

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes from Orlestone Parish Council's Annual Assembly held on Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7pm in the Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Hamstreet, Ashford, Kent.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Mike Wady, (Vice-Chairman), Sid Gittens, David Lancaster, Steve Shorter, Mags Wellsted-Boorman, David Weeks and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell)

Also Present: Borough Councillor Aline Hicks, Representatives from various organisations including Hamstreet Primary Academy, Hamstreet Victory Hall, Hamstreet & District WI, Hamstreet & District Sports and Leisure Association (HDSLAs) and members of the public.

Apologies: had been received from Kent County Councillor Mike Angell and Borough Councillor Gareth Bradford.

Chairman's Annual Report for the Annual Assembly – Tuesday 26th March 2019

Good Evening and welcome to this year's Annual Assembly. It has been a busy year and the intention of this address is to give you a brief update as to what OPC have been spending your money on, what we have achieved and what is still in progress.

Once this address is complete, an informal session will be held when questions and information can be sought from the representatives of the various organisations present.

I would like to start by saying "Thank You" to our Parish Councillors and their families. Recently many members have given up their time to ensure our village is kept looking wonderful. Whether they are gardening, repairing benches, mowing lawns, collecting rubbish discarded onto the street or painting, they do so gladly and without expecting reward. That said, I would like to say thank you to someone who is not a parish councillor but whose husband always nominates her for these events.

Linda Gittens, we would like to present you with a small token of our appreciation for your continuous help, especially with the 'Silent Soldier' and more recently with Forge Gardens. *Presentation of flowers took place.*

It is not just Parish Councillors who I wish to thank; I can extend this to all of the other volunteers who give up their precious time in order to contribute to our parish. We live in a beautiful and unique area with wonderful community spirit. There are many groups and committees who give so much time to continue to provide the excellent facilities and events we sometimes take for granted. The Victory Hall, The Pavilion, The MUGA, Local Councillors, The playparks, The Children's groups. The W.I, Football clubs, Bowling, I could go on and on.... Thank you to everyone who contributes to our lovely community.

I would also like to thank Mike Angel, Aline Hicks, Brad Bradford, Peter Davison and Ian Kirkland for the assistance they have given the council over the last year. Although sometimes left unsaid, we are truly grateful for your knowledge, support and commitment to our Parish.

This leads us to what we have contributed. Well it has been a busy year for OPC. Some of my personal highlights of the year include:

The Remembrance Day Poppies – all around the village with more planned for 2019!

The Silent Soldier – a permanent reminder and iconic addition to the parish

Forge Gardens – many hours spent clearing and preparing for a cleaner look.

Johnsons Corner – mowing, clearing and a much-needed facelift.

In addition, we continue to provide contributions to these and other local groups. These help the groups continue to provide the environments our community needs to flourish. Again, trying not to repeat myself, we are truly lucky to have so much available to so many.

Finally, we value and treasure the fact that Hamstreet is a village and like to think of it as a thriving community. However, like many villages in the Ashford area; Ashford Borough Council has highlighted areas for residential development. At the moment there are outline plans to develop land opposite the Hamstreet Primary Academy, along Warehorne Road and at Parker Farm. Together this would see an increase of approximately 140 dwellings - not many for a town location but a large number for a village.

We are concerned that two of the sites in question have large land mass which would allow for much higher developments than that being put forward at the moment. We have listened to those living in the village and on the behalf of those living here have put forward concerns about these developments. In response to our recent parish poll, we paid for legal advice and employed a planning adviser to put forward a case during the hearings of Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan Consultation. All these sites remain in the ABC's Local Plan which has now been adopted.

As soon as planning applications are received regarding these sites, we will inform those living in the parish via our website, Facebook page, noticeboards and parish magazine. Everyone can make comment on planning applications and I encourage you all to keep an eye open for these planning applications so that you can put your views forward.

We strive to represent those living in the public, we do not get paid for being Parish Councillors, we value the village we live in and want the parish to be a good community. We all have families and other commitments and would welcome and appreciate help. We realise that not everyone wants to be a Parish Councillor but help with gardening projects, clearing litter etc would be a start.

The local elections will be held on 2nd May. We have never had a Parish Council Election as we have never had enough people wanting to sit on the Parish Council. Usually we 'press gang' our friends and neighbours to join, but please think about joining us. The Parish Clerk has nomination papers should you wish to join OPC.

We can now move on to my favourite part of the evening, where we recognise members of the community for outstanding contribution. This year we identified two people who we feel should be acknowledged. The first award, is someone who was highly recognisable in the village where he helped with many committees and at many events.

Presentation of OPC Community Award by Angela Broomfield to Susan Shoebridge

For those who remember Susan's father Mr Sam Shoebridge was a master baker for many years in Hamstreet and Susan has followed on from her father. Susan has worked tirelessly for over 30 years raising funds for Demelza House Childrens Hospice, The Childrens Society and the the Pilgrims' Hospice.

For the Pilgrims Hospice and Children's Society, Susan holds a coffee morning in her house every six weeks from February to October. Her annual afternoon tea and walk in September helps raise funds for Demelza House.

In total Susan has raised (wait for it) £41,584; a grand total indeed.

In recognition for Susan's wonderful fund-raising efforts, Susan received an invitation to the Queen's Garden party in 2017. Susan was delighted to attend with her friend Alice.

Susan is one of those dedicated people who is always working behind the scenes and keeps quiet about her achievements and is well deserving of the Parish Council's Award.

Presentation of OPC Community Award by The Vice Chairman Mr Mike Wady

Mike Wady explained to those present that this was a special award for the late Lewis Brockway for his service to the community. He presented Lewis's widow Rita with a plaque and flowers.

Rita Brockway: Thanked those present for the award explaining that she moved to Hamstreet in 1989 when she became the warden/manager of Cotton Hill House. She and Lewis married in 1991 and he was a great help at Cotton Hill House. After their retirement they moved to Bankside and Lewis concentrated on his passion – photography. He worked with Barbara Ware, helping her restore historical pictures. He continued to take photographs of various events and even weddings. He was diagnosed with Mesothelioma in 2017 and passed away in October 2018.

Following the presentations, the Chairman thank all for attending and asked those present to mix, share information and enjoy the refreshments available.

Finished 9.30pm

Chairman's Signature

Various photographs, information and posters were displayed for those present to read and look.