

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2021 AT 7.45 PM**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs K Hipkins (Chairman); R. Gray; S. Trench; V. Moon; H. Drake; C. Hickmott; G. Newton (part); K. Stallwood; Mrs T. Irving – Clerk; Cllr Gary Cooke – KCC (part); + 2 further Members of the Public.

- 1 APOLOGIES:** Cllr Newton suffered some connection problems at the start of the meeting. Apologies received from 2 residents also due to connection problems.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEM –** None received.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no declarations.
- 4 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES/CO-OPTION:** No updates available.
- 5 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** Information obtained from e-watch.co.  
**Gore Court Road.** Between 5.30pm on Thursday 26 Nov and 8am on Fri 27 Nov. Someone broke into a residential property at a building site and stole a boiler.
- 6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

The meeting was reconvened.

- 7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2020:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & will be signed by Cllr Hipkins at his earliest convenience. **ACTION: KH**
- 8 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Not available.
- 9 RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Things are very quiet, nothing really to report at present.
- 10 REVIEW OF COVID 19 CIRCUMSTANCES:** Information continues to be circulated to councillors on a regular basis.

It was reported that Harrietsham Surgery started offering a vaccine approx. 3 weeks ago. Cllr Hipkins signed up as a former GP to volunteer assistance with the rollout, but stated that the process is very difficult.

## 11 FINANCE.

### 11.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Cheques issued		
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Nov)	150.50
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses (Nov)	415.89
Geoxhere	Mapping (NHP - Annual Fee)	90.00
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses (Dec)	427.62
KCC Re Kent Pension	Employer/Employee (Dec)	150.58
HMRC	PAYE	176.20
Spectulise	Website (Annual Fee)	100.00
		1510.79

### Receipts

NatWest	Business Reserve Acct Interest	0.12
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**Balance of Current Account: £21,291.20 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd**

**Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,922.46**

**Total Funds: £26,213.66**

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

### 11.2 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 - SET PRECEPT:

The Finance Committee's recommendation for the 2021/22 Precept to be set at £16,632.34 was proposed by Cllr Hipkins, seconded by Cllr Drake & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.** This precept will mean no change in the parish element of the council tax for each resident.

### 11.3 Other Matters to Report:

- Clerk to complete the Precept Request form & forwarded to Cllr Hipkins for signing.  
**ACTION: KH/TI**
- S106 Funding for the Village Green Play Equipment has been received. Clerk to place an order with Discovery Timber, as per their quotation dated 4 March 2020.  
**ACTION: TI**

## 12 CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED

### Applications Granted

20/504086/FULL Amber House, Otham Street

20/504438 – Aspley House, Avery Lane.

A clause has been included (as per OPC's request) stating:

The additional accommodation to the principal dwelling hereby permitted shall not be sub-divided, separated or altered in any way so as to create a separate self-contained unit; and shall only be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling currently known as Aspley House, Avery Road, Otham, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8RZ Reason: Its use

as a separate unit without adequate amenity space would be unacceptable and would also result in an unsatisfactory relationship with the principal dwelling as well as being detrimental to the general character of the locality.

### **Applications Refused**

20/504933 – Bishops & Bishops Annex, Avery Lane.

Due to its excessive mass and volume, and the spread of built development across the site, the proposed development would be visually harmful to the openness of the countryside, contrary to policy DM 32 of the Maidstone Local Plan 2017 and the advice contained within the adopted Supplementary Planning Document "Residential Extensions". Informative(s): (1) There is no objection to the principle of this development. However, the bulk and mass of buildings needs to be significantly reduced. In general terms, the design of the proposals is likely to be considered acceptable.

- **Update of Church Road Planning Applications.** Members are very disappointed that the Planning Inspectorate has decided to allow the appeal and grant planning permission for 421 dwellings on Church Road. The decision was largely based on the fact that the site was included in the Local Plan. Work on the development is expected to start in 2023.

The proposal for 120-150 dwellings on Sutton Road was discussed as this currently includes access to Honey Lane for 8 to 10 houses. (The PCs objections to the Otham proposal have already been submitted).

**Local Plan Consultation:** The Council's comments were submitted on 21 December 2020.

### **13 VILLAGE GREEN**

- **Update Car Park:** Following the report from Cllr Hipkins that measurements suggest that a car park will be viable, it was agreed for costings to be obtained.

It was suggested that 6 cars could park on the green, with the access road between the Oak and Field Maple.

Parking will be beneficial for disabled visitors to the green, as well as local residents. It could also assist visitors wishing to use the Village Hall.

Additional trees could be considered for screening.

The concerns expressed by one resident were noted. However, the proposal will be going out for full consultation once quotes have been obtained.

**14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:** Provide update: An examination is currently underway by the Examiner. Three questions were raised and duly responded to.

A full report will be submitted in due course with findings and any necessary amendments.

**15 UPDATE Re COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID/ASSET(S) OF COMMUNITY VALUE:** The notes as circulated by Cllr Trench were discussed.

If The White Horse PH is to be requested as a Community Asset, a form will need to be completed asking for the property to be nominated and added to the register. If agreed, assets remain on the register for 5 years.

Further investigations are required to establish the ownership of The White Horse.

**ACTION: CLLR TRENCH**

**16 PARISH HEDGES:** MBC has advised that future maintenance of the Gore Court Road/White Horse Lane hedge will be the responsibility of Bellway Homes. (This has now been cut back).

The developer has confirmed that they will look at the section of hedge that was taken out by a resident - which is next to a section that they are due to replace - to see what can be done.

The farmer responsible for the hedge on Otham Street has been unwell. However, he confirmed that the roadside has been cut by his contractors. Any additional work is considered 'non-essential' and will incur a charge.

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

- Cllr Hipkins - KALC Training: How to chair PC meetings on Zoom.
- Cllr Hickmott – KCC Parish Seminar 19.11.2020 (slides circulated).

**18 NOTICE BOARDS:** Cllrs Trench and Stallwood to look for suitable positions at The Coppice & Bicknor Wood & report back.

**ACTION ST/KS**

**19 URGENT MATTERS:**

- Litter Pick - Agenda item for 8 March meeting.  
It was noted that several people are currently litter picking in the parish.
- Flooding/drainage in White Horse Lane. KCC's drainage team has visited and asked the developer to clear the ditches. Enforcement will investigate if the work is not carried out.

**20 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE:** Various correspondence circulated by email.

**21 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING/ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** No advice is currently available regarding if/how these will take place this year. Once guidelines are issued, it was agreed for the Chairman and Clerk to suggest dates.

**ACTION: KH/TI**

**22 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING ON 8 MARCH 2021:** Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.