

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Clint Hickmott (Vice-Chairman); Val Moon, Sally Christodoulou; Jenny Hollingsworth; Mick Read; Teresa Irving – Clerk; 2 Members of the Public

In the absence of Councillor Hipkins, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Hickmott

- 1. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Hipkins & Newton – conflicting appointments, Cllr Gary Cooke (KCC). The apologies and reasons for absence were noted and accepted.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEMS** – The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for the purpose of minuting.
- 3 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS:** Mr Butler was not present at the meeting but had previously contacted the Clerk to express an interest in the vacancy.
Following discussion, it was agreed that as the applicant has not previously attended meetings, and based on the premise that an Otham resident with local knowledge of the parish will be preferable, the candidate was thanked for his interest but his application was declined.
- 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 5 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** Crimes reported via e-watch.co.

Irwell Road on Thursday 19 October between 09.52 and 15.00 hrs. Somebody stole medication from outside the front door of a residence, in a communal area.

Honey Lane on Monday 23 October around 14.02. A group of young people fired rocks at a vehicle.

Sutton Road on Tuesday 7 November around 20.42 & 20.44.

- Somebody broke into a building site and stole a dust extractor worth approximately £548
- Somebody broke into a refreshment van on a building site and stole approximately £250 worth of goods
- Somebody broke into a shipping container on a building site and stole approximately £3,000 worth of tools.
- Somebody broke into a building site and stole tools and a key box.

6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

A question regarding maintenance of the vegetation around the Village Hall was raised. Clerk to request cost from contractor to cut the vegetation back.

The meeting reconvened.

- 7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 September 2023:**
The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Councillor Hickmott.
- 8 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Not available.
- 9 RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available.
- 10 VILLAGE GREEN:**
- Car Park/Signage Update.** Awaiting official confirmation from Kirkwood Trust before proceeding with signage.
- 11 FINANCE**
- 11.1 Approve Statement of Account:**

<u>FINANCIAL REPORT</u>		<u>TO</u>	<u>31.10.23</u>	<u>Current Account</u>	<u>Business Reserve</u>
Balance b/f		11/09/2023		153,447.69	113,885.32
<u>Expenses - current Account</u>					
<u>Name</u>		<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>		
Mazars		Annual Ext Audit	504.00		
Staffing costs		Payroll - Sept	818.52		
KALC		Clerks Conf (50%)	42.00		
H & P Cons Works	CIL	Map Board	1,110.00		
Bank charges		September	2.80		
Bank charges		Oct	2.80		
P Hyland	CIL	Defib Installation	522.00		
		Poppy Appeal/			
Royal British Legion		Wreath	50.00		
Staffing costs		Payroll - Oct	1,137.07		
The Institute Otham		Hall Hire 2022-2024	500.00		
			4,689.19		
				148,758.50	113,885.32
<u>Receipts</u>					
CIL receipt	CIL	19/503912 Land at Bicknor Wood	76,759.13		
Interest received		Sept			131.20
Interest received		Oct			144.94
Transfers		IN/OUT	0.00		0.00
Transfers		IN/OUT	0.00		0.00
Net position as at			31.10.23	225,517.63	114,161.46

Bank statement	31.10.23	227,246.70	114,161.46
	diff (unpresented chqs)	-1,729.07	0.00

Approval of the above was proposed by Cllr Hickmott, seconded by Cllr Moon and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

- 11.2 Agree Meeting for 2024/25 Budget:** It was agreed that the Finance Committee will meet on Monday, 8 January at 7.15 pm. **ACTION: KH, VM, JH, Clerk**
- 11.3 CAF Account Update:** The application has been declined and returned as members are required to be charity trustees and registered with the charity commission. On this basis, members confirmed that they do not wish to proceed with the application. It was **RESOLVED** that the £85K earmarked for the account will be transferred back to the Business Reserve account. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 11.4 Consider Alternative Banking/Investment Arrangement:** Clerk to circulate details for Unity Bank for consideration. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 11.5 Confirm Conclusion of Annual Audit:** The notice to confirm the conclusion was posted on notice boards & the website on 11 September.
- 11.6 Asset Register/Insurance Update:** The Asset Register has been updated to include the defibrillator and map board.
The Street Furniture sum insured has been increased by £700.00 to include the Map Board on the Village Green. (The policy automatically provides cover under the Core Section for Defibrillators and Cabinets up to a maximum sum insured of £5,000.)
- 11.7 Annual Salary Review.** It was agreed to move this item to the end of the meeting when it will be held in closed session, due to its confidential nature.
- 11.8 Other Matters to Report:** None.

12 CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED:

- **Maidstone Borough Council – Local Plan Review.** Consultation ends 13.11.23
The Local Plan Review will provide the planning framework for development in the borough until 2038. The policies within the plan will be used to assess planning applications and guide future development in the borough.
No comments from Otham Parish Council at this will not directly impact Otham.

Applications Granted:

23/503083/FULL - The Oast House Green Hill

23/502468/LBC - Green Hill House Green Hill

23/503047/TPO -The Coppice.

To crown lift one Oak (T3) giving a 3 metre height clearance above ground level, removing major deadwood and pruning back branches to adjacent property.

23/503951/LBC Bicknor Farm Sutton Road.

Applications Awaiting Decision: 23/5041382/TPOA Tree Preservation Order: Translocate nine trees T2, T3, T6, T7, T9, T12, T14 and T15. Remove/replace two others and replace them with six trees T10 and T13. All details set out in Arboriculture Report.

Public Right of Way – The Glebe

It was noted with thanks that Mrs Rachel Gray has kindly agreed to prepare the application pack of evidence to submit to KCC, in the hope that the path will be designated as a Public Right of Way. Information on how residents can help with evidence has been posted on the website and Facebook.

- 13 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE:** Cllr Moon to review the information request on MBC's spreadsheet and report what, if anything, is required. **ACTION: Cllr Moon**
- 14 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** A meeting is scheduled to take place on 16 November to consider traffic calming proposals.
Cllr Hickmott to make contact with the local farmer to ask if he has any suggestions if/how the PC can help where the road drops away on Green Hill. **ACTION: Cllr Hickmott**
- 15 TRAFFIC CALMING/SPEEDWATCH:** Speed surveys are due to be carried out on White Horse Lane, The Street, Green Hill and Church Road in early December.
- 16 CIL PROJECTS:**
 - 16.1 Defibrillator** – Installed and registered on The Circuit (Cllr Hickmott to be registered as the Guardian.)
Map Board – Installed on the Green. A possible problem with condensation to be monitored.
 - 16.2 Consider New Projects** – Original ideas to be recirculated for consideration.
Cllr Moon to make enquiries with Green Hill Allotment Trustees to ask if they require assistance? **ACTION: Cllr Moon**
- 17 POPPY APPEAL/REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE:** The service was attended by councillors, with the wreath presented by Cllr Hipkins. Approximately 40 to 50 people were in attendance.
- 18 CHRISTMAS EVENT:** The Rock Choir will be performing at the BWRCG event on Sunday, 10 December. Cllr Read advised that the group will be in touch if they require a financial contribution toward the organisation.
Otham Parish Council Christmas Meal: Clerk to check dates/availability of restaurants and advise accordingly. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 19 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:**
 - Cllr Hipkins has attended online Planning Training sessions
 - Cllr Christodoulou attended the KALC Dynamic Councillor & Planning Training.
- 20 URGENT MATTERS:** Concerns have been raised for the future of the Village Hall.
It was agreed that the Village Hall Committee will meet prior to January's PC meeting to discuss how to move forward/what help will be requested from the Parish Council, following the closure of the hall's pre-school.
- 21 CLERK'S REPORT:** No additional items to report.
- 22 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE:** Various correspondence circulated by email for consideration.

The Clerk to chase up MBC for a response on how the Electoral Review will impact the Parish Council.

ACTION: Clerk

23 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED:

For January's meeting:

- 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings during WWII (June 6 2024).
- Village Hall.

The meeting closed to the public at 9.40 pm.

The following was discussed in closed session

11.7 Annual Salary Review: The annual increase as advised by NALC was confirmed.

Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to uplift the Clerk's salary by 2 Spinal Column Points.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.50 pm.

Members of the Finance Committee will meet at 7.15 pm on Monday, 8 January in the Village Hall. This will be followed by meeting of Full Council at 7.45 pm.

Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for the agenda.