



Website:

OPC Facebook page where you can share views, discuss community issues and connect with friends in the village as well as the Parish Council.

<http://www.Facebook.com/othamcommunity>



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www.othampc.org.uk

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Vice Chair: Rachel Gray

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Mark Ramsey

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THE RAGSTONE

Otham Parish Council's Newsletter

December 2021



The tools that shaped our village



Festive Greetings

Otham's Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted!

On 29 September, Maidstone Borough Council formally adopted our Neighbourhood Plan which means that it is now legally part of Maidstone's Local Plan and must be used by them in deciding planning applications.

The policies inside our plan cover the things that matter to local people; our views, rural character and amenity, hedgerows, walking routes, Local Green Space and the design and sustainability of new buildings. With this plan in place, it is our hope that these elements of our beautiful village will be preserved for future generations.

To read our Neighbourhood Plan, which includes information about the origins and history of our village which will be of interest to any new residents, go to www.othampc.org.uk and look under the Otham Neighbourhood Plan tab.

Otham PC News. We regret that due to Covid we are unable to host the Carols this year. Let's hope that we can get together next year! **We wish you a Happy Christmas and a Healthy & Peaceful New Year.**

Welcome to our newest members; Cllrs Kinga Stallwood & Mark Ramsey.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Stella Trench for the numerous projects that she was involved with during her time on the PC. We wish her all the best for the future.

We currently have 1 councillor vacancy —please contact the Clerk for more info.

Did you know that Otham has the No. 13 bus service which runs up to Morrisons on Sutton Road? From there you can catch the 82 into town which runs every

10 mins. Early morning and mid afternoon Monday – Friday it goes as far as the Royal Star Arcade, return journey is 16:10.

Village Green Car Park Consultation

As reported previously, we have taken into account the concerns expressed by residents living in close proximity to the Village Green that parking is not currently available for those wishing to visit the green or play area.

With that in mind, we have investigated the possibility of providing a car park on the green with park bays for approximately 10 cars and a height restriction barrier at the entrance.

We would like to know your views regarding the proposal shown below.

Please send your comments to the Parish Clerk, Teresa Irving (contact details provided on front page).



Some facts about Otham. Otham is described in the Domesday Book of 1086 as having 14 households, a mill and a church. By 1911 it had 100 houses, by 2011 it had 193 and when the new housing developments allocated by the Borough Council in 2017 are completed, there will be more than 1,200 houses in the parish.

The church of St Nicholas, in Church Road, is Norman and the 13th century tower contains one of the oldest bells in Kent.

The village grew up around a medieval ragstone quarry and a number of medieval hall houses still remain in Otham today including Stoneacre, owned by The National Trust, who plan to open a tea room inside next year.

Otham is crisscrossed by a network of well-maintained public footpaths which were first recorded on maps in 1797. These allow residents to walk safely, avoiding the now busy lanes. See the KCC map here <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/standardmap.aspx>

The historic centre of the village, running along Otham Street and Greenhill, including the Village Hall and Village Green is protected as a Conservation Area. Read this Appraisal to learn about some of our ancient buildings https://maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/19712/Otham-Appraisal.pdf

Otham has a long history of farming, with hops, nuts and fruit grown in the 1700s, with sheep grazing underneath. Today, our farmers still grow fruit and graze sheep, but we also have arable fields and grazing for horses.

Otham is a dark village, with only 4 streetlights outside of the new housing developments. In 2015, 81% of residents surveyed liked the dark lanes, commenting on their rural atmosphere and wildlife benefits.

The parish council is asked to name the roads and apartment blocks in the new housing developments, but they must relate to the local area. The roads and apartments in The Coppice are varieties of cobnuts, reflecting our nut farming heritage. Those in Bicknor Wood are names on the village war memorial and historic Otham families. For the new Parsonage Place development, we have suggested St Nicholas Way and the names of the Rectors of Otham church from 1293 to 1935. MBC will make the final decision on which names to use.