

## ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 at 7.30pm via ZOOM.

**Present:** Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Sid Gittens, Julian Griffiths, Basil Smith, David White and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell).

**Also Present:** Kent County Councillor Mike Angell, Borough Councillor David Ledger and Borough Councillor George Sparks and three members of the public (Gaye Larter, Cassie Ma and Chris Grayling).

**Public Comments & Observations:** *This being an opportunity for parishioners to speak or ask questions.* No questions were put forward at this point of the meeting.

- **Apologies:** were received from Mike Wady (prior engagement) and Stephen Shorter (long term apologies); these apologies were accepted by members present. Apologies were also received from PCSO Katherine Richards.

- **Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point from Councillors present.

Declarations of Significant Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point from Councillors present.

- **Minutes of Meeting Held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to be Authorised as Being Correct Record.**

Sid Gittens proposed that the minutes from the Parish Council's meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be accepted as correct record of the meeting and that they be signed/authorised by the Chairman of that meeting; Julian Griffiths seconded this proposal, which was agreed by all present. *The minutes were signed by the Chairman following the meeting.*

- **Matters Arising From The Minutes of the Meeting Held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020:** *Items for discussion only; no decisions can be made under this heading.*

- Christmas Lights: Members agreed via an online vote who should receive a prize for their Christmas Light Display in Hamstreet; prizes had been

distributed to the winners.

- **Vacancies on Parish Council & Co-Option:** Following the last meeting notice of resignation had been received from David Weeks. This vacancy was currently being advertised; it was noted that the vacancy would become a casual one in approximately 2 weeks and co-option would then be possible. The Chairman concluded that further discussion would be held at the next meeting when the vacancy became a casual vacancy and the Parish Council were free to co-opt. It was agreed by members that David Weeks be sent a card with a gift voucher, thanking him for his service to the parish council.

Following the resignation of Mags Wellsted-Boorman there was currently was a casual vacancy that could be filled by co-option. Gaye Larter had voiced an interest previously in this vacancy and had attended previous meetings. During a brief discussion those present agreed that she be co-opted onto the parish council. *Following the meeting Gaye withdrew her interest due to working and personal commitments.*

- **Reports From Representatives of the Community**

**Kent County Councillor Mike Angell:** highlighted that KCC were in the process of delivering their annual budget. A draft budget had been released which showed an increase in Council Tax from April 2021; this was due to be debated on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. He concluded saying that an enormous amount of funding had been spent on COVID measures which was now being documented.

**Borough Councillor George Sparks:** Thanked members for his Christmas bottle of wine. He reported:

- ABC had provided funding to struggling businesses via a Business Funding Grant.
- Flooding: This had been an issue for a number of years not helped by residents building structures over Speringbrook. He had received information regarding a property in Bournemouth who had been pumping water off their property which was illegal and was aware that this had occurred in the past by a number of property owners which did not help. He shared concern regarding water levels and was happy to help where he could.
- Community Grant: He had now spent all of his grant funding and would not have any more until April 2021. He had been able to donate £1,000 to The Friends of St Mary's to help them complete their fencing project..

**Borough Councillor David Ledger:** reported:

- He still had some funding left in his Community Grant Fund; applications had to be in by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- ABC were reviewing the provision of Concurrent Grants and Council Tax Support Grant to Parish Councils; this was likely to cease. He sat on the Scrutiny Overview Task Group who had questioned this and recommended that this should be phased out over a period of time so that those Parish Councils who relied heavily on the grants were not adversely affected; unfortunately, due to financial restrictions this was unlikely to be agreed.
- Planning: Due to the ‘Stodmarsh’ affect, applications that run its waste water through the River Stour were being delayed, developers must come up with mitigation measures to avoid increasing the chemical loading. Areas that do not run their water through the River Stour were in danger of having their applications pushed forward.

During a brief discussion it was noted that the planning application for development opposite the Primary Academy was likely to be put forward. Hamstreet did not come under ‘Stodmarsh’ as waste water went to the Marsh and not the River Stour. Sewage did go to Ashford which could cause a delay in forthcoming applications. It was noted that there was an increase in lorry containers going to the water treatment works in Warehorne Road and concern was expressed as how the works would cope if there was more development.

**Hamstreet & District Sports & Leisure Association:** The pavilion and tennis courts are closed to regular bookings; the pavilion had been used by Nexus for care training which is permitted under current guidelines.

Following the last meeting South East Water had asked for permission to install water quality monitoring equipment/telemetric equipment on Pound Lees. Graham Woodcock had been liaising with them and arrangements had been made to have this installed in about a week.

The barrier at Pound Lees had been repaired but a week later was damaged. ABC have responded saying that they do not have the funds to repair or replace the barrier again and if it becomes dangerous, they will remove it. CCTV coverage is being viewed to see if there is any footage showing who is responsible. During discussion ideas for replacing the barrier were put forward. The Parish Clerk was asked to contact ABC to find out if there was any regulations or guidelines relating to car park barriers. It was noted that OPC were still holding on to funds from Borough Councillor Sparks and Cllr Angell that could be used for a new barrier.

**PCSO Katherine Richard:** her report had been circulated to members prior the meeting. It noted that various scams were in circulation including a COVID Vaccination scam. A warning was given regarding the passing on of personal bank details and money transfers. Kate also noted that 63 fines had been issued in Kent to those not keeping to COVID regulations

**Neighbourhood Watch Update:** various reports had been received regarding

scam emails and telephone calls. It was noted that catalytic converters and number plates were objects that were being targeted for theft. Crime reports received since the last meeting;

8th January Carters Wood Area Interference with a vehicle

5<sup>th</sup> January Ruckinge Road Area Number plates stolen from a vehicle

During a brief discussion it was noted that there was no longer a formal Neighbourhood Watch group only the online page on Facebook. *During this agenda item one of the members of public present left the meeting.*

- **Parish Councillor Updates/Reports:** *During discussion via email following the last meeting, it had been agreed by a majority of members that a tidyman be employed to carry out work that was needed in the village; some of which had been previously carried out by Colin Howland and Dave Collins, who had both retired.*

**Tidyman:** The Chairman reported that the Tidyman (Stuart Weeks) had starting working for the Parish Council as a self-employed tidyman (he would be responsible for his own insurance and tax). He would be involved in general tidying up, looking after Johnsons Corner, gardening work and was available to help out at Forge Gardens. He was currently working approximately 4 hours a week and was completing a monthly timesheet, with payment being made on receipt of it.

His first task had been to clear nearly all the paths in the village. The Chairman asked that either he or the Clerk be notified of any work that was required from Stuart and they would liaise with him.

**Green Hearts:** It was highlighted that Orlestone WI were running a Green Hearts programme and were asking residents to display green hearts on their windows around Valentine's Day. Orlestone WI were joining the national campaign for more action to combat environmental pollution and climate change and by decorating windows with Green Hearts residents could show that they loved the planet. During discussion those present agreed that prizes would be presented to the winner (£30 Dobbies voucher) and two runners up (£20 & £10 Dobbies Vouchers).

**NHS Flag:** The Chairman highlighted that the NHS flag that was currently flying was becoming worn and tatty. It was agreed that a new one be purchased.

**Website:** The Chairman reported that the Parish Council's website had been updated that week.

**Drainage:** Basil highlighted issues with blocked drains in Warehorne Road and had expressed frustration to Highways who had attended one particular drain more than once that was not blocked but had not attended others that

were blocked.

**Highways:** Julian reported that with Basil and David's help, he had co-ordinated a survey of blocked drains in Hamstreet as part of his participation with the flood watch community group and had circulated findings to members. It noted that there were 307 drains/gullies on the road; 22% were blocked with 40% of drains blocked in Ashford Road. All issues had been reported. It was hoped that these issues would emphasise to Highways that there were issues that needed investigation.

The Chairman thanked David, Basil and Julian for this work and asked that all issues that needed to be reported to Highways be passed on to Mike Wady or that he be included in these discussions as he was the parish council's highways liaison representative. He could keep 'tabs' on all matters. This would help ensure that problems were not reported more than once.

**Sid Gittens:** reported

- An issue had been brought to his attention of land encroachment; this regarded a gate being set forward by a foot in the alley. He did not feel personally that this was a major issue, if the gate was moved back the neighbouring hedge would have to be cut back severely. The alley was tight but not impassable.
- The street sign was still bent over in Forge Gardens and had not been rectified.
- Flooding had occurred adjacent to the duck pond by Cotton Hill House.

During discussion, Borough Councillor George Sparks said that he would raise this issue with ABC. It was suggested that if land around the edge of Pound Lees was dug up to build a burn/shelf, surplus earth would need to go somewhere and perhaps it could be placed in this area to help raise its level.

- Cotton Hill Land Slide: There had been a land slide previously her and Cllr Mike Angell reported that this issue was to do with private land and was not a KCC responsibility. The land owner had repaired the damage however with the latest deluge of rain, problems were occurring. It was agreed that the land owner be contacted and concern expressed.
- **Community Flood Watch Update/Flood Warden For Hamstreet:** Julian reported that following the last meeting, flooding was experienced in the centre of the village. A new Facebook page had been set up by concerned residents called 'Hamstreet Flooding'. Julian had been holding regular discussions with its representative (Vicky McKissock) and the Environment Agency and had circulated via email updates of discussions held, these noted that a leaflet drop had been made to those who were likely to be affected by

flooding and work that was planned. The group were in the process of gathering all the evidence that were causing flooding issues.

- **Possible Speed Watch Programme For Hamstreet:** Funding has been applied for from Cllr Angell for the provision of speed watch monitors. The application was ongoing. Cllr Angell suggested that a monitor could be shared between OPC and Ruckinge Parish Council.

Speed watch programme: A request for volunteers for this programme had been made, the Clerk had received one enquiry. During a brief discussion it was agreed that due to the lack of volunteers coming forward the programme would be shelved for the time being. It was agreed that a speed watch monitor would be the way to proceed with a mobile one being preferable.

- **Planning: Update, Applications Received:**

**No: 21/00072** Stable Cottage, The Street, TN26 2HG

Two storey infill extension to rear to replace existing conservatory, re-position of front door with new entrance porch

During discussion it was agreed that the application would not be objected to however a site visit would be requested as there was concern regarding a possible problem with vehicle and pedestrian access by a neighbour.

**Update:**

**No: 01057/AMND/AS** Home Farm, Ashford Road, TN26 2DS

Non material minor amendment to planning permission 20/01057

(Demolition of existing single skin link building and replacement with infill Kitchen extension) to change roof design from part flat part pitched roof to stepped flat roof)

Decision: Plans approved by ABC

- **Correspondence Received:** not covered under other agenda items
  - Various briefing notes/updates had been received from ABC and KCC (these had been forwarded to members via email.

- **Finance:**

**Budget Review:** circulated to members prior the meeting.

**Grants:** A grant form from the Hamstreet Bowling Club had been received

and discussed during the last meeting. Following the meeting a socially distanced site meeting had been held with a representative from the Club. Julian reported to members via email:

‘ The treasurer handed me the quotes they have received. An early verbal one from Chart Fencing was for less work and only for materials that came to £2,600 plus an estimated further £2,000 for a subcontractor to install the originally planned straight line of fencing.

Following Mike and I’s visit they now have two quotes for all the work, both supply and install. £4,920 from N&D Carpentry and £3,908.86 from The Friendly Fencer (Neil Underdown). The latter is the one, as local and cheapest, they are accepting and he is on hand to start in February.’

Julian highlighted that he had reviewed those receiving grants from OPC and had noted that the Club had received a previous grant for a mower. During discussion, it was highlighted that removing the hedge and replacing it with fencing would increase the size of the alley way which would benefit those living in the area. However, concern was expressed that it appeared that the same groups were receiving grants. Following discussion, a vote was held, by a majority vote it was agreed that the funding would be provided. Sid Gittens abstained from the vote.

**Authorisation of Cheques:** The Clerk highlighted the annual grants to the Friends of St Mary’s Church, The HDSL A and Victory Hall were now due. Those present agreed that these grants be made as usual. It was noted that the Chairman had authorised the payment of the external auditor’s fees since the last meeting. The following cheques were authorised; those present agreed that the Chairman had delegated authority to authorise cheques if required.

#### Removed Finance

- **Dates For Meetings In 2021 & Annual Assembly Preparations:** The Clerk noted that due to bank holidays in 2021 some meeting dates would have to be moved from the first Monday of the month to an alternative date; in April this would be the second Monday of the month.

During discussion it was noted that the Annual Assembly would be unlikely to go ahead and it was agreed that a newsletter be put together highlighting reports from various groups and the work of the Parish Council during the year.

A short discussion was held regarding OPC’s Annual Community Awards, it was agreed that the two not handed out last year would be presented with two being provided this year. During discussion it was agreed that those to be presented with an award would be finalised at the next meeting. It was suggested that the doctor’s surgery could receive a plaque in recognition for their help in the community. A fun day for the community was also suggested. Cllr Sparks promised funding to cover music. It was suggested that a committee be put together to run and organise the event with representatives

from the community all being involved.

*During discussion the Chairman highlighted that the 2-hour time limit for meetings had been exceeded; it was unanimously agreed that discussion continue.*

- **Items for Next Agenda:** It was agreed that ‘Community Funday Committee’ be put on the agenda. During discussion the condition of the brick alley was discussed. It was noted that in the past ABC had said that they could replace the bricks with tarmac but the village and OPC had not wanted to lose the ethnicity of the path. It was agreed that Highways and Public Rights of Way be contacted and asked if the path could be improved.

Cllr Sparks reported that any vehicle weighing more than 5 tonnes could not park in residential areas and would be clamped; if OPC were aware of any vehicles over 5 tonne parking then parking enforcement should be contacted. During discussion it was noted that parking enforcement officers had been out in the village recently.

**15.Date & Time of Next Meetings:** Planning Meeting: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (if necessary)

Parish Council Meeting: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 7.30pm

Meeting Concluded 9.46pm  
Signature:

Chairman’s