



## OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### Parish Council Newsletter – December 2024

- **Are you interested in becoming a Parish Councillor?** We have two vacancies. Please contact [sue.taylor@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.taylor@offham-pc.gov.uk) or [clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk) for more details.

#### December Meeting

- Kent Highways have produced design plans for signage to help improve the junction at Seven Mile Lane
- Cllrs are looking to improve the fencing around the Recreation Ground and Play Area
- The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025. If you know of a Village Group or Society who have not been invited and would like to take part, please contact [clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@offham-pc.gov.uk)
- Completion of the solar park has been delayed by matters outside of their control. Ducting needs to be run under the M26, but approval has not been given for a 2 night full closure to enable work to take place. The alternative is 6 weeks of work, which will involve the road works returning at Wrotham Heath. It is hoped the solar park will be finished by the end of March and the footpath opened in April.
- A project to repair and restore the quintain is underway, with support and guidance from James M and Suzanne Y. Progress will be reported at Parish Council meetings.
- Work to clear silt from the pond on Comp Lane is being planned, and Steve R will carry out maintenance on the duck house.
- The event to light the Christmas Tree went well. Thanks were given to the May Queen Kyra Williamson, to Cllr Marchant and Steve R for sorting out the lights, and to everyone else who took part or helped. Cllrs donated £100 towards refreshments for the event and for Carols in the Pub.
- Cllr Marchant laid a Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Service. Steve R, Robin T and Ken F were thanked for the display on the Village Green
- The 2025-2026 budget and precept request will be agreed at the next meeting
- The date of the January meeting has been changed to Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025

#### Highways Improvement Plan

The Parish Council works with KCC to produce a Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). This is a list of measures which the Parish Council thinks will improve roads in the village. The HIP serves as a record. It helps Highways to see what local people think is important.

Putting an item on the HIP does not mean that action will be taken and it does not mean that there will be any funding. Kent Highways hope to work on one or two items on the HIP per year. That does not mean that action will be taken on that item or that funding will be available, but they will look to make some progress.

The HIP is reviewed once a year with Highways. Kent Highway are the Highways Authority who make decisions about what can and cannot be done on the roads.

Any changes such as physical traffic calming or streetlights would need public consultation and approval of the majority of residents. Approval would also be needed from Highways, but they are unlikely to provide any funding. Costs may run into tens of thousands of pounds, and the Parish Council does not have the means to fund these. Grants are not available for Highways works.

Residents can report any issues to Highways using the online fault reporting tool – <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem> eg – signs missing, white lines faded, potholes, signs covered by vegetation, tools or equipment left after roadworks, requests for traffic calming etc.

### **Solar Park – Update**

Infinis have provided the following information:

- Infinis have had several meetings with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO), who have had had issues with National Highways allowing them to complete their works back to the primary sub stations near the M26 slip lane. Unfortunately, this has put the programme back significantly.
- Infinis have been pushing hard to resolve the issues with Highways and are making some headway.
- The Order for UKPN works now looks to be:
  - Works along Seven Mile Lane finished 24<sup>th</sup> November, with all traffic management to be removed by 6<sup>th</sup> January
  - 6th January - night closure of M26 slip road for traffic management to be put in place, then 4 weeks of single lane reduction around roundabout and slip lane - but planning to be reduced to 2 weeks
  - Next stage cable pulling but will cause little disturbance until completion
  - Project finalised by end of February

Due to the above, the new completion and generation date is now 31/3/25

### **Speedwatch**

Thanks to all the volunteers taking part. The Chief Constable has written to Cllr Steer thanking the Speedwatch Group, and PC Laura Farmer stopped to show her support to the volunteers at a session. If you would like to take part, please contact [fred.steer@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:fred.steer@offham-pc.gov.uk)

### **Dogs**

As a point of information, if you have concerns about dogs, you can get in touch with:

- TMBC Licensing team who deal with the licensing of dog breeders - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/licensing/animal-licensing>
- If dogs are barking and making noise, details of how to report potential noise nuisances are published on the TMBC website at <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/environmental-health/pollution>.
- Any welfare concerns would need to be reported to the RSPCA - <https://www.rspca.org.uk/reportaconcern>.

### **May Day 2025**

May Day has been a fantastic village event and celebration for many years. Most recently it has been organised by Jeni S, who is thanked for her hard work.

It is understood there are a number of volunteers willing to help, but a new organiser is needed as Jeni is stepping down from the role. If you are interested, please contact Jeni, or get in touch with the Parish Council who will pass your message on.

### **Kent Association of Councils (KALC) Community Award Scheme and Offham Village Awards**

Do you know somebody in Offham who deserves to be acknowledged and recognised for making a significant contribution over a considerable period of time to our local community? The Parish

Council is participating in the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Awards Scheme 2025 and is also running its own Parish Council Awards Scheme.

All nominations must be received by **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. Previous winners are listed later in the Newsletter.

### **DAVSS Newsletter**

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

<https://mailchi.mp/2ec6e6ced6c6/c1g9c2wvv4-17450226?e=14c16829ad>

### **TMBC – Severe Weather Emergency Protocol**

Like all councils up and down the country, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has undertaken lots of work to bring in those who have rough slept in the district and we have moved many on to successful long term placements. There are several ongoing initiatives to try and prevent people from entering the streets, and if they do, then we are working with all of our partners to prevent them from remaining on the streets.

Our Severe Weather Emergency protocol (SWEP) is designed to be a humanitarian response to severe weather to protect the health and wellbeing of anyone who might be sleeping outside. The aim of the protocol is to provide suitable accommodation for anyone who is sleeping rough during periods of severe weather, which may include extreme cold, heat, wind or rain. Despite our recent successes in accommodating many of our rough sleepers we will be activating SWEP, as an absolute safety net to prevent anyone from sleeping on the street when the weather is severe.

If you see anyone sleeping rough or are working with anyone who is homeless, please make contact with the Housing Solutions team on 01732 844522 for advice and assistance. If assistance is required outside of office hours there is an out of hours homelessness service available by calling 01732 844522. Those who are rough sleeping can also refer themselves in by calling the same numbers.

If you have any questions or concerns for anyone who is sleeping rough or you are aware of any services who would benefit from receiving this email please contact the Housing Solutions Team on 01732 844522 or by emailing [housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk)



### **Mens Shed and Shedettes at The Kings Arms**

Mens Shed is on Thursdays in the Kings Arms from 10am – 11.30am, and costs £2 each. Come along to meet people, and enjoy a warm welcome!

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



### **Seasons Greetings!**

Seasons Greetings from the Parish Council and best wishes for a Happy 2025.



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

- Carols in the pub – 19.12.24 – 7.30pm
- 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 held a week later than usual, on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

# OFFHAM



## YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU!

### Parish Councillor Vacancies

Come and Join the Parish Council

Would you like to:

- Make a difference to local people?
- Give something back to your community?
- Help shape change for the benefit of your local area?



For More Details:

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

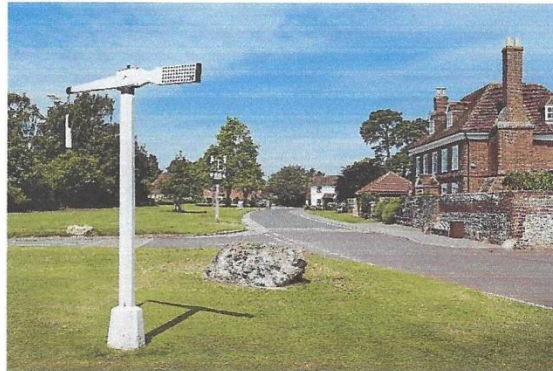
[sue.taylor@offham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.taylor@offham-pc.gov.uk)

07563 606573





# Offham Parish Council Calendar 2025



All funds raised will go to Village Projects

**£6**

available to purchase from Sue:

**07732267121**

**The Kings Arms Pub**



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



UK Government

# Are you over State Pension age, or know someone who is?

**Pension Credit** tops up pension income and can help with day-to-day living costs.

If you are over State Pension age, you may be eligible to claim **Pension Credit**, even if you own your home or have savings. People who claim **Pension Credit** may also be able to get:

- The **Winter Fuel Payment\*** and other help with heating costs
- Help with rent and Council Tax
- A free TV Licence for those aged 75 or over
- Help with the cost of NHS services, such as NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments

You could be eligible for **Pension Credit** if your weekly income is below £218.15 or, if you have a partner who lives with you, £332.95. Qualifying income level may be higher in some circumstances.

**Don't miss out.**



SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE



Check your eligibility at [gov.uk/pension-credit](https://gov.uk/pension-credit) or by calling **0800 99 1234**

Eligibility criteria apply  
\*or the equivalent in Scotland.



# Offham Parish Council

## Community Awards Scheme 2025

Do you know somebody in Offham who deserves to be acknowledged and recognised for making a significant contribution over a considerable period of time to our local community?

The Parish Council is participating in the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Awards Scheme 2025 and is also running its own Parish Council Awards Scheme.

All nominations must be received by **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

Previous Winners:

### **2024**

KALC Community Award: Steve Rickett

Offham Community Award: Angela Unter, Ken Frost and Warren Boulter

### **2023**

KALC Community Award: Pam Begbey

Offham Community Award: Brian Jones and Robin Taylor

### **2022**

KALC Community Award: Caroline Dyer

Offham Community Award: Rachel Godfrey and George Rothschild

### **2021**

KALC Community Award: David Frankling

Offham Community Award: Wendy Williams

### **2020**

KALC Community Award: David Stretton

Offham Community Award: Stewart and Sally Biggs

### **2019**

KALC Community Award: Stephen Betts

Offham Community Award: Martyn Begbey and Collin Ellis

### **2018**

KALC Community Award: Fiona Lloyd-Williams

Offham Community Award: Malcolm Goodwin and Clive Turpie



**2017**

KALC Community Award: Clare Innes

Offham Community Award: Val Taylor and Stewart Malcolm

**2016**

KALC Community Award: Mike Rowe

Offham Community Award: Paul Nelson and Stewart Betts

**2015**

KALC Community Award: John Lander

Offham Community Award: Colin Wolfe and Phyllis Jones

**2014**

KALC Community Award: Gloria Pearson

Offham Community Award: Ron Marchant and Joan Phipps

## Offham Cricket Club December Update

### 1st XI Success

Following their successful season members of the 1st XI attended the Kent Cricket League awards ceremony in November. At the event the Offham captain, Dave Sibley, received the trophy for winning the league from the Kent County Cricket captain, Daniel Bell-Drummond.



### Junior winter training begins

In preparation for the 2025 season our junior squads have already begun indoor training sessions each Friday leading up to Christmas. Sessions are this year being held at Wrotham School, with more in the spring. The club runs junior sides for both boys and girls from ages 8 - 18, with many of the older players also participating in adult cricket.



### The sheep return



We have sheep grazing on the outfield for the next couple of months as this helps keep the grass down at a manageable level. Without them early season mowing, particularly when the outfield is damp, is very challenging and can be quite damaging. They will leave at the end of January before we begin pre-season preparation work on the square and outfield.

The club always welcomes new players or anyone who would like to contribute to the club more generally. If you are interested or have a child who wishes to play please contact us via our email address [offhamcricketclub@gmail.com](mailto:offhamcricketclub@gmail.com)



## Guided group walks – January 2025



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.

*Returning towards Platt Church – 5 January walk*

**For full details of all upcoming walks, see [Tonbridge and Malling Ramblers Facebook page](#) or [www.tonbridgeandmallingsramblers.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgeandmallingsramblers.org.uk).**

Sunday 5 January	Platt Woods, fields and lanes, starting with a climb to Platt Woods and sections of the Wealdway. Open farmland views of the North Downs. After Crouch and Claygate Cross, walk down Plough Hill to Basted Mill, returning via a steep bridleway. Moderate difficulty.	5 miles
Thursday 9 January	Chiddingstone circular walk - fairly flat with good countryside views. Woodland, fields and lanes and part of the walk passes through the grounds of Hever Castle. Moderate difficulty.	5.8 miles
Sunday 12 January	Two sides of the North Downs with views over the Weald and the City. Walk through beech woods, open pasture and across a Roman Road. Good footing along both sides of the North Downs between the highest points at Botley Hill and Betsom Hill. One or two short climbs. Moderate difficulty.	5.6 miles
Sunday 19 January	A leisurely winter walk that encircles Weald village. It's ideal for winter with many tracks, and some hills, fields and stiles. The Greensand Way provides good views over the surrounding countryside.	4 miles
Sunday 26 January	Circular walk from Shipbourne to Igham Mote with a climb up the Greensand Ridge for views south from Wilmot Hill. Follow the Greensand Way past Igham Mote to return through the Fairlawne estate. 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).		

# Consultation on proposals for the Postural Stability Service



## Consultation on proposals for the Postural Stability Service in Kent

Kent County Council are seeking views from individuals and organisations from communities across Kent on proposed changes to the Postural Stability Service. The Postural Stability Service helps people improve their strength and balance and helps them live independently, for longer.

Find out more and have your say at [Postural Stability Service | Let's talk Kent](#)

Or paste <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/postural-stability> into your browser (Consultation closes on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024.)

If you require any of the documents in an alternative format or language please email [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk) ([External link](#)) or call 03000 42 15 53 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 42 15 53). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

# Kent Resilience Forum



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES IN KENT AND MEDWAY

Dear Resident,

I am contacting you to let you know that The Port of Dover and Eurotunnel are forecasting their peak tourist traveller numbers on 19, 20 and 21 December, as schools break up for the holiday and hauliers from the EU head back to the continent in time for the festive break.

To help keep traffic flowing through Dover, and avoid congestion on local roads in the area, the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) has agreed to deploy Operation Brock on the M20 for a limited period as a precaution.

The contraflow will be put out on the London-bound carriageway between junctions 8 and 9 from overnight on Sunday 15 December until Sunday 22 December. This will allow lorries to be held on the coastbound carriageway if the Dover TAP queuing system on the A20 outside Dover fills up.

As Strategic Lead of the Kent & Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) I want to reassure you that the focus of everyone involved in managing traffic at this busy time will be on keeping traffic moving, disruption to a minimum, and communities in and around Dover safe.

However, should any disruption occur due to delays at the Port of Dover because of high passengers numbers or severe weather in the channel, we want to do all we can to support you through this by offering as much help and advice as possible.

For the latest updates on any services changes and useful contacts in your community, you can find out more by visiting the following websites:

If you are a resident or business in the Dover District: [Cross-channel traffic disruption](#)

If you are a resident or business in the Folkestone & Hythe District: [Roads and travel | Folkestone & Hythe District Council](#)

For more information, or to check what is happening on the roads before you go out and about, you can visit [Check before you travel - Kent County Council](#) or @KentHighways or @HighwaysSEAST on X.

Also, a reminder about access for emergency services during times of heavy traffic or disruption:

**FIRE** - Kent Fire and Rescue Service has plans in place to make sure they can carry on providing an effective emergency response in areas of significant congestion. They do this by moving crews, fire engines and other resources around the county to provide cover where it's needed. They urge everyone to only **call 999 in an emergency**, where there is a risk to life or property.

**AMBULANCE** - In periods of expected increased traffic build up, South East Coast Ambulance (SECAMB) can station paramedics in your area to ensure they are as prepared as possible to provide care for seriously ill or injured patients. In periods of disruption in and around Dover and Folkestone, they may organise for ambulance crews to start and finish their shifts more locally, which would further help with the response. Please be assured that SECAMB position their vehicles to best respond to patient demand. You can help manage demand by only dialling 999 in an emergency and making use of alternatives including NHS 111.

**POLICE** - Kent Police officers will still reach you quickly in an emergency even when there is heavy traffic congestion. They have enough officers in place to enable them to get to an emergency, and can move people around the county to provide cover where it is needed. You do not need to visit a police station to report an incident. The quickest way is online at [www.kent.police.uk/report](http://www.kent.police.uk/report) but always call 999 in an emergency including if a crime is in progress or someone's life is at risk.

**NHS** - The NHS in Kent and Medway has tried and tested plans to make sure patients can access the care they need during periods of disruption. Patients can help by making sure they use the right service for them. If you are not sure where to go or what help you need, use NHS 111 online (111.nhs.uk) or on the phone. After a successful trial in the summer, I am pleased to tell you that the permit scheme will once again be in place if Operation Brock goes to control, and lorries start to be filtered down to the port from the M20. No permit means no entry to the Port of Dover, which significantly reduced truckers attempting to jump the queue, circumnavigate the restrictions, and cause problems on local roads.

Traffic levels will be monitored 24-hours a day during the Christmas getaway period by a team made up of KMRF partners including Kent County Council and the emergency services, with traffic officers at points through Dover town.

Whilst there may be some local traffic restrictions, we will continue to explore and test new ways to assist residents.

Our priority, as always, is to ensure everyone is able to get to where they want to go safely and as quickly as possible and to enjoy the festive period.

Simon Jones

Strategic Lead for Kent and Medway Resilience Forum



## Rogue Traders

Please be aware of possible Rogue Traders operating in the area.

There have been reports recently of people cold calling on vulnerable residents offering roofing, minor building and gardening work.

If suspicious, decline work, don't hand over any money and try and obtain any company name and vehicle registration numbers for the police to investigate along with Trading Standards.

Importantly, please safeguard your family, friends and neighbours by sharing this information.

Many thanks,

PS Atkinson



**Message Sent By**

Nick Atkinson

(Kent Police, PS, Tonbridge Neighbourhood Officer)



Kent Libraries

# Volunteer with the Home Library Service

## Create connections and share stories: become a Home Library Service volunteer

For more info call 03000 41 31 31, email [libraryvolunteers@kent.gov.uk](mailto:libraryvolunteers@kent.gov.uk) or scan the QR code to apply online.



SCAN ME



 **CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING**

**NEW LOCATIONS ADDED!**

 **Heart of Kent Hospice**

Let us collect and recycle your real Christmas tree in exchange for a donation.

**We will be collecting in**  
 ME9, ME6 5, ME14, ME15, ME16, ME17 3, ME17 4  
 ME18, ME19, ME20, TN12 5, TN15 7, TN15 8, TN15 9  
 Burham, Woldham, Shippourne, Plaxtol and Haglow  
 £15 suggested donation to Heart of Kent Hospice.

**Tree Collection**  
 Your real Christmas tree will be collected between:  
 Friday 3 – Sunday 5 January 2025.

Scan here to book your christmas collection!  
 For further information visit [hokh.org](http://hokh.org)

\*All trees must be booked for recycling before Tuesday 31 December 2024.

In partnership with    



# **Sing-along of Popular Christmas Carols**



**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>  
December  
7.30pm**

**Music & carol sheets provided  
singing will be led  
Mulled Wine & Mince Pies**

# **The Kings Arms**

*Mulled wine and mince pies generously supported by Offham Parish Council*