

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2025 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Persons Present: Cllrs Kevin Hipkins - Chairman; Val Moon; Jenny Hollingsworth; Alan Chard; Mick Read; Teresa Irving – Clerk.

1. **APOLOGIES:** An apology was received and accepted from Councillor Hickmott, who was absent due to work commitments.
- 2 **NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD ANY ITEMS** – Not applicable.
- 3 **CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS:** Not applicable.
- 4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 5 **CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** The following reports were obtained from e-watch.co:

Filbert Way. On 25 October between 00.01 and 10.58. Somebody damaged two street bollard lights, one was completely pulled out of the ground.

Boyson Drive. On 13 December between 16.00 and 18.00. Somebody stole a recently delivered parcel from a doorstep.

White Horse Lane. On Wednesday 18 December between 18.00 and 21.04. Somebody stole a white Ford Transit WXL61***, from the road.

Honey Lane. Between 22.00 on Saturday 4 January and 03.14 on Sunday 5 January. Somebody stole a white Honda Civic P529***, from a driveway.
- 6 **ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** No questions were raised.
- 7 **APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2024:**
The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were duly signed by Councillor Hipkins
- 8 **RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT:** Not available.
- 9 **RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available
- 10 **VILLAGE GREEN:**
 - 10.1 **Parking contract update:** Cllr Hipkins has been in contact with the farmer to discuss a contract with Savills. Enquiries were also made about parking for the fete.

ACTION: Cllr Hipkins
 - 10.2 **Confirm Maintenance Requirements for War Memorial/Consider Previously Circulated Quotations:** Clerk to forward the drone footage and photos to request new quotations, to
Minutes 13.01.25

Signed:

include; the removal of defective pointing, repointing, replace missing sections and cleaning of the cross. **ACTION: Clerk**

- 10.3 Annual Inspection Report: Agree required actions.** Items identified are all designated 'low risk'. Items to be checked and remedial work carried out as required.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to request the Play Inspection Company to carry out an annual inspection in November 2025. **ACTION: Clerk**

- 10.4 Grass Cutting 2025/26.** Following due consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the quotation from Steven Waring.

Clerk to request a quotation for a regular tidying of vegetation around the parking area, at the back of the sheds.

11. FINANCE:

11.1 Approve Statement of Account:

OTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORT FROM 01.11.24 TO 31.12.24

	UNITY BANK Current Acct	UNITY BANK Savings Acct	NATWEST Current Acct	NATWEST Reserve Acct
Balance b/f 31/10/2024	141,856.71	0.00	81,466.35	202,016.97
<u>Expenses: Name</u>				
RBL - Wreath & Donation	50.00			
Service Charge	6.00			
The Living Forest	649.80			
Staffing Costs November	1,139.98			
The Play Inspection Company	207.00			
KALC - Clerks Conference	42.00			
Staffing Costs December	1434.32			
Service Charge	6.00			
Transfer to Unity Savings Acct				
Total expenditure:	3,535.10			
<u>Receipts:</u>	0.00			
<u>Transferred Funds:</u>				
			-	
In: NatWest Transfer (Acct Closed)	81,466.35		81,466.35	
Sub total:	219,787.96			
Out - Transferred to Unity Savings Acct	-200,000.00	200,000.00		
<u>Interest</u>				
November				
December		484.38		0.00
Balance c/f	19,787.96	200,484.38	0.00	202,016.97

Bank Statements:	19,787.96	200,484.38	Acct Closed	202,016.97
<u>Breakdown of above funds</u>				
CIL Funding:	361,177.70			
Parish Council Reserves	<u>61,111.61</u>			
	422,289.31			

Approval of the above was proposed by Cllr Hipkins, seconded Cllr Moon and duly **RESOLVED**

- 11.2 Budget Proposals for 2025/26/Agree Precept:** Following due consideration, it was proposed by Cllr Hipkins, seconded by Cllr Moon and unanimously agreed to accept the proposal from the Finance Committee and maintain the current band D charge. This will generate a precept of £31,850 for 2025/26, with no change in the parish element of the council tax for residents. **RESOLVED**

- 11.3 Accounts Update:** It was **RESOLVED** to transfer £85 K from the NatWest Reserve Account to the newly opened 95 Day Saver Account. The balance from the Reserve Account will be transferred to a new Unity 6-Month Fixed Term Saving Account, and the Reserve Account closed.

- 11.4 Other Matters to Report.** A donation request has been received from the Heart of Kent Hospice for consideration at the 10 March meeting.

12. CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED/GRANTED:

To consider and resolve the council's response to planning applications listed below and any additional applications advised by Maidstone Borough Council and are available on their website between the circulation of the agenda and the meeting to which it pertains.

New Applications – None received.

13 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN/JOINT PARISHES TRANSPORT GRP INC SPEEDWATCH UPDATE:

- Parish Speed Indicator Device (SID – Shared across Parishes) Update: An interest was confirmed by OPC, but no further information has been forthcoming. Cllr Christodoulou to progress. **ACTION: Cllr Christodoulou**
- Update re Flooding/Blocked gullies in White Horse Lane/Honey Lane. The problem has again been reported to Highways (ref. 851006), and is awaiting further attention.

- 14 CONSIDER COMMUNITY WARDEN REQUEST FROM BEARSTED PC:** Following due consideration of the information relating to Otham, it was agreed that it will not be viable for the parish to contribute towards the scheme at this point in time. It was noted that there is a free online workshop about sponsorship of the scheme on 20 January.

15 REVIEW OF POLICIES:

Asset Register – Acceptance of the updated register was proposed, seconded & **RESOLVED**
Standing Orders – It was confirmed that no updates are required.
Financial Regulations – To be updated in accordance with NALCs new guidelines.

- 16 MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL, CONSERVATION AREA CONSULTATION:** The consultation will run until 9 March '25, with a public consultation taking place in the Village

Hall between 4pm to 6pm on 19 February. MBC confirmed that they will provide posters and postcards for display/circulation (Clerk to progress).

17 RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- Clerk – KALC. Clerk's Annual Conference on 12 November.
- Cllr Hollingsworth – KCC. The Parish Seminar at Sessions House on 20 November.

18 CIL – CONSIDER NEW PROJECTS:

Interpretation Panel/Lectern Proposal. It was proposed, seconded **RESOLVED** to purchase the Ancient Oak & Conservation - Woodsman Waney Edge from Fitzpatrick Walmer @ £2,371 ex VAT. (Following advice subsequently provided by FW, it was agreed not to raise the board to waist height, as it will not be helpful to wheelchair users). **ACTION: Clerk**

Book Swap. The proposal from Cllr Christodoulou for a low-level container to be sited outside the Village Hall, with books to be swapped by residents was agreed in principle. Cllr Christodoulou to obtain quotes. **ACTION: Cllr Christodoulou**

Signage for Gore Court/Church Rd Junction – Cllr Read proposed that a 'Welcome to Otham' sign be provided for Buffkyn Way, was agreed in principle. **ACTION: Cllr Read**

Fibre broadband Assistance. Following a communication between Cllr Chard and BT, it was confirmed that BT are working at connecting all residents in the very near future.

Additional suggestions: A slope to replace the existing steps on the Green, with a composite surface running from the slope to the War Memorial. **Action: Clerk to organise quotations.**

A drinking fountain to be considered for the Green. **Action: Cllr Read**

19 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: Various correspondence circulated by email for consideration.

20 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION: Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.45 pm on Monday 10 March, 2025.