

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllrs K Hipkins (Chairman); R. Gray; R. Gardner; V. Moon; S. Drake; Mrs T. Irving – Clerk; Mrs Jocelyn Chambers (resident) and 2 further residents.

1 APOLOGIES: Cllr H. Drake (unwell); PCSO Turner; Cllr Newton (received retrospectively - conflicting meeting) OP & MB Cllr.

The apologies and reasons for absence were noted and accepted.

2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEM – None received.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Hipkins stated that he does not have a personal (or pecuniary) interest in Item 11 – The Old Barn, Holly Farm Road.

4 COUNCILLOR VACANCY/CO-OPTION: Mrs Chambers expressed interest in the vacancy and provided details about herself.

Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed to co-opt Mrs Chambers. An acceptance of office was signed – additional paperwork to be completed within the stipulated 28 days.

Cllr Chambers was welcomed to the council.

5 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:

The following written report was provided by PCSO Turner:

- Crimes of note:
- 03/11/19 Criminal damage to a vehicle – Church Road, Otham – Parked vehicle in a field at the top of Church Road. Driver's window h been smashed, but the victim does not believe anything has been taken.

Cllr Trench commented that she had reported a serious incident of flytipping on 21 October.

6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Query regarding the progress of Bramley's planning application.

The meeting was reconvened

7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2019: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Cllr Hipkins.

8 **RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Not available.

9 **RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available.

10 **FINANCE.**

10.1 Approve Statement of Account: Cllr Gardner proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Gray & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

Cheques issued

HMRC	PAYE	157.20
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary (Sept)	410.02
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Sept)	126.34
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary (Oct)	412.73
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Oct)	126.34

Receipts

NatWest	Interest (June to Aug)	2.45
MBC	PSS	714.50

Balance of Current Account: £20,078.62 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd

Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,914.88

Total Funds: £24,993.50

10.2 Budget Proposal for 2020/21: Play Equipment and Heritage Walks (further info required). It was agreed that the Finance Committee will meet prior to January's meeting to draft their budget proposal.

10.3 RBL Wreath Donation: It was **RESOLVED** to donate £50 towards a wreath in accordance with LGA S137.

10.4 Banking Arrangements: The Clerk advised the meeting that HSBC has a maximum of four people to sign if applying for an online account. Cllr Trench stated that she will be happy to stand down as a signatory, if necessary.

10.5 Other Matters to Report: None.

11 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED**

19/501600/OUT – Land West of Church Road

Outline application for up to 440 residential dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, drainage, landscaping and open space (Access being sought with all other matters reserved for future consideration).

The parish council maintains its objections to the above as detailed in our original letter dated 7 May 2019.

The council also objects to the amendments on the grounds listed below.

St Nicholas Church stands next to this proposed development and predates 1086. It is very unlikely that it has foundations and we have very serious concerns what harm will be caused to this historic building? As a grade I listed building, the Church has huge historical significance and is a very vulnerable.

The council requires clarification why Historic England's 'serious concerns' have changed so dramatically following a meeting with Council Officers and the developer?

We do not agree that a large tarmac car park is appropriate for the setting. We also disagree with the statement that the car park will provide a 'heritage benefit'. The car park will damage the setting of the grade 1 listed church and the two grade II listed properties, which stand nearby. A car park cannot be built to facilitate the residents of a housing estate.

The NPPF 'Proposals affecting heritage assets' Section 1.90 states:

'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'

The NPPF Para 1.94 states:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

The council also believes that the proposal fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF para 1.90 '...to avoid or minimize any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal' and thus we cannot yet conclude that the harm has clear and convincing justification as required by paragraph 1.94.

This proposal fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF para 1.94 a) which states that any development in this setting should be 'exceptional'.

Whilst the buffer zone has been increased, this is to house a car park and is to the detriment of the buffer zone.

Transport

The existing local road network cannot cope.

The proposal is totally unworkable which is supported by the conflicting information.

We object to the Iceni Projects (Transport) response to KCC Highways as it states there is no need to improve Spot Lane as no one will use it. This is in direct conflict with their response to Highways England's comments which states that residents would prefer to extend their route by a few kilometers using Spot Lane to reach Junction 8.

These 2 opinions are contrary and cannot both be right. Both have failed to take into consideration that Mallards Way/Spot Lane is susceptible to flooding and the road can at times be impassable.

It is stated that the Willington Street/Deringwood Drive junction is likely to fail even without this application. Potential capacity issues will effectively restrict vehicles from exiting Deringwood Drive.

We have grave concerns regarding the mitigation of traffic signals at the Deringwood Drive/Willington Street junction. In view of the steep incline, the flooding and heavy use by cyclist/pedestrians into Mote Park and the Len Valley Walk.

The increasing use of Willington Street by HGV's weighing up to 40 tons, necessitating increased stopping distance in icy/wet conditions has not been considered.

This site is not viable for development and for this reason we wish to see it removed from the Maidstone Local Plan.

Cllrs Hipkins and Newton both addressed MBC's planning committee at the 24 October meeting, when a decision was deferred. A date for a consultation meeting is awaited.

MBC Cllrs to be lobbied again when the application goes back to the committee.

Is there a process to appeal the Government Inspector's decision?

19/503912 Land at Bicknor Farm, Sutton Road.

Development of the site with 302 dwellings, parking, access, amenity space, landscaping and associated works.

Otham Parish Council is disappointed that the developer has not made any attempt to have dialogue with members.

The council has no major objections to the application, but wishes the following comments to be taken into account.

The council is concerned that too many houses are being built on the already overloaded A274 Sutton Road. The appropriate infrastructure needs to be in place BEFORE more vehicles add to the congestion.

The council would like to see the affordable dwellings spread more evenly throughout the proposed development, rather than heavily concentrated in two corners. We recommend that every road should have a mix of housing.

Footpaths/Public Rights of Way in the parish are already suffering as many dog owners are not picking up after their dogs. More needs to be done to address the health risks/anti-social behaviour associated with dog fouling.

Consideration should be given to upgrading PROW KM94. As half of KM94 will be incorporated into the new development and footfall will be massively increased, the

council requests that the developer upgrades the full length of the PROW north of the development to White Horse Lane to make it suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

In addition to the above, Rumwood Cricket Club has experienced problems with members of the public diverting from the PROW onto their ground. This has resulted in a number of crimes being carried out. As the cricket ground boundary is on the edge of the proposed development - and as mentioned above, the footfall will massively increase - it is our recommendation that the developer affords the Cricket Club fencing as a security measure.

19/504880 – Land at Bicknor Farm

Advertisement consent for 2 no. non-illuminated signage boards

No objection

19/504960 - The Monards, Avery Lane

Proposal: Demolition of existing outbuilding and summer house. Erection of an annexe ancillary to main dwelling, together with garage and car lift (resubmission: 19/502389/FULL).

Whilst Otham Parish Council has no specific objection, the previous objections made by Maidstone Borough Council have been noted.

The revised building is still, perhaps, not subservient to the main dwelling and would compete for dominance, rather than ancillary

19/505471 – The Old Barn, Holly Farm Road.

Erection of a single storey rear extension

No objection

19/504706 – Ivy Cottage, Green Hill

Retrospective application for double wooden gates

No objection

Awaiting decision by MBC

19/503342 – Bramley, Otham Street.

Retention of dwelling footprint as built with alterations to the roof

Call for Sites: Several new sites have been offered in Otham. Clerk to request a meeting with the LDF team. Once this has taken place, OPC planning committee to discuss their response at a meeting.

12 HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS: Recommendations for Working Group

Cllr Hipkins and the Clerk had a positive meeting with KHS.

A copy of the Highway Improvement Plan has been circulated to all councillors for information. A follow up meeting will be held on 22 November with the Schemes Project Manager.

20 MPH to be pushed as it is very important for the village. This should start at the Three Tees, down The Street to the River Len and include Avery Lane and Simmons Lane.

Greenhill. Tarmac was not used for the repairs and the road continues to fall away.

Signage required outside the Village Hall warning that children are crossing.

Signage to be requested warning of narrow road with no passing places.

13 VILLAGE GREEN – Play Equipment:

The quotations from Playdale (£10,511), Discovery (£8,295) and Wicksteed (£13,917) - all ex VAT - were considered.

The scheme from Discovery was proposed, seconded and agreed in principal. An updated plan with 1 x Stilt Walker replaced by another piece of equipment is awaited.

14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE: The group are still responding to comments and amending the NHP accordingly. Relative anti-coalescent values are being look at in all fields.

15 CAROLS: The Pre-School has confirmed that they believe the children would love to make decorations for the Christmas tree. They will send out a note to parents with the date of the Carols and hopefully some may come along.

Rumwood Nursery are unable to donate a tree but they are happy to offer a discount.

Cllr Hipkins offered to collect and deliver the tree to the hall. **ACTION: CLLR HIPKINS**

Cllr Trench to organise refreshments with help from others. **ACTION: CLLR TRENCH**

Flyers to be printed and made available for delivery on 1st and 2nd December

CHRISTMAS MEAL: The George, Leeds has been booked for 11 December. Deposit of £10 pp & choice of menu to be sent to the Clerk ASAP.

16 HERITAGE WALKS: These have been identified as part of the NHP and need to be published and used. It was suggested that perhaps a community event could be held in the spring, inviting people to do the walk with us?

If enough interest is shown in the walks, then outsourcing the publication to be considered.

17 VILLAGE HALL SIGN & LIGHT: The Clerk was notified that both of these – originally provided by the PC – require replacing. The light is not working and the sign has rotted.

Cllr Gardner to investigate repair/replacements & raise with the Village Hall Committee.

ACTION: CLLR GARDNER

18 BEARSTED PC TRANSPORT GROUP: Cllr Trench volunteered to represent OPC at Bearsted & Boxley PCs informal transport group to discuss common transport and traffic concerns.

ACTION: CLLR TRENCH

19 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:

KCC Highways Seminar 28 November – attended by the Clerk.

It was stated that the Leeds/Langley bypass is still being evaluated but as Highways does not have the money to finance the system, this would have to be put to the Government. It would require a very large amount of housing to justify this, making land around the route very vulnerable for development.

Key points to slow growth are considered to be water supply and air quality.

20 URGENT MATTERS: In response to the council's request for dog fouling signs to be installed on all PROWs with a warning about fines. PROW advised that there would need to be a byelaw in place and it is the Borough Council that are the byelaw making authority. However they supplied signs to remind owners to clear up after their dogs.

21 HEDGES: The sides of the hedge in White Horse Lane has been cut back but Bellway Homes has not responded. Clerk to ask KHS if contact was made with Bellway Homes and if there is a reason why the farmer has not cut the top of the hedge in WH Lane?

ACTION: CLERK

22 REMEMBRANCE DAY UPDATE: Cllr Hipkins presented the PC wreath. He noted that attendance at the War Memorial was larger than that at the church. The young lady on the bugle played very well and Susan/Annette did a lovely job supplying refreshments in the hall.

23 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE: Various correspondence circulated by email.

- Maidstone KALC. The scheme whereby parishes can request additional air quality diffusion tubes to be deployed will continue next year. Urgent confirmation of numbers required.
- Letter received from Came & Co advising that the company has been taken over by Arthur J Gallagher. No changes to the insurance will take.

24 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING ON 13 JANUARY

2020: Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you would like to be considered for the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm.