



**OTFORD  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**

Clerk: S Holt  
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF OPC RECREATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
at The School House on Monday 28 June 2021 from 7:30pm

Present: Cllr M Evans (in the Chair), Cllr P Clucas and Cllr J Lawrey  
Also Present Parish Clerk

Public Forum: No members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for Absence – Mrs K Drake (OSA) and Mr M Richards (OAA).
2. Declaration of Interest - None.
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 February 2020 were signed as an accurate record of the meeting.
4. Matters arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda - None.
5. Allotments
  - a A written report was received from the Allotments Association.
  - b Plot Lettings. All the plots are now let and there are 12 people on the waiting list.
  - c Inspection of Plots. An inspection was carried out in May 2021 and several allotments were noted as being in poor condition and appearing to be unworked. The Clerk has written to a number of plot holders to suggest the allotments should be worked or given up. A further inspection will be undertaken in September 2021 prior to the renewal of tenancies in October.
  - d Work parties have not been carried out over the last year. It is hoped they will start again soon and a new list of work will be prepared.
  - e Allotments Rents. The Clerk will prepare a five year income/expense report. This item will be considered again at the Rec & Env meeting scheduled for 23 August 2021. 20/19 Clerk
  - f Brian Thomas will be carrying out mowing of the main paths periodically between March and October.
  - g Plot Numbering. Plot markers have been installed. 1/20 Completed
  - h Greenhouse on the Allotments. Planning regulations prevent the erection of greenhouses in the Allotments. 37/19 Completed
  - i Installation of a secure container. This project has been completed. 2/20 Completed
  - j Association Events. The judging of the allotments will take place on 14 July 2021 followed by the Open Morning and Scarecrow Competition on Saturday 17 July 2021. The Association will also be running a stall at the Village Fete on 30 August 2021.
  - k Otford Village Autumn Show. This is scheduled to take place on Sunday 5 September 2021.
  - l Mr Thomas has identified a leak in the water system in the allotments. This will need to be monitored in case it gets worse. 1/21 OAA/BT
  - m A couple of trees have been identified as needing removal on the path to Mill Meadow. Quotes will be sought. 2/21 Clerk/BT
6. OSA
  - a A written report was received from Mrs Drake.
  - b Extra storage adjoining Hale Lane Pavilion. The Football Club is preparing a planning application to be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for the placement of a storage container close to the Pavilion. 3/21 OFC
  - c Defibrillator training course for the public. The new defibrillators have been installed in the sports pavilions and it is hoped a training course can be run as soon as pandemic restrictions are lifted. 24/19 Clerk Continuing
  - d Worm Treatment. Mr Thomas has been consulting with the Football Club to ensure the treatment is carried out under current regulations. 3/20 BT Completed

- e Petanque. It was noted that Mr Wickenden will be retiring at the AGM. It was also noted that the terrain will need attention in 2020 with the barge boards and surface stones needing replacement.
- f Parking at Hale Lane. District Councillor Roy will be speaking with Sevenoaks District Council, the landowners, regarding the removal of the lorry. 4/21 Clerk
- g. Hale Lane Pavilion. Quotes are being sought to replace the windows and storage door at Hale Lane. 5/21 Clerk
- h. Security at the Pavilions. The Football Club would like to install a security system at each Pavilion. It was agreed that they will be asked to submit a grant application. 6/21 Clerk
- i. It was noted that the Cricket Club have replaced the damaged netting at the High Street Recreation Ground.
- j. Complaints have been received at the Parish Office about the amount of rubbish that is being left on the Recreation Ground around the football pitches following the games. Residents have asked that the Football Club cleans up the area after the games. The Clerk will report this to OSA. 7/21 Clerk
- k. A complaint has been received from a resident about the cricket players changing their clothes in public on the Recreation Ground and would they please use the changing room to do this or come already dressed appropriately for the game. The Clerk will report this to OSA. 8/21 Clerk
7. High Street Recreation Ground
- a. A report was received from Brian Thomas.
- b. Dog Fouling. Additional notices have been installed. 25/19 Completed
- c. Some minor work to the roundabout has been completed. 34/19 Completed
- d. New seats, chains and bearings have been installed on the youth swings. 4/20 Completed
- e. The roof has been removed from the Youth Shelter to prevent children from climbing on it. 5/20 Completed
- f. Waste bin to be placed on the OVMH patio. This job is outstanding from when the previous Manager was in place. OVMH will be asked to put in the bin as quickly as possible. 9/21 Clerk
- g. An overhaul of the gates/security from the car park into the Recreation Ground is in progress.
- h. It has been noted that a resident in Park Lane is repeatedly fly-tipping his garden rubbish in the hedgerow between the Recreation Ground and the Lane. The Community Warden has been informed.
- i. Following the felling of a tree at the top of the Recreation Ground before lock-down, the stump will be ground out in the near future.
- j. Repairs are currently being made to the safety surfaces.
- k. An email has been received from the Sevenoaks District Senior Action Forum suggesting that cycle/skateboard ramps should be considered for the Recreation Ground. Members agreed that following the last time the young people in the village were asked what they wanted in the way of equipment in the village, which was about 18 months ago for Hale Lane, they specifically stated that they did not want any ramps but they wanted hoops and hard standing in both Hale Lane and the High Street Recreation Grounds. The Hale Lane provision has already been installed and is constantly being used. The suggestion to provide a ramp will therefore not be pursued at the moment.
8. Chalk Pit
- a. The chalk grassland area has several Bee Orchids and numerous wild flowers. Cllr Evans will speak to SDC and advise them where the orchids are located prior to the handing back of this area of land to SDC on 1 October 2021. 10/21 ME
- b. Mr Thomas advised that he has been picking up a lot of rubbish and metal that has started to appear around the edge of the grass area due to increased activity through the woods.
9. Hale Lane Recreation Ground/Pavilion/Telston Park
- a. Equipment for the over 12s. A basketball hoop and hardstanding has been installed. Completed
- b. Swing. The seat and chains will be returned in July 2021.
- c. The North West Kent Countryside Partnership hedge planting has been completed. 41/19 Completed
- d. Fence security work has been carried out and a hedge planting and fencing scheme will be prepared this autumn. 11/21 BT
- e. Willow Park fence. The rotting fence has been replaced. 33/19 Completed
- f. The post at the entrance to Telston Park to prevent cars driving into the area will be replaced shortly. 6/20 Clerk

- g Youth Shelter and Hale Lane Pavilion. Anti-climb paint is being applied to these areas to prevent children from climbing onto the roofs. 12/21 BT
- h Post and Rail Fence. Mr Thomas will be asked to install a short section of post and rail fence to prevent anyone falling off the path into the stream where it runs into the culvert pipe. 13/21 Clerk
10. Oxenhill Wood
- a No recent meeting has been held. Maintenance of the area continues.
11. Village Green, Pond and Palace Approach
- a Copper Beech tree on the Village Green. Quotes were considered and it was agreed to recommend that the quotation from Estate & Field Management is accepted. 14/21 Council to consider
- b Palace Approach. The potential transfer of the land to OPC has been put on hold by SDC. We await developments.
- c Request to place a Memorial Bench on the Village Green. 15/21 Council to consider  
*Cllr Clucas declared that he was a friend of the family involved but had no financial interest in the matter.*  
 Members considered a request to place a new memorial bench and base on the Village Green which is recommended for refusal. To place another bench on the Green would put the Parish Council in the position of carrying out a criminal offence under the laws that govern a Registered Village Green. However, it was agreed that it could be suggested to the family concerned that they could place the memorial bench on the Recreation Ground in the location that they originally requested and then move the bench to the Village Green when one of the benches on the six existing bases needs replacement, which is allowed under the current laws.
- d Placement of Memorial Benches. Following on from the discussion above, it was agreed that F&GP will be asked to agree that Memorial Benches can only be placed in the High Street or Hale Lane Recreation Grounds or in Palace Park Wood in future, in sites agreed by the Parish Council. 16/21 Council to consider
12. Cemetery
- a Car Park Litter. McDonalds has been asked to clear the area more often and to consider putting in another bin. 16/19 Completed
- b The new cemetery path project has started. Quotes are being sought.
- d A groundwater pollution risk assessment has been prepared. 7/20 Completed
- e Stone Masons information notice. This has been put up on the new noticeboard. 8/20 Completed
- f A new notice board has been put up at the entrance to the cemetery. 9/20 Completed
13. Palace Park Wood
- a Woodland Trust. The lease has been cancelled and the care and maintenance of this area has reverted back to the Parish Council. 42/19 Completed
- b Apple trees in the Community Orchard. A copy of the drawing showing the placement of each variety is awaited. 4/19 Clerk/BT
- c DVLP. An application for funding has been submitted. Following the recent lockdown, the Parish Council has been advised that a decision may be forthcoming soon.
- d The ancient Oak tree has responded very well to the removal of the first 5m belt of trees around it with a profusion of new growth along its boughs.
- e Work is about to begin on the kissing gate on the path to the Old Walk. The gate structure has moved so that the gate itself no longer functions. At the same time the surface around and through the gateway will be covered with crushed concrete from existing supplies.
- d Ash Die-back. Members noted the report from Mr Thomas regarding the speed that Ash Die-back has spread at Palace Park Wood and the associated health and safety concerns regarding the extensive public use of this area. 17/21 Council to Consider  
 Members agreed to recommend to F&GP and Council that the quotation from Bernwoods Ltd is accepted.  
 It is understood that a further quotation will be received from them regarding the access point from Sevenoaks Road that will be needed as hardstanding for the specialist machinery to remove the affected trees. Members noted that this hardstanding will be required no matter which company is appointed to carry out the work and will be a useful asset in the future.  
 Bernwoods Ltd will also liaise with the Forestry Commission on our behalf and obtain the necessary licences etc.
- e Drainage at Palace Park Wood/Cemetery 18/21 Council to Consider

A site meeting has been held with adjoining landowners regarding drainage in this area. Following assessment, the adjoining landowner has suggested that he undertakes initial works in line with the technical report from his consultant. Members agreed with this proposal and also the removal of the overgrown and damaged trees and vegetation in the drainage ditch.

It was also agreed that a formal agreement is drawn up regarding future rights and obligations regarding drainage. A draft will be sent to Otford PC for consideration by our solicitors.

15. Correspondence

16. Other Matters

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| a | Otford Litter Picker. The Parish Council uses the services of a Litter Picker for all the Parish Council owned areas. As the amount of litter in the village has increased this year, Members agreed to recommend to increase the hours worked from 8 to 10 hours per week from the beginning of April until the end of September. | 19/21 Council to Consider |
| b | Front Garden Competition. This will follow the same format as last year.   |                           |
| c | Terms of Reference. Members agreed the draft Terms of Reference as requested by the Council Chairman. They will be forwarded to F&GP.  | 20/21 Clerk               |
| d | Planter. The planter currently cared for by Russel House School will be emptied and the plaque removed as they are no longer able to look after it. The future of the planter in its current location will be considered as it is not near a water supply.   |                           |
17. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 23 August 2020 at 7:30pm.