Chairman’s Report

Council Tax Changes – the Effect on Parish Councils

- The Government has introduced a new scheme to replace the existing Council Tax Benefits Scheme.

- As a result, from April 2013, the 100% Council Tax benefits will be reduced to 91.5%.

- Only pensioners are protected (Govt regulations), therefore the full extent of the cuts in Council Tax Benefits falls on working-age claimants.

- This will mean that some Council Tax Support recipients who had been used to receiving 100% benefits will now have to pay some council tax.

- Those households who receive Council Tax benefit are no longer included in the Tax Base calculations, the impact of which will be an effective increase in the level of Council Tax which relates to the Parish Council precept without an increase in the funds the Parish Council receives.

- This year by judicious budgeting, and the assistance of a support grant from SDC, Otford Parish Council has managed to keep their increase in the actual parish precept down to 1.9%, despite the general trend in our overheads rising.

- Along with this there is also a threat that capping on Town/Parish councils may be introduced by Government (from 2014/5) and the support grant may also be for one year only.
On 25th January, we had a cloudless blue sky and sunshine! We have all struggled through a very wet autumn and winter, and a snowy January. Now we wonder what February has in store for us. During the last few weeks of sorting out paperwork I found details of two moth surveys that were done last year in our garden on Otford Mount. These were arranged by two volunteers from the Kent Wildlife Trust, and they were overjoyed with the results. A total of 729 moths entered the light-trap set up on two nights in July and August. The moths were trapped very carefully, identified, counted and released the next morning. There were a total of 94 species including 5 rare and 1 migrant.

Personally, I have never been very keen on moths, but after being involved in these two surveys, I'm hooked! Many moths are very colourful, and lots are beautiful with fantastic patterns on their wings.

They have wonderful names, here are just a few: Snout, Fanfoot, Heart and Dart, Rosy Footman, Garden Carpet, Ghost moth, July Highflyer, Double Striped Pug, Nut-tree Tussock, Bird-cherry Ermine,

The most numerous were: 55 Double Square-spots, 51 Dingy Footman, 45 Dark Arches, and 44 Rosy Footman. To the joy of the identifiers they saw 1 Orange-tailed clearwing.

www.ukmoths.org.uk is the most reliable site to use if you want to look up any of the moths.

Some may well come to your gardens this year. All of us will be looking forward to spring and the joys of summer as we work our way through February.

**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.

**Otford & District Historical Society**

The next meeting of the winter programme will take place on **Wednesday 20th February** in Otford Village Memorial Hall at 8pm when Mark de Angeli will talk about ‘John Frith, early protestant martyr, the Reformation and lessons for history’ Membership is £6 a year and visitors are welcome at £2 per meeting.

**Otford Players**

Otford Players present ‘Who Killed the Director’ on **Friday 8th and Saturday 9th March** in Otford Memorial Hall.

Please join them for an evening of intrigue and suspense. ‘Who Killed the Director’ is a murder mystery in which the audience have to guess 'who done it'

The evening will consist of a 45 minute play where the scene will be set and the plot will unfold. This is followed by a Ploughman's Supper during which the cast will mingle with the audience who will have the opportunity to interrogate the characters in the hope of exposing the killer.
The evening will end with the conclusion of the play and the killer will be revealed. Can you guess ‘who done it’ and win the prize?

Tickets are £10 each and available from Carole on 01959 525404 or email oxfordplayers@otford.net

**Otford Gardeners’ Society**

The first meeting will be on **Tuesday 5th February** when they will be holding a Cheese and Wine Evening and Indoor Bulb Show in Otford Village Memorial Hall. Admission is £2 and includes cheese and wine. For details of all events please contact the Society Secretary, Janet Finney on 01959 523760 or visit the website www.otford.info/gardeners. The following meeting will be on **Tuesday 5th March** when the talk is entitled ‘Preparing for the Show’ with the expert help of well known grower, exhibitor, lecturer and judge Barry Newman NDH, FNVS, Chairman of the National Vegetable Society. Admission which includes refreshments is £1 for visitors.

**Otford & District Wine Club**

The Otford & District Wine Club will be meeting in the Otford Memorial Hall at 8pm on **Wednesday 23rd February** to enjoy a selection of interesting short films from various sources and will include an ice cream in the interval. Free for members, £3 for guests. Please contact the Secretary Olive Cherry on 01732 458240 for further information.

**Otford Twinning Association**

The next social gathering of the Otford Twinning Association will be in the Woodman on **Monday 25th February** 2013 at 7.45pm. Do join us.

We have booked a coach for the morning in Hardelot and the afternoon in the lovely old town of Montreuil with a fortified citadel, leaving Otford at 7am on **Saturday 20 April** 2013. This trip is suitable for all ages and interests, and a knowledge of French is not essential. Please contact Jane Lawrey via the Parish Office for an application form.

**Guide Christmas Post Box**

Thank you to all who supported the 2012 Christmas Guide Post Box in Otford Library and the Parish Council Office. This again was a success and raised in total £484-60p which has been divided between the girls’ chosen charities- Kent Air Ambulance and Children with Cancer UK. Thanks to Angela in the Library and Sue and Brenda in the Parish Office for helping us, also to Gerry Froggatt and Craig who continue every year to print the stamps and posters for us.

**Otford Methodist Church**

Otford Methodist Church will be hosting the next Women’s Breakfast on **Saturday 16th March** at Otford Methodist Halls, 8.30am. Writer Ali Herbert will be our speaker and everyone is welcome. The cost is £4 on the door, but please reserve your place by phoning Sue on 01959 535099 or e-mail johnandsueward@btinternet.com
The World Day of Prayer Service 2013

The World Day of Prayer Service is to be held on **Friday 1st March** at 2pm in the Otford Methodist Church. The theme will be ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ and the speaker will be Rev. Chris Reed. Although the service has been prepared by women from France it is not intended just for women. Everyone is welcome to attend this ecumenical event. The service will be followed by refreshments.

Otford Oast WI

The meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 9.30am in Otford Village Memorial Hall. The next meeting will take place on **14th February** when Angie Jordan will demonstrate ‘Quick and Healthy cooking’. There is a crèche and the first visit is free. Do join them. Contact Julie Stevens on 01732 450618 for more details.

Otford Evening WI

At their next meeting on **Thursday 14th February** members will be having a games evening, owing to the speaker unavoidable having to cancel. Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday in the month in the Club Room of Otford Village Memorial Hall. For more information please contact Sandra Thomas on 0208 402 4634.

Spring Workshop

Following on from her very popular Christmas Wreath making evening Denise Thompson Otford’s own designer florist will be holding a Spring Workshop in Otford Village Memorial Hall on **Wednesday 20th March** at 7pm. Cost £30. Everything will be provided (except scissors /secateurs - please bring your own). Please ring 01959 525009 to book.

The Kirsch Cup

The Otford Sports Association shall nominate a recipient for the OSA-Kirsch Cup, awarded each year to a promising young local sportsperson, or a person who has made a valuable contribution to any recreational activity in Otford. This will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting.

This year the OSA would like to offer villagers the opportunity to nominate someone who has played a part in continuing to keep sport alive within the Village such as by way of participating in sport, training, organising sporting events or similar.

The procedure is that the OSA compile a short list of nominees which are voted on by members at their Annual General Meeting, and the cup itself is presented to the winner at the Annual Meeting of the Parish in May.

If you would like to make a nomination it would be appreciated if you could provide their name and a brief resume of why you think they are a suitable candidate. This should reach the Parish Office by mid-March or ring Kay Drake 01959 522727 email drake_kay@hotmail.com.
Motor Mower

Otford Sports Association, on behalf of member club Otford United Football Club, are seeking a second hand petrol motor mower, with a minimum blade width of 18” (46cm), to enable them to cut areas of the High Street recreation ground that cannot be reached by a bigger machine. If you have such a mower that you would be willing to donate, or you know someone who has, please contact Kay Drake, OSA Secretary, 01959 522727. Such a donation will not only benefit the whole community but will be appreciated by all those who use this wonderful, free, facility.

Sevenoaks Embroiderer’s Guild

The next meeting will take place in the Otford Village Memorial Hall on Saturday 23rd February. There will be an all-day workshop with Pam Buck entitled 'Gardens in Bloom.' The meetings start at 10am and 2pm and end with tea and cakes at about 4pm. For further information please contact Sylvia Grafton on 01732 452117.

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 next meeting will be on 21st February when Clive Barham Carter will be talking about 'Phaetons to Phantoms - Cars and Carriages.' This lecture looks at 100 years of coach building covering both carriages and cars. Anyone interested in attending a lecture or joining the Society, please contact Yvonne Stewart on 01732 457852 or email knoledfas@gmail.com

Getting the most from The Library

There will be a Free Craft Activity Session at Otford Library on Saturday 9th February 10 until 12pm. Please ring 01959 522488 to book a slot.

Regular free events include:

- Baby Bounce & Rhyme Time – Monday mornings 11am to 11.30am
- Story Time – Term time only - Tuesdays 2.15pm – 2.45pm
- Talk Time – Every Monday 11.30am to 12.30pm
- Computer Buddy – Tuesdays or Fridays (booking essential)

Could you use the library for your group or event, meetings, book groups etc? Contact the library on the above number and discuss your requirements and cost.

Remember we have a wonderful resource in our village so please use your library. If you have not already then please join in 2013 and have a look at the large selection of books and also a great selection of DVD’s to hire out.

Hospice in The Weald

Well Done to Dennis & Carol Brown from Broughton Manor who raised £890 at the Carols & Mince Pie evening with the Community Choir that they held just before Christmas in their lovely home.
Help urgently required - Otford Village Fete

Patty Chatterjee, Chair of the Fete Committee, has advised that their Treasurer, has decided to step down as he has recently taken on responsibilities on other committees and, after six year's loyal service, feels that it is the right time. Unfortunately, at the present time, no one has still been identified to take over this key role. Unless a volunteer comes forward (preferably with some accounting background, or who is at least comfortable working with figures), there is a danger the Fete will, sadly, not take place next year. Patty has emphasised that the role is an enjoyable one, involving monthly evening meetings, administration and payment of invoices through the year and, of course, strong involvement around the time of the Fete itself. Please could you give some thought to this? For more information email patty.chatterjee@virgin.net

Health Walk

Go along and try the Health Walk which starts from Otford Car Park every Monday at 10.30am. The walks last normally about an hour. The walks are free and are organised by Sevenoaks District Council. There is no need to book.

RSPB

On Thursday 7th February at 7.45pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall John Buckingham will talk about ‘Where, when and why of British Birds’ Group members £2.50, non-members £3.50. Telephone 01959 563530 for more details

New Release - Otford 'Caught on Camera' 2012

The new release is a 1½ hr DVD recording of 30 village events during the Jubilee year. They are available from The Heritage Centre, bdvideos.co.uk or Barbara Darby on 01959 523339. They cost £10 each, profits to Otford Fete Committee who help various organisations in the village.

Otford Methodist Church Wednesday Afternoon Women’s Fellowship

Meetings are at 2.30pm in the Church Hall. Phone Rosemary Cracknell on 01959 522325 for details / transport.

February
6th - Joint meeting with St Barts - Chris Towers - a games maker
13th - ‘The Midwife’ - Jennifer Jackson
20th - A games afternoon
27th - No meeting

March
1st - World Day of Prayer Service
6th - ‘Evacuees’ - Keith Lawrey
13th - Lunch out
20th Easter meditation
Do you enjoy singing?

Why not come and join the Kemsing Singers. We are a friendly sociable group and would welcome new members. We meet for rehearsals on a Monday evening and have a wide and varied repertoire of light and more serious music which we perform for public and charitable occasions. If you are interested, talk to any members or ring the Secretary, Mrs Margaret Holgate on 01732 454448 email secretary@kemsingsingers.com or visit www.kemsingsingers.com for more information.

Citizens Advice Bureau

A Citizens Advice Bureau surgery takes place on the 1st Tuesday of each month at the Otford Parish Council offices between 10am and 12 noon. No appointment necessary.

Planning

The following applications have been considered by the Parish Council in January. 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/12/03290 20 Bubblestone Road
Demolition of existing rear conservatory. Erection of a single/two storey rear extension with two roof-lights to the single storey and solar panels on the roof of the two storey extension; new pitched roof to existing garage. Alterations to existing house with removal of chimney to side (northern) elevation; addition of a roof-light to side (southern) elevation, a roof-light to the centre of the roof and a sun tunnel to side (northern) elevation.

SE/12/03401 39 High Street
Erection of a single storey rear extension

SE/13/00043 Land rear of 77 and 79 Pilgrims Way West
Erection of a 2 bed detached chalet bungalow with attached garage, and two 3/4 bed detached houses with integral garages.

b. Results received

SE/12/2300 4 Sevenoaks Road  Allowed
Change of use of a ground floor residential room to retail use, non food.

SE/12/02617 48 Well Road  Withdrawn
Proposed single storey side extension, two storey rear extension and loft conversion including large rear glazed dormer and balcony, front and side dormers.

SE/12/2842 85 Pilgrims Way West  Allowed
Demolition of existing garage and conservatory. The erection of side and rear extension and the new first floor to create bedrooms and bathrooms.

SE/12/02855 The Red House, 55 Greenhill Road  Allowed
Demolition of existing garage and erection of a new single storey side extension incorporating a garage and rear extension.

SE/12/2931 1 Wickham Cottages, Pilgrims Way West  Refused
Erection of a two storey side extension and widening of the access by repositioning the brick pier.
c. Appeals
SE/12/02548  Land rear of 77 & 79 Pilgrims Way West
The erection of a 2 bed detached chalet bungalow with attached garage and two 3/4/ bedroom detached houses with integral garages and access from Orchard Road (Appeal ref APP/G2245/A/1212/2189781/NWF)

d. Appeal decision
APP/G2245/A/12/ Frog Farm, Pilgrims Way West 2180585
Change of use from disused agricultural barn to two apartments with external alterations, together with alterations to Barn B for car parking  Dismissed

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<th>Parish Councillors Contact Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Edwards-Winser  Oastbrook, Telston Lane  522503</td>
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<td>Councillors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas G. Cracknell  23 Warham Road  522325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mary Evans  14 Tudor Crescent  <a href="mailto:mary.a.evans@btinternet.com">mary.a.evans@btinternet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Jackie Howe  33 Pilgrims Way West  525434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Knight  38 Warham Road  524488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. H. Jane Lawrey  23 Tudor Crescent  522360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howard Leicester  Albany, Shoreham Road  <a href="mailto:howard_leicester@btconnect.com">howard_leicester@btconnect.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Charmian Marsh  40 Greenhill Road  522609</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Verrall  24 Pilgrims Way East  <a href="mailto:jon.verrall5@btinternet.com">jon.verrall5@btinternet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Elizabeth J. Ward  Thymebank, Coombe Road  522384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin J. Whitehead  19 Coombe Road  524088</td>
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Newsletter Deadline
The deadline for items for the March Newsletter is Monday 25th February

Happy Valentines Day
Please remember don’t take that trip to Bluewater or elsewhere but get that special present / flowers for your loved one from our lovely individual village shops or dine out in our restaurants or pubs. Please support all your local businesses.