Parish Council

For those interested in all the activities of OPC, the minutes of meetings are available in the library, and all minutes, agendas and newsletters can be obtained via the web (also available in the library). They can all be read via http://www.otford.info/parishcouncil. The next meetings will be on 8th December and 12th January at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall. There is a CAB Surgery in Parish Council offices between 10am and 12 noon every Tuesday.

Chairman’s Report

December is upon us and winter is here. The leaves have turned golden and have dropped on lawns, gardens and pavements. Take care, wet leaves are slippery. No doubt before the next newsletter (February 2015) it might snow - summer cannot last forever. Don’t be put off clearing paths because you’re afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to be careful themselves (Duty of Care). Make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively, don’t use water to clear the ice and don’t believe the myths - it’s unlikely you’ll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries if you have cleared the path with due diligence.

Clear the snow and ice early in the day it’s easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has packed together from people walking on it.

Offer to clear your neighbours’ paths If your neighbour has difficulty getting in and out of their home, offer to clear snow and ice around their property as well. Check that any elderly or disabled neighbours are alright in the cold weather. If you’re worried about them, try contacting their relatives or friends, or if necessary the local council or Paul our Community Warden.

Do NOT use the salt from the roadside bins to put on your pathways - it is stealing and is illegal. The salt in the yellow bins is for roads and pavements only. Once empty the bins will not be refilled until next year.

The Remembrance service was extremely well attended with the church filled to capacity and overflowing into the entrance foyer. On a chilly but sunny morning, and despite the police no longer being able to provide support for road closures, our band of volunteers ensured that we were able to hold the procession round the pond, followed by a quiet and traffic-free ceremony for reflection, remembrance and laying of wreaths at the memorial. I would like to congratulate all the children that took part in the
service for their exemplary behaviour and thank the road stewards for their rewarding work. The total raised for the Poppy Appeal in Otford was £1953.27.

We have been informed that Network Rail are proposing to install a footbridge to replace the level crossing on the footpath between Tudor Drive and Evelyn Road. This is being carried out under Permitted Development Rights and there is very little that OPC, SDC or KCC can do about it, apart from mitigate the situation and influence the design. It is being carried out for Health and Safety reasons and is part of a nationwide plan to replace dangerous crossings with footbridges. This crossing is classed as dangerous because the trains are no longer allowed to whistle at this location and the sight-line for the drivers is insufficient to enable them to stop in an emergency. A safety audit has been carried out on some 650 crossings in the South East and Otford is one of the 35 most dangerous - i.e it is in the top 5%. As the Public Rights of Way officer at KCC will not allow the path to be diverted, the fall-back position is to close the crossing - something that Network Rail are trying hard not to implement. Network Rail have stated that they will be consulting with local residents and OPC are in contact with Network Rail on your behalf and will arrange an open meeting for residents to air their views. Watch this space.

Unfortunately the Christmas tree on the green has had to be felled and a replacement one has been erected outside the parish office. The tree was diseased and encroaching on the small leafed lime tree adjacent to it. It was also getting too big and dangerous to install the lights each year. I know it's not the same, but nobody in their right mind would want to climb the tree to put the lights up and hiring a cherry picker would have been exorbitant.

The Pay and Display in the car park has been a success with plenty of space for all the users and the parish council has received far more compliments than complaints. However, not unexpectedly as a result there have been more cars than usual parking on the Sevenoaks Road
and surrounding areas, but there is limited space available in the village and the situation is under surveillance.

Thames Water are drilling a borehole on land opposite Rye Lane. This is to monitor groundwater.

I trust you have all responded to the KCC Community Wardens Consultation for the retention of Paul, if not it is probably too late and all we can do is keep our fingers crossed that KCC do not remove a vital local “eyes and ears of the community” who does a lot to support the wellbeing of both Otford and Shoreham.

Please shop locally in Otford for those special presents from our lovely independent village shops, there will also be FREE parking in Sevenoaks Town Centre car parks on 14th and 21st December, Swanley Town on 7th, 14th and 21st and Westerham on 7th and 14th December.

**Otford Parish Council / Otford Heritage Centre**

The Parish Council office will be closed on Monday 22nd December and re-open after Christmas on Monday 29th December and then close again until after the New Year on Monday 5th January 2015. Full details will be posted on the office window.

The Heritage Centre will be open on Saturday mornings before Christmas in December from 10am to 12 noon and normal weekend/bank holiday opening resumes in March 2015. It has lots of cards and stocking fillers available to buy.

**Tree of Light**

The Tree of Light service will take place on Friday 12th December at 7.00pm on the Village Green. Following the service there will be refreshments offered in the St Bartholomew’s Church Centre. Labels for you to write your message on are available from the Parish Council Office. If you cannot get into the office during opening hours (8.30am – 12.30pm) then please phone up and we will write your card for you. The Tree of Light will remain lit up until after the New Year. Donations will once again be going to The Hospice in the Weald.

**Otford & District Historical Society**

On Saturday 13th December at 4pm in St Bartholomew’s Church, Otford Alison Weir will be presenting a lecture with Siobhan Clarke on ‘A Royal Christmas’. - How our Kings and Queens have celebrated Christmas from the Medieval and Tudor courts, to the modern Royal Family’. Tickets are available from Parish Council office, the Library and Sevenoaks Bookshop at £8.00. Alison Weir will also be unveiling the new Otford Palace interpretive boards at 2.30pm on the day. The first meeting for 2015 will have Prof Peter Wadhams talk about ‘The Holy Shroud’
Otford Folk Dance Club – New Years Day Dance

Otford Folk Dance Club are holding a dance on **Thursday 1st January** starting at 7.30pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall. Carol Hewson will be calling to recorded music. Tickets are £7 and may be brought from Jean on 01959 523404 or at the door. Please take along a light buffet supper for each person. Soft drinks, tea and coffee will be provided free. There will be a programme of mixed dances. The club meets every Thursday in Otford Church Hall at 8pm. The cost is £1.50. For more information please call Peter George on 01959 522105.

**Community Warden Surgery**

Paul holds his weekly surgery to discuss any problems and community issues at School House on Tuesdays between 11am and 12 noon. Come and see him. Paul can also be contacted on 07813 713366.

**‘The Great War and the Songs they Sang’**

Continuing Otford’s participation in the commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, now known as World War I, the Community Choir and Otford Players follow their successful production of ‘Otford Remembered 1914-1918 – The Calm before the Storm’ with another original presentation in the Otford Methodist Church on **Friday 5th December** and **Friday 12th December** at 7.45pm. The Great War cast a long dark shadow over millions of lives for most of the 20th Century. This production provides an opportunity to join the national expressions of remembrance which honour both the dead and the courage of people who saw us through those desperate years. In spoken and dramatic fashion the story unfolds through eyewitness accounts, giving us a glimpse of life at home and on the Western Front, interspersed with songs of the day that rallied the spirit of the nation. Admission by ticket £5. Ring 01959 522709 to book. Proceeds to support the Community Choir and donations to charity.

**Guide Christmas Post Box**

The Guide Christmas Post Box will be in Otford Library between **Thursday 27th November and Friday 19th December** inclusive during opening hours. A second Box will also be available in the Parish Council Office on Monday to Friday **between the same dates**. All cards will be delivered by Brownies and Guides over the weekend 20/22nd December. Stamps will be 25p per card and all money will go to the chosen charities, Hospital Radio Tunbridge Wells and Ehlers-Danlos Support UK. This will be the 32nd year that Otford Guides have been delivering Christmas cards in the village and we would like our Christmas Post Service for the village to continue and be really successful, so please give generously and support us by posting early.

**St Bartholomew’s Church Christmas Services**

- **Sunday 30th November**
  - 6.30pm - Advent Carol Service
- **Sunday 7th December**
  - 4.00pm - Christingle
Sunday 21st December
10am - YPF Christmas presentation and Sunday Club Nativity Play

Sunday 21st December
6.30pm - Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight

Christmas Eve
4.00pm - Crib Service /11.30pm - Midnight Christmas Communion (starting with carols at 11.10pm)

Christmas Day
9.00am - Christmas Day Communion / 10.30am - Church Family Christmas Worship

Otford Methodist Church Services

Sunday 7th December
10.30am Service & 6.30pm café style meeting with coffee and cake

Sunday 14th December
10.30am & 6.30pm - service

Sunday 21st December
9am - Service, 10.30am Family service with children's nativity & 6.30pm Carol service

Christmas Eve
5.00pm - Special Christingle children's service

Christmas Day
10.00am - Christmas Day Service for all the Family.

Sunday 28th December
10.30am service

New Years Eve
11.30pm - Watchnight Service -social gathering and refreshments from 9pm.

Parenting Course
This course is for any parent with children up to the age of 10. It will be held once a week for 5 weeks at the Otford Methodist Church Halls starting on [Monday 12th January] at 9.30 am to approx. 10.45am and is free to attend. Subsequent Monday dates will be 19th Jan, 26th Jan, 2nd Feb and 9th Feb. Its aim is to encourage parents and give us all extra skills that help us to parent our children well. While it is based on Christian principles, it is relevant and helpful for any parent - and does not require or assume any Church background. It consists of a DVD presentation with teaching from the authors Nicky and Sila Lee, followed by some opportunity for discussion over a cup of tea/coffee. Nicky and Sila Lee have worked with couples and families for over 20 years and speak regularly on parenting. To book a place or for more information please phone Armanda on 07904 018987 or email armanda.nick@dsl.pipex.com

St Bartholomew's Church Choir Concert
St Bartholomew's Choir's Annual Christmas concert, will take place in the church on [Sunday 14th December] at 7.30 pm. There will be a mixture of carols old and new, from England and many other countries, with plenty of carols for everyone to join in. Refreshments, in the form of wine or fruit juice
and mince pies, will be available in the interval as always. The admission price is £5 (children free). Please come and support them – and bring a friend!

Allotments
There are currently vacant plots of various sizes. If you are interested in becoming an allotmenteer then please contact Roger Beasley on 01732 463072 or e-mail him at rogerbeasley@tiscali.co.uk

The Darent Valley Choir Christmas Concert
The Christmas concert this year will be held in the United Reformed Church (Christ Church) Littlecourt Road, Sevenoaks on Saturday 6th December at 7.30pm. They will be singing Handel’s Messiah Part 1 together with the Hallelujah Chorus and carols old and new. Do join them for a special evening. Tickets are available at Sevenoaks Bookshop or at the door or reservations can be made at www.darentvalleychoir.com

Kemsing Singers' Golden Christmas
Fifty years after a simple beginning, the Kemsing Singers will get this Christmas season off to a swinging start on Friday and Saturday, 12th and 13th December at St Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing. Both performances start at 7.30pm. The programme includes old favourites such as the Vaughan Williams 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' and John Rutter's 'Jesus Child' as well as new pieces for the choir's 50th season. There will be the same audience carols as in 1964 and a children's choir from Kemsing Primary School will also join us as we raise money for their swimming pool appeal. Tickets are available from Frankie on 01959 523752 (£8 adults, £6 concessions, £4 under 18).

Burglars mess with your head not just your home
Kent Police is asking residents to take simple measures to protect themselves from becoming a victim of burglary over the festive season. Overall the force has seen a positive decrease in this type of crime, but statistics show that the number of reports can increase during the autumn/ winter months. Most burglaries happen during daylight hours, with offences often peaking at about 11am, so while you’re hard at work, burglars are too. Most burglars are opportunists, which means it is important to ensure the security measures taken at night are also taken before you leave home in the morning. From experience, the police know burglary can leave victims feeling scared and anxious long after the crime has been committed. To help reduce the risk of becoming a burglary victim officers are asking residents to work with them by following these key principles:

Light it
Light dark or hidden entrances with low wattage security lighting Use timer switches to turn on lights/radio – invest in a 24-hour segment timer for under £5. Remember to use an energy efficient light bulb

Lock it
Keep your front and back windows and doors locked (double lock uPVC). Keep side gates locked - burglars often break into homes from the garden where they have less chance of being seen
If bins are emptied before you leave for work return them to your garden - they can be used as climbing aids if left on display. Instead use bins as obstructions in side entrances. Trim high hedging/plant growth - they could provide cover for a burglar. Secure your garage and shed - items inside can be just as tempting and can even be used to break in. If you get the train ensure your car is locked, windows are closed and keys are not left on display through windows. Don’t keep large amounts of money or jewellery at home. If you have to, use a safe that is stored out of sight and fixed to a solid floor.

List it
All valuable items should be registered for free on www.immobilise.com – logging details helps police to return them to you if they are found or seized. These include:

- Expensive jewellery and antiques / Bicycles
- Laptops, desktop computers and tablets/Mobile phones and MP3 players
- Home entertainment systems including TVs and games consoles

Also please take great care with your handbag, purses and phones whilst shopping and enjoying that much needed coffee shop stop. Thieves unfortunately are always about and want to spoil our enjoyment.

Otford Primary School Bazaar
On [Saturday 6th December] between 12noon and 3pm Otford Primary School will be holding its Christmas Bazaar, including Santa’s grotto, mulled wine, carol singing, auction, toys, games and books, cookie decorating, raffle, hot dogs, tea and cakes. Please go along and support the school.

Community Transport Service
A new leaflet is now available from the Parish Council office and Heritage Centre which gives details of the Community Transport Services available for older people or people with mobility needs.

Library – Craft Activity
There will be a free craft activity on [Saturday 13th December] from 10am to 12 noon. This month’s session will have a Christmas theme. All children welcome. Please ring 01959 522488 to ensure a place.

Christmas tree recycling
After this year’s festivities have ended, Sevenoaks District Council will collect and recycle your real Christmas tree for free throughout January. The Council will collect trees with a trunk of up to 90mm (3.5 inches) in diameter with its Garden Waste Collection Service until Friday 30 January.

Simply leave your tree by the boundary of your property, where you’d usually put your refuse and recycling sacks, by 7am on the day the Council’s Garden Waste Collection service visits your road. If you’re not sure when the service is scheduled for your area then visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays and search for your road name. The good news is that all
the trees will be turned into environmentally-friendly compost. For this reason the Council cannot take trees that are decorated or in pots or stands. If your tree is too big for this service, you can take it to one of Kent County Council’s Household Waste Recycling sites. Call KCC on 03000 417171 for locations and opening times or visit www.kent.gov.uk.

**Christmas Refuse Collections**

- Mon 22nd December - normal collection
- Tue 23rd December - normal collection
- Wed 24th December - normal collection
- Thurs 25th December - collection on 2nd January
- Fri 26th December - collection on 27th December
- Mon 29th December - normal collection
- Tue 30th December - normal collection
- Wed 31st December - normal collection
- Thurs 1st January - collection on 2nd January
- Fri 2nd January - collection on 3rd January

**Otford Oast WI**

The next meeting will be on **11th December** when they hold their Christmas Party in the Otford Memorial Hall. There is a crèche and the first visit is free. Do join them. Contact Jo Hall on 01689 638996 for more details.

**Otford Evening WI**

The Christmas meeting will be held on **11th December** at 7.30pm in the Otford Village Memorial Hall. It is a meeting of ‘Home Entertainment’ a cookery demonstration with a Christmas slant - items to be eaten later with coffee. This meeting is for MEMBERS ONLY. January is the time for making new resolutions. On **8th January** the speaker is from the Institute for Advanced Motorists’. A Happy new year to all members. For more information please contact Pat Goddard on 01959 522578.

**Knole Decorative and Fine Art Society**

Knole Decorative and Fine Arts Society meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Sevenoaks Community Centre, Bat & Ball. The lectures start promptly at 1.45 pm and finish by 3 pm. The December lecture is members only. The first 2015 lecture will be on **Thursday 15th January** when Maggie Campbell Pedersen will talk about ‘A Dewdrop from Heaven – Pearls and Shells’. For further information see the website www.knopledfas.org.uk.

**Sevenoaks Local RSPB Group**

The next meeting is on **Thursday 4th December** at 7.45pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall and will feature ‘Bobs best of the year - his wildlife images over the last 12 months by Robert Canis’. Includes mulled wine and mince pies. Local Group members are £2.50 and non-members are £3.50. Telephone 01959 563530 for further information.
Heritage Centre Picture for December

The featured artist for the rest of the year is Chris Masson. She says “I cannot remember a time when I was not painting or drawing something, not always with success I might add. I attended the Roan School in Greenwich where I was more often found in the Art room rather than the netball pitch by my exasperated PE teachers. I did gain a distinction in Art in the exam at the end of my school career and it was my dearly held intention to go to the Goldsmiths College to do Stage or Fashion design but it was not to be. After I married John and our Julia was 2 years old I signed up with an art group in Sale, Cheshire where we were then living. We had a superb tutor there and on coming south again I joined an evening class in Sevenoaks. When I retired I joined the Otford Art Group and thoroughly enjoy the art and convivial company each week.

Christmas /New Year Travel

Buses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 25th</td>
<td>No service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 26th</td>
<td>No service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 27th</td>
<td>Saturday service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 28th</td>
<td>No service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 29th</td>
<td>Saturday service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dec 30th - Saturday service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - No service
Jan 2nd - Normal service

Timetables may change so please always check before travelling

Work at London Bridge Station

From 20th December and throughout next year journeys to and from London will change as the work to improve the railway continues. These changes include:

20th December 2014 to 4th January 2015
- No Southern or Thameslink trains will stop at London Bridge
- There will also be changes to other services, including Southern and Gatwick Express services to Victoria and London overground and underground.

22nd to 24th December
- During the morning peak trains to Charing Cross will not call at London Bridge

5th January 2015 to 2018
- No Bedford to Brighton cross London Thameslink trains will call at London Bridge Station
- A reduced service will run between Brighton and London Bridge in the off-peak and a very limited service will run in the peak.

17th January 2015 to August 2016
- Some Southeastern trains to Charing Cross will not stop at London Bridge for 20 months
- Some Southeastern stations will have all trains diverted to Cannon Street, with no trains calling at Charing Cross or Waterloo East

For more information please visit ThameslinkProgramme.co.uk or www.thameslinkrailway.com or www.southernrailway.com
**Christmas & New Year Trains**

Dec 24th - Normal service. Early finish  
Dec 25th - No service  
Dec 26th - No service / Some High Speed services  
Dec 27th - Saturday service  
Dec 28th - Sunday service  
Dec 29th - Saturday service  
Dec 30th - Saturday service  
Dec 31st - Saturday service  
Jan 1st - Sunday Service  
Jan 2nd - Normal Service  

Times may change so please always check with the station before travelling.

**Hedges - Keep them trimmed**

Hedges are growing very quickly at the moment and a number in the village have grown over the public footway and are causing a nuisance to pedestrians, especially those who have poor sight, use wheelchairs or double buggies. Please check the boundaries of the property you are in and if necessary please arrange for it to be cut back from the footway as soon as possible. Thank you.

**Planning**

The following applications have been considered by the Parish Council. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Head of Development Services, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000

**a. New applications**

**SE/14/01872   15 Greenhill Road**  
Variation of condition 6 and condition 12 of application reference SE/13/00687 for the erection of detached dwelling with rooms in roof with roof lights to front, rear and side elevations, rear balcony, basement with light well, attached garage with room in roof, retaining walls to gardens, parking and landscaping in order to allow the windows to the first floor South West and North West in home office to be top hung and fitted with restrictors, restricting the opening to 3000mm

**SE/14/03282   14 Warham Road**  
Demolition of outbuildings and erection of a single storey conservatory to the side of the existing dwelling

**SE/14/03371   89 Well Road**  
Single storey extension with roof lantern. Alterations to fenestration (retrospective)

**SE/14/03462   52B Pilgrims Way East**  
Removal of condition 5 (Permitted Development) and variation of condition 10 (removal of existing structures prior to commencement) to ‘Prior to commencement of development existing outbuildings shown as 1&3 on 4441-PD-001 Rev A shall be demolished and all resulting materials removed from site. The existing dwelling shown on drawing no 4441-PD-001 Rev A shall be completely demolished and all resulting materials removed from site within 3 months from the date of completion of the approved dwelling.

**SE/14/035486   21 Warham Road**
Erection of a single storey rear extension
SE/14/03543    2 New Barn Farm Cottages, Telston Lane
1st floor extension to front elevation on timber post support
SE/14/02971    Elmwood, Tudor Crescent
Demolition of existing sheds and stable block. Erection of proposed sheds.

b. Results Received
SE/14/02432    28 Hillydeal Road
Erection of a two storey side extension to form annexe    Allowed
SE/14/02858    Lorien, St Michael’s Drive
Double storey infill front extension and a ground floor extension to the rear elevation.    Refused
SE/14/02279    Bartram Farm, Old Otford Road
Demolition of two detached dwellings and a number of commercial buildings and the construction of a new office building and associated parking    Allowed

c. Tree works
SE/14/03409    Bubblestone Farm, The Green
Various works to trees
SE/14/03596    The Chalet, High Street
Various works to trees

d. Appeals
APP/G2245/A /14/2227771/NWF    Pilgrims Way Cottage, Pilgrims Way West
Demolition of existing double garage, and the erection of two detached four bedroom dwellings, including the closure of the existing access onto Pilgrims Way West and the creation of a new access from Rye Lane to serve the existing and proposes dwelling. Improvement to footpath. Associated landscaping.

Speedwatch
Would you like to join our dedicated Speedwatch Team. Please contact the Parish Council office if you would be available to go out during daylight hours and help to slow down and report speeding traffic passing through the village.

Newsletter Deadline
The deadline for items for the February Newsletter will be Monday 19th January

Newsletter Deliverers
We are currently looking for anyone willing to go on a ‘reserve’ list to be available when regular deliverers are not. Please contact the parish council office. Many thanks.

Rubbish and Garden Bags
Garden waste bags packs are available from the Parish Council office at £13 for 25. It avoids all those trips to the tip. Rolls of black sacks at £1.50 and white sacks at 50p are also available. The correct change would be much appreciated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Edwards-Winser Oastbrook, Telston Lane 522503</td>
<td>Douglas G. Cracknell 23 Warham Road 522325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Mary Evans 14 Tudor Crescent <a href="mailto:mary.a.evans@btinternet.com">mary.a.evans@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Jackie Howe 33 Pilgrims Way West 525434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nick Fothergill 7 Darnets Field 524120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. H. Jane Lawrey 23 Tudor Crescent 522360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Howard Leicester Albany, Shoreham Rd <a href="mailto:howard_leicester@btconnect.com">howard_leicester@btconnect.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Charmian Marsh 40 Greenhill Road 522609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jon Verrall 24 Pilgrims Way East <a href="mailto:jon.verrall5@btinternet.com">jon.verrall5@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Elizabeth J. Ward Thymebank,Coombe Rd 522384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin J. Whitehead 19 Coombe Road 524088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chairman, Parish Councillors, Clerk and Assistant Clerk wish you all a very happy, restful, and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.