Otford Parish Council
January Newsletter 2011
No 197
See otford.info/parishcouncil for Village Helplines Directory

Kent and South & South East England
Village of the Year 2002
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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). Copies of the Helplines Directory can be printed off for residents if required. They can all be read via http://www.otford.info/parishcouncil. The next meeting will be on Monday 14th February at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall.

Thankyou

The Parish Council would like to thank residents who during the recent bad weather helped to clear snow/ice on footways for neighbours, those 4x4 owners who did shopping runs and others just for taking care of the more vulnerable residents. Community spirit at its best!

Parish Chairman's News

Farewell and Welcome. In December we said farewell to Barbara Darby, our parish clerk for the last twenty-five years and welcomed Brenda Hambrook

to take her place. Barbara received a presentation and flowers at a gathering of councillors and other residents on the 10th December. Our MP was unable to be present but Mr Fallon is well acquainted with Otford and summed up everyone's thoughts by writing, "Mrs Darby has made an extremely valuable contribution to Otford Parish Council over the last 25 years. I would like to thank her for her dedication and hard work". We wish her and Ron a long and very happy retirement and I would like to thank her, especially for the many ways she has assisted me during my period as the chairman. A village gains immensely through such professionalism.

Snowy Otford. As I write the village is labouring under a coating of snow, ice and frost. Kent Highways have fulfilled their regular programme of gritting on main routes and hills, and the District Council workers have treated areas near the High Street shops. The amount and frequency of the snowfalls required 12 hour shifts and 24 hour use of many of the vehicles. The parish council received a small supply of salt/grit just in time to treat the most important parts of the car park and we asked County Highways to treat other parts of Otford that were badly affected. There is a page on the website: "Direct.gov", dealing with householder's clearing snow and ice from pavements that states, "There's no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your home or from public spaces. It's unlikely you'll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries on the path if you have cleared it carefully. It also makes the point: "don't use the salt found in salting bins - this will be needed to keep the roads clear". And it is put in strategic places for council worker use.

Letter from Barbara Darby

Thank you all for the wonderful evening on 10th December which so many attended despite the weather. It was a fantastic end to my term of office and I'm very, very touched by your lovely comments, thanks and incredible generosity shown in the gifts and cheque which I've received.

It's been a very rewarding 25 years as Parish Clerk for Otford and I feel I've been privileged to try and put something back into the community which has been our home for 37 years. I can honestly say I've thoroughly enjoyed my time. Of course there has been the odd occasion when I've wondered why I let myself in for it but the overwhelming majority of the time it's been great and I'm not going into anecdotes now!

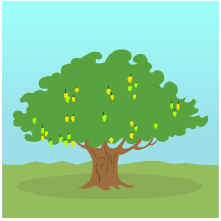
The office has progressed from a shed in our garden - which fell down when all the Parish Council records and equipment were moved out - to the far more professional Parish Office in School House which is a lot warmer too, not to mention more central and accessible! The workload has well over doubled since June 1985 when I became Clerk and government policy seems to indicate that it could well increase even more in the future.

I must pay tribute to all (and there have been quite a lot) of the volunteer Parish Councillors who have worked so hard for Otford during my term. They give unstintingly of their time to Otford, often at great inconvenience to themselves, and are usually at the sharp end of any criticism. Thank you too for all the support from our Police, PCSO's and Community Warden.

My last and greatest thanks must be given to Sue Stephenson, nominally my Assistant Clerk but in reality my partner in crime, my staunchest ally, my very true friend (as to many others), an incredibly hard worker, without whom so many things would not have been achieved (including my farewell), who works so hard for the village, the office and many other things besides. Definitely an unsung heroine.

I leave the office in the very capable hands of Sue, and Brenda Hambrook, my successor, and know you will all give them the support, encouragement and help which I have enjoyed.

Again, thank you all very much and a very Happy New Year to you.



Heritage Tree Survey

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers are seeking volunteers for a Heritage Tree Survey in Kent.

- Play a valuable role in recording and conserving the heritage trees in your local area.
- Learn new skills by going on FREE training courses
- Come along to various community events and activities ranging from talks, walks, practical action tasks, open days, art and photographic workshops, wildlife courses and much more…

No previous experience necessary.To find out how to get involved, please contact Virginia at BTCV on 01233 666519 or
Email v.hodge@btcv.org.uk

Otford & District Wine Club

Celebrate Australia Day with the Otford & District Wine Club who are holding an Australian Wine Tasting evening with Music, Cheese & Biscuits in the Otford Memorial Hall on Wednesday 26 January at 8pm. Free for members, £4 for guests. For further information contact Denise on 01959 523115.

The Darent Valley Choir

Due to the adverse weather conditions the concert will now take place on Saturday 22nd January at 7.30pm. The concert theme is 'A feast of Christmas music from the Middle Ages to the present day'. They shall be singing excerpts from Bach's Christmas Oratorio and their Musical Director Ben Odom has written a carol called 'The Sleigh Bell'. There will be well known carols for the audience too. It will take place in St Mary's Church, Swanley. Tickets may be obtained at Sevenoaks Bookshop or from 01474 815591 or 01959 523279 or at the door.

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. Paul can always be contacted on 07813 713366.

Police Contact Numbers

Contact our neighbourhood Police Officer PC Brian Smith on 07972 004450 or PCSO Wright on 07772 226036. To report a crime please call 01622 690690. The next Community engagement will take place as shown below:-

- Monday 17 January 2011 2pm-3pm Homebase, Otford

Otford & District Historical Society

The Otford & District Historical Society will be holding its next meeting on Wednesday 19th January when Clare Graham will talk about *'Jane Austen's Kentish Connections'*. Because of the cancellation of the December meeting

due to the adverse weather the meeting will be starting with a very quick AGM. The Annual Membership is now £6 and £2 for visitors.

India Bike Ride 3-12 November 2011

Join them on a trip of a lifetime and cycle for 5 days through rural Rajasthan along with other like minded people and raise funds for the Kent Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre in Canterbury (KM Charity of the Year 2010). This will be the 2nd major fundraising event for the Centre which provides therapies, advice and support for people with MS in Kent. They are looking for over 30 people to take part in the event which finishes with a visit to the Taj Mahal. For more information and a registration pack call 01303 862 996 or e-mail info@lifecyclepromotions.co.uk or visit www.kentmstc.co.uk

January's Eco Tip from the Otford Green Team

New Year's Resolution - With ever increasing energy prices make it a habit to read your Gas & Electricity meters monthly to keep a check on what you are using with a view to reducing unnecessary consumption.

If you were lucky enough to get a new mobile phone for Christmas, don't just throw the old one away or leave it in a drawer. Pick up a recycling envelope and send it off to be recycled, and help a charity to benefit at the same time.

Knole Decorative and Fine Arts 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. Anyone interested in attending a lecture or joining the Society, please contact Alison Davis on 01732 780453 or email knoledfas@gmail.com

The next meeting will take place on 20th January 2011 when Valerie Woodgate will be talking about *'Art and the Great War'*

The first casualty of war may be truth but wartime artists defied the censors to produce works which very powerfully depicted the horror of what they had witnessed. Valerie Woodgate will also discuss post-war German Art

depicting the disillusion and collapse of order in German society, and in a wider European context the effect of the Great War on the future of Art.

Yoga Class

The new term for your friendly Hatha Yoga class at Otford Church Hall started on Tuesday 4 January Classes are weekly, 7.30-9.00pm and cost £8 per lesson. Beginners and all abilities are welcome. For further details and to reserve a place please contact Brenda Hambrook on 01959 525969 or yoga@otford.net.

Friends of Otford Library (FOOLS)

In January there will be an IT day with the computer buddy Elaine Elston. In February local watchcase maker Martin Matthews will be giving a talk on a Wednesday afternoon and during March/April there will hopefully be a flower arranging demonstration by Evelyn Mercer who helped to arrange the flowers for Prince Andrew's wedding.

Library Volunteering

Time2Give is Kent Libraries and Archives volunteering programme, offering opportunities at over 100 libraries across Kent. We welcome people of all ages from the Kent community and pay agreed out of pocket expenses, such as travel to the library.

The range of activities we offer is much wider than most people expect, from Computer Buddies to help customers with IT, to library gardeners to create attractive reading gardens, to Knit and Natter volunteers to encourage and retain traditional crafts and to Home Library Service couriers delivering books to those who are housebound, and to their carers. There is a leaflet readily available at all Kent libraries and archives.

Our activities include

- Ancestry Wizards — Providing customers with a basic introduction to online genealogy using www.ancestry.com

• Baby Rhyme Time	Meeting and greeting customers; providing refreshments; and supporting the rhymes and songs
• Bag Books	Cleaning and repairing story-book boards/bags
• CB+HWW	Computer Buddies + Homework Wizard, a weekend role especially targeted at young volunteers involved in DoE award or similar youth schemes
• Chat with books	Helping staff support customers who are taking Skills Plus reading and literacy courses
• Chatterbooks	Facilitators for children's reading groups
• Celebration volunteers	Helping staff with occasional community events to promote and celebrate libraries and archives
• Coffee and Chat	Facilitating sessions of local reminiscence or seasonal discussions about books, eg travel, Christmas
• Computer Buddies	Initial support to help customers gain confidence with computers, and occasional one off IT questions
• Consultation volunteers	To help library staff with a range of customer and public consultation (occasional)
• Craft sessions	Sharing your creative skills with customers of all ages, on either an occasional or regular basis
• Finishing Touches	Ensuring the finishing touches are carried out regularly and systematically, for example cleaning board books or Rhyme Time equipment; checking story-time sacks and bag books; pencil sharpening; and dusting CD racks

• Gardeners	Enhancing library gardens with extra planting and pots. Includes option to seek sponsorship and donations
• Home Library Couriers	Promoting libraries to customers and carers unable to visit the library; finding our about and selecting their favourite reading; and delivering the books and audio-visual resources
• Homework Club	Helping library staff with homework sessions
• Reading Support for Family And life long learning	Developing relationships with schools and children's centres to help maximise benefits from the library ticket
• Language Related	Varied. Might include nursery rhymes n in French, promoting foreign language books translating historical information
• Local Studies	Indexing, collating and some research to enrich local history collections for collections for library and archive customers.
• Local Sporting Heroes	(From November 2010). Local studies research activity to investigate Kent People with a link to past Olympics and Paralympics. Will be offered at all libraries as web based research but only larger libraries with resources will offer microfilm and research facilities
• Music and drama skills t activities	Musicians and actors to share their and experiences at library based
• Reading group hosts	Organising and facilitating library based reading groups for customers of all ages

• Retail Rangers	Helping staff promote merchandise events. An occasional activity or possibly over several locations
• Scrabble Clubs	Organising and facilitating library based Scrabble Clubs for customers of all ages
• Talk Time	Helping staff organise a range library based social groups
• Specialist Skills	Occasional opportunities, perhaps marketing or photography and film editing.
• Story Time Host	Meeting and greeting and offering refreshments. (Staff read the stories except in single staffed libraries)
• Volunteer Drivers	Helping customers unable to make their own way to the library join in events and chose their own books

Otford & Sevenoaks Libraries has vacancies in the following

- Otford Library: Computer Buddies, Ancestry Buddies, Craft Activities, Home Library Service Couriers, Local Sporting Heroes, Talk Time
- Sevenoaks Library: Baby Rhyme Time Hosts, Computer Buddies, Ancestry Buddies, Home Library Service Couriers , Retail Rangers, Local Sporting Heroes, Talk Time, Knit and Natter

Further information, including our volunteer newsletter and volunteers own accounts of their Time2Give experience, can be found in the Libraries/Services For All section of the KCC website at www.kent.gov.uk

Christmas Guide Post

A big thank you to everyone in the village who supported the Guide Christmas Post Service in 2010. The fantastic sum of £407.80 was raised from the sale of stamps and has been divided between Spring House Family Support Centre, Sevenoaks and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. We apologise for any late deliveries due to the snow and ice which hampered us for a second year running. Thanks must also go to Angela in the library and Barbara and Sue in the Parish Office who sell the stamps for us and Gerry

Froggatt who organises the stamps and posters as we could not run the post service without them.

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 20th January with the theme of *'Osteopathy – What it can do for you'*. There is a crèche and the first visit is free. Do join them.

Otford Afternoon WI

Meetings are held in the Otford Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month.

The next meeting on 8th February Gerry Harris will talk about *'New England in the Fall'*

Visitors are very welcome, and further details can be found on the Otford Village web site at www.otford.info with the link to the WI or call Joyce Shaw on 01959 522736

Otford Evening WI

All meetings take place on 2nd Thursday of each month in Otford Village Hall. Visitors are always very welcome. For more information please call Eve Wiltshire on 01959 524887 or Joan Beacom on 01959 524304

Picture of the Month

Our artist for the month of January is Sheila Dickerson. Sheila has enjoyed her creative interest in embroidery. To broaden her interests she took a short calligraphy course which included learning how to decorate artistically, the various pieces of calligraphic writing. This encouraged her to enrol in a course for drawing and painting flowers, which developed into botanical art. Being a member of Otford Art Group she looks forward to their Tuesday meetings and also her occasional Botanical Art classes. Please contact Doug Dickerson on 01959 524183 if you would be interested in displaying your work in the Heritage Centre.

Hospices of Hope

hospicesofhope
making every day count
for terminally ill children and adults in Kent and surrounding counties

There is now an unwanted goods donation drop off point inside the Otford Tea Rooms & Gift Shop, 11a High Street, Otford which is

open Monday – Friday 10am – 4.30pm and Saturday 10am – 5.00pm. The well stocked second hand bookshop contains good quality paperbacks and hardbacks, children's corner and themed displays.
PAPERBACK BOOKS ARE CURRENTLY REQUIRED PLEASE

Next Event – Saturday 19th February at 7.30pm at Christchurch, High Street, Tunbridge Wells – *'When the Stars are Brightly Shining'* – an evening of music with Elianne Pretorian, performing famous operatic arias and Cole Porter and Leonard Bernstein songs, Roger Barber, former Opera & orperetta Covent Garden tenor singing songs associated with Mario Lanza and Richard Tauber accompanied by Carol Anne Wells on piano performing music from movies and musicals.
Standard Ticket £10 or VIP ticket £13 which includes interval refreshments. To book contact 01959 525110 or wendy@hospicesofhope.co.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau Surgery

The next CAB Surgery will take place at School House on Tuesday 1st February between 10am and 12 noon. No appointment necessary. To contact them at Sevenoaks please call 01732 454443.

Planning

The following applications are 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/10/03383 13 Warham Road
Construction of a single storey rear extension
SE/10/00420 Burfield P W East
Retrospective application for the retention of replacement roof and changes to elevations and fenestration not in accordance with planning permission SE/08/00101/FUL (removal of pitched roof, construction of new roof to Form additional bedrooms)

b. Results received

SE/10/02088 St Michaels School St Michaels Drive
Erection of a new pre-preparatory school following the demolition of the existing Headmaster's House, together with the conversion of the existing school building to provide replacement accommodation including part demolition and improvements to an existing playing field.
Allowed

SE/10/02326 20 Ryecroft Road
Erection of first floor rear extension *Refused*

SE/10/02606 4 Hillydeal Road
Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with two detached dwellings with access from Hillydeal Road *Allowed*

SE/10/02668 22 The Charne
Single storey rear and side extensions *Allowed*

SE/10/02761 11A Hillydeal Road
Loft conversion and roof extension *Allowed*

SE/10/02790 11 Tudor Crescent
Erection of single storey rear extension, pitched roof over adjacent existing flat roof, and fenestration changes *Allowed*

SE/10/02796 9 Colets Orchard
Demolition of existing garage and car port and construction of new double garage and studio room *Allowed*

SE/10/02995 59 Pilgrims Way West
Proposed rear conservatory extension *Allowed*

SE/10/02806 Broughton Manor High Street
Retrospective installation of cupola on the boathouse roof *Allowed*

SE/10/02807 Broughton Manor
Retention of cupola on the boathouse roof - Listed Building Consent *Granted*

c. Tree Preservation Orders

10/03517/WTPO Tanglewood Shoreham Road
Various works to trees