Annual Assembly
This is notification of the Annual Assembly of the Electors of the Parish, more commonly called the Annual Parish Meeting, which will be held, in the Club Room of the Village Hall on **Monday 23rd May** at 7pm for refreshments before a 7.30pm start. The Parish Council and a number of village organisations will present their reports. This is your chance to hear about and ask questions about what is happening in the village, so please attend if you can.

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 the Annual Meeting on **Monday 9th May** at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall.

Otford Village Fete
**Bank Holiday Monday 30th May**
12noon - 5.30pm
The Fete committee is finalising plans for this year’s event, which has Circus as its theme. Our Fete is one of the largest in Kent and certainly the best known. Last year we were blessed with beautiful weather and as a
result over 6,000 visitors attended. This put a tremendous burden on the committee, all of whom gave a great deal of their time to make the event a success.

We desperately need some additional support. The fete committee donate more than £6,000 annually to local associations and we can only continue to offer this level of support if we get help to run the event. This is your fete, please help us to give you a great day out. Just an hour or two on the day would help us.

We would also like to remind you that if you would like to enter the dog show you will need to register on the day. A list of the various categories can be found on our website (www.otford.info/villagefete)

Please email patty.chatterjee@virgin.net if you can help.

**Speedwatch**

Speedwatch is coming back to Otford.

Community Speed Watch is a scheme to encourage people to reduce speeding traffic though their community. The scheme enables volunteers to work within their community to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and poor driving, helping to control the problem locally. Many villages including our own have a problem with vehicles that fail to reduce speed. On country routes, a 30mph zone may regularly become a 40 or 50mph zone, as it passes through our community.

Many drivers don't reduce their speed until they are well past the speed limit sign, and many only slow down by a small amount - not enough to be within the speed limit. They may simply be oblivious that they are in a residential area and need to slow down.

These drivers risk the safety of local residents and pedestrians - especially children as not all of our roads have pavements and in some areas they are very narrow. The greatest killer of young people in the UK is excess use of speed on the roads!

Speedwatch is not a pressure group, but a Police operated community group, such as Countryside Watch and Neighbourhood Watch. Speedwatch is overseen by the police neighbourhood teams and each 'watch' is recorded,
having an incident number. Those observed exceeding the speed limit in our community are reported to the police, who will write a letter.

**Parish Plan**

From **Monday 9th May**, copies of the Otford Parish Plan will be available for sale at the Parish Office, Yvonne’s and the Post Office at a price of £3.50. The plan will also be available online at [www.otford.info/parishplan/](http://www.otford.info/parishplan/). This 48 page, lavishly illustrated, plan reflects the views of our community and makes clear those recommendations we felt important to carry forward in the years ahead. The plan aims to ensure that Otford’s future unfolds in the way local people want rather than happening by chance. Get your copy before stocks run out.

**Talk - Otford Library**

On **Monday 9th May** at 2.30pm in Otford Library there will be a talk with slides by Evelyn Mercer called ‘My life with flowers’. Evelyn is the past president of the Flower Arrangers Society and she helped to arrange the flowers for Prince Andrew’s wedding and has won medals at the Chelsea Flower Show. Tickets are free but booking is essential from Otford Library on 01959 522488 or email [otfordlibrary@kent.gov.uk](mailto:otfordlibrary@kent.gov.uk)

**Ice Creams**

The Otford & District Wine Club will be manning the Ice Cream Stall on **Monday 30th May** at the Otford Village Fete and would welcome Club Members helping out for a short period between 12 noon and 4pm. Contact the Secretary on 01732 458240 for further information.

**St Bartholomew’s Church Fair**

Have a lovely family afternoon out and go along to St Bartholomew’s Church Fair, on **Saturday 11th June** at 2pm in the beautiful grounds of Castle House, by kind permission of the owners. Stalls will include Plants, Cakes, Toys, Crafts, Music, White Elephant, Books, and other attractions. Refreshments will be served all day. Programmes will be on sale before the fair and on the gate for 50p children under 5 free.
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 always be contacted on 07813 713366.

Police Matters
In recent weeks we have seen an increase in burglaries in the Otford area. The number isn’t high, less than 25, and most are burglaries to sheds rather than houses. Nevertheless if this happens to you it is inconvenient and can be upsetting.

We would like to help reduce the likelihood of this happening to you by asking you to check your home security. Please ensure you keep external doors locked even when you are at home, and if you are not in a room do not leave the window open. At night, double check that you have locked up before you go to bed. Don’t leave your car keys in an obvious place and certainly never leave them visible through a door or window.

Use the best possible lock you can afford for your shed and cover up the window so no-one can see what’s inside. Security mark your property and keep a record of what tools and equipment you have. It will act as a deterrent if you chain more expensive items together and secure them to a fixed point.

The Home Office has launched a new website offering practical home security advice at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/how-you-can-prevent-crime/secure-your-home/ which includes a quick, three minute scorecard you can complete to find out how secure your home is.

If you see anything that you think is out of the ordinary or suspicious - people or vehicles - please report this to police, all information is recorded and acted on.

Your neighbourhood officers are carrying out additional patrols in the area. Please do not hesitate to contact your neighbourhood policing team as shown below if you have any questions or would like further information.

Police Contact Details
To contact our neighbourhood Police Officer Brian Smith please call 07972 004450 or for local PCSO Jane Wright call 07772 226036. To report a
crime please call 01622 690690. The next community engagement will be on **Monday 9\(^{th}\) May** between 3pm and 4pm at McDonalds Restaurant.

**SE Water - Metering Programme**

This year South East Water are going to start a water meter installation programme in the Sevenoaks District. If you missed the drop in session in Otford in March there is another session in the Sevenoaks Community Centre on Thursday 19th May between 5pm and 7pm when you can ask questions about water meters.

**British Iris Society - Kent Group**

The Group are holding their Annual Show on **Saturday 21\(^{st}\) May** between 12 noon and 4pm in the Otford Methodist Hall. There will be plants on display, competitions and photographic displays and there will be Irises and other plants for sale. All are welcome and entrance is free. Refreshments will also be available.

**Otford Players - Barn Dance/Ceilidh**

We are hosting a Barn Dance/Ceilidh in Otford Memorial Hall **Saturday 14\(^{th}\) May**. Tickets are £10 each, which includes dinner and pudding. Please bring your own drinks. Tickets are on sale now by calling Carole on 01959 525404 or email otfordplayers@gmail.com. To ensure everyone has space to dance we are limiting the tickets to 90 this year - so don't delay, come and have some fun.

**Sevenoaks and Swanley Citizens Advice Bureau**

In 2010 your Citizens Advice Bureau helped 4,700 local people deal with over 17,000 concerns. Although we receive invaluable support from Sevenoaks District Council, we have lost significant public funding in the past two years. We need to find new sources of funding to maintain our services. This will come mainly from charitable donations and community support.

**Our future**

After serving the local community for over 70 years, the largely volunteer based service of Sevenoaks and Swanley CAB is under serious threat. In
2009 the two Bureaux merged to reduce our costs, but this will not be enough to cope with the funding cuts we now face. Added to this, our caseload has continued to rise - last year the number of enquiries we handled increased by over 30% on the previous year. We are now working hard to find possible new sources of funding, but, in the current economic climate, this is a difficult task. We always value greatly the donations we receive and are appealing directly to our local community for further help.

**Our service**

CAB support has a positive impact on people's lives. Research carried out by MORI found that 46% of people felt less anxious, less stressed, or had fewer health problems after receiving help from the CAB. This also helps to ease pressure on other services, for example, local GPs. In the well respected tradition of CABs our staff and volunteers remain determined to continue to offer a free, confidential service available to everybody.

Each hour of advice costs us £15 to provide. At any one time we can be conducting three or four interviews, while three or four other advisers are completing case notes, writing letters on clients' behalf, dealing with emails, answering telephone enquiries or researching solutions to more complex problems.

For many we are the first port of call when a problem emerges, for others we may be the last port of call when things have gone badly wrong. Often we deal with a problem from beginning to end, or we can signpost clients to more specialist agencies for additional support.

**Managing debt**

Helping people manage debt problems takes up a considerable amount of our time. These often arise as a result of a dramatic change of circumstances, for example, losing a job, relationship breakdown or ill health. Last year we opened a weekly debt clinic to provide a dedicated service to clients struggling with debt. We are looking for financial support to continue with this valuable service after its current funding comes to an end later this year.

**Welfare benefits**

The benefits system is complex and our specialist advisors and form fillers help ensure that claimants follow the correct procedures. We do not help people cheat the benefit system - instead we aim to ensure that clients can claim the benefits to which they are entitled, particularly those clients who are disabled or genuinely too ill to work
Employment
Employment problems also make up a significant proportion of our caseload. Some employers do not understand their obligations, others choose to ignore them. Again, our specialist advisers work hard to help resolve employment issues. This will mean that clients may keep their job or obtain rightful compensation if they lose it.

Family, legal and other matters
We help clients deal with a wide range of other problems. For example, relationship breakdown is frequently discussed in detail for the first time at the Bureau. We also help clients who have been made homeless, or who are threatened with it; advise them on how to exercise their consumer rights, deal with problems following a bereavement and many more issues.

Our social policy work
Another very important part of our service is our social policy work which seeks to influence the decisions of government and policymakers at local and national level. For example, providing evidence from clients on changes to the benefits system which may result in them being disadvantaged; highlighting excessive bank charges, creditor harassment and the poor enquiry and complaint handling systems of some utility companies.

Can you help us sustain this valuable, free service to the local community? Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated

Further information
If you would like to make a donation, a leaflet can be obtained from the Parish Council. If you can offer help or ideas for our fundraising activities please contact Colin Logier at funding@sevenoaksdistrictcab.org.uk or on 01732 456100, weekdays 9.30-3.30.

Darent Valley Choir
The Choir will be holding a concert in St Katherine’s Church, Knockholt on the Saturday 21st May and they would love to welcome you there. The music will be varied and a little different from their usual programme.

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 next meeting will
be on **19th May** when Michael Howard will talk about *'A Certain Generosity of Spirit - The Art of David Hockney'*: David Hockney is one of Britain’s best-known artists – his work is instantly recognisable and deals with the joys and challenges of being alive. Michael Howard will discuss the journey of Hockney’s life from Bradford to London; to New York and Los Angeles and back to Yorkshire. 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

**Otford - Hardelet Twinning**

If you would like an easy 5 mile walk or a longer 10 mile walk locally and a pub lunch with some of our friends from Hardelet on **Tuesday 17th May** please contact Jane Lawrey on 01959 522360 for further details.

**Sevenoaks Embroiderers Guild**

The next meeting will take place in the Otford Village Memorial Hall on **Saturday 28th May** when there will be all day workshops with Libby Smith on 'Kantha Cushions' Morning sessions begin at 10am and afternoons at 2pm. More information can be obtained from Sylvia Grafton on 01732 452117

**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. The next meeting will be on **19th May** when they will have their AGM plus Phoenix cards and Jewellery Therapy. For more information please contact the Secretary Jane Dean on 01732 460512

**Otford Afternoon WI**

Meetings are held in the Otford Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. The next meeting will be on **10th May** when they will have their AGM plus Travel Talk

Visitors are very welcome, and further details can be found on the Otford Village web site at [www.otford.info](http://www.otford.info) with the link to the WI or call Joyce Shaw on 01959 522736
**Otford Evening WI**
The Otford Evening WI have just celebrated their 52\(^{nd}\) Birthday, two of the founder members attended the event, with a splendid meal organised by the Committee and members, and entertainment afterwards.
A Bursary to attend a course at the WI College at Denman is balloted for on our Birthday Night. This year it was won by Norna Munson. There was news of a proposed visit to Highgrove next Spring, also a visit to Coolings with a talk on Hanging Baskets. In May it’s the ‘business meeting’ evening where the new Committee are elected and possibly a new President. Ken Gunderson will then be speaking of his experience as a Bevin Boy.
All meetings take place on 2\(^{nd}\) 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.

**Otford Gardeners’ Society**
The Otford Gardeners’ Society next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 7\(^{th}\) June** when Mike Bundock will talk about ‘Floral Clocks’. The evening starts at 8pm in the Otford Village Memorial Hall. Admission is £1 for non members and the admission price includes refreshments.
On Bank Holiday Monday you will find the Society on the Recreation Ground with their stall for the Village Fete. They will be selling ornamental and edible plants all raised by members. Please visit them and grab a bargain.

**Picture of the Month**
The artist for May is Edna Coleman. Edna has lived in Otford for over 30 years and is a member of the W.I. She joined the Otford Art Group when there were only five members and now that has increased to over twenty! Edna says that she prefers working in watercolours but has also painted in oils. She takes photographs when on holiday and in the garden and then gets her brushes out at the Otford Art Group. Please contact Doug Dickerson on 01959 524183 if you would be interested in displaying your work in the Heritage Centre.

**Rockdale Appeal**
Rockdale are pleased to announce that as part of their Appeal to build a new residential home for the elderly at their site in the centre of Sevenoaks they are running the following event:
Mrs Jane Rogers of Riverhill House has kindly offered to open the House and Garden for the Rockdale Appeal on the evening of **Saturday June 11th** between 6 pm and 8.30 pm. The Rogers family have lived at Riverhill House since 1840 - don’t miss this opportunity to view Riverhill House which is rarely open to the public.

The Halstead Concert Band will entertain everyone in the Garden and the ticket price of £15 will include a glass of wine and canapés as well as a visit to the House and the Garden. Walk along the hillside garden with wonderful views over the Weald of Kent. Since Riverhill House appeared on Channel 4’s Country House Rescue programme last year there have been several changes to the Garden, including a Himalayan Garden which has been added.

Tickets £15 to include a glass of wine and canapés and a visit to the House and Garden as well as listening to the Halstead Concert Band

Please telephone 01732 458762 or email lynn.tier@rockdale.org.uk for details. For tickets please send cheques made out to Rockdale Housing Association to Fundraising Office, Rockdale Housing Association, Rockdale Lodge, Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1JT.

**Hospices of Hope**

Visit the Otford Tea Rooms & Gift Shop, 11a High Street, Otford which is open Monday – Friday 10am – 4.30pm and Saturday 10am – 5.00pm.

**Next Event**

-Literary Lunch with Margaret Durdant-Hollamby MBE on **Tuesday 17th May** at Hotel Du Vin, Tunbridge Wells.

Margaret is the Founder of The Stag theatre in Sevenoaks. She will talk about her life and her autobiography “Life’s not a Rehearsal”.

12 noon for 12.30pm, £26.50 to include a pre lunch drink, two course lunch and coffee. Tickets available from Vanessa 01959 525110 vanessa@hospicesofhope.co.uk

**Citizens Advice Bureau Surgery**

The next CAB Surgery will take place at School House on **Tuesday 7th June** between 10am and 12 noon. No appointment necessary. To contact them at Sevenoaks please call 01732 454443.
**T’ai Chi Classes**

The aims of T’ai Chi are to improve the general health, strengthen the legs, improve balance & coordination, promote better circulation, whilst bringing relaxation and increased energy. The courses will also work on improving posture and breathing.

**Sevenoaks: Thursday 5th May:** 6.35-7.30pm ... at The Bradbourne School, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks. TN13 3LE. **ALSO:** Class for T’ai Chi sword Form - on Thursdays at 8.35-9.30pm. **Friday 6th May:** 1) 12.05-1.00pm & 2) 1.05-2.00pm ...... both at St. Luke’s Church Hall, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks. TN13 1XT. The 1st class is specifically aimed at the over-60s, but anyone can attend.

**Length & Cost of Course:** 12 weeks. Try-out session: £5 & the remaining 11 weeks of the course: £115. Email: james@taiji.co.uk or call 07836 -710281 or visit www.taiji.co.uk or www.qigonghealth.co.uk

**Planning**

The following applications are considered by the Parish Council in May. 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/11/00659 The Old Oast House Shoreham Road**

Erection of first floor rear extension, demolition of existing single dwelling (The Oast House Bungalow) to facilitate erection of detached garage with first floor Granny Annexe and single storey link canopy

**SE/11/00698 14 Telston Lane**

Erection of a single storey rear extension (Amendment to previously approved scheme SE/10/02216/FUL reflecting change to built extent at boundary)

**SE/11/00860 24 Warham Road**

Demolition of existing garage and erection of attached single storey side garage and porch. new crossover and driveway.

**SE/11/00895 High Point Coombe Road**

Replacement of existing pair of garages, with a one bedroom dwelling

**SE/11/00920 Willow Brook Old Otford Road**

Demolition of the lean-to roofed extension to the kitchen, the existing balcony roof and parapet, and the erection of an extension in place of the existing patio area, which will fill in the 'L' shape of the present building.
The flat roofed balcony area will contain a lantern light and glass balustrade to the perimeter.

KCC/SE/0164/2011 Otford Primary School
Planning permission for the construction of one, six bay modular building to accommodate an additional two classrooms.

b. Results received
SE/11/00182 19 Orchard Road
Two storey side extension, rear conservatory and front porch extension with pitched roof over (as approved application SE/10/02386/FUL with porch extension)  
Allowed
SE/11/00136 Unit 6 Block 2 Vestry Industrial Estate
To operate hand car wash (retrospective)  
Allowed
SE/11/00242 The Bull, High Street
1 no. externally illuminated freestanding post sign (sign 1), 1 no. externally illuminated hanging sign (sign 4), 2 no. non illuminated board signs (signs 7) (retrospective)  
Refused
SE/11/00243 The Bull, High Street
Remove old signs and install new (retrospective)  
Refused
SE/11/00326 St Bartholomew’s Church, The Green
External illumination to East window of church  
Allowed
SE/11/00308 Downsview Shoreham Road
Alterations and additions including new double volume entrance hall, rear single storey extension and enlarged rear dormer window. Revised vehicular access with repositioning of entrance piers and gates.  
Allowed
SE/11/00479 7 Tudor Drive
First floor side and rear extension, to include room in roof space.  
Allowed

c Appeals
APP/G2245/C/10/2134986
Hopgarden Farm Telston Lane
Appeal against Sevenoaks District Council  
Appeal dismissed