

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 1st March 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 George Sparks and 2 members of the public (Spencer & Ebony Goddard)

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.

1. **Apologies:** were received from Stephen Shorter (long term apologies); these apologies were accepted by members present. Apologies were also received from PCSO Katherine Richards.

2. **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.

3. **Minutes of Meeting Held on 1st February 2021 to be Authorised as Being Correct Record.**

Julian Griffiths proposed that the minutes from the Parish Council's meeting held on 1st February 2021 be accepted as correct record of the meeting and that they be signed/authorised by the Chairman of that meeting; Basil Smith seconded this proposal, which was agreed by all present. *The minutes were signed by the Chairman following the meeting.*

4. **Matters Arising From The Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1st February 2021:** *Items for discussion only; no decisions can be made under this heading.*

- Damaged Barrier to Pound Lees Car Park: Graham (HDSL A) had gone through some of the CCTV footage but had not found anything indicating how the barrier had been damaged. The Chairman is to look at prices of having this repaired or replaced in the future.

5. **Vacancies on Parish Council & Co-Option:** As the person who had voiced an interest in the casual vacancy was not present, it was agreed that this agenda item be skipped and would perhaps be brought in at a later point of the meeting.

6. **Reports From Representatives of the Community**

Hamstreet Street Squad: Ebony Goddard explained that she had set up the Street Squad, as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award and co-ordinated a group of volunteers who worked in pairs and litter picked the village every Sunday for an hour. Ebony thanked members of the parish council for their support and the funding provided. She explained that during the past 6 weeks they had collected 48 bags of rubbish which was taken away by a licensed waste collector. This coming week they planned to cover the entrances to Hamstreet. The plan going forward was to organise two village community litter picks a year, so that all residents could take part and improve the look of Hamstreet. She hoped that their actions would encourage people to change their mind set about littering. The group wore hi-visible jackets so that they could easily be seen.

The Chairman thanked Ebony and the rest of the Street Squad for their work which had received a lot of good feedback. During a brief discussion David White proposed that banners/notices noting that litter picking was in progress be provided and paid for by OPC. This was unanimously agreed; the Chairman is to research and find the most suitable signs. *Ebony Goddard left the meeting.*

Kent County Councillor Mike Angell: highlighted that local elections for county councillors would be taking place on 6th May. He had decided not to stand again and would be retiring after 24 years. He noted that the forthcoming census would be taking place on-line and forms needed to be completed by 21st March 2021.

Borough Councillor George Sparks: reported that he was still trying to find out who owned the green around the pond by Cotton Hill House. He did not think OPC would be allowed to build the surface up, as suggested at the last meeting. ABC would be setting the Council Tax on 4th March but it would remain the lowest in Kent. 150 new staff were being employed to cover the border control near Sevington. He concluded by congratulating the Hamstreet Street Squad on the job they were doing.

Hamstreet & District Sports & Leisure Association:

- Defibrillator sited on side of pavilion; the Clerk had been asked to check to see if it is insured by OPC and had noted that it was not listed separately. The insurance policy was due to be renewed in June and the Clerk will ask that it be noted. During a brief discussion it was agreed that its expenses would be drawn from the property maintenance budget.

PCSO Katherine Richard: her report had been circulated to members prior the meeting. It noted:

- That there had been thefts from garages and garden sheds in Ashford and she advised that these could be fitted with simple alarms to act as a deterrent and to mark all property.
- Due to the rise of catalytic converter thefts, Ashford Community Safety Unit had supplied permanent security-marking kits to several garages in the town. This initiative would allow mechanics to mark the catalytic converters of cars when they are brought in for a service. Vehicle owners interested in the kits can email the Community Safety Unit: csu.ashford@kent.police.uk.
- It was noted that there had been an increase in dog thefts and that owners take adequate precautions in keeping their pets safe.
- Fraud: circulating at the moment were fake calls from Amazon, COVID Vaccine Scams, police impersonators, Council Tax Banding. A warning was given regarding the passing on of personal bank details and money transfers.

Neighbourhood Watch Update: Crime reports received since the last meeting included damage caused by catapults in Ashford. Scams reported included courier and royal mail fraud, with scammers trying to find personal addresses and bank details.

7. **Parish Councillor Updates/Reports:**

David White: Highlighted that work at Springbrook looked very good, he would be investigating that access to water for the allotment holders was still possible.

Julian Griffiths: provided the following report which had been emailed to members prior the meeting.

Community Flood Watch Update:

- Environmental Agency: Dredging from the Chocolate box to the Canal has started. Pound Lees and the next field down have been completed. Work should be completed by Friday 5th March. The churned up ground has been flattened and they will return later in the year to smooth and reseed as necessary.
- Representatives met with Lesley Mason of DEFRA/EA Fisheries Biodiversity and Geomorphology (FBG Team), she informs the team what they can and cannot dredge.
- 101 blocked drains were reported out of 364 so 28% blocked. KCC are now working to unblock them. Julian is in contact with Fiona Green of KCC. Some of the drains have been looked at and white paint marks are appearing indicating where work to be done.
- The Environmental Agency is chasing Highways England to deal with the attenuation pond on A2070.
- The Environmental Agency has confirmed a bigger sluice into the canal cannot be done, but they are discussing with the landowners laying down a permanent way/hardstanding so that they can move a high capacity pump in easily when needed.
- The Environmental Agency & Natural England are in discussion to introduce beavers/leaky dams into the woods.
- Paul Settle has completed the Environment Agency's Food Watch Programme and he and Julian have met to discuss what has happened and what needs to be done.
- Flood Warden Handbooks and High Viz jackets have arrived.

Possible future steps: -

- i) Remind villagers of their 'riparian rights' if their property borders the Springbrook.

- ii) Villagers to clear garden rubbish, overhanging shrubs, etc. during the summer when dry and water low.
- iii) Berm/Bund - cost benefit to be produced this year. The 'proposer' for this should probably be OPC, there will be initial costs involved to establish what can be done, e.g., Habitat surveys, consultants advice etc. and then completion of the forms required. The EA will help with some of this initial cost. However, if everything else is carried out this solution may not be necessary. Should funds be allocated for this in the budget?
- iv) Should there ever be roadworks at the bottom of the street then the EA would wish to replace the kinky culvert with a proper bridge.

Julian concluded by highlighting that an inspector from Highways had visited the village and all the issues reported had been shortened and issues had been grouped together and referenced under the road name that they occurred on.

During a brief discussion it was noted that the bridge by the chocolate box was a 'pinch' point and to help prevent flooding and required updating; unfortunately, the work was not planned.

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP): a wish list had been drawn up and posted on OPC's website. It was agreed that this be posted on OPC's Facebook page. Other ideas that could be added were noted.

A brief discussion was held regarding HGVs parking in the village by the junction of Cock Lane and Ashford Road and how this could be prevented. It was thought that double yellow lines would help. Cllr Mike Angell noted that this was the responsibility of ABC; Cllr Sparks was asked if he could refer this issue to ABC.

It was noted that lorries parking in this problem area had recently been clamped by a parking warden and it was hoped that this action would help prevent large vehicles parking here again.

Parish Council Newsletter: The Clerk had circulated reports provided and put them into a draft newsletter. During discussion, the Chairman said that he would work on a draft introduction to be agreed and would circulate it for comment.

Basil Smith: noted that he was now working with Victory Hall as OPC's representative. They had a new committee ready in the wings to take over after lock down. As yet there were no plans to re-open the hall due to the deep clean that was required between bookings but it was currently available for the doctor surgery to use when required. The play park remained open.

Sid Gittens: Noted that the Village Sign on the flag pole was still absent. The Chairman is to make arrangements to have this removed from the Pavilion so that it can be painted. It was agreed that the handy-man be asked to help. *Following the meeting arrangements were made to have two village signs repaired and the flag pole painted.* During further discussion, Sid agreed to investigate the mud slide near Cotton Hill and speak to the land owner about remedying the problem. He highlighted that Mr & Mrs Light had been looking after the entrance to Bankside for a number of years and that perhaps this work should be acknowledged. Members agreed that the Clerk write to them thanking them for their efforts. Sid concluded by noting that he had seen the gullies being cleaned in Cock Lane during the week.

8. **Community Flood Watch Update:** Julian highlighted that a resident, Paul Settle, had attended a flood watch meeting and they had both been provided with Hi-Vis jackets and handbooks. They will work through what they think they have to do, which would include some type of flood plan.
9. **Possible Speed Watch Programme For Hamstreet:** Funding has been applied for from Cllr Angell for the provision of speed watch monitors. A reply from Highways had been received saying that a speed monitor was not required as the traffic survey undertaken by OPC indicated that there was not a problem with speeding vehicles. Consequently, the request for funding had been turned down. It was suggested that on OPC's HIP a speed limit sign be requested to 20mph. Borough Councillor George Sparks thought that this request would likely be turned down but he would investigate on behalf of OPC. The Chairman suggested that banners asking drivers to 'Slow Down in Our Village' could be put up. During discussion it was agreed that some type of signage was required, it was noted that Bilsington had a mobile speed sign. The Clerk was asked to contact Bilsington PC and ask for details of their mobile speed sign. It was noted that Tenterden also had a mobile speed sign.

10. Planning: Update, Applications Received:

Update: No 18/00644 *Land to the north of St Marys Close and east of, Ashford Road, Hamstreet, Kent*

Outline application to consider the access from Ashford Road only and the construction of up to 80 new homes, an up to 60 bed care home.....

Passed by ABC

During the last meeting discussion had taken place regarding the application due to the land being sold to a new developer who had been speaking to Kent Online about it and various discussions held on the Hamstreet Community Facebook Page. Draft plans had been advertised. To date no application has been put forward by the developer. The Clerk had contacted the developer (Bovis Homes) asking if a representative would meet with representatives from OPC. No acknowledgement to this email or reply had been received. Julian had drafted a letter raising concerns about flooding risk and sewage capability to be submitted when an application is put forward.

During a brief discussion, it was noted that representation should be made regarding traffic calming and flooding when the application went forward. Borough Councillor George Sparks highlighted that Ashford Road, car park and entrance had already been approved in the outline planning application.

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

Decision: Granted by ABC

Concern regarding a possible problem with vehicle and pedestrian access by a neighbour was highlighted to ABC's planning officer (Sally Hogsbin) who was overseeing the application and a request for a site visit was made. She responded saying *'At the moment (and really since the beginning of lockdown) we are unable to carry out site visits particularly for this type of application. I had seen the objection from the neighbour. The red line as per the site location plan is definitely under the ownership of the applicant (having checked with Land Registry this also confirms the same) and therefore any rights of access etc. would in any event be civil matters between the individuals and not material planning considerations.'*

11. Correspondence Received: not covered under other agenda items

- Email from the WI (circulated to members) highlighting a NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day that is being held on 5th July 2021. The WI were being encouraged to hold afternoon tea events. Hamstreet WI have said that they would like to be involved in doing something and hoped that they will have the backing of OPC.

Those present agreed that they be invited to sit on the proposed Funday Committee and that their Frontline Workers Day could run alongside the Funday.

- Thank you letters and emails had been received from the HDSLAs, The Friends of St Mary's Church and the Hamstreet Victory Hall Committee thanking OPC for their annual grants to help cover mowing costs.
- Various briefing notes/updates had been received from ABC and KCC (these had been forwarded to members via email.
- Emails have been received regarding the national census that was taking place on 21st March 2021. For the first time this will be done online. Letters will be sent out during the next week or so which will provide all information required.

12. Finance:

Budget Review: circulated to members prior the meeting and made available to those present via a screen share. A forecast had also been circulated to members for the new financial year. It was noted that funding needed to be ear-marked for the Funday; funding allocated for Twinning and surplus funding in the Chairman's Budget would be placed in a new budget for the Funday. During discussion regarding reserves held it was suggested that land to use for allotments could be purchased, this led to a brief discussion which noted that Southern Water had not replied to

enquiries regarding the possibility of them releasing some of their land to use for allotments. The Clerk is to make further enquiries.

Authorisation of Cheques: The following cheques were authorised; those present agreed that the Chairman had delegated authority to authorise cheques if required. The Chairman highlighted that the Tidyman had completed approximately 6 hours a week during February.

For	To	Amount	Cheque No
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During this agenda item Cllr Mike Angell left the meeting.

13. Parish Council Newsletter (to replace Annual Assembly): A first draft had been circulated to members. A few alterations were suggested; the Chairman is to put together an introduction. Annual Awards: For 2020 and 2021 were agreed. The Clerk was asked to contact Mags Wellsted-Boorman and ask her if she could have them engraved as usual. Discussion was held regarding a plaque of some type to be presented to the doctors surgery. The Clerk is to discuss with Mags an appropriate plaque and its provision for the doctors surgery.

14. Community Funday – Committee & Other Considerations: During discussion it was agreed that an initial meeting be held on Tuesday 16th March at 7.30pm via Zoom to set up the committee and start discussions. It was noted that the HDSLAs were happy to provide a bar. Free entertainment could be offered for children. Music would be provided. The Clerk was asked to invite various organisations in the village to join the committee. It was suggested that the Funday be held on Saturday 17th July.

15. Items for Next Agenda: None were brought forward.

16. Date & Time of Next Meetings: Planning Meeting: Monday 15th March 2021 (if necessary)
Community Funday Committee: 16th March 2021 at 7.30pm
Parish Council Meeting: Monday 12th April 2021 at 7.30pm

Meeting Concluded 9.29pm

Chairman's Signature: