

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Hipkins; Val Moon; Clint Hickmott; Gordon Newton; Teresa Irving – Clerk;
Mr Mark Ramsey.

- 1 APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Rachel Gray (received retrospectively); Heather Drake – family commitments; Stella Trench.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEM** – None received.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None received.
- 4 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES/CO-OPTION:** Stella Trench has unfortunately tendered her resignation due to other commitments. MBC has been informed.

The Council is very grateful to Mrs Trench for all the work she carried out during her time as a councillor.

Mr Ramsey expressed an interest in the ongoing vacancy and forwarded a brief resume for consideration prior to the meeting. Following discussions, Mr Ramsey, was duly co-opted. An acceptance of office was signed – additional paperwork to be completed and returned to MBC within 28 days

- 5 CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** Report obtained from e-watch.co.
 - 28 July between 00.01 and 07.30 in Pentecost Lane. Somebody broke into a Vauxhall Zafira parked in the road. They stole some work tools.
 - 28 July between 01.00 and 07.00 in White Horse Lane. Somebody broke into a vehicle parked in the road.
- 6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Not applicable – no questions.
- 7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2021:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Councillor Hipkins.
- 8 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Cllr Newton confirmed that the Planning Department will refuse the retrospective application by Bellway Homes for advertising flagpoles on Church Road.

Cllr Newton has had sight of the Geophysical report for Church Road and would like to know why the Roman and/or Iron Age artefacts have not been 'picked up'.

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

10 FINANCE.

10.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Cheques issued

KCC Re Kent Pension Fund	Employer/Employee Payments (July)	150.58
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses (July)	406.06
KCC Re Kent Pension Fund	Employer/Employee Payments (Aug)	150.58
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses (Aug)	418.15
PKF Littlejohn	Annual External Audit	240.00

Receipts

NatWest	Interest	0.12
---------	----------	------

Balance of Current Account: £81,502.28 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd

Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,922.82

Total Funds: £86,425.10

Approval of the above was proposed by Cllr Hickmott, seconded by Cllr Newton and unanimously agreed.

10.2 Bank Mandate (Approved)/ Electronic Banking: Following confirmation from NatWest that the new mandate has been approved, it was unanimously agreed to set up a Bankline account to allow electronic banking. **ACTION: CLERK**

10.3 CIL Payments/Projects. Awaiting further discussion prior to moving forward **ACTION: ALL**

10.4 Village Hall Grant Request: Members are unable to discuss a grant until they know the full extent of all the work that's required/if other grants have been successful and, if so, how much has been awarded? Clerk to contact the VH to request more information. **ACTION: CLERK**

10.5 Review Fixed Assets Reporting: The Clerk queried with a previous Chairman why the fixed assets have always been valued as nil on the Annual Return? She was informed that: "The play equipment has always been written off as an expenditure in the year of purchase, rather than show depreciation over a number of years. However, the items are detailed in the parish accounts with the insured value shown." Members agreed to reconsider this procedure moving forward.

ACTION: FINANCE COMM

10.6 Other Matters to Report: Confirmation has been received from the External Auditor that the 2020/21 audit is now complete.

The following comment has been noted (see also 10.5 above): 'The smaller authority should therefore reconsider the valuation policy for all fixed assets and draw up a policy to be approved by the authority and recorded in both the authority's minutes and in the asset register. When submitting the 2021/22 AGAR, the

smaller authority should ensure that the 2020/21 comparative figure in Box 9 is restated for consistency and comparability

With the exception of the above, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

11 CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS: RECEIVED/GRANTED:

Applications Received:

- **21/502775/FULL – Land South West of Caring Road, Leeds.**
Construction of lake, improvement of habitat and bio-diversity and reinstatement, improvement of current derelict huts on site and establishment of woodland copse, orchard and hedgerow.
The Council neither supports nor objects to the application. However, if the application is granted, it was requested that a condition is made that the site cannot be used for commercial activity.
- **21/50385/ADV – Land West of Church Rd.**
Advertisement Consent for 2 no signs and 10 no flags
Council objects to this application.
- **21/504081 – Yeolands, White Horse Lane**
Erection of rear conservatory
Awaiting comments from Planning Committee
- **21/504508 – 1 Wardes Bungalows, Otham Street.**
Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with new dwelling and associated landscaping
Awaiting comments from Planning Committee
- **Planning Committee – Terms of engagement:** Members were reminded that they are required to send comments for all planning applications to the Clerk, prior to the deadline issued by MBC.

12 VILLAGE GREEN

- **Update Car Park:** Following consideration of the four remaining quotations, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that, subject to the outcome of a consultation, the quotation from MBC in the sum of £28,542 (includes an additional £2K for height restriction bar) is considered most suitable.
Consultation to be included in the next edition of the Ragstone. **ACTION: CLERK**
- **Tree Report.** The Clerk has tried to progress with MBC's Landscape Officer but has had no success.

13 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: Provide update.

MBC has requested an amendment to the front cover. The latest version of the plan

states 'Post Examination Draft March 2021'. This will need amending to say 'Made 29th September 2021'. The Council confirmed they are happy for the Borough Council to make this amendment.

- 14 UPDATE Re. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID/ASSET(S) OF COMMUNITY VALUE:** Clerk to complete the application to register the Council's interest in the White Horse as a Community Asset. **ACTION: CLERK**
- 15 FLOODING – WHITE HORSE LANE:** A further follow up email was sent to KCC on 13 July (copy to Cllr Cooke). No response received.
- 16 PARISH VEGETATION/HEDGE CUTTING:** Cllr Hipkins to speak with a contractor who has stated that he would be prepared to cut the hedge in WH Lane at no cost (contractor to liaise/obtain agreement from the tenant farmer). **ACTION: CLLR HIPKINS**
- 17 POPPY APPEAL/WREATH:** Further to the request from the RBL organiser, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to contribute £50 in accordance with LGA S137.
- 18 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:**
- Safer Maidstone Partnership – Ward Cluster meeting of 7 September was attended by Cllr Moon.
 - ❖ It was confirmed that incidents should be reported to the police, no matter how small they are.
 - ❖ MBC has introduced trial litter cams in various locations.
 - ❖ Safety in the town centre was discussed. There has been problems in Brenchley Gardens which are being addressed. Additional funding will be made available to deal with the spike in behaviour.
 - ❖ A Speedwatch Campaign is due to be launched on 22 September.
 - It was noted that the next meeting with Bellway Homes has been rescheduled from 8 September to 22 September.
- 19 NOTICE BOARDS:** Update not available. **ACTION: TBC**
- 20 REVIEW RE CHRISTMAS CAROLS:** It was unanimously agreed that due to Covid uncertainty, the Council regrets that they will not be able to have carols in the parish this year. To be reviewed in 2022.
- 21 URGENT MATTERS:** No urgent matters to report.
Cllr Moon to monitor Bearsted FC in accordance with the regulations.
- 22 RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE:** Various correspondence circulated by email.
- Email received from M. Smith requesting 'speed humps in front of the junction starting at the pub down to Simmonds Lane.' Concern was expressed about the speed & usage of cars on this part of the road.

The Council review traffic issues on a regular basis and whilst some minor traffic management might take place, the current thinking is wait until development is complete before tackling any major remodelling.

23 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING ON 8 NOVEMBER 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 9.40 pm.