

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 7.30 PM  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs R. Gray; S. Trench; H. Drake; V. Moon; K. Hipkins; T. Irving (Clerk); Cllr Cooke (KCC).

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Rachel Gray.

**1 APOLOGIES:** Cllr Gardner (holiday); L. Gandotra (family commitment); OP & MB Cllr Newton (unwell).

**2 CONFIRMATION RESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN/ELECT NEW CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Aplin's resignation of 26/10/16 (due to moving) was accepted. The vacancy formalities have already commenced.

Cllr Trench proposed Cllr Gray as Chairman, seconded by Cllr Drake. Following Cllr Gray's acceptance, the necessary paperwork was completed. Cllr Hipkins was elected as Vice Chairman.

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

**4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.

**5 COUNCILLOR VACANCY/CO-OPTION:** Ongoing.

**6 POLICE REPORT:**  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016

1 crime reported – A dog bit someone causing little or no injury, prosecution was not supported by the victim.

PCSO Money requested that the matter was 'raised at the meeting as a reminder for people to take care whilst walking dogs and to keep dogs on leads if owners are unsure how they may react to strangers.' (A note to be included in the next Ragstone).

The meeting was adjourned for

**7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

In response to a query when the Local Plan will be decided? A decision is expected early 2017.

The meeting was reconvened.

**8 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2016:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Cllr Gray.

**9 RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: (Written Report)**  
With the Maidstone Draft Local Plan currently under inspection in public by Mr Robert Mellor HM Inspector, I have spent a significant number of days at the inspection putting our case forward on numerous grounds including the

unsuitability of the road infrastructure, lack of school spaces, lack of accessible public transport, loss of green space, protection of special landscape characteristics of Otham, increase in the 15 metre green buffer, maintaining and protection of wildlife corridors including hedgerows, protection of nesting habitats for birds plus a complete lack of an adequate sewage systems to cope with the increased number of houses, etc.

I can report that the KCC Highways Team also put forward good arguments why they had not recommended approval of the housing applications with MBC arguing that KCC had failed to consult with them.

I challenged the Mott MacDonald Roads Consultant over her inability to "remember" how many minutes the road transport modifications along the Sutton Road into Maidstone would save.  
She stated that she could not remember.

I advised her in notes from previous meetings that she claimed it would be 15 seconds!

When the subject of The Special Landscapes Characteristics of Otham came to the fore, the Inspector listened to both my arguments for Otham and those of Cheryl Taylor-Maggio, Chair of Langley Parish Council.  
The Inspector listened to us for approx 30 minutes on this item, supported by CPRE and made copious notes. We will have to wait and see what transpires.

Land North of Gore Court Road / widening of Gore Court Road

MBC's Heritage Culture & Leisure Committee were requested by Parks & Open Spaces to declare part of the Senacre Open Space & Playing Field surplus to requirements in order that the Developer could widen Gore Court Road in order to access the site North of Bicknor Wood.

At the HCL Committee as a visiting Member, I had provided reasons why the Committee should not declare it surplus as it was used by the residents of Otham and Senacre as public open space.

After deliberations the HCL Committee voted to reject the application by MBC by the following vote:

To declare it surplus to requirements: 2 Lib/Dems +1 Lib/Dem Abstention.

To declare it not surplus to requirement 1 UKIP, 1 Lib/Dem 2 Conservatives

The motion put to the HCL Committee therefore Failed.

Within one week Fay Gooch, (Ind) John Perry (Con) Diana Lewins (Lib/Dem) called in the HCL Decision to The Policy & Resources Committee to get the decision reversed.

Both myself, Rachel Gray and Bill Greenhead (DPC) spoke at the meeting to support the original decision of HCL Committee.

On the evening of 25th October 2016, I received a telephone call and an email from MBC Legal Department advising me that as they felt that I held "very strong views on the matter" and they were "of the opinion that my actions at HCL give the appearance of bias and pre-determination"

It goes further in stating that "I should not take part in the discussion at P & R tomorrow and should absent myself from the room"

I obviously did attend the meeting and spoke.

All but one Conservative voted to declare the land surplus to requirement. All Lib/Dems voted to declare it surplus as did the Independent.

I am given to understand that any application to change Gore Court Road however would need the approval of KCC Highways following a Planning Application being received by MBC. I trust that MBC will listen. I have seen little evidence of the strength of the opinion of KCC Highways being heeded by MBC.

Bramley's – see planning.

I have chased both Officers in respect of Madam Taylors and the Bearsted Football Club Floodlighting issues and will keep you informed.

**10 RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Written report provided – see Appendix 1.

**Verbal report:** A reminder for 'You Decide' on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December between 9.15-12.45 at Downswood Community Centre.

Cllr Cooke wrote to the Planning Inspector stating "shock at where we are". KCC has suggested that the Inspector throws out the Integrated Transport Strategy.

KCC's Budget Consultation is available on their website. Whilst 103 million has already been found, a further 5 million of savings is still required.

**11 RECEIVE UPDATE ON POPPY COLLECTION –** Figures currently unknown/**REMEMBRANCE DAY:** A good turnout with a delightful Last Post played by the same young man as last year. Thanks were recorded to those serving tea and coffee in the Village Hall.

## **12. FINANCE.**

### **12.1 Statement of Account**

**approved the following payments.**

	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (Sept)	400.22
ent	Employer/Employee Pension (Sept)	98.66
	PAYE	180.60
	Donation - Wreath	40.00
I Services	Printing - Ragstone	27.72
	Clearing Bus Shelter/Empty Bin	216.00
	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (Oct)	375.78
ent	Employer/Employee Pension	

Pension (Oct)

**Cheques Received:**

MBC	PSS 2nd Installment	910.50
Nat West	Charges Refund (TBC)	12.63

**Balance of Current Account: £15,993.66 credit, after all cheques sent/rec'd**

**Balance of Business Reserve Account: £4,902.80**

**Total Funds: £20,896.46**

**12.2 Other Matters to Report:** Precept/Budget: Members of the Finance Committee to discuss proposals at 7.15 pm preceding the next full council meeting on 9 January.

**13 DISCUSSION OF VILLAGE GREEN ISSUES:** MBC's quotation to make a metal insert for the post and install and concrete for the sum of £98 was accepted.

The pre-school has explained how the misunderstanding of vehicles being parked on the green occurred and their apology has been accepted.

**14 DISCUSSION OF HEDGE MAINTENANCE OR ISSUES:** Whilst the sides of the hedges have been cut in line with DEFRA guidelines, the tops remain untouched.

Following complaints from residents that PROW KM88 has been ploughed over, the Clerk contacted the farmer to request that it's reinstated as quickly as possible.

**15 PLANNING: RECEIVED/GRANTED/LOCAL PLAN**

**Ongoing Applications:**

16/506349/FULL - Bearsted Football Club

16/507996/FULL - The White Horse

16/506074 - Bramley's. The Planning Officer attended a site meeting with the applicant and it transpired that there were some inaccuracies on the plans that have been submitted with the current application. The applicant has been asked to amend the plans accordingly in order that MBC can progress matters to a decision.

MBC will notify Cllr Newton when the amended plans are received and neighbouring householders will be consulted.

Cllr Newton has called in to the Planning Committee, any decision in respect of the above if the Officer is minded to approve ANY part of the retrospective building work carried out to date.

**Madam Taylors** – Planning breach.

**Local Plan:** Cllr Cooke remains concerned that a 5,000 homes 'Garden Suburb' is still an ambition of Golding Homes.

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

Cllr Gray attended an Introduction to Chairmanship training course on 5 Nov.

**17 URGENT MATTERS:** Almost all the reflectors are down between Honey Lane and Avery Lane. Cllr Cooke to investigate and report findings.

Ragstone to be produced featuring the following: Carols/Cllr Vacancy/Photo Competition/'You Decide/Oil Club (Cllr Gray has info)/Advice re Contact Details for 'Get Ready for Winter'.

**18 DECIDE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLS:** The choir has confirmed that 4 pm on Sunday 11 December will be convenient. Cllr Trench is happy to continue organising supplies but would appreciate some help on the day (setting up to start at 2 pm).

**DATE, TIME, VENUE FOR DINNER:** 13 or 16 Dec (depending on availability at suggested venues).

**19 CORRESPONDENCE:** Various correspondence circulated by email as received.

KCC & MBC Budget Consultations are available on line.

Get Ready for Winter Campaign. Producing a leaflet similar to Chegworth PC to be considered for Otham.

**20 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING (9 JANUARY 2017):** 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 9.40 pm.