

**MINUTES OF THE OTHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022 AT 7.30 P.M
IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs Kevin Hipkins (Chairman), Clint Hickmott, Mick Read, Gordon Newton (OPC/MBC), Mrs T. Irving (Clerk), Hayley Scott & Terry Dine – Bicknor Wood Community Group, 1 Member of the Public.

1. Apologies: No apologies were received.

Apologies were received retrospectively from Cllrs Ramsey & Gray.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 26 April, 2021.

The minutes were discussed and agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & were signed and dated by the Chairman.

3. Reports from invited groups and associations:

Bicknor Wood Community Group – Hayley Scott & Terry Dine.

The group thanked the parish council for their support and confirmed that a kissing gate has been installed, which was financed with the grant that was made at the PC meeting of 14 March 2022. A lot of positive comments have been received

Unfortunately, there is still a problem with motorbikes at one of the entrances. The group are trying to deal with the issue themselves, rather than reporting to official channels, but the message does not appear to be getting through. They will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, will have to take further steps.

Councillor Newton – Maidstone Borough Council:

- The pot holes on Church Road are consistently reported to KCC but nothing appears to happen.
- Tree cutting. I do not like to see trees being cut down illegally and I will continue to monitor and report as necessary.
- Parsonage Place. Roads have now been installed for the development.

I will continue to fight against the Variation of Condition 30 (to vary the trigger point for the delivery of the Willington Street/Deringwood Drive improvements, to prior to occupation of 100 units).

I am looking to pressure KCC to install a temporary pedestrian crossing at the Willington Street/Deringwood Drive junction, until a permanent fixture can be installed.

Having now received and read the Archaeology Report, I feel it is a shame that this was not available before work started on the development.

APM OPC 25.04.22

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4. Otham Parish Council: Chair's Report – Cllr Kevin Hipkins:

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP: Following the resignation of Cllr Drake and Trench, we now have 8 Parish Councillors: Cllrs Gray, Hickmott, Hipkins, Moon, Newton, Stallwood, Ramsey and Read. Clerk Teresa Irving.

MEMBERSHIP, ASSOCIATIONS and STATUTORY BODIES

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Kent Association of Local Councils

Joint Parishes Group

The Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks

As in previous years I would like to formally record the activity of the Council over the past years.

OTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This was adopted on 29/09/2021. Well done to all!

VILLAGE GREEN

New Play Area being used.

Memorial tree and bench installed.

Protocol agreed to maintain and control the type and number of memorial additions to the green.

Tree pruning and grass cutting continue.

Proposal and initial costing of small (10) space car parking on north/west aspect of green.

Consultation take place. Decision pending.

LITTER PICKING.

No Parish Council organised session has taken place because of COVID but individual picking done by Siomha Keith. Thankyou.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS/ VILLAGE FETE abandoned due to COVID.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ragstone still published and delivered. Facebook. Parish Council Website.

COMMUNITY ASSETS: These have been documented and were agreed at the 14 March 2022 meeting.

BICKNOR WOODS: Now in community hands and development.

Finally, I would like to thank Teresa and all councillors for their support and assistance throughout the year.

5. Otham Parish Council: Teresa Irving, Clerk/RFO's Report:

During 2021/22 the parish received a total income of £122,302.514. This is much higher than in previous years as two CIL payments were received in the sum of £51,172.75 each (one in April & one in November '21).

The remainder of income was from the precept - £16,632.34, parish services scheme- £1,483 (a small increase of £27 from last year), a VAT refund of £1,841.15 and interest of 0.52.

As of 31st March 2022, the bank balance stood at £132,195.94

Mr Michael Subert has kindly agreed that he will again carry out this year's internal audit. The accounts will then be sent to PKF Littlejohn for an external audit.

After the challenges that we've all faced over the past couple of years, it's good that things have pretty much returned to normal.

I would like to thank all councillors for their help and for the contributions that have been made during the past year.

6. Questions from members of the public:

- Parking for the Village Green. Details were requested regarding the car park proposal. The resident stated that the green has such lovely features, it's a shame that they cannot be accessed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.