Proposed Stopping Up of FP49

Otford Station

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs proposes to make an order under Sec 120 (2) of the Highways Act 1980 for the stopping up of footpath SR49 at Otford in the interests of public safety. The Secretary of State further proposes to make an order under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 to create a public footpath over the land at Otford Station. If you would like to write to oppose or support this closure please send your objections to The Secretary of State, DEFRA, Room 1-02, Temple Quay House, 2, The Square, Temple Quay, BRISTOL, BS1 6EB by 10th June 2004. Full details are available from office. A copy of your comments would be appreciated.

The Otford Society, after a full debate at its AGM, voted overwhelmingly against the draft order to close the footpath where it crosses the railway and divert it via the A225 bridge and across the Station forecourt. It endorsed the proposal for a public petition. This petition is available at the Parish Office and Heritage Centre for those who do not wish to write and is available for ‘FOR’ and ‘AGAINST’ signatures and can be signed during opening hours until Monday 31st May.

Unsocial Behaviour

It has been noted that various residents have been dumping garden rubbish on Parish Council maintained land. If this continues it will upset the biodiversity of the land through garden chemicals and seeds. Clearing these areas costs you money that could be used to far better advantage to the village. The Parish Council will be sending letters to residents in the affected areas shortly.

Glaucoma Support Group

There will be a Coffee Morning in the Club Room of the Village Hall on Wednesday 19th May between 10am - 12 noon. If you suffer from Glaucoma, have a family member who has the condition or would like to know more about the work of the International Glaucoma Association do please come and support them. The speaker will be a local member who will give a short talk on ‘Family Glaucoma and Genetic Research’. For more information please contact Hilary Johnson on 01959 522917.

Otford Gardeners’ Society

The next lecture will take place in the Otford Memorial Hall on Tuesday 1st June at 8pm when Harry Townsend will be giving a practical demonstration on ‘Making and Planting Alpine Troughs’. Admission is 50p for members and £1 for non-members.

Advance Notice For All Flower Arrangers

ALL flower arrangers are invited to take part in the new Open Class at the Otford Gardeners Society Summer Show on Saturday 10th July. The title of the class is ‘A Summers Day’ - to fit an alcove size of 20” overall. The entry fee for non-members will be 20p (members usual fee). For further details and application form please contact Sheila Dickerson on 01959 524183.
Police Surgery

The next Police Surgery will take place on Wednesday 7th July 2004 and PC Jackie Allen will again be joined by Lorraine Chapman from West Kent Housing. So if you have any concerns please come and see them between 10am and 12 noon.

Embroiders Guild

Goldwork and Golden Threads will be the subject of the talk given by William Kentish-Barnes at the next meeting of the Embroiderers Guild Sevenoaks Branch on Saturday 29th May in Otford Village Memorial Hall starting at 2pm. All are welcome. For further details please phone Barbara Savager on 01959 523484.

Otford Players

Otford Players are hoping to perform 'The Noble Spaniard' a comedy by W. Somerset Maugham on 11th, 12th and 13th November 2004, and to this end they are holding open auditions / readings which will take place on Tuesday 8th and Friday 11th June at the Otford Methodist Hall at 8pm. If you have ever wanted to act or help backstage, now is the time to give it a try. Contact Sue Simpson on 01959 522786 for further information.

Otford Society AGM

About 60 members attended the AGM held on 6th May. The Executive Committee was re-elected. Two volunteers have come forward for the vacant Secretaryship and will be considered. Membership figures are still very good but more would be better. New residents would be particularly welcome. Subscription fees are very low, but the Committee is reluctant to raise them. At the present time annual expenditure exceeds the annual income from subscriptions! Laing Homes application for 2 possible schemes at the coal-yard, Station Approach were on view as was the map showing the draft orders for Footpath 49. The vicar Rev. Pat Hopkins and Jim Lidbetter (architect) spoke on the plans for the extension to the Parish Church, which the meeting received with great interest. The Chairman mentioned the Methodists' plans for their new building were not yet available.

The Otford Society are looking for a new Chairman to succeed Ken Gunderson, who has served in this capacity for over 10 years. Someone, perhaps recently retired, who is or would like to be involved in village matters. The Society has a membership of around 1000. Its role is to encourage and support efforts to achieve good planning and design to support the preservation and enhancement of the village environment and to foster community spirit and involvement in local decisions. It produces 3 newsletters a year which record Otford events and provides an independent voice for residents views. If you are interested please ring Ken Gunderson on 01959 522709.

Aviation History

On a wet September day in 1899, a brave young man, England's first aviator, fell 60ft to his death from his flying machine. His name was Percy Pilcher. He was just 36 years old. The flying machine was called The Hawk. Had this not occurred, Otford might today be heralded as the cradle of modern aviation. Percy had already designed a three-wing flying machine, powered by a light engine that could have taken him into the history books, ten years ahead of the Wright Brothers in Kitty Hawk, N Carolina. He was taking a last flight in The Hawk that day in order to raise the funding he needed to finish his new tri-plane. All his test flights took place from a hill south of Austin Lodge Farm, a few miles from our village centre, where he soared the Hawk, something like a modern hang-glider between two hills.

Today in recognition of his achievement, you can see a model of Percy's Hawk in the Otford Heritage Centre and learn more about this extraordinary early aviator who came so close to becoming the world's first man of powered flight.

Otford Methodist Wednesday Afternoon Women's Fellowship

Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings which take place at 2.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall and a list of the next two months speakers and events are as follows: -

May
26th - Pub lunch at Tudeley and visit to church

June
9th - NCH Tea Party at Jean's
16th - Outing - Marle Place
23rd - Missionary Garden Party
30th - Sevenoaks Network Meeting
Otford & District Wine Club

The Otford & District Wine Club is holding a Music Quiz on **Wednesday 26th May** starting at 8 o’clock in the Memorial Hall, organised by David Prestage. Why not go along for a fun night out amongst friends? As usual it is free to members with a small fee for visitors. There will be a prize for the winner and a raffle. Cheese & biscuits will be provided but please bring your own liquid refreshment. On Monday 31st, the Club is organising the Ice Cream stall at the Otford Fete and help would be appreciated from all members in manning the stall during the afternoon. Even if you can only do half an hour on the stall it would greatly assist them. Last year they had record sales of ice cream, which enabled the Club to support local charities and to supplement some of the clubs activities (i.e. The Christmas Dinner, BBQ and Buffet) so do go along if you can. Remember Your Club needs YOU.

Members all enjoyed the Wine Tasting at Sainsbury’s in April. Thanks very much to Sainsbury’s for their generosity and assistance in organising this event.

Otford & District Historical Society

The first Historical Society Summer Outing this year will take place on:

**Saturday 22nd May** with a full day trip to Hampton Court: Palace, Gardens and Maze.

Cardinal Wolsey’s answer to Otford Palace, presented by him to King Henry VIII, enlarged, beautified, and still a royal palace. It was first opened to the public by Queen Victoria c1840, when Sir Henry Cole wrote of it “Natures works and man’s bravest achievements go hand in hand together here”. Refreshments are available. The coach leaves Otford Pond at **9am**.

Total Cost is Full - £23.25 and concessions - £20.50. For more details and bookings please contact 01959 522384.

Otford Allotments Association

The good news now is that all plots are once again fully tenanted - the bad news for you is that if you were thinking about a plot you may have to wait until one becomes available. Never fear as availability of plots is constantly moving as do the tenants who have to give up for varying reasons from time to time. Please, therefore, call into the Parish Office on any weekday morning or give Barbara Hine a ring on 01959 525468 if you would like to consider being part of the ‘green team’ and grow your own or just be shown around the allotment site.

The new equipment shed is soon to be erected but the association still have money to raise to pay for it, and to this end they will be running a table at the forthcoming Boot Fair on May 15th in the Village Hall and hope to have one or two stalls at the Village Fete on May 31st. After all this excitement they hope to see many of you on the Open Day on Saturday 14th August during National Allotment Week - more details of this later.

Transit of Venus

On Tuesday 8th June between 5.19am and 11.24am the planet Venus will cross the Sun. The last transit occurred in 1882 and a complete transit has not occurred in the country for 720 years. Weather permitting David Thomas and his wife will be at the Recreation Ground near the Sun pillar during this period taking photos through his telescope. For people who wish to witness the event, a pair of modified binoculars will be set up to project the image onto card and a few pairs of special eclipse glasses will be available for those wishing to look directly. Planet markers will be set up to help explain why the event is happening. Visitors are very welcome to come and witness this unique event. **WARNING - DO NOT** attempt to look at the Sun directly as you could permanently damage your eyes.

Picture of the Month

The artist for May-June is Ruth Barclay. Ruth who has been a member of the Otford Art Group for a number of years, is a very keen botanical artist and as would be expected a very keen gardener.

St Bartholomew’s Fair

The Fair will be held as usual in the beautiful grounds of Castle House on **Saturday 19th June**. The theme this year is celebrating 1400 years of Rochester Diocese.
Otford Oast W.I.
Their next meeting will be on Thursday 20th May when members will discuss and then vote on the resolutions put forward which will then be taken to the National Federation of W.I’s AGM in June. So why not go along and give it a try, you can be sure of a warm welcome. There is a free crèche at every meeting. The first visit is free, second visit £1.50 and Annual membership is £20. For more information please contact Mrs D Metcalfe on 01322 271873

Otford Folk Dance Club
The special Barn Dance in aid of MacMillan Nursing and Heart of Kent Hospice on Saturday 24th April in the Church Hall, was a great success. Although tickets were limited a total of £500 was raised to be split between the charities. Both the Otford band ‘Footloose’ and caller Eddie Crook volunteered their services free of charge.
The next Thursday night special is on 27th May at 8pm in the Parish Church Hall with The Pilgrims Way Band playing and Eddie and Morris calling. Admission is £1.50 with tea, coffee and squash included.
The regular ‘Thursday Nights’ run from 8pm in the Parish Church Hall and mostly finish at 10pm. Admission and membership is £1.50. The first visit is FREE! Including Tea / Coffee and biscuits. They have dancing to Eddie and Morris each usually taking half of the evening. But on the last Thursday in the month they are supported by visiting callers or musicians. They welcome new members at any time. All dances are walked through first and called. Enjoyment takes first place over skill. Don’t be put off, because you can’t commit to regular visits. They have over 100 members, many of whom just go along from time to time when they can. So why not go along when you can and enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the Otford Club.
Website http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/otfordfdc2

Open Morning
St Michael’s School, Otford is holding an Open Morning on Tuesday 18th May between 9.30-11.30am. There is no need to make an appointment just go along. Further details from 01959 522137.

CAB Surgery
An adviser from CAB is at the Otford Parish Council office on the 1st Tuesday of each month between 10am and 12noon. Please use this local service. The next surgery will be on 1st June.

Planning
The following applications were considered by the Parish Council at its meeting in May. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Strategic Services Director, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000

a. New applications
SE/04/00885 Elidai and The Coal Yard Station Rd
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of sixteen dwellings (9 detached, 2 pairs of semi-detached and a terrace of 3) all with garaging and construction of new access road
SE/04/00886 Elidai and The Coal Yard Station Rd
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of seven detached dwellings all with double garages plus construction of new access road
SE/04/00938 33 Tudor Drive
Conversion of garage at side of house to habitable room

b. Results Received
SE/04/00451 Umberslade Shoreham Road
Demolition of existing property and erection of 2 detached houses and garages
Allowed
SE/04/00535 15 Station Road
Proposed single storey rear and side extensions and two storey rear extension
Allowed
SE/04/00564 113 Evelyn Road
Single storey rear extension
Allowed
SE/04/00611 19 Rye Lane
Erection of a single storey rear extension
Allowed
SE/04/00636 48 Telston Lane
Loft conversion with front and rear dormers
Allowed
SE/04/00648 63 Sidney Gardens
Outline application for the erection of a detached bungalow
Refused
SE/04/00691 80 Evelyn Road
Rear single storey extension to bungalow (revised scheme)
Allowed