

**INUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.45 PM  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Kevin Hipkins; Clint Hickmott; Mick Read; Teresa Irving – Clerk; 12 Members of the Public.

- 1 APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Val Moon – Holiday: Cllr Newton – conflicting meeting.  
The apologies and reasons for absence was noted and accepted.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEMS** – The meeting was recorded for the purpose of minuting.
- 3 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLORS:** Cllrs Rachel Gray, Mark Ramsey & Christine Lambourne.  
Thanks were formally recorded to Rachel Gray for the tremendous amount of work she carried out during the 8 years she was a councillor; particularly the work carried out on the Neighbourhood Plan.  
**CO- OPTION:** Mrs Jennifer Hollingsworth had previously expressed an interest in the vacancy and having confirmed her continued interest was duly co-opted. An Acceptance of Office form was completed with remaining forms to follow within the prescribed 28 days.
- 4 APPOINT VICE CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Hickmott was nominated by Cllr Hipkins, seconded by Cllr Read and was duly appointed Vice Chairman.
- 5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 6 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** Crimes reported on e-watch.co.
  - 14.10.22 Between 19.50 & 20.15 in Downton Court. Somebody set fire to a Mercedes C220. The fire also damaged a Peugeot Panther that was nearby.
- 7 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**
- 8 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2022:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Councillor Hipkins.
- 9 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Not available.
- 10 RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available.
- 11 VILLAGE GREEN:**
  - **Car Park Review.** Cllr Hipkins is awaiting an update from the farmer who, whilst he is very sympathetic about the parking issue, will have to discuss with the possibility of parking behind Madame Taylors Barn with the landowner.

Due to the importance of this issue, and as a result of the number of councillors available to participate in making a decision/the awaited response regarding alternative parking,

it was agreed to defer a decision until the next meeting which will take place on 9 January, 2023.

Enquires to trace the resident who volunteered to speak with the Kirkwood Trust have failed.

It was noted that the survey of trees on the Village Green will be carried out on Monday, 29 November. Cllr Hipkins hopes to be in attendance.

## **12 FINANCE:**

### **12.1 Approve Statement of Account:**

#### **Cheques issued**

Royal British Legion	Donation - Wreath	50.00
Hyland Electrical	Village Hall Heating (CIL Funding)	7,086.00
Staffing Costs (Oct)	Payroll/Expenses	694.32

#### **Cheques received:**

Current Account	MBC. CIL Funding 01.04.22 to 30.09.22	111,050.43
	MBC. PSP Grant	757.50
Business Acct	Interest (to 31 Oct)	1.61

**Balance of Current Account: £246,750.34 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd**

**Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,927.60**

**Total Funds: £251,677.94**

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

**12.2 Consider Investment Account re CIL monies:** The Clerk advised members of the various accounts that are currently offered by NatWest, none of which are not particularly competitive. All are again requested to consider alternative saving accounts. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the finance meeting to be held on 9 January 2023.

**12.3 Annual Salary Review (SCP) Parish Clerk:** Item deferred to the end of the meeting **to be held in closed session.**

**12.4 2023/24 Budget Proposals:** All are requested to inform the Clerk of any projects to be undertaken in the forthcoming financial year. It was **RESOLVED** that the Finance Committee will meet prior to the OPC meeting on 9 January at a time TBC.

**12.5 Other Matters to Report –** No further matters.

## **13 CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED:**

#### **Applications Received:**

##### **22/504326/LBC – Synyards, Otham Street.**

Listed Building Consent for installation of a wood burner and flue to existing inglenook and chimney.

Comments required prior to 29 November 2022.

#### **Applications Granted:**

##### **22/500298/SUB – Land West of Church Road.**

Submission of Details to Discharge Condition 27 – Lighting for streets and houses subject to 19/506182/FULL

**14 ADDITIONAL CIL PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**Parish PROW Map.** PROW has been in touch to say that due to the condition of the board they are looking to remove it, unless the PC wish to carry out repairs/repair? Clerk to obtain quotes to have the board repaired/replaced.

**Defibrillator:** It was agreed in principle to pursue this suggestion with suggested locations of either the Village Hall, or in the vicinity of The White Horse PH. A request was for consideration to be given to purchasing 2 defibrillators for the village as this would ensure that one is accessible to all villagers. Considerations to bear in mind are that the battery and pads will need checking monthly.

**Rumwood Cricket Club.** Cllr Hipkins and the Clerk attended a meeting on 11.01.22 with Rod Bailey and David Day to try and establish how the parish council can help the club?

Following vandalism that caused thousands of pounds to repair, the club had a verbal agreement with a construction company that new fencing would be provided by them. An alternative suggestion was made that as Rumwood permit Bearsted FC to use part of their grounds for football matches, perhaps they may wish to assist the Cricket Club by extending their fence?

Low water pressure is also a matter of concern for the club and needs to be investigated further to establish exactly what the pressure is to the club house?

OPC wish to support the club in whatever way they can and will be happy to discuss the issues further, once the stages above have been resolved.

**15 CHRISTMAS EVENT WITH BWCG:** Maidstone Rock Choir has been approached by the Clerk but confirmation of availability is still awaited.

OPC to be kept informed about how they can assist with the event?

**CHRISTMAS MEAL:** It was agreed that the Clerk will email all involved with suggested dates/venues.

**16 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:**

- MBC Virtual Planning was attended by Cllr Hickmott.
- A meeting at Rumwood Cricket Club was attended by Cllr Hipkins and the Clerk – see item 14 above.
- The Clerk attended a meeting with KHS Road Safety Engineering Project Manager to discuss speeding/rat running/traffic calming.  
The Officer has suggested that the hedges are severely cut back to widen the roads and 'SLOW' painted on the street(s). It was explained that these measure have already been implemented/explored.  
New Highway Improvement Plan has been circulated.

**17 URGENT MATTERS:** None raised.

**18 CLERK'S REPORT:**

- Verge posts. An order has been placed to install the missing posts and will be implemented ASAP. It was pointed out that the 'drop down post' will not be located

in the middle of the gap, as it would catch on the contractor's vehicle when requiring access.

- Thanks were recorded to Cllr Newton/The Stone Shop for carrying out the cleaning of the War Memorial. An excellent job has been carried out.
- Cllr Newton has advised that the cross on the top of the memorial – which is Bethersden marble – is in a poor condition and whilst it will be fine for a couple of years, it will need monitoring in the future.
- It was noted with thanks that Mr Waring has cut the grass and tidied the grass area around the War Memorial.

**19 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Civility and Respect Project. An agenda item for January's meeting.
- Verbal Report from the Village Hall:  
It was acknowledged that the figures quoted by the VH Committee previously were, in fact, out of date as they were not expecting to be able to proceed with refurbishment.  
Grant funding is proving difficult due to the limited use (most funding requires proof of good community use).  
New heating has been installed at a cost of £5,905.  
Decorating of the toilet and kitchen area is pending, subject to further grants.  
Committed to decorating other areas at a cost of £2,000.  
Funding for All has provided the committee with a funding mentor and they are providing advice. A meeting has also been arranged with Kent Community Foundation.  
A £10K funding application has been submitted to KCC, with a letter of support from the Pre-School and OPC.

**20 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED: None.**

**The following items was held in closed session.**

- 12.3 Annual Salary Review (SCP) Parish Clerk:** It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to uplift the SCP from December 2022.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

**The next meeting will be held at 7.45 pm on Monday, 9 January 2023 in the Village Hall.**

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