ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 8th July 2024 at 7pm in Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Pound Lees, Hamstreet.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Mike Wady (Vice-Chairman), Dave Farrell, Sid Gittens, Basil Smith, David White and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell).
Also Present: Borough Councillor David Ledger, Margaret Hanlon (Resident) and Mark Taylor (HDSLA Representative)

Public Comments & Observations: *None brought forward.*

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Mags Wellsted-Boorman and Steven Newton who both had prior engagements and Sadie Michell who was unwell. Those present agreed that these apologies be accepted. Apologies were also received from Kent County Councillor David Robey and Borough Councillor Aline Hicks.

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 of the meeting.

3 **Minutes From OPC's Meetings Held on 3rd June and 17th June 2024: To Be Authorised as Being A Correct Record:** Sid Gittens proposed that the minutes from the meetings held on 3rd June and 17th June 2024 be accepted as correct records of the meetings and signed/authorised by the chairman. Andy Othen seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

4. **Matters Arising From Minutes of The Meetings Held on 3rd & 17th June 2024.**
   - Overgrowth by Lancaster Close and and South of Bromley Green crossroads: a request had been made to have these cut back to Aspire and Highways. It was noted that the area around Lancaster Close entrance had already been cut back.
   - Noise From Road Bumps Outside The Primary Academy: These had been reported to the ABC & KCC Highways.
   - Hamstreet Allotments - Hemlock: The Chairman had spoken to a gardener in the village (Dennis) who was willing to remove the Hemlock as the Tidyman was busy. He is also willing to take over the work required at Johnsons Corner.

5. **Online Community/Village Magazine: Margaret Hanlon** During discussion Margaret highlighted that the loss of the parish magazine had been felt by the community. She wished to put herself forward as a co-ordinator for an on-line magazine. A content editor would be responsible for putting the magazine together and she was hoping that if she was to advertise, it may attract someone. She was proposing that the content editor would be paid a small sum for their work which would be paid for from advertising space in the magazine however she would need financial help covering this to start off with.
   Full support was verbally given to Margaret's idea and the Chairman highlighted that the Parish Council's website could hold a page for the magazine to be placed on. It was agreed that Margaret would chat to the Chairman informally with the person who was helping her.

6. **Working Partnership With HDSLA & OPC:** During discussion the following was agreed/noted:
   i) Members of the HDSLA and OPC would meet twice a year for updates and exchange of information.
   ii) A new agreement would be drawn up if there was a successful outcome in the bid to purchase the land adjacent to Pound Leas Open Space between OPC and HDSLA regarding its use.

iii) HDSLA Finance: Details of income and expenditure for the last financial year were provided. It was noted that the pavilion and recreation space was providing a steady income which was allowing funds to keep everything ticking over and also to be set aside for various projects including; the resurfacing of the MUGA which had to be replaced every 7 to 10 years; a possible extension to the car park and replacement of various lights so that they were more energy efficient.

iv) OPC Finance: It was noted that the Parish Council's only source of income was the Precept. Funds had been set aside for the initial costs for the purchase of the field. If the bid was successful then the Parish Council would be setting aside some 42% of the Precept each year to pay for the loan for the field.

Discussion concluded with the Chairman thanking Mark and the HDSLA team for all the work they were doing and confirming that OPC were 100% committed to the purchase of the land to enhance Pound Leas Recreation Space.

7. Reports/Updates From Representatives of the Community Including Kent County Councillor David Robey & Borough Councillors

Kent County Councillor David Robey: when sending his apologies he highlighted that the main issue with KCC remained finance and they were working to ensure that the budgets were balancing. He hopeed that with the new government in place that there will be a review of both its structure and finances.

Borough Councillor David Ledger: highlighted that Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2041 would be holding an engagement consultation in Victory Hall on Wednesday 24th July. Following a brief discussion regarding 106 contributions David left the meeting.

8. War Memorial Project: Update & Finance: Sid Gittens reported that Dave (Farrell) had been successful in obtaining bricks from the developers at the Nightingale Development and that these were to be delivered during the next few days. He would be getting a quotation for the plaque that would be placed on the memorial.

9. Reports/Updates Received From Parish Councillors:

Basil Smith:

- He would be helping to plant the two willow trees that Sid had been looking after near the village pond.
- The number of trucks visiting the 'works' in Warehorne Road remained a problem. With more than ten trucks visiting the works most days.
- The Plant Exchange located at the side of Victory Hall had been updated and repainted.
- Victory Hall: There were problems with the surface to the play area due to drainage issues and members of the committee were disappointed with the quality of workmanship overall. Safety inspections took place twice a year which cost over £1,200 annually.

Following Basil's report, the Clerk highlighted that there may be Section 106 funding available from The Pippins development for the hall.. She would investigate and pass on details.

Sid Gittens:

- He and his wife continued working at Forge Gardens keeping it neat. The noticeboard had been tidied up and the plant boxes had been painted.

Mike Wady:

- He had contacted Aspire asking for various overgrown hedges to be cut back.
- The water leak by the surgery had been reported but still not rectified.
- A 'community' friendly bowls game would be held on 28th July. It was agreed that OPC would cover the cost of refreshments.

David White:

- There was a problem with the water pump at the allotments and he would speak to Duncan.

- There was still no news from Southern Water regarding the track by the side of the allotments and OPC's request that they make good the damage that they had done.

Andy Othen:

- He had noted that the Tidyman was becoming increasingly busy and not always able to do the work for the Parish Council. He had spoken to another gardener in the village (Dennis) who was willing to take up some of the work. His hourly rate being £20.

  During a brief discussion it was unanimously agreed that he be asked to take on some of the work that the Tidyman did not have time to do. It was agreed that Andy and Mike would have joint responsibility in corresponding with Dennis and agreeing what his work duties would be in the village and Johnsons Corner.

10. Planning Update & Review Applications Received:

ABC's Local Plan 2041: It was noted that Ashford Borough Council are to hold an information session on 24th July in Victory Hall from 2pm to 8pm. Details had been put up on the village noticeboards and noted on OPC's Facebook Page.

During discussion it was agreed that at every opportunity it would be highlighted how the existing water works in Warehorne Road were not coping and how either an extension or new works were required. Concern was expressed regarding the plan for development at Windsor Farm and how visible this would be. It was acknowledged that at least one of the sites put forward for development would be accepted and OPC would press for the need for smaller 'first time' homes in any future development.

11. Correspondence Received: not covered under other agenda items:

- Various circulars, bulletins and fraud notices had been circulated to members via email and where appropriate shared on OPC's Facebook Page.
- An email had been received from the Parish Council's solicitor regarding the purchase of the land beside Pound Leas Recreation Space noting the agreement of all three owners of the land to sell the land to the parish council. It had been requested that no further work be undertaken ie searches until OPC had heard if they were successful in obtaining a loan.

15. Finance:

Budget Review/Update: had been circulated to members prior the meeting.

- It was noted that Funds had been set aside towards the purchase of the field beside Pound Leas Recreation Ground. This would be used to cover the first year of the loan repayment and legal fees.
- It was highlighted that if the bid for a loan was successful the initial repayments would be approximately £15,000 each year. This amount would reduce annually. According to figures provided by the PWLB in December 2023, a total amount payable would be £486,335 for a loan of £200,000 over a period of 49 years. This being the cheapest and most affordable option for OPC.
- To cover this cost the Precept would need to be increased gradually. So that eventually, OPC's Precept would cover the total cost of the loan. It was noted that the loan this would be approximately 42% of OPC's income.

Grant Applications: None received.

Authorisation of Cheques: The following cheques were authorised for signature with the Chairman having delegated authority to approve cheques if required before the next meeting.

To	For	Amount	Cheque No

16. Items for Next Agenda/Any Other Business: None brought forward.

17. **Date & Time of Next Meetings:**
Parish Council Meeting: Monday 2nd September 2024 at 7pm

Meeting Concluded 9.14pm Chairman's Signature: