

Otford Parish Council
May Newsletter 2017
No 262

Twinned with Neufchatel-Hardelot

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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). They can all be read via <http://www.otford.info/parishcouncil>. The next meetings will be on **8th May** and **12th June** at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Hall.

Chairman's Report

The Annual Meeting of the Electorate was held on 3rd April. Thank you to those few people who attended. Please see the Annual report below.

The Annual Report

Yet again, it has been another very busy year for councillors and the clerks, and as a result, this report will not be too dissimilar from last years.

The Council Agendas, Minutes and Newsletters are currently placed on the local Otford web-site "Otford.net" by Sharon and Sue, which is so ably managed by John Hubbard. I say currently, because we are soon to launch our own website that will be as interactive as we can make it.

The Helpline Directory is regularly updated by Sue. Hard copies of which can be obtained from the parish office.

Otford has long been well-served by volunteers; tonight, you will be able to speak to a selection of them around the hall and I would like to thank all of them for all their efforts and hard work in helping the community.

As you know, we are now twinned with Neufchatel-Hardelot and there have been several reciprocal visits between us. My thanks to Cllr Jane Lawrey for masterminding all the hard work involved in its organisation and implementation. A full report is available at the Twinning table following this meeting.

I will now give you a short précis of what your council does, what we have achieved and what we hope to achieve in the future. The Parish Plan (which is now 5yrs old) has been the driving force behind the majority of our projects, both long and short term. It

now needs updating, or replacing with the Neighbourhood Plan. (Volunteers please). The Neighbourhood Plan is a lot more formal than the PP, in that we "Otfordians" determine our future requirements on a range of topics including housing. It is a fairly long-term project which has to go out for public consultation at every stage and finally has to undergo formal inspection before it can be adopted by SDC. However, we are not allowed to say what we don't want, only what we would like to see in the future, or how we would like to maintain the status quo, so a revised Parish plan might be the easier option, although it doesn't carry as much weight as a Neighbourhood Plan. However, we do have a new Village Design Statement - thanks to Rod Shelton for 2yrs of compilation and iterations with SDC Policy.

I would like to mention that all of our meetings, not just the monthly council meetings, are open meetings and to the best of our ability and within the rules of council governance we do try to involve public participation - you are all welcome to attend, but as space in the Office meeting room is limited, please notify the clerk if you wish to do so. There are four committees that report to our monthly Parish Council meetings and I will briefly outline their roles and work carried out on your behalf.

Planning - chaired by Martin Whitehead



The Planning Committee meets on a bi-weekly basis on Wednesday mornings at 9.15 in the Parish Office. These meetings are open to all and I would encourage the applicants and objectors to attend. I would also encourage prospective applicants to consult with OPC prior to submitting their applications to SDC. The Committee members have wide ranging experience and knowledge of the village which enables the committee to reflect the best interests of the majority of residents, while maintaining compliance with the Village Design Statement and planning laws. Please note that we are only consultants on the applications, SDC make the decisions. During the last year we have reviewed 98 applications of which 73 have been decided. They covered developments from minor works, small and large extensions, through to new builds. Of those 73 decisions, the District Council have agreed with 75% of our recommendations.

Amenities - chaired by Jackie Howe



Amenities have continued with their H&S reviews, Fire Risks and general Risk Assessments of the office and other PC assets.

Overseen repairs and general maintenance to the Parish Office

Carried out repairs to several fences around Otford - at this point I would like to thank Brian Thomas and Norman Catt for their varied and invaluable help around the village. Some monthly newsletters are sent out by e-mail to reduce the cost of postage, mainly to those residents that live on excessively dangerous roads or Otfordians that have moved away from the village. Car Parking - the main car park continues to be well managed producing sufficient income for maintenance and future costs. Parking at Hale Lane recreation ground is regularly monitored. And

there is a watching brief on parking in Station Road. Road signage monitored resulting in cleaning, being cleared of overhanging foliage and improvement (request to Kent Highways to replace signs either side of the railway bridge in Pilgrims' Way West to include metric measurements). There has been extensive new signage on Pilgrims' Way East as a result of the fatality there - although that was in the parish of Kemsing. We have installed new Parish notice boards around the village. We notify KCC of Footpath hazards - and some resurfacing has recently taken place. We monitor traffic incidents both accidents and near misses - The office keeps a record of all incidents that we are informed of.

Potholes - we report and progress all potholes - although you can also do that yourself. We maintain the Otford Cemetery on the Sevenoaks Road and are planning extensions to the current footpaths. You might have noticed that 2hr Parking restrictions have recently been introduced in the Cemetery Car Park so as to prevent the all-day parking that had presented difficulties for those visiting the cemetery, attending funerals and dog walkers. The bus shelter at the bottom of Bubblestone Road was recently blown over by a storm and cannot be repaired. A replacement is being considered as is one for the top end of Willow Park. Let the Office have your thoughts. The proposed Cycle path between Otford and Sainsbury's is progressing and will hopefully be up and running later this year.

Recreation & Environment - Chaired by Mary Evans



The Recreation and Environment committee oversees the following areas:

The High Street Recreation Ground and play area, Hale Lane recreation ground and play area, Telston Park, the Chalkpit, the allotments, Oxenhill Woods, Palace Park Woods, the Cemetery, The Village Green and Pond, Palace Field and Palace Approach, and some of the planters around the village. Oxenhill Woods are situated at the bottom of Tudor Drive and in conjunction with Kemsing Parish Council, SDC and the Forestry Commission we look after this naturally regenerated woodland, which runs parallel to the railway line to Sevenoaks. If you haven't seen this area, it is well worth a visit in the summer when the land has dried out a little. The Woods have had considerable improvements during the course of the year, widening of some of the rides, and some of the very muddy paths have now had roadstone put down which has improved the areas substantially. Funding has been secured to add more benches and information boards, and we hope to encourage more visitors to this lovely area. The Otford Sports Association (and I would like to thank Kay Drake for her assistance as Secretary of the OSA) works with the Sports clubs to maintain the High Street Recreation ground, with further maintenance work being carried out by the Parish Council. The Parish Council along with the OSA and Sports Clubs has worked very hard on maintaining the Recreation Ground and keeping it looking so good throughout the year. However, we are still plagued by the thoughtless

action of some dog owners who allow don't clear up after their pets. Parish Councillors and the dog warden have held several poop scoop sessions over the last year, clearing the mess and marking it. We are working in conjunction with SDC to get some more dog bins to be placed in areas of the village where there is nothing at present. We shall be carrying out more spot checks this summer, so please can we urge you to clear up after your dog, it isn't pleasant for anybody who helps to maintain this green and otherwise beautiful area. Thank you to all the Parish Councillors and volunteers who helped with our Keep Britain Tidy efforts, it was much appreciated, but a shame that more volunteers did not turn out to help. Also, our thanks go to MacDonald's who help us by clearing litter from the cemetery and along the Sevenoaks Road. A new planter has been placed on the island by the Crown, and this along with others are planted up twice a year, and watered regularly by kind parishioners. The ash trees at the Cemetery have had to be felled due to Ash die back, there are plans to replace them soon. However, we can't do all the work ourselves and we are always looking for more volunteers who would be prepared to join working parties throughout the year. This may be planting of bulbs, trimming back the hedgerows on the footpaths or even litter-picking. If you would like to help, please leave your contact details with the Parish Office.

Finance - Chaired by John Edwards-Winsor



You will be glad to know that due to careful monitoring of expenditure this year we came in ahead of budget although some projects planned for last year have had to be moved to the current year. As mentioned before, the car park income is as predicted - estimated IRO £10K in the year - However, this is not all profit as it costs us £5k/yr in Business Rates and the remainder goes towards ongoing and future maintenance costs.

You might have noticed that the parish precept for the year to 31st March 2017 was not increased although the overall Council tax has been increased in line with inflation by SDC, KCC, the Fire services and the Police.

I must again mention Brian Thomas our Grounds Maintenance Supervisor and Cemetery Supervisor. He meets frequently with bereaved families at the cemetery, a task he handles with great sensitivity. He also inspects the playgrounds on a weekly basis and advises on the care of all our natural sites. It is down to Brian that the pond looks so good and of course he also looks after the ducks. So now as I close my report I really would like to thank the clerks for all their hard work and dedication, often under demanding conditions and constant interruptions. I would also like to thank all the councillors for their support. Their continuous "voluntary" work on behalf of Otford, most of which goes on in the background and is largely unheard and unseen, but without which the effects would soon be noticed. To plagiarise a speech from JFK - "Don't ask what does the Parish

Council do for me - instead, ask What can I do for the Parish Council". Finally - This will be my last report as Chairman as I will be standing down after 8 years to make way for new blood to lead the council.

Otford Village Fete - Monday 29th May - Gates open at 12noon



This year the fete will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the building of Otford's Tudor Palace.

There has been an Archbishop's Manor House or Palace at Otford since the early-ninth century, and over the long course of the Middle Ages, kings and queens had been entertained as guests of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Indeed, six Archbishops became saints, each of whom

lived and prayed here at Otford. Perhaps the most famous of the previous 56 was St Thomas à Becket whose martyrdom saw pilgrims pass through Otford on their journey to his shrine in Canterbury Cathedral.

Five hundred years ago, in the reign of King Henry VIII, the then Archbishop, William Warham, resolved to rebuild Otford Palace on a truly awe-inspiring scale. In its day, Otford Palace was larger than Hampton Court - as befitted the home of the senior cleric in the land. Such magnificence did not go unnoticed, and in 1537 King Henry VIII took the palace as his own.

However, by the end of the Tudor Period, its splendour had passed and due to Queen Elizabeth 1st refusal to spend money on repairs it faded from the national scene and we are left with the ruined fragments we see today. Now, at last, what was arguably the most colourful and important period of our history is receiving the attention it deserves.

As the Fete is all about Otford's magnificent Palace, once the home of Tudor Kings and Queens, we are running a fancy-dress competition with the theme 'Knights in Armour' and 'Princesses'. Please come dressed up using these two themes and the best dressed boy and girl will win a special prize.

Your Village Memorial Hall - Update on refurbishment plan

We are already researching funding opportunities for our next phase, which is the Main Hall, but these rely on us having raised a proportion of the project costs ourselves. Consequently, any contributions you can make will be very gratefully received. If you haven't yet donated and are able and willing to do so, please send your cheque to: The Treasurer, OVMH, 69, Knighton Road, TN14 5LE or by Bacs to OVMH, Sort Code 09 01 53 Account Number 84811701. Please email ovmh.treasurer@otford.net or write to The Treasurer with your name and address and amount donated as we are now able to claim Gift Aid on personal donations.



Otford United Reserves

Congratulations to the Otford United Reserves who became the Junior Sevenoaks Charity Cup Champions by beating Dowgate 2-1. The Senior side played in the Senior Cup Final but unfortunately lost 1-0 to Southborough. Well played both teams you 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.

Health in the Community

Another Health Event will be held at Otford Methodist Church Hall on **Saturday May 13th** from 10am to 1pm.

This time the Otford Patient Group has a double bill:-

Firstly Dr Eakins will take us through the multiple choices you face if you are ill or injured - do you go to the Pharmacy, to your GP, to the Minor Injuries Unit, A and E, or phone 111 or 999?

Then at 11.15am James Lang, a First Responder, will give us a chance to practice CPR (Cardiac and Pulmonary Resuscitation) and try out a Defibrillator. You could one day perhaps save some-one's life if you come along and learn how!

And a special ukelele band, the Sevenukes, will play you in from 10am.

For further details speak to Alastair Boobyer - 01959 522490.



Health Walk

Go along and try the Health Walk which starts from Otford Car Park every Monday at 10.30am. The walks last normally about an hour. The walks are free and are organised by Sevenoaks District Council. There is no need to book.

Otford Gardeners' Society



The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 2nd May** when Russel Bowes, Garden Historian will give a talk on the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. The admission price, which includes refreshments, has been held at £2 per person. Membership rates for the Society, remain at £5 for a single membership and £8 for a joint membership. Please contact Janet Finney on 523760, or email gardeners@otford.net for further details. Contact Janet Finney on 01959 523760 for

more details or e-mail gardeners@otford.net.



On Bank Holiday Monday, whatever the weather the Gardeners' will have a stall at the Fete selling ornamental and edible plants raised by members. Please go along and support them.

Otford Oast WI

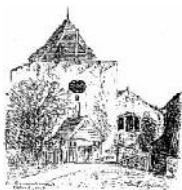
The next meeting will be on **Thursday 18th May** at 9.30am in Otford Village Memorial Hall when they will be holding their AGM, resolutions and some retail therapy. The first visit is free. For more details or if you wish to join please contact the Secretary Sharna Peyto on 07860 463656.

Otford Evening WI



The Annual Meeting of the Otford Evening WI will be held on **Thursday 11th May** at 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Otford Village Memorial Hall. They will also be holding a Silent Auction at the meeting so please go along and bring something that you no longer need which could be a bargain for someone else to buy. For more information or to join please contact our President on 01959 524831.

St Bartholomew's Church Fair



St Bartholomew's Church Fair will be taking place this year on the **VILLAGE GREEN** on **Saturday 17th June** from 2pm. Stalls will include: Books, Plants, Cakes, Crafts, White Elephant, raffle, unwanted gifts, bottles, toys, soft drinks, strawberries and cream and ices. Other attractions include children's games and a bouncy castle. There will be a children's art competition with the theme of 'Fairy Tales' There are two categories 7-11 and under 7 with good prizes. All village children are welcome to submit an entry. Contact Christeen Malan on 01959 522654.

Otford & District Historical Society



The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 17th May** at 8pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall (doors open at 7.30pm for tea and biscuits) when you can hear from Alan Williams about '*The life of Helen Thomas (widow of Edward Thomas) and 1920's Otford.*' Adult subscription is £10. No charge for under 16's and visitors are welcome at £3 per meeting.

1940's Society

The next meeting is on **Friday 19th May** at 8pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall when Carol Harris will talk about 'The Nation's Health in World War II' including

such questions as: What was the effect of rationing? What was shelter cough and how did it spread? What was the effect of poor sanitation in crowded shelters?

Otford Library Craft Mornings



There will be a craft mornings (10.00am-12.00pm) for children on Saturday 20th May, 17th June and 15th July. As usual all craft events are free but children must be accompanied by an adult. Please phone 03000 413131, asking to be put through to Otford library, to ensure a place or for more details.

Otford Library Storytime / Bounce & Rhyme



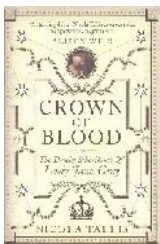
There is also a new (free) story time session for pre-schoolers on Tuesdays between 2.30-3.00pm. This is every Tuesday, term time only. The Baby bounce and rhyme time for pre-schoolers is on every Monday 11.00-11.30am throughout the year.

Otford Library Computer/ IT help



Volunteer assistance with IT problems is available in the Library on Mondays from 10am to 12 noon and Saturdays 10am to 12 noon. The Library has free public WiFi. When people join the Library they can bring their iPad/tablet or laptop, be able to connect to the internet and get help. If anyone is interested call the number above and ask to be put through to Otford Library or just pop in and ask to book a time with a volunteer.

Kemsing Library Author Talk



Kemsing library will be hosting a talk on Lady Jane Grey by Nicola Tallis on the evening on **Tuesday 23rd May** at 7pm.

Nicola is an up and coming popular historian and her new book 'Crown of Blood' is gaining excellent reviews. The book is innovative and well researched and has been endorsed by all major publications and historians alike, she is definitely a historian in the ascending. In this dramatic retelling of an often-misread tale, the author explores a range of evidence, never before used in a biography, to sweep away many myths and reveal the moving, human story of an extraordinarily intelligent, independent and courageous young woman.

Tickets are £4 and can be booked in advance at Kemsing, Otford and Sevenoaks Libraries. For more information please email jenny.carter2@kent.gov.uk or phone 03000 41 31 31 and ask for Kemsing Library.

Sevenoaks Embroiderer's Guild



The next meeting will take place on **Saturday 25th May** in Otford Village Memorial Hall when there will be an all-day workshop with Libby Smith on 'Kantha'. The meetings start at 10am and 2pm and end with tea and cakes at about 4pm. For further information please contact Sylvia Grafton on 01732 452117.

Kemsing Singers



The next concert by the Kemsing Singers will take place on **Saturday 20th May** at 7.30pm in St Edith Hall, Kemsing with the title 'Songs of Sea & River'. A sparkling programme including Stanford's Song of the sea with baritone Tom Wood, Captain Noah and his floating Zoo, an amusing jazz cantata, spirituals including Michael Row the Boat Ashore and Deep River and much more. Tickets are £8 and available from 01959 523752.

RSPB Sevenoaks Local Group



The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 4th May** at 7.45pm in Otford Village Memorial Hall when the group will hold its AGM followed by a talk by Brian Nobbs on 'Bears and Pelicans - a taste of Romania'. Plus wine & cheese. Group members £2.50, non-members £3.50. Telephone 01959 563530 for more details.

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. The next lecture is on **Thursday 18th May** when Hanne Sutcliffe will talk about 'The Splendid Silks from China: Embroideries, Costumes & Imperial Dragon Robes'

Heritage Centre artist May & June - Barbara Darby



Barbara says "I have lived with my husband in this lovely village for nearly sixty years and, have enjoyed filming most of the village events including Sir Patrick Moore and the Duke of Kent visits. Another hobby of mine is painting, using various mediums, the latest being acrylics and water colour pencils. I am fascinated by old cottages and we certainly have plenty of those in the village, most of which are now preserved onto canvas. When I took my granddaughter to London to see the 'Poppies at the Tower'. The London skyline so impressed me I spent many hours at home putting

them onto a large canvas. I am now looking for a few more Otford buildings to paint.

Calling for Volunteers



Local disability charity, Leonard Cheshire Disability at Chipstead Lake is calling on eager volunteers to support its work with disabled people.

Whether someone has just a few hours per week, or month, to spare, we would love to hear from you and are currently looking for volunteers who are seeking an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Roles could

include:

- Assisting in our day Centre
- Driving a minibus for a few hours a week
- Helping out in the garden
- Buddying
- Assisting at meal times

Chipstead Lake is situated off of Chevening Road, opposite the sailing club, and provides a range of activities and support to both our residents and day clients. For more information please contact the Service Manager, Kevin Parkes, or the Volunteer Coordinator, John Walters, on the following number 01732 459510. You can also email either on Kevin.Parkes@leonardcheshire.org or John.walters@leonardcheshire.org.

Hospices of Hope Events

May Gala Dinner

Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London, SW7 4LH

Thursday 18th May - 7pm for 7.45pm

Following on from the success of the Silver Gala dinner last year we are returning to the Millennium Gloucester Road for a fantastic evening of delicious food and excellent entertainment. £125 per person (10% discount for tables of 10) Dress Code: Black Tie & Evening Dresses

Ladies Lunch-Travels with my piano Carol Anne Wells

Clockhouse Suite Rowhill Grange Hotel, Wilmington Kent

Thursday 8th June

Time: 12:00pm arrival, 12:30pm lunch followed by guest Speaker Carol Anne Wells. Ticket: £29.00 per person to include an arrival drink, two course lunch with a glass of wine and coffee with mints

TRAVELS WITH MY PIANO is a one-woman show packed full of much loved and well known tunes. The stories are interspersed with songs and catchy tunes.

Ladies Lunch with Katherine Richards Design

Alexander House Hotel, East Grinstead

Monday 12th June

Time: 12:00 Ticket: £32.00 per person to include an arrival drink, two course luncheon with a glass of wine & coffee with mints

Join us for luxurious ladies lunch at Alexander House Hotel. Katherine will talk about her work and the ways in which we use colour in our homes.

Sunday 30th July

London - Surrey 100 miles cycle ride

We have 4 any places available for the Prudential Ride London 100 2017 the cycling challenge through the closed roads of London and the Surrey Hills. We ask you to raise a minimum sponsorship of £500 and a registration fee of £25.

Saturday 16th September Swim Serpentine

Swim Serpentine is a one-day open water swimming festival staged in the heart of London. Organised by London Marathon Events, the festival is held in and around the beautiful Serpentine in Hyde Park, the venue for the open water swimming competition at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Citizens Advice Sevenoaks - Otford Outreach



The surgery will take place on **Tuesday 2nd May** between 10am and 12 noon. Drop in appointments may be available on the day. For telephone advice or to book an appointment at the Otford outreach: ring 01732 440488 and leave a message at any time. For email advice: info@sevenoaks.cab.org.uk



Planning

The following applications have been considered by the Parish Council. 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/17/01017 **7 High Street**

Change of Windows

SE/17/00789 **Maunder's, St Michael's Drive**

Use of loft space to accommodate 3 bedrooms, 2 with en-suite

SE/17/00958 **75 Sidney Gardens**

Demolition of existing lean-to. Single storey rear extension with large metal sliding doors, rooflight and green roof. Formation of a front covered porch and

conversion of existing garage to living room, insertion of window to the north elevation side passageway to bedroom 2 and two new opening to the south elevation. Loft conversion incorporating rear and side dormers and two rooflights over to the front elevation.

SE/17/01021/22 McDonalds Restaurant, Old Otford Road

Installation of canopies over the COD units and installation of a new wall mounted 'Good Times' sign.

b. Results received

SE/16/03885 2 The Charne

Demolition of single storey side extension. Erection of a two storey side extension. *Allowed*

SE/17/00030 45 Sidney Gardens

Minor material amendment to SE/16/02905 for the construction of a summer house in the rear garden. In order to reduce the size *Allowed*

SE/17/00102 21 Knighton Road

Erection of a single storey rear extension and internal alterations *Allowed*

SE/17/00164 6 Tudor Drive

Erection of a first floor side extension and a single storey rear extension. A new ramped access to the side of property. Removal of chimney. Alterations to fenestration and internal alterations. Conversion of garage to room *Allowed*

SE/17/00210 30 Rye Lane

Removal of canopy. Erection of porch *Allowed*

SE/17/00234 Windy Ridge, Shoreham Road

Erection of single storey rear extensions. Demolition of single storey side extension. Erection of a single storey side extension. Erection of a single storey side infill extension. *Allowed*

SE/17/00257 11 Coombe Road

Erection of a single storey garage and replacement gates *Allowed*

SE/17/00389 13 The Old Walk

Demolition of existing sun room and kitchen. Conversion of double garage into habitable space. Ground floor extension *Allowed*

SE/17/00497 Merlins, 42, Hillydeal Road

Removal of existing loggia. Single storey rear extension *Allowed*

Rubbish and Garden Bags

Garden waste bags packs are available from the Parish Council office at £14.00 for 25. Rolls of black sacks at £1.50 and white sacks at 50p are also available. Please try and bring the right money.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for items for the June newsletter is Wednesday 17th May