

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2020 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllrs K Hipkins (Chairman); R. Gray; V. Moon; R. Gardner; G. Newton; Mrs T. Irving – Clerk; 2 residents.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Newton - following his recent operation - and stated that it was good to see him.

1 APOLOGIES: Cllr H. Drake – indisposed due to injury; Cllr S. Trench – holiday; PCSO Roberts (received retrospectively).

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: None received.

4 COUNCILLOR VACANCY/CO-OPTION: Ongoing.

Cllr Drake communicated via the Clerk that she is considering tendering her resignation due to her recent injury and being unable to contribute with parish matters. The Clerk was asked to reassure Cllr Drake that members understand how she feels but there is no pressure for her to contribute at this moment in time.

5 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE: Not available.

The following report was obtained from e-watch:

- White Horse Lane on Tuesday 18 Feb between 3.00 pm and 6.39 pm. Somebody attempted to break in to a residential property. Damage was caused to the doors and window.

6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

The meeting was reconvened.

7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2020: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Cllr Hipkins.

8 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:

- **Bramley.** Cllr Newton has called the application in and is waiting for it to be heard by the planning committee. It was noted that neighbours are concerned that

building work is continuing and a large tank has appeared, which can be seen from the road.

- Cllr Newton has received a response from Luke Hall MP in response to his letter to the RH Robert Jennrick re Land West of Church Rd. The letter suggests various options in relation to Land West of Church Rd. The application can be called in to the committee as soon as it is determined by the Officer.

9 RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

- Chapman Avenue has started a petition in response to the Church Rd Application.
- The awful winter has resulted in bad road conditions. A pothole blitz will be carried out, with an additional £500,000 funding secured for the Maidstone region. Cllr Cooke requested potholes are reported to him or via the website.
- 'You Decide' will be held on 4 April at the Maidstone Skills Centre, Senacre. £15,000 funding is available.
- A number of drop-ins are being arranged to meet Cllr Cooke and other members of the team.
- Golding Homes has failed a couple of electrical tests recently as they did not meet the correct safety standards.

10 FINANCE.

10.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Cheques issued

Specutulise	Website	100.00
K. Hipkins	Expenses - Christmas Tree	24.00
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Jan)	126.34
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary (Jan)	422.05
The Institute	Hall Hire	250.00
Commercial Services	Ragstone	74.00
Paul Waring	Village Green Maintenance	928.14
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Feb)	126.34
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary (Feb)	403.60
NatWest	Safe Custody Hold	25.00

Receipts

MBC	1,456.65
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Balance of Current Account: £17,414.39 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd

Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,917.32

Total Funds: £22,331.71

Cllr Moon proposed acceptance of the above, seconded by Cllr Hipkins & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

10.2 Donation Requests: Otham with Langley PCC - £200 was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. RESOLVED.

Five Acre Wood School - £100 was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED.

Kent, Surrey, & Sussex Air Ambulance - £100 was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

10.3 Set Donation Budget for 2020/21: A sum of £500 was proposed by Cllr Moon, seconded by Cllr Hipkins and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

10.4 Standing Orders: It was agreed that, in accordance with the template from KALC, the Clerk will draft new SOs for consideration.

10.5 SLCC Membership: 1/3 contribution of £60 towards the Clerk's membership was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

10.6 Other Matters to Report:

- In response to DPC's request, Cllr Hipkins contacted Cllr Weeks to discuss how the Clerk's expenses are divided. Cllr Weeks promised to call back the next day but has not made contact.
- Section 137 Expenditure limit for 2020/21 is £8.32.

11 PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED

Cllr Hipkins has tried to contact Helen Whatley MP to discuss why the planning process is failing residents.

New Applications

Bishops, Avery Lane

Listed Building consent for external repairs to timber-frame members on the South, East and West elevations.

No objections – appears to be like for like repairs.

Awaiting Decision by MBC

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).

Ragstone to be produced to encourage residents to comment on the update as soon as re-consultation dates are known.

19/506158/TPOA | TPO application to carry out works according to received 2019 H&S tree survey and location plan. | Gore Court Church Road Otham ME15 8RF

19/503342 – Bramley, Otham Street.

Retention of dwelling footprint as built with alterations to the roof

Applications Granted

19/503912 Land at Bicknor Farm, Sutton Road.

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

- **Bicknor Farm. Road Names:** In response to the request from MBC, the following names were suggested and agreed: Alliance, Baxenden, Broadclough, Broad Oak, Fernbank, Finsley, Fountain, Hambledon, Irwell, New Hey, Olive, Union, Rossendale,

Stacksteads, Spring Hill, Waterside, Westfield, Woodnook. Whilst only 15 names are required, all names to be submitted in case some are considered unsuitable.

S106: A sum of £1,456.65 has been received to pay for refurbishment of the play area. The Clerk has been advised that a further sum will be made available in respect of the new play equipment.

- **Response to Call for Sites.** Cllr Gray provided a draft response to her meeting with Gavin Ball. Following a couple of suggested minor additions/amendments, it was agreed as the council's response.

12 HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS: Highways Improvement Plan. KCC has carried out site visits - updates awaited.

13 VILLAGE GREEN/PLAY EQUIPMENT:

Play Equipment:

The choice of safety surfacing was discussed: Tiles, wet-pour and bonded rubber mulch, with the latter being the preferred option. MBC has stated that S106 Funding is available to finance the equipment.

A consultation will appear in the next Ragstone to gather comments from residents.

Meeting to be arranged with the Chairman, Paul Waring and the Clerk to look at the maintenance of trees and the necessity of tidying sections of the green.

14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE:

It has been confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required. One more meeting is due to be held by the group next Monday when the planning policy will be checked to ensure that it is robust.

Once complete, it will be submitted to the Borough and subject to a 16 week consultation. If the examiner thinks it is satisfactory it will then go to a referendum.

15 PARISH WALK: It was suggested that this could take place on the morning of the Village Fete. All to consider options and discuss further at May's meeting.

16 HERITAGE WALKS UPDATE: The request to assist with publicity of the walks and supply hard copies is being considered by the Borough. MBC's Open Spaces said they think they 'look great'.

17 VILLAGE HALL SIGN & LIGHT: 2 Quotations have been received. Having considered both, it was proposed, seconded & **RESOLVED** that an order is placed with Maidstone Signs in the sum of £565.00 + VAT. This price will include to supply and install new double sided projecting sign, back to back Dibond trays with gold vinyl lettering and 2 No. new LED Pictorial downlighters.

18 HEDGES: KCC has confirmed that 'The topping of hedges is for the owner to decide. As long as the hedge is at least 450mm from the edge of the road and poses no threat to the highway user, from a highway authority perspective this is deemed safe.

The asset holder should be contacted regarding concerns with cables.'

ACTION: Clerk

19 SPRING CLEAN: UPDATE: A good amount of rubbish was collected.

Particular thanks go to BFC Chairman, Jamie Houston, for tackling Church Road. Also thanks to Cllr Trench for collecting the filled bags and depositing on the green for collection by MBC.

20 OTHAM FETE: It was agreed that OPC will have a stall as it will provide a good opportunity for a question and answer session for the Neighbourhood Plan.

21 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- Allotment Meeting attended by Cllr Gardner on 10 February.
- KALC Meeting attended by Cllr Gardner on 2 March – draft minutes circulated.

22 URGENT MATTERS:

- BFC to be made aware that their security light is currently on all night. Motion sensor to be requested as Otham is a 'dark village' and it would like to stay that way.

ACTION: Clerk

- Hedge on White Horse Lane/Core Court Road has been broken through by Bellway. Is there a reason for this? Request to be made that it is filled in as it could become an unofficial access point.

ACTION: Clerk

23 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE: Various correspondence circulated by email.

- A resident expressed her concerns that the new junction on Gore Court Road is too tight for a car to enter and exit at the same time. Cllr Cooke advised that as the junction was made as per the design there was nothing that can be done.
- The council was made aware that Bicknor Wood is advertised for sale on a local auction site. No further information is known.

24 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING ON 11 MAY 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 9.30pm.