



DRAFT MINUTES of OFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL meeting
Held on **Tuesday 1st April 2025 at 7.30PM** in The Committee Room, Offham Village Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr S Taylor (Chair)
Cllr S Williams (Vice-Chair)
Cllr A Marchant

Also in attendance:

Borough Councillor Tatton, 3 members of public (one left at 8.10pm), 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 Cllrs Bailey and Steer, Borough Councillors Dean and Roud.
2. **MINUTES** To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2025 for signature. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of meeting held on 4th March 2025 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Taylor.
3. **TO CONSIDER PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY AND CO-OPTION**
There are two vacancies to be filled.
There was a discussion about how to recruit Councillors. There is a new leaflet to explain what the Parish Council is and what it does. Copies of the Newsletter could be left at the Kings Arms.
4. **EXTERNAL REPORTS**
 - a) County Councillor Hohler
There was no report.
 - b) Borough Councillor Tatton
 - There was a discussion about recruiting Councillors and encouraging residents to attend the APM
 - She thanked the Parish Council for filling in a Sustainability Form, which feeds into the Local Plan and helps TMBC understand what services you have and accessibility
 - Cllrs Dean and Roud are at Cabinet tonight, talking about the West Malling Farmers Market petition. They are hoping for solution to allow traders to park for more than 4 hours
 - There are changes to the way the Borough Council accesses heritage advice. They did share with Tunbridge Wells, but they have lost their Conservation Officer. A number of Conservation Areas, including Offham, don't have appraisals. There are impacts on the time it takes to make a decision when, for example, a Listed Building application comes in
 - New parking standards have come out, which she will share with the Parish Council. These are better than they were before, for example about 2 spaces per house in a new development and garages in rural and semi rural areas will not count towards parking
 - Devolution – the Leaders submitted a letter to Government and would not support less than 3 Unitary Authorities or more than 4. The letter included a number of options of how those Unitaries can be arranged. The Kent Leaders are engaging with KALC to see if there are ways to devolve further powers and responsibilities to Parish Councils
 - c) Police
PC Farmer has been in contact but was unable to attend the meeting. There was a theft of aluminium irrigation pipes from a farm in March.
 - d) Village Hall, Primary School
The Village Hall AGM is next week and Cllr Williams will attend.
5. **PLANNING AND LICENSING:**
 - a) New applications
 - i. **25/00476/PA - The Applehouse, Aldon Lane** - Replace up & over broken metal garage door with 3 x hand-made glazed wooden hinged doors. The space will be used mainly for storage and repairs to agricultural machinery. Glazed aspect of the design and colour of woodwork will match

existing windows and doors of The Applehouse. The new combined doors overall size will be the same as the metal door

There was a discussion. There were NO OBJECTIONS.

- ii. **25/00524/PA - Bulawayo House, Teston Road** - Construction of two-storey side and front extensions, alterations to roof including dormers to front and rear, construction of single-storey rear extension. Conversion of existing garage and extending existing ground floor rear/side utility/garden room incorporating a swimming pool/changing/plant room extension. Associated external alterations.
There was a discussion. There were NO OBJECTIONS.

b) Approvals

- i. **25/00158/PA - Teston Cottage, Teston Road** - Tree Notification Conservation Area - T1/T2 Maple, Prune to previous starting 4.5m to 3m T3 Purple Plum, Prune to previous starting 6m to 5m
- ii. **25/00209 - Stocketts, Aldon Lane** - Removal of small section of modern boundary wall and enlargement of driveway to allow vehicle manoeuvring
- iii. **25/00189/PA - Barn Cottage, Seven Mile Lane**, - Part 1 Class A (Prior Approval) - Prior Notification for Larger Home Extension (Part 1 Class A): Single storey rear extension to a depth of 5.0m, maximum roof height of 3.70m, and eaves height of 3.0m (Prior Approval Not Required)

c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

d) Any other planning and Licensing matters

- i. **25/00343/PA - Land Adjacent Orchard House, Pepingstraw Close**- Non-Material Amendment to planning Permission TM/20/01954/FL. For the erection of new entrance gates and accompanying pillars in lieu of the existing gates and pillars (PC Not consulted)
- ii. **25/00338/PA - 23 Pepingstraw Close** - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Extension of current single dropped kerb into a double length dropped kerb to match our double garage (PC Not consulted)
- iii. To consider and approve appointment of Planning Consultant, and accept quotation for work, to prepare a Planning Policy Statement/Priority Statement
The Parish Council is working with Alison Eardley, a Planning Consultant who also works with KALC, to prepare a questionnaire to distribute to residents. Cllr Taylor is doing a lot of work on this to save the Parish Council Money. The questionnaire will help us understand what the community wants. This will be hand delivered to houses and will be available at the APM. At the APM there will also be a board so residents can make comments on Post-It Notes.
The costs of the Planning Consultant will be up to £2,500 +VAT. Cllrs AGREED to appoint the consultant to make sure the work was done properly.
- iv. To consider and approve village questionnaire
Cllrs will consider and agree the draft questionnaire to be sent out as soon as possible.

6. MATTERS ARISING

a) TMBC – Parish Infrastructure Statement 2025

Suggestions for the statement include: ramp to the Recreation Ground, fence from the exit from the Recreation Ground to Pepingstraw Close, Renovating the Lectern and Offham OS Map, any other project work.

b) To consider quotes for Recreation Ground Fencing

We have two quotes and Cllr Marchant is obtaining a third quote.

c) To consider Dog Fouling Campaign

Cllrs AGREED to order campaign posters from Keep Britain Tidy for £140 + VAT. Cllr Marchant has offered to put posters up on the Village Green in the evening and remove them in the morning. Posters can be rotated on the Notice Boards to draw attention to them.

- d) KCC Licence To Cultivate – Gateways at Spadework and Aldon Lane
Highways have not yet granted the Licence.

Patrick B spoke on behalf of The Offham Society. At their next meeting he will ask if the Committee is happy to send out a request from the Parish Council to their mailing list. The Offham Society cannot ask for volunteers to help with things that the Parish Council do.

Cllr Williams will arrange a Working Party with a list of jobs around the village

The Offham Society has a number of events – 4th April a talk about Lavender Fields, 23rd May AGM, 13th July Jazz in Cosgrave Field and 17th August Treasure Hunt in the Village. Cllr Marchant offered use of a gazebo for the Jazz event.

- e) Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution
Cllr Tatton has already discussed this.
- f) To receive any updates about Highways Improvement Plan
There was no update.

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS:

- a) Blaise Farm (Liaison Meeting tbc)

- i. Quarry
A number of residents have felt recent blasts, who have previously not been aware of them. Cllr Tatton noted that all blast data is available on the KCC website.
- ii. IVC Waste Management
There was nothing to report.
- iii. AD Plant
There was nothing to report.

- b) Offham Landfill Site (FCC Environment) and Solar Park (Infinis)

Painting of the fence at the site entrance on Teston Road will take place later this week. Final work is underway and the power will go on 15th April. The Solar Park should be fully operational within the next few months.

- c) To discuss Quintain Repairs and Maintenance (ST)

James M has tendered and received pricing from 3 specialist companies to carry out the work on the Quintain. The Scope of Works states that the Quintain cannot be out of the village for more than 4 weeks. The Parish Council will need to publicise the removal of the Quintain so that residents are aware why it will not be there.

The most competitive quote was from a company that James recommended. He has also suggested a contingency allowance of 10-15% on total costs

Cllrs APPROVED expenditure of up to £7,500 +VAT on the work which includes a contingency. We cannot do anything until we hear from TMBC planning. This should be funded by fund raising.

- d) Wellbeing (FS)

A record 20 ladies attended Shedettes at The Kings Arms last week. Matt Scullion is supplying good coffee to the Shedettes and once a month a breakfast menu is offered to Men's Shed which is well received.

- e) Speedwatch

In the last month they have run at least 2 sessions a week. Due to road works near the eastern gateway the sessions have been sited, mainly, at the western gateway. 5 vehicles were recorded for speeding in one hour last week and 2 or 3 each at other sessions.

Due to administration and logistics, Speedwatch will not run while Cllr Steer is not available.

Cllr Steer is seeking more volunteers.

- f) Community Emergency Resilience Plan

Cllr Taylor is working on the plan.

g) To consider Diary of Village Works

Cllrs thanked everyone who worked on the pond.

A Working Party can renovate the Gates on the Village Green. Cllr Williams will organise this for Saturday 17th May. The Working Party event will be promoted at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Village Green looks wonderful and Cllr Marchant was thanked.

h) To consider Parish Council Projects (all)

There was nothing to report.

8. MONTHLY CHECK-LIST

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

It has been reported that vehicles leaving The Wright Event Junction are not observing the "no right turn" at Teston Road. This has been reported to the businesses there who will ask drivers to observe the sign. It was noted that this is not a Road Traffic Order – it was put up by landowner to help – so cannot be enforced. The junction is in West Malling Parish.

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 Marchant will put down the stone by Hayes Lane
- Cllr Bailey looked at the Book Box door but there was nothing wrong with it
- Steve R has carried out maintenance of the duck house
- The ring by the Pond is leaning on the bench. The bench needs cleaning.

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

a) Race Night – 29.03.25

Cllr Williams provided £230 cash and £20 cheques from Race Night. Cllr Marchant paid £30 sponsorship cash.

Payments are awaited from 3 more sponsors.

b) Offham Village Hall AGM – 07.04.25

Cllr Williams is attending.

c) KALC Meeting with Kent Police and Crime Commissioner – 29.04.25

Noted.

d) KCC - Election of County Councillors – 01.05.25

Noted.

e) May Day – 03.05.25

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

f) Offham Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting – 09.05.24

There were no updates.

g) Offham Society Lazy Jazz in Cosgrave Field - 13.07.25

Cllr Marchant will carry out a risk assessment of Cosgrave Field before the event.

10. OPEN FORUM – Public Participation Session

- The road sign by the map is green. This can be cleaned by a Working Party.

11. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

a) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements and to monitor budget

These have been circulated to Cllrs. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts and the statements were signed by Cllr Taylor.

The Clerk provided a summary. There were payments of £1,560.14 in March 2025 and receipts of £1,668.15. There were no budget issues to report.

Bank Account positions as at 31.03.25 were:

Minutes of Offham Parish Council Meeting Cont'd

Unity Trust Current Account £3,541.60
 Unit Trust Instant Access Savings Account @ 2.50% gross £13,851.86

b) To consider and approve invoice payments

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	Payments Approved at the last meeting	£1,554.14
	Payments Approved since the last meeting	
Unity Trust	Monthly Service Charge Current Account	£6.00
	TOTAL FEBRUARY PAYMENTS	£1,560.14
	Payments approved at the meeting	
KALC	Annual Membership Subscription	469.03
SLCC	Annual Membership Subscription	127.50
Clerk	April 2025 Salary	£835.67
HMRC	April 2025 PAYE and NI	£302.92
Clerk	Travel, Office Expenses, Reimbursements	£99.65
	TOTAL APRIL PAYMENTS	1,834.77
	Internal Transfers	
Current Account	Savings Account	£0

Cllrs Taylor and Marchant will authorise the payments with Unity Trust.

c) End of Year Audit Update (AGAR) 2024-2025

The documents have now been received from the External Auditor Mazars. The Internal Audit is on 22nd May. The papers will be available for consideration and approval at the June meeting.

d) To consider End of Year Financial Statement 2024-2025

This has been prepared and is appended to the Minutes.

e) The Pensions Regulator: workplace pensions re-enrolment

This will be reported when re-enrolment is completed.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next monthly meeting will be held on **Tuesday 6th May 2025** at 7.30pm in The Village Hall
 The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed

Dated

Minutes of Offham Parish Council Meeting Cont'd

Offham Parish Council - End of Financial Year 2024-2025

Balances held with Unity Trust Bank			
Current Account		£ 3,475.60	31.03.25
Instant Access Savings Account		<u>13,851.86</u>	<u>32.03.25</u>
			<u>17,327.46</u>
Less: any unreported payments at 31 March 2025			
Date	Payee	Description	Amount
			<u>£ -</u>
Total Receipts for Year			17,327.46
TMBC	Precept		27,137.00
Unity Trust	Bank Interest		351.86
Various	Other		5,207.48
Various	Rent and Wayleaves		31.00
Various	Project Fund raising		3,530.50
TMBC	s106 grant funding		49,461.34
FCC	Grant Funding		
Various	Other		60.00
Inland Revenue	VAT reclaim		<u>29,678.74</u>
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		115,457.92
Total Payments for Year			
	Employment costs		14,062.75
Clerk/HMRC	Travel		81.90
Clerk/HMRC	Cltr Expenses		16.80
Various	Training		205.00
KALC	Consumables and Office Supplies		185.29
Various	Hire of Hall		315.00
Village Hall Management Committee	Professional fees & Admin		794.77
Various	Elections		-
TMBC	Play Area and Recreation Ground		135.25
Various	S 106 Recreation Ground Phase 1		49,461.34
Various	Phase 2 Enclosed Play Area		3,264.83
Various	Open Spaces		5,750.04
Various	Play Area - from Sinking Fund		5,687.54
Various	Traffic Calming, Speedwatch		17.96
Various	Parish Property		5,265.80
Various	Churchyard Gardening		1,000.00
Church	Insurance		2,413.39
Gallagher	Audit		455.00
Various	Village Projects		1,813.77
Various	Contingency		-
Various	APM		173.13
Various	Donations		1,130.00
Various	Subscriptions		368.06
Various			<u>27,429.92</u>
VAT	TOTAL PAYMENTS		120,027.54
Balance carried forward	Balance B/F from 2023/24		21,897.08
	Plus receipts		115,457.92
	Less Payments		<u>120,027.54</u>
			17,327.46
	Variance	£	-

