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 meetings will be on 14th January 2013 and 11th February at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall. Contact details of Councillors can be found on the website and at the back of this newsletter.

Chairman’s Report

As we go into January and February we can expect it to get colder and maybe even snow. If you want to clear your pavements, or even those of an elderly neighbour, the gov.uk web site fully explains the legal situation, but these are a few snippets from the site.

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. 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. So if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can then cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.
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.

**Strictly Christmas Tea Dance**

It was our KCC Community Warden Paul Robertson’s idea to hold the Strictly Christmas Tea Dance for the community of Otford and along with The Parish Clerk Brenda and Assistant Clerk Sue helped to organise the whole event. He also got a professional dance instructor (Colin Brown) to be the compere who provided the music and also lead the dancing. Brenda and Sue acted as waitresses on the day and two KCC wardens, Jackie West (West Kingsdown) and Steve Armstrong (Eynsford) helped make things run smoothly. Friends, family and local residents also helped and donated cakes and helped on the day. Members of the business community including Gulliver Timer Treatments, Otford Antiques Centre, Ibbett Mosely, H2omes Living Solutions and DR & FA Transport (Shrewsbury) made the event possible because of their kind donations and generosity. The dance on a horribly wet day was a resounding success with approximately 80 people attending who all enjoyed a really fun afternoon of dancing and lovely home made cakes and tea. The event did Otford proud.
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 Primary School - Public Consultation
If you would like to respond to this consultation e-mail your comments by 28th January 2013 to school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

Otford & District Historical Society
The next meeting of the winter programme will take place on Wednesday 16th January in Otford Village Memorial Hall at 8pm when Chris Spillane will talk about the ‘Sights, sounds and smells: walking the streets of Pompeii’. Membership is £6 a year and visitors are welcome at £2 per meeting.

St Michael's School Grounds - Reminder
This is a gentle reminder to local residents and other members of the public that there are no rights of way or public footpaths across the land belonging to St Michael’s School. This includes the area known as 'The Warren'. The Parish Council holds plans of the area should you wish to familiarise yourself with the St Michael’s site or local footpaths. The School grounds are bounded to the north by the North Downs Way and to the South by the Pilgrims Way.

Otford Oast WI
The meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 9.30am in Otford Village Memorial Hall. There is a crèche and the first visit is free. Do join them. Contact Julie Stevens on 01732 450618 for more details

Otford Afternoon WI
Meetings are held in the Otford Village Memorial Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. 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. Contact Kath Larkin on 01959 522355 for more details.

Otford Evening WI
Thursday 10th January will be their first meeting in 2013, at 7.30pm in the Club Room, where the speaker will be Mr C Hare and his talk is entitled ‘40 years without a proper job’. For more information please contact Sandra Thomas on 0208 402 4634.

Otford Bridge Club
Otford Bridge Club is searching for new members and is offering £3 lessons for beginners to learn the game. The club meets every Friday in Otford Village Hall at 7.30pm. Anyone interested in learning to play please contact Sally Ford on 01474 812250.
**Otford Allotment Association**

Not the best time of the year to visit our allotments unless you have a capacity for appreciating potential. If interested in obtaining a plot in the New Year just ring Roger Beasley (Parish Agent) 01732 463072 to join a short waiting list.

Allotments sprang up in the 18th century when land owners allocated plots to labourers to enable them to produce fruit and vegetables. Researcher Agnes van den Berg of Wageninges University said, “Around the world allotment gardens are under pressure. Considering that allotments may play a vital role in developing active and healthy lifestyles, governments and local authorities might do well to protect and enhance them” OPC fortunately has always appreciated this so if you remember come and visit us on “Open Day” date to be fixed and enjoy the difference.

**Otford-Neufchatel-Hardelot Twinning**

The first AGM of the Twinning Association will be held on **Monday 21st January 2013** at 8pm in the Heritage Centre, with cheese and wine. Do join us, letting us know your particular interests. There will be a coach trip to Montreuil and Hardelot on **Saturday 20 April 2013** and we shall be visiting our French "Twins" again on **22nd/23rd June 2013**, sharing cars, with overnight hospitality. More details from Jane Lawrey via the Parish Office.

**Getting the most from The Library**

Don’t miss the Free Craft Activity Session in Otford Library on **Saturday 19th January** from 10am to 12 noon. To book call 01959 522488. Go along and have some fun.

Other 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 Buddie – 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 are 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.

**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.

January
9th - New Videos - Barbara Darby
16th - to be arranged
23rd - Ightham at the Crossroads - David Williams
30th - Pub lunch at the Kings Arms, Shoreham

February
6th - joint meeting with St Barts - Chris Towers - a games maker
13th - to be arranged
20th - A games afternoon

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

Planning
The following applications have been considered by the Parish Council in December. 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. Applications
SE/12/02855 The Red House, 55 Greenhill Road
Demolition of existing garage and erection of a new single storey side incorporating a garage and rear extension
SE/12/02862 41 High Street
Demolition of existing single storey structure and construction of a new single storey structure.
SE/12/02931 1 Wickham Cottages, Pilgrims Way West
Erection of a two storey side extension and widening of the access by repositioning the brick pier.
SE/12/03180 11 Coombe Road
Demolition of existing garage. Erection of a ground floor extension to side of existing single storey section of property. Erection of a second storey section of property. Erection of a second storey extension above existing single storey section of property and a part loft
conversion. Dormer windows to the front and rear of the property. Erection of an open
porch.
SE/12/03204  41 Greenhill Road
Loft Conversion with four velux windows on the front elevation and two weatherboard clad
rear dormer windows. Re-tiling of roof with concrete overlapping tiles.
SE/12/3209  The Grange, High Street
Demolition of existing single storey flat roofed side extension and erection of new single
storey extensions to both sides and rear of property.

b. Results Received
SE/12/00836  Burfield, Pilgrims Way East
Erection of a two storey side extension and erection of a front porch extension.  Refused
SE/12/02548  Land rear of 77 and 79 Pilgrims Way West
The erection of a two bed detached chalet bungalow with attached garage and two ½ bed
detached houses with integral garages and accessed from Orchard Road.  Refused

c. Notification of tree works
SE/12/03111/WTCA  The Corner House, The Green
Fell 1 no Acacia tree and 1 no Almond tree
SE/12/03250/WTCA  2 Colets Orchard
T1 Pear Tree - crown clean by pruning out dead wood and crossing/rubbing/duplicating
branches, T2 Mixed hedge-reduce height to 1ft below top of chain link fence, T3 Hedge to
rear of lawn - reduce in height to 7ft from ground level and prune back lateral spread by up
to 1 metre,T4 1 ash sapling and 1 elder - fell to ground level, T5 Norway maple - prune back
lateral spread as close to boundary as possible, T6 Weeping silver birch - reduced lateral
spread by 1.5-2 metres

d. Appeals
High Point, Coombe Road
Demolition of detached double garage and erection of a 1 bedroom lodge style dwelling
house with parking bay to side- APP/G2245/A/12/2187060/NWF
Hopgarden Farm, Telston Lane
Use of site for a single gypsy family with provision of a mobile home, touring caravan, utility
building and installation of a septic tank - App/G2245/A/12/2185283/NWF

Don’t lag behind this winter
As the temperature gauge plummets, South East Water is urging its customers
to be prepared and make sure their homes are wrapped up for winter.
When the temperature drops outside, the water in internal plumbing pipes can
freeze, expand, and cause pipes to fracture and burst. Lagging pipes against
freezing temperatures will prevent the misery of a flooded home as well as
help save water and money too.

Steve Andrews, Head of Customer and Commercial Services at South East Water, said:
“During the winter period we see a rise in the number of bursts on our water network and
this is the same for our customers’ properties too.
“People need to be aware of the hidden danger in the attic, where a lot of internal pipework exists. A collapsed ceiling or coming home to water running down the stairs as a result of a frozen pipe thawing out and then bursting is a nightmare, and can be a costly winter experience.”

Top tips to beat the winter blues:
- Know where your internal stop tap is - usually under the kitchen sink
- Lag outside pipes with insulating material
- Ensure pipes, cisterns and tanks in unheated areas such as lofts are lagged
- Repair dripping taps
- If away, leave the heating on low
- Leave loft doors open to allow warm air to circulate
- If a pipe bursts turn off the water and central heating
- Keep the number of a reliable plumber handy

To find out more information on how properties can stay warm this winter visit [www.southeastwater.co.uk/winter](http://www.southeastwater.co.uk/winter) and [www.metoffice.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter).

### Parish Councillors Contact Details

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<td>Douglas G. Cracknell</td>
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<td>Mrs. Mary Evans</td>
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<td>Mrs. Jackie Howe</td>
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<td>Richard Knight</td>
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<td>Mrs. H. Jane Lawrey</td>
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<td>Mrs. Charmian Marsh</td>
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<td>Jon Verrall</td>
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<td>Mrs. Elizabeth J. Ward</td>
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<td>Martin J. Whitehead</td>
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We are including a questionnaire in this month's newsletter. This was initiated by the advisory group, recently authorised by the Parish Council to work with us towards a solution of the problems regarding the car park. This body will represent identified stakeholder groups, but in any discussions the Parish Council will aim to ensure that the interests of the whole Otford community are taken into account.

**Otford Parking - Questionnaire**

Further to recent proposals concerning both the village car park and the expansion of the village school, it has been agreed by the Parish Council, that a representative, volunteer based advisory group be created to work in co-operation with the Parish Council with regard to the proposed Pay and Display system in the car park. The aim of the group would be to present and progress the Community’s concerns and requirements in terms of car parking facilities and road safety in the village.

We would welcome your views on this development. Please answer the questions at the bottom of the page and return by 31st January 2013.

Below is a list of the proposed stakeholder groups:

High St Residents

School Parents

Otford Primary School Staff

Gatehouse Nursery

Otford Nursery

Otford Traders

Otford Sports Association

Otford Village Memorial Halls

Otford Methodist Church

Allotments Association

Question 1 Are you in favour of a stakeholder representing your views?  YES/NO

Question 2 Please detail any stakeholder groups you believe have not been identified in the above list..........................................................................................................................................................................................

NAME..................................................................................................................

ADDRESS.............................................................................................................