Minutes of a Meeting of Otford Parish Council held in the Club Room of the Otford Village Memorial Hall on Monday 14th February, 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Cllr. J. Allen
        Cllrs.  D.G. Cracknell
                J. Edwards Winser
                Mrs. M. Evans
                Mrs. L. Lattimer
                Mrs. J. Lawrey
                Mrs. C. Marsh
                Mrs. E. Ward
                R.A. Woodrow-Clark

In attendance: Clerk and several members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE received from Cllrs Knight and Whitehead.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Planning application 18 Tudor Crescent  - Cllrs. Mrs.M. Evans and Mrs. J. Lawrey

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 10th January 2011 were approved and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING
4.1 Cllr Edwards-Winser reported that Kevin Thompsett was now the Emergency Planning Officer at SDC. A copy of the OPC emergency plan would be sent to him (section 7.A.1.4. of previous minutes). BH
4.2 The potholes detailed in section 6.2.of the previous minutes had been repaired. BH
4.3 Cllr. Mrs. Ward had visited Elands re the proposed dog bins (section 7.A.1.9 of previous minutes) but her meeting there had been cancelled. As dog fouling continues to be a problem Cllr. Mrs. Ward suggested that the newsletter pointed out that dog bags could be put in normal waste bins. BH
4.4. Cllr. Mrs Lawrey had spoken to the bus company concerning the bus shelter opposite the vestry estate who had confirmed that buses no longer stop there. The clerk will confirm that KCC have no issues if this is dismantled (section 7.A.1.10.of previous minutes). BH
4.5. Cllr. Edwards-Winser had ascertained that none of the pubs in the village opened before 12.00pm and would ascertain if the cafes in the village would be willing to open their toilets to the public (7.B.2.3 and 7.B.4. of previous minutes). JEW

5. CLERK'S REPORT
5.1. Issue No's 750 & 751 of Direct Information Service received from NALC.
5.2. Various agendas, reports and press releases received from SDC and KCC. Available from Clerk
5.3. Various advertising brochures received. Available from Clerk.

6. OVERSEERS' REPORTS
6.1. A stop cock cover in the footway outside 20 Warham Road had sunk causing a dangerous hole. BH
6.2. The hole caused by a collapsed drain in Tudor Crescent has not yet been repaired. KHS
6.3. A pothole was reported outside 29 Tudor Drive. BH
6.4. Some replacement trees had been planted in Tudor Drive and Tudor Crescent.
6.5. Large amounts of litter were being dropped in Oxenhill Shaw.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
7.A. Recreation
7.A.1. The Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Parish Council. The next meeting is on 21st February 2011.
7.A.2. A letter had been received from Otford Cricket Club requesting that OPC treat the wormcasts on the cricket outfield. The Clerk had responded that this treatment should be carried out at the expense of the club. The football club will be asked to pay for the recent spraying carried out on the football fields. BH
7.A.3. A meeting had been held re the Hale Lane Project on 24 January 2011. A further meeting would be held on 15 February 2011.
OPC meeting 14.02.11

7.A.4. Wicksteed had carried out an inspection of the children’s play areas and any repairs specified were in progress.

7.A.5. The possibility of including the Hale Lane Playing Field within the ‘QE II Fields’ scheme is being investigated. The clerk would seek confirmation from SDC that they had no objection to the Hale Lane playing field being designated as such.

7.B. Services

7.B.1. The committee had not met since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

7.B.2. A copy of the Hospice in the Weald newsletter was received.

7.B.3. SDC is holding a Summer Activity Workshop on 3rd March 2011. This is to train volunteers in the absence of an SDC run play day for children in the summer holidays. It was decided that it was not within the council’s remit to obtain and train volunteers to run such a day.

7.C. Finance and General Purposes

7.C.1. Orders for payment were approved.

7.C.2. The report of the Committee meeting held on 7th February 2011 was received.

Present: Cllrs. (Chairman); Allen; Edwards-Winser (Vice Chairman), Mrs Lowrey. Apologies: Cllr Woodrow-Clark. In attendance: Clerk and RFO.

7.C.2.1 Cemetery charges have not increased in line with inflation or in comparison with those charged elsewhere since 2008; neither has account been taken of costs of maintenance of the Woodland Cemetery when full. It was agreed that on 1 April 2011 costs to Otford Parish residents be raised by approximately 5% but for the consecrated area costs to others from adjacent villages and town be raised in line with other cemeteries. For the Woodland cemetery costs for non Otford Parish residents would be raised in line with such sites elsewhere. The possibility of a long term fund for future Woodland cemetery maintenance would be investigated.

7.C.2.2. The men’s public toilets had been blocked on two occasions. A quote had been received from Gold Services Cleaning of £3,657 plus VAT compared to £6802.27 from SDC who currently clean the toilets. It was agreed that the former quote be accepted.

7.C.2.3. The Clerk’s computer had been backed up.

7.C.2.4. The Parish tractor had been sold for £2,000 with the assistance of FCS.

7.C.2.5. Security of Parish Council bank account. Information had been received from a Shoreham councillor that council accounts are not protected by the guarantee given to private individuals and this had been confirmed by web information. However, the Council bankers, Bank of Ireland had confirmed that they comply with EC regulations and guarantee Parish Council funds up to £100,000 until June this year. This guarantee had been renewed six monthly in the past. This guarantee is not given by British (sterling?) banks.

7.C.2.6. Heritage Centre bank account. The latest quarterly account shows £572.88 in the cash deposit account and £1,457 in the income account. A routine charge of £27.84 was made for the period (this is made on accounts of less than £10,000). No income has been paid into the account during the last four quarters.

7.C.2.7. Annual Meeting of Electors It was agreed that this be held on 23rd May 2011.

7.C.3. A report had not been received from the Heritage Centre Management Committee. An email had been received from the Chairman of the Heritage Centre Management Committee concerning outstanding charges from the Council and it was agreed that this would be discussed at the next committee meeting. Cllr. Edwards-Winser would attend the next meeting of the Heritage Centre Management Committee.

7.C.4. Report re Twinning the next visit to Hardebol is on 12 June 2011. The Parish Council equivalent in Hardebol would like a twinning charter to be signed on that day. Cllr. Mrs Lawrey will obtain a final copy of the proposed charter so that the wording can be agreed. Otford Primary School children are emailing their counterparts in Hardebol, a walking and painting group would be visiting Otford on 17 May, a group from Hardebol would be having a stall at the village fete, there would be a football tournament in September and six tennis players would also be visiting at the end of September.

7.C.5. Parish Plan representatives had met with Alan Dyer and Lesley Bowles at SDC to discuss the Parish Plan in draft form and how this can evolve into a Neighbourhood Plan if necessary.
7.C.6. A copy of the ASHTAV magazine received.
7.C.8. Letter from Chris Hennis re cessation of funding of West Otford Youth Club received. Further funding is being sought by Cllr. Mrs Marsh. The youth football team would take over the running costs of the Hale Lane Pavilion if the youth club operated from different premises. Cllr. Edwards-Winser will establish if any progress had been made on the pre planning application for the portacabin that had been made to SDC.
7.C.9. A letter had been received from Kent Police re voluntary PCSO funding. The Clerk had ascertained that other local councils do not pay this voluntary contribution and had written to Kent Police to ascertain whether cessation of payment would impact on the level of service given to the Parish. It was agreed that, subject to receiving confirmation that the level of service would not be impacted, Otford Parish Council would not make a voluntary contribution for 2011/2012.
7.C.10. Letter received from OVMH re replacement trees for those on the patio area which were to be taken up. It was suggested that the replacement trees be planted on the green in celebration of the golden jubilee and Brian Thomas had recommended several varieties. The Clerk will write to accept the suggestion of the OVMH.
7.C.11. A quote had been received from dB Audio and Electronic re Fire Alarm/Emergency Lighting System. Cllr. Edwards-Winser will obtain a further quote.
7.C.12. A letter had been received from Sevenoaks Town Council re a meeting of KALC local members on 17th February to discuss sharing resources. Cllr. Edwards-Winser and the Clerk will attend.

7.D. Planning
7.D.1. The report of the Committee was received.
Meeting held 19th January 2011 Present Cllrs. Edwards-Winser (Chairman), Cracknell, Whitehead and Woodrow-Clark. In attendance: Clerk
7.D.1.1. New applications
SE/11/00005 93 Willow Park Single storey extension to outbuilding in rear garden, for use as a craft room
SE/11/00145 3 Willow Park Erection of a single storey rear extension No objection in principle
7.D.1.2. Results received
SE/10/03117 18 The Butts Loft conversion with Velux rooflights, and balcony to rear elevation Allowed
SE/10/00420 Burfield Pilgrims Way East Retrospective application for the retention of replacement roof and changes to elevations and fenestration not in accordance with planning permission SE/08/00191/FUL (Removal of pitched roof, construction of new roof top form additional bedrooms) Allowed
7.D.1.3. Appeals
SE/10/01207 14 Shinecroft Retrospective application for fence Dismissed
7.D.1.5. Tree Preservation Orders
11/00172/WTPO 11 Hopfield Close Reduce 4 Poplar trees by 30%. Noted
11/00134/WTPO Ivy Bank Various works to trees Noted
Shoreham Road
7.D.2. Cllr. Cracknell pointed out that Parish Councils currently do not have a right of appeal equivalent to that of developers. The Clerk would write to Michael Fallon MP asking if this would be addressed in the Localism Bill.

7.E. Environment
7.E.1. A committee meeting had not taken place.
7.E.2. Cllr. Mrs Ward expressed concern that North West Kent Countryside Project had returned to Telston Park without informing either herself or Mr Thomas and some areas had been coppiced without
7.E.3. It was reported that a resident of a house backing on to Telston Park had used weed killer to kill all the vegetation behind their house.

7.E.4. Concern was expressed at the overflowing skip and amount of dumped rubbish at the Vestry Industrial Estate which could be seen clearly from the Road. The Clerk would write to the owner.

7.E.5. The verges in Pilgrims Way West had not been reinstated following the gas works which were carried out last year. The Clerk had emailed Michael Sammut but had received no reply. The Clerk would chase a response.

7.E.6. There will be a meeting with in March concerning Oxenhill Meadow and Shaw. It was noted that part of the fence there had been vandalised.

7.E.7. Mr Thomas explained that an NFU briefing note had indicated that under an EU directive 60 tonne lorries would now be able to access A roads. There had been problems recently with large lorries attempting to drive round the pond and either having to drive up on the pond or on the pavement outside the shops. The proprietor of the Willow Estate Agency had contacted the police. The Clerk will ask her for contact details in order to speak to them herself.

7.E.8. A letter had been received from The Kent Men of The Trees Project re the Village Competition 2011. It was agreed that Otford Parish Council would enter the competition. The Clerk would organise this.

7.E.9. A letter had been received from BTCV re Kent Heritage Trees project.

7.F. Highways

7.E.1. The report of the Committee meeting on 7th February 2011 was received.

Present: Cllrs. Allen (Chairman), Edwards-Winser (Vice-Chairman). In attendance: Clerk and a members of the public.

Apologies: Cllrs. Cracknell, Knight and Whitehead.

7.E.1.1. Mr Reg Oakley, Sevenoaks Cyclists representative, was invited to give a list of suggestions for cycle paths in the Parish. This follows from the SDC Transportation Policy document and the general wish by SDC for more such paths in the District. The paths suggested were:

7.E.1.1.A A path from Sevenoaks Station via Bradbourne Vale Road to Otford Pond, via a path north or south of Bradbourne Lake, through the nature reserve, to the west and north of Davis garage and then onto the A225, then a dual track to Otford pond. The committee commented that this proposal represented considerably more than anything the JTB had considered at any meeting during the last 5 years.

7.E.1.1.B. Part of the route referred to above – cycle paths along the A225 from the pond towards Sevenoaks.

7.E.1.1.C. Rye Lane would become a cycle route with a 20mph limit. This could only be implemented with speed bumps and lighting to which Otford Parish Council would object.

7.E.1.2. Mr Oakley asked if a sign showing ‘No overtaking cyclists’ could be erected by the traffic refuge in Station Road. The committee considered that this would add to signage clutter and would not be observed any more than the other signs.

7.E.1.3. Mr Oakley asked that use of the footpath 48 from Tudor Drive to Station Road be extended to cyclists. The committee explained that this was not feasible due to the narrow sections at each end of the footpath.

7.E.1.4 The discussions with Mr Oakley showed the difficulty of adding new routes to an existing dense village structure.

7.E.1.5. It was noted that Cllr. Nick Chard had resigned from the Environment, Highways and Waste Portfolio at KCC. He had been replaced by Cllr. Bryan Sweetland (Gravesham East) and Deputy Cabinet Member David Brazier (Sevenoaks North East).

7.E.1.6. KCC had set up a priority system for potholes with additional teams. Further funds might be provided after April 2011.

7.E.1.7. A response had belatedly been received in respect of the operation of Speedwatch. The equipment can be borrowed from SDC. The Clerk will organise the necessary documentation.
7.E.1.8. There had been a high positive response to the proposed parking restrictions in Tudor Drive and Tudor Crescent (92% in favour). However the proposals would cause major problems for three residents at the end of Tudor Drive who have no other parking space. The proposals will be considered by the JTB in March. The extension of restrictions to other roads in the Bubblestone Road area is intended.

7.E.1.9.A The reports of the meeting with Highways Officer Mr M. Sammut on 5 December 2010 were considered. The meeting resulted from an email to the Highways Portfolio Cllr asking why there had been no action or information on the two proposed items of work in Otford Parish (both for £57,000). These were the first such proposals for Otford for decades. The proposal for cycle paths to Eynsford or Shoreham was not known about by the officer (or the officer who visited in April 2010). The proposal for a crossing had not been investigated and the officer knew nothing of the previous officer’s consideration of the difficulties. The JTB had not kept track of this work that had been put before them in 2009. It appeared unlikely that officers had considered the feasibility of the two projects before their listing and they were listed only on the basis that they were desirable.

7.E.1.9.B. Mr Sammut said he would conduct a review of traffic on Station Road re the possibility of a crossing there and send the results in January 2011. No information had been received and no replies received to emails seeking updates.

7.E.1.9.C. A crossing at the other position frequently mentioned (The Parade) was briefly discussed. This has the problem of the adjacent junction with Bubblestone Road and probable traffic flow blocking. This is the stretch of road where the majority of road deaths occur and a crossing is unlikely to prevent these and would rule out a roundabout at the Bubblestone Road junction and associated works that would alter the way the road was perceived.

7.E.1.9.D. White lining and bollards in Rye Lane had stopped because a resident claimed chevron signs were being put on his land; the road width is being investigated. The need for greater clarity in signs at the end of the road was emphasised and also the problem of satellite navigation systems in foreign lorries.

7.E.1.9.E. Work on replacement signs for the incorrect roundabout sign in the car park was still proceeding. Funding was secure for this.

7.E.1.9.F. In view of the questions over crossings at Station Road and The Parade and the existence of funding, the possible need for a crossing west of the road narrowing and the termination of the footway near Pickmoss on the north side of Pilgrims Way West, would also be investigated.

7.E.1.9.G. The continuing need for dropped kerbs, to enable residents with prams, buggies or wheel chairs to go from the pond area to the shopping area near Sainsbury’s was raised again.

7.E.1.10 Detailed notes of the meeting with Mr Sammut, prepared by Cllr. Edwards-Winser were received.

8. KALC/ACRK

8.1. Minutes of meeting of KALC Sevenoaks Area Committee held 12.11.10 received.

8.2. Copy of Parish News Issue 352 received from KALC.

9. Date of next meeting noted as 14.3.11 at 7.30pm

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.

Signed …………………………………… Chairman

Dated ……………………………………