phase 1 will be finished in time for Easter. There was a discussion about whether the pub could run an event, perhaps with an easter egg hunt and ribbon cutting. The TMBC Planning Obligations Officer should be invited as we would not have got the funding without her support.

There are a couple of issues that need addressing:

- 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. Cllr Marchant offered to seed the area. When it is settled he will order graded top soil and will dress the area later in the summer. He will liaise with the contractor about this. He estimated that the top soil will cost about £350 per lorry. TMBC has funded £75,000 of equipment and work, but this will not cover the top soil. Cllrs AGREED to spend project funding on this to finish the Recreation Ground to a good standard
- The contractor damaged one of the benches and has repaired this
- The gate to the Recreation Ground needs a new post. Quotes will be obtained. Project funding can be used to replace the post.
- The contractor has said the agility trail should have turf laid under the grass matting. There was a discussion about this. Cllrs felt that it was better to lay the area with a soil and sand mix, then seed it so the grass grows through the matting. Cllrs will deal with this.

The FCC board meet on Thursday 14th March to consider the Parish Council's application for funding for stage two of works to improve the enclosed Play Area.

d) Wellbeing

The first meeting of the Shedettes took place this morning at the Kings Arms, with 13 in attendance. Attendees paid £2.50 for coffee from the new machine at the Kings Arms and could purchase cake. Cllr Taylor was able to visit. Mens Shed normally has an attendance of 12. Cllr Steer is considering walks when the weather is better.

e) 2025 Fund Raising Calendar

Entries are being received.

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

a) Annual Parish Meeting 05.04.24

Cllrs Taylor, Williams, Marchant and Steer will be in attendance.

b) Race Night with Malling Lions 27.04.24

Cllr Williams reported that tickets are on sale, and a Fish and Chips supper has been arranged. Raffle and auction prizes are needed.

c) Offham May Day 04.05.24

Cllr Marchant will complete a risk assessment of the Village Green before the event.

d) D Day 80 – 06.06.24

It was decided that no event will be planned.

e) Offham Society lazy Sunday Jazz 30.06.24

Cllrs APPROVED the use of Cosgrave Field by Offham Society for this popular event. Cllr Marchant will complete a risk assessment of the Field before the event.

- f) Offham Garden Safari 14.07.24
Cllr Marchant will complete a risk assessment of the Village Green before the event.
- g) Sheddettes – every Thursday 10am Kings Arms
This has been discussed.
- h) Mens Shed – The Kings Arms – Every Thursday
This has been discussed.

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.

The Clerk has provided a budget report to Cllrs. Overall the Parish Council is below budget.

- b) To consider and approve invoice payments

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payments Approved since the last meeting		
Clerk	Reimbursement - DropBox	£95.88
First 4 Drains	Phase One Recreation Ground – Track Works Inv 1	£7,501.20
First 4 Drains	Phase One Recreation Ground – Track Works Inv 2	£9,169.20
Payments – March 2024		
Offham Village Hall	July – December 23 Hall Hire	£100.00
Clerk	March 2024 Salary	£935.90
Clerk	March 2024 - Overtime	£60.06
HMRC	March 2024 PAYE and NI	£256.95
HMRC	March 2024 – PAYE & NI on overtime	£37,64
Clerk	February 24 Travel Expenses	£4.55

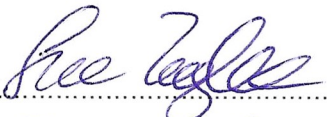
Cllrs Marchant and Bailey will approve the payments.

- c) To receive update on Parish Councillor Signatories with Unity Trust
The Clerk confirmed that Charles Unter has been removed as a signatory.
- d) To consider donations 2023-2024
Cllrs noted that there are not significant Parish Reserves. Donations will be considered during the year if requests are made, but no further donations will be made for this year.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

It was noted the next meeting follows a Bank Holiday weekend. The Agenda will go out two days early.

Date of Next Monthly Meeting – **Tuesday 2nd April 2024**. The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed 

Dated 2-4-2024

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