

MINUTES OF THE OTHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON MONDAY 26 APRIL 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present: Cllrs Kevin Hipkins (Chairman) Rachel Gray, Valerie Moon; Stella Trench, Clint Hickmott, Heather Drake (part), Mrs T. Irving (Clerk).

1. Apologies: Cllrs Gordon Newton, Kinga Stallwood and Martin Weeks (DPC) the latter wished OPC all the best for the coming year.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 29 April 2019. The minutes were discussed and agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings & will be signed and dated by the Chairman at his earliest convenience.

3. Reports from invited groups and associations: Unfortunately no reports were available.

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

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP: Following the resignation of Cllr Gardiner, we now have 8 Parish Councilors; Cllrs, Drake, Gray, Hickmott, Hipkins, Moon, Newton, Stallwood and Trench.

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 two years'.

FINANCE

Otham Parish Council continues to maintain a range of services on a modest budget. We have frozen the precept payable by residents this year. Donations to Air Ambulance, St Nicholas Church and Five Acre Wood have been made during the course of 2020/21.

OTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

We are in the final stages of successfully having the plan approved!

This is the result of regular meetings held by the Steering Group and determined and skilled leadership of Cllr Gray. We are waiting for the referendum and the adoption of our plan

VILLAGE GREEN

The extension of the village green play area has taken place this month.

A memorial tree and allocation of a bench have been agreed.

Parking concerns on the National Trust owned Stoneacre Lane are being addressed with

additional signage and consideration of the creation of a small parking area on the North/West corner of the green. This would be separated from the green by low banking, possibly planted with shrubs. The cost and planning is currently out to tender.

Tree pruning and grass cutting continue.

A protocol is being developed to maintain and control the type and number of memorial additions to the green.

LITTER PICKING.

No Parish Council organised session has taken place because of COVID but individuals have continued to help where they can. Thank you. Hopefully we will resume when safe to do so.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS/ VILLAGE FETE.

Both abandoned due to COVID

COMMUNICATIONS

Ragstone still published and delivered. Thank you to all counsellors for continuing to do this in our growing village. We continue to use Facebook. The Parish Council website continues with regular updates. Thank you to all involved.

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

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

During 2020/21 the parish received a total income of £26,820.24. This is higher than in previous years, mainly due to a grant of £11,898 from Maidstone Borough Council to fund the new play equipment on the village green.

The remainder of income was from the precept - £13,208.12, parish services scheme- £1,456, a VAT refund of £255.31 and interest of £2.81.

As of 31st March 2021, there was £24,629.56 cash at the bank.

Mr Michael Subert has kindly agreed to carry out this year's internal audit and with the annual income exceeding £25,000 an external audit will be required.

The last year has certainly been very different and we have all faced new challenges. During this time Councillors Hipkins and Gray have been very supportive. In addition, I would like to thank all councillors for their help and the contributions they have made during the past year.

6. Questions from members of the public: No members of the public were present.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.