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 10th October and 14th November at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall.

An update from the Parish Council Chairman

Car Park

The beginning of September, heralds in the autumn and the beginning of a new school year and all the associated problems, especially with extra traffic and car parking. The Parish Office has received complaints about lack of parking spaces and poor or inconsiderate parking. What can we do about it - especially as the “we” is “all” of us not just the Parish Council. “We” all need to drive as walking is “too dangerous“ is often put forward as an excuse for laziness or lack of planning for those few extra minutes walking. The blame has been laid at the feet of commuters, but this was not found to be the case last time we carried out a survey, with less than 10 spaces a day being attributable to commuters. Shops and their staff contribute their share of all-day parking; as do residents of the High Street that do not have off-road parking; Walkers use the car park before leaving for a day long ramble; Dog owners use the car park to
drive their dogs to the recreation ground for exercise; Users of the Village Halls also contribute - and everybody wants to park as near as possible to their journeys end. So what can we all do about it? Should we charge for using the facility? If so, should we charge per hr as happens elsewhere. Should we allow 2hrs free and then charging at £1.00/hr. If so, who will be responsible for the upkeep of the ticket machines? Who will collect the monies? Who will enforce the parking regulations? Who will send out the parking fines and be responsible for sending in the bailiffs to the defaulters? These are just a few of the questions we face, so if anybody has a solution that is acceptable to all the users please let the Office know - or maybe walk to avoid the parking problem, but please do not just keep on complaining that "something" should be done about it. Let us know what you want us to do - be positive. In the meantime we will be carrying out further surveys.

**Pond Willows**

The larger of the two willows on the pond, is diseased and due to have a major pruning exercise carried out, probably at half-term, if the tree surgeons can organise a suitable date with Kent Highways Services, as 3-way temporary traffic lights will have to be installed on the pond.

**Yellow Lining**

By now the yellow lining in the Tudors should be complete, as should the consultation for similar yellow lining in the Bubblestone area. Time will tell if it’s what the residents really wanted or if it ends up being as much of an inconvenience as the commuters.

**Lorries**

At a recent Highways meeting, members of the public expressed concern at the speed of traffic and size of lorries in the High Street. The Highways committee are looking at possible solutions, including a 20mph speed limit or a narrowing of the High Street with traffic lights. We found out from Kent Highways Services that enforcement of the 6’ 6” width restriction was not practicable and that the haulage federated companies did not indicate the High Street as a through route on their sat navs. Your views would be welcome assuming they are practical.

**Dog Fouling**

We are still getting complaints about dog fouling on the recreation ground. Too many people are just too lazy or ignorant and fail to “pick up” after their dog, implying that “it’s not my dog” even though the event has been witnessed. The dog-warden has been made aware of
the situation and will be patrolling the ground and issuing fines to offenders. I have been informed that here will be NO warning notices issued – Apart from this one! It has also become a problem on the allotments. ALWAYS PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG.

**Community Tree Planting**

On a more positive note, as part of the Parish councils plan to make the Hale Lane recreation ground a more attractive open space, a community tree planting event will take place on 5th November.

**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. Paul would like to start a *local jobs for local people* scheme at his weekly surgery to help to find jobs for unemployed Otford residents. Please contact him on the above number or go along and see him.

**Oxenhill Woods**

A report from Elizabeth Ward Chairman of Environment Committee.

The 61 acres of land that lies between Otford and Kemsing was arable farmland until 1979 when the farming ceased. It was known as Keddie’s Field and the site developed naturally into the mixture of scrub and trees that you see today.

In the late 1800’s it was reputed to be part of a 100 acre field stretching from Seal Road to Pilgrim’s Way East - supposed to be the largest field in Kent. When the houses in Tudor Drive were built in the 1920’s Oxenhill had been proposed for development, but was lucky to escape with the onset of the Second World War. In 1997 there were concerns that this valuable open space would be lost and negotiations between Otford, Kemsing and Sevenoaks District Council enabled the land to be purchased. Two meetings a year are held with representatives of the two parishes and SDC. The aims are to improve the value of the site for wildlife whilst maintaining it as a public amenity.

Because the land had been neglected it has taken some years to control the spread of scrub and make wide rides throughout the area to encourage wild flowers, birds and butterflies. We now have a comprehensive list to say what can be seen there at various times of the year. Significant areas of the scrub are now developing into woodland and it has been interesting to watch this development. The whole site has won awards for a perfect example of naturally regenerated woodland.
The old wood at the south-eastern corner of the site is known as Oxenhill Shaw had been sadly neglected. In the past it was an area that was coppiced but this had not continued as the industry had greatly declined. Because of the state of a considerable number of trees a regime of coppicing was necessary, to protect and encourage healthy trees for the future and to protect those who walk through this part of woodland. Natural England had to visit the site and grant a licence to SDC before any coppicing can be done. A report was received: 'The stand of timber is believed to be 90 years old, predominately ash coppice with a number of oak standards and an under story of hazel and field maple. The stand of timber is very mature with signs of decay in a number of very large coppice stools. There is evidence of some stools collapsing due to the size of timber decay and poor structural unions within the timber'

Ash wood is one of our toughest native timbers and because of its flexibility it can withstand pressure, shock and splintering. But one of the biggest structural dangers for mature trees is co-dominance (double stemmed trunks) which often leads to an associated problem called included bark. The weak union that occurs when upright branches grow so closely together means that bark grows between the union. This can be where water collects or the union may form a wedge and cause the union to split apart. There is evidence of this within many trees and their location next to or overhanging footpaths is a cause for real concern for future failure. This kind of decline can often lead to the death of individual stools. There is also evidence of vandalism with hollow and decayed stools being set on fire which has subsequently led to trees being felled for safety reasons.

The area coppiced 18 months ago has regenerated creating an area of warm, open coppice regeneration, which is so important for many plants, insects and birds species. This form of management is also supported by RSPB as it improves habitat. Many woods have become much poorer in their ground vegetation and insect species since the decline in coppicing. Some butterflies in particular, require the open conditions of newly cleared woodland that was once provided by coppicing. It is the species that require light to the woodland floor that are most in decline. The reduction in pollen and nectar and structure associated with the reduced ground and shrub flora seen in over stood coppice has resulted in a national stock of woodlands that do not provide optimum feeding and nesting conditions for woodland invertebrates, birds and mammals.

It is hoped that the coppicing will be completed in the next 3 weeks weather permitting and that this will enable rides to be cut and maintained throughout the whole of the area, making and preserving a nature reserve for us and future generations to enjoy.

**Halloween**

We know that many people are worried about people coming to their door at Halloween particularly those calling late in the evening and especially if you live on your own. You do not have to answer the door to them. You can make this clear by displaying a poster as above. These are available from the Parish Council.
Bonfire Night

The Scouts Bonfire Night will be on **Saturday 5th November** this year, at the Chalk Pit, off Station Road. Tickets are £4.00 per person (under 5's free), gates open from 5.30pm, and the evening starts about 6.00pm. There will be two Firework displays, with an interval for refreshments. Burgers, hotdogs and soup will be available.

Otford Players – Panto

Otford Players will perform their second panto in Otford Village Memorial Hall between **Thursday 10th and Saturday 12th November** at 7.30pm with a matinee on Saturday at 2.00pm. How much do you really know about Otford? Are you aware of its darker side? Otford Players explore these issues (in a funny way) in their forthcoming production 'ALICE – THE PANTO’. Join them and follow Alice’s adventures as she enters the dark world in pursuit of the villain known as the White Rabbit. Tickets available on 01959 525404 or visit the website www.otford.info/otfordplayers.

Signing of the Charter for the Twinning of Otford with Neufchatel-Hardelot Saturday 17th September 2011

At 7.30 a.m. 46 people including the Parish Chairman John Edwards-Winser, the Vicar the Rev Richard Worssam, our District Councillor Michelle Lowe and her family, some Parish Councillors, Paul Robertson our Community Warden, representatives of various organisations, including the WI, and some children, left the Pond on a 'Plan It' coach bound for the Channel Tunnel and France.

During some of the time we were underground 20 volunteers formed a group outside the coach to practise four folk songs, chosen for us by Tony Wiltshire who soon got us into shape.

On reaching France we were met with torrential rain, which lasted until we entered the outskirts of Neufchatel. On reaching their Mairie (Town Hall) we were welcomed by the Mayor and members of the Twinning Committee. Entering their Council Chamber we were greeted by 8 more folk from Otford who had arrived earlier and numerous French people whom we had met on other occasions. Their very accomplished Band, l'Esperance, opened the ceremony by firstly playing our National Anthem which was followed by the Marseillaise. A speech was made by the Mayor and ably interpreted by one of his colleagues.

Jane Lawrey explained in French and English how the twinning plans had progressed to this stage. John Edwards-Winser then gave his speech which was translated into French by Charmian Marsh. The formal Charters were read out in our respective languages and the documents signed. Otford gave a gift of a framed watercolour, painted by Barbara.
Darby, of various features of the centre of our village and this was presented by Emily Tierney to the Mayor.

We took a short walk to another hall where a light buffet lunch was served and their English and our French language skills were put to the test in a very happy atmosphere. Our hosts asked everyone to sign a book to mark the occasion.

Following lunch we boarded our coach for a short ride to Hardelot, their coastal resort, where they had arranged for 16 people at a time to have a short drive in a roofed carriage pulled by 2 horses, to show us their main street, the promenade and some of the surrounding architecture. Those waiting their turn were taken on a walk to see St. Augustine’s Cross which commemorates the Saint leaving Hardelot in 596 to sail to England to convert the English to Christianity. It was a large imposing Celtic cross set in woodland, having been moved from the seafront at the request of the aviator Bleriot, as its original position was considered a danger to his flying pursuits. There was a really strong wind blowing up the Channel and as we made our way back through the sand dunes and along the promenade the sand was whipped up to sting our faces, but the sea air was wonderful. Some Otfordians decided not to do either activity and explored the delights of Hardelot for themselves. A small jazz band was playing in the main street for the entertainment of pedestrians.

At 5 o’clock we all assembled in their Community Centre for tea and cakes. We had been asked to entertain them with a few English Folk Songs, hence our ‘practice’ in the Tunnel. Tony ably led us through ‘Early One Morning’, ‘On Ilkley Moor Bar T’at’, ‘Now is the Month of Maying’ and ‘Widdecombe Fair’. A copy of the music and words were left for those who may be interested in translating into French. All too soon it was time to board our coach for the return journey. We arrived safely back at the Pond at 9.20 p.m. having all enjoyed pleasant company and surroundings. The signing of the Charter in Otford will take place on **31st March 2012** watch the Parish Newsletter for details nearer the time.

A group from Neufchatel-Hardelot will be visiting Otford for a cup of tea and cake from about 4.30pm on **Saturday 22nd October**. Do speak to them if you see them.

A 15 yr old boy from Hardebdt is very keen to spend some time in Otford between **22nd October and 2nd November**, ideally with a family with a boy of a similar age, as a paying guest or on an exchange basis. He wants to improve his English, speaking and listening, so would consider other others. Please contact the Parish Office for further details.

**Hale Lane Recreation Ground**

On the morning of **Saturday 5th November**, there will be a community planting of trees, hedging and bulbs at this Recreation Ground. Please spare some time to come and help - all welcome especially children. The plans can be seen at the Parish Office.
Otford Library – Free Activity Hour
Otford Library will be holding a Free Activity and Craft Session for children on Saturday 15th October from 10am to 12 noon making masks, colouring, drawing, cutting and sticking. Please go along.

Otford Village Fete
The Annual General Meeting of the Fete Committee will be held on Thursday 6th October at 7.45pm (for 8pm) at the Methodist Church Hall. All residents of Otford are invited to attend.

Fellowship at St Bartholomew’s Church
We invite friends from other churches in the village to join us in St Bartholomew’s Church Centre on Wednesday 12th October between 2.30pm and 4.00pm. There will be a short talk when the new Headteacher of Otford Primary School Natasha Caisley will introduce herself followed by refreshments. We look forward to you joining us – you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Otford Methodist Church
Otford Methodist Church’s next Woman’s Breakfast is on Saturday 15th October when Fiona Castle (wife of the late Roy Castle) will be the guest speaker. The cost is £4 payable on the door. Please reserve your space by calling Margaret Matthews on 01959 522046 or emailing Sue Ward on johnandsueward@btinternet.com

Otford Society
The Otford Society’s Autumn meeting will be held on Thursday 20th October in the Otford Village Memorial Hall at 8pm. The speaker will be Roger Kasper the editor of the Sevenoaks Chronicle.

Gardeners’ Society
The final speaker of the year is Jan Wilson is a professional artist. She will give a talk on Tuesday 4th October entitled ‘The coloured pencil in Botanical Art’. The evening starts at 8pm in the OVMH; admission is £1 for non-members and the admission price includes refreshments.

Picture of the Month
The artist for September / October is Zoe Sands. Zoe decided to try watercolour painting about 10 years ago at Adult Education classes but unfortunately work and family life got in the way of doing any serious painting. She says ‘I thought that when I retired, five years ago, I would find more time to paint but travelling, gardening and catching up
with friends gets in the way. However joining the Otford Art Group and having weekly sessions does keep my brushes working’. Please contact Doug Dickerson on 01959 524183 if you would be interested in displaying your work in the Heritage Centre.

**Sevenoaks Embroiderers Guild**

The next meeting will take place on **Saturday 29th October** in the Otford Village Memorial Hall when there will be an All day Workshop entitled ‘Coiled Pots’ by Helen Deigham. 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. Otford Oast WI would like to invite you on **Thursday 20th October** between 9.30am and 1pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall to ‘A Morning of Mind, Body and Soul Therapy’

Go along and be pampered by an array of different therapists, browse and buy some beautiful gifts for friends or simply a special treat for you. Take time to chat, drink tea and sample some scrumptious homemade cakes. Entrance is £3 for non members and £1 to members, which includes a hot drink, a piece of cake and a free raffle ticket. There is a crèche available from 9.30am to 11.30am. The entrance fee does not include the cost of therapy sessions which you book on arrival.

**Otford Afternoon WI**

Meetings are held in the Otford Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. The next meetings will be on **11th October** with ‘Members memories’.

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.

**Otford Evening WI**

Although many members were on holiday at the August Meeting, the demonstration of handbell ringing proved a most enjoyable evening. All meetings take place on 2nd Thursday of each month in Otford Village Hall. Visitors are always very welcome. The next meeting will take place on **13th October** when one of the members Linda Dunning will be holding an Auction . For more information please call Eve Wiltshire on 01959 524887 or Joan Beacom on 01959 524304.

**Otford & District Historical Society**

The next meeting of the Winter programme will take place in Otford Village Memorial Hall on **Wednesday 19th October** at 8pm when Richard Filmer is going to talk about ‘Hops & Hop Picking’. 
The Hall will be open from 7.30pm for the payment of this year’s subscription. Membership is £6 a year and visitors are welcome at £2 per meeting.

**Shop Opening**

Our lovely shops need your support and will be opening again on **Sunday 27th November** between 11am and 4pm for the purchase of those special Christmas presents and enjoy some seasonal entertainment. They would be interested to hear from anyone who would be prepared to dress up for the day in either Victorian or Christmas themed costumes. More details in the next newsletter.

**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 **20th October**. The lectures start promptly at 1.45 pm and finish by 3 pm. The next meeting on **20th October** is a talk by Andrew Davies on ‘Roman London: A Discovery’. Why were the Romans here in Britain for nearly 400 years, what did they do for us and what was their legacy? The lecture will explore the Roman contribution including its defences, baths, roads, temples and living standards. Anyone interested in attending a lecture or joining the Society, please contact Alison Davis on 01732 780453 or email knoledfas@gmail.com

**Elands Veterinary Clinic**

Elands Veterinary Clinic are holding a talk on ‘Preventing Firework Fear’ at St Ediths Hall in Kemsing on **Thursday 6th October** starting at 7.30pm. Tea and cake will be provided so give Elands a call on 01732 452333 or 01732 761650 to book your place and get some useful information and tips from our vet and a nurse team on how you can help your pet through a stressful time. *Remember, Remember the 5th November is a scary time for your pets*

**Otford Methodist Wednesday Afternoons Women’s Fellowship**

Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings, which take place at 2.30pm in the new Church Hall. Phone Rosemary Cracknell on 01959 522325 for details

**October**

5th - AGM and Games afternoon
12th - Joint meeting at St Barts Church Centre
19th - War Time Memories - John Coomber
26th - Knole and the Sackvilles- Marcia King
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 Events

Quiz Night, Saturday 8 October in Otford Tea Rooms & Gift Shop
Take on another challenge with our Quiz Master! Supper is included.
7.00pm, £12 per ticket, contact wendy@hospicesofhope.co.uk | 01959 525110

Cameo Opera is back by popular demand!
An evening of exceptional entertainment by Cameo Opera and The Robert Reid Duo
Friday 14 October at The Royal Wells Hotel, Tunbridge Wells
7.30pm, £40 per ticket, black tie 2 course dinner, contact vanessa@hospicesofhope.co.uk | 07866 495628

Fashion Show, Friday 21 October at Christchurch, Tunbridge Wells
What more could a lady want? With a drink on arrival, the opportunity to shop, to sit back and enjoy a catwalk show and be pampered with mini beauty treatments from Aveda and Mary Kay Cosmetics.
7 - 10pm, £7 per ticket, treatments £5 each (pre booking and pre payment required)Tickets available from: wendy@hospicesofhope.co.uk | 01959 525110

Citizens Advice Bureau Surgery
The next CAB Surgeries will take place at School House between 10am and 12 noon on Tuesday 4th October and 1st November. No appointment necessary. To contact them at Sevenoaks please call 01732 454443.

Road Safety
The Highways Committee of Otford Parish Council would like to gather information / statistics on road traffic accidents in the village. If you become aware of any please can you report them to the parish office.

Planning
The following applications were considered by the Parish Council in September. 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/11/01668 Park Farm, High Street
Change of use of vacant agricultural buildings to equestrian use, associated parking and gates. (Retrospective) Amended consultation – information only
SE/11/1868 Park Farm, High Street

Construction of Sand School (amended application)
SE/11/02171 Clan Cottage Pilgrims Way East

Variation of condition 10 (The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans) of planning permission SE/10/00902/FUL, Demolition of existing cottage and erection of five bedroom house
SE/11/02316 Stradbrook, Shoreham Road

Erection of front extension to existing garage and first floor study, rear extension to living room
SE/11/02303 69 Knighton Road

Erection of a side bathroom extension
SE/11/02330 Land to front of Mayola, Station Road

Erection of two detached residential properties with garages
SE/11/2362 Park Farm, land adj to Park Farm Lodge, High Street

Variation of condition 6 of (SE/94/01978) – (The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed in the locality in agriculture as in forestry or a dependent of such a person residing with him or her or a widow or widower of such person). To (The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to the manager of the equestrian livery business at Park Farm or to a person solely or mainly employed or last employed in the locality in agriculture defined in s336 of the T&CP Act 1990, or in forestry or a dependent of such person residing with him or her, or a widow or widower of such person)

b. Results Received
SE/11/01474 Tennis Cts, Recreation Ground
To install floodlighting onto 3rd Tennis Ct Allowed
SE/11/01616 41 Tudor Drive
Erection of a two storey rear extension, demolition and erection of new detached garage. Replacement roof over existing porch, removal of both chimneys and new fenestration. Refused
SE/11/01673 The Bull PH, High Street
Externally illuminated pictorial sign (no4) Allowed
SE/11/01673 The Bull PH, High Street
Externally illuminated pictorial sign (no 1) Refused
SE/11/01674 The Bull PH, High Street
Remove old signs and install new (retrospective) Refused
SE/11/01691 42 Hillydeal Road
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a two storey five bedroom detached property with roof accommodation and partial basement, incorporating double garage. Allowed
SE/11/01708 36 High Street
Demolition of an existing conservatory and shed and erection of a two storey extension and conservatory to rear  Allowed

SE/11/01712 Pickmoss, 69 High Street
Insertion of window in east facing wall  Allowed

SE/11/01892 St Michael’s School
Details pursuant to condition 4 (demolition timetable) of planning permission  Allowed

SE/09/02972 Block 4 Vestry Industrial Estate
Recladding, alterations to both internal and external layout. New access path fencing and security gates together with 27 allocated parking bays and 2 disabled  Allowed

SE/10/03111 Greatness Quarry
Development of land – variation of condition 11 of planning permission SE/08/02141  Allowed

c. Notice of work to trees in a Conservation area
SE/11/02273 11 Bubblestone Road
Various works to trees
SE/11/02276 The Old Parsonage, 23 High Street
Remove 2 Sycamore Trees

c. Tree Preservation Order
HW/TPO/14/2011 The Old Parsonage, 23 High Street
2 Sycamore Trees

d. Appeal
SE/11/0092/FUL -APP/G2245/D/11/2159644 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.

Don’t forget the clocks go back on Sunday 30th October