
Ospringe Parish Council

The Parish Council meeting was held on Wednesday 4th January 2017 in the Church Rooms, Church of St Peter and St Paul, Ospringe. The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

Present: A Keel – Chairman
B Flynn – Vice Chairman
J Dean-Kimili
R Simmons
H Williams
S Wright
I Bowie – Clerk

Apologies: Cllr A Bowles
Cllr C Prescott
A Greason

001/17 Dispensations

Councillors B Flynn, A Greason and A Keel have been granted dispensation to deal with matters related to Champion Hall.

002/17 Public Participation

Mr Paul Cumberland expanded on his proposal previously submitted in writing to the Parish Council to create local jobs in Ospringe via wildlife tours with 10 log cabins for accommodation and a 2-3 bedroom manager lodge. Some concerns were raised regarding the proposal as presented. He has already been liaising with SBC over viability, and OPC suggested that Mr Cumberland seeks pre-application advice from SBC and, if he feels it is appropriate, to submit a planning application. Mr Cumberland was invited to bring any further information to the attention of the Parish Council.

003/17 Agenda for any other business

There was no other business

004/17 Signing of minutes

All were in agreement for the Chairman to sign the Minutes as a true record of the business transacted at the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th December 2016.

005/17 Matters Arising

Highway matters: Vicarage Lane drainage issue remains outstanding and Chairman has again been in touch with KCC drainage department but the lack of any response has been frustrating - Chairman is still awaiting a response to his last email (3rd November). Chairman to follow up regarding this and the other drainage issues..

Speed limits – No response from Guy Rollinson at Kent Police. Clerk to contact Kent Police, to establish who to contact to take this forward.

Lighting – Chairman and Cllr Williams will discuss with Ken Bonner which lights on the inventory are actually OPC responsibility as there seems to be a duplication concerning one or two lamps in Brogdale Road based on latest info from StreetLights.

Lorenden School visit – No update regarding traffic issues. Chairman to follow up.

Painter's Forstal BT phone box – Response from BT re phone box and no 999 calls made over the last 18 months. Clerk to continue follow up regarding proposal for removal.

Perry Court (Section 106 funding). Still no response from Cllr Bowles. To be followed up.

15/502982/ADV Syndale illuminated advertising. Still no response from Graham Thomas. To be followed up

006/17 Parish Councillor Vacancies

There are two parish councillor vacancies and the Chairman urged councillors to continue to encourage suitable applicants.

007/17 Parish Localism and Community Assets - Review

It was agreed to postpone this agenda item to the January 2017 meeting.

008/17 Planning

16/504755/FULL – Equestrian Centre Willow Farm, Hansletts Lane. Erection of three agricultural buildings comprising hay store, machinery and tractor, tool and workshop. Response agreed to SBC as follows:- Ospringe Parish council discussed this application at our meeting on the 4th January 2017. We have reviewed the additional information provided, and can confirm that this does not assuage our concerns. We maintain our objection to the application for the reasons we set out in our email dated 19 July.

Additionally we have noted the comments of SBC agricultural consultant Mr Richard Lloyd-Hughes on 30th November 2016, 'This business does largely rely, and it appears, on continuing "gentleman's agreements" over the farmland concerned. An issue of potential concern for the Council, therefore, is the extent of any risk as to the use of the buildings changing if, for example, the applicant were no longer able to secure sufficient annual licenses for making hay and baling straw to justify the building space. I wonder whether a specifically agriculturally-related use could be, and should be, effectively reserved by a condition or legal agreement?'

Ospringe Parish Council concur with this assessment of potential risk which accords with our concerns expressed earlier that neither the need or size of the proposed buildings is justified by the landholding within the applicant's ownership or under the gentleman's agreements. We would therefore request, if planning permission is to be granted, that an enforceable condition or legal agreement is imposed specifically restricting the buildings to agricultural use.

We would also make the point that although Mr Lloyd-Hughes assumes that agricultural use of Willow Farm has ceased, this does not accord with the information submitted in support of the application which confirms that buildings and facilities within the existing farmyard are used for agricultural purposes.

Applications Approved by Swale Borough Council

16/506403/FULL - Two Thatch Cottage, Water Lane Removal of rear thatched porch, erection of detached cloakroom and lobby with glazed link.

16/508067/FULL – Ospringe School. Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - application for crown lifting of 2 no Lime trees and pruning of 1 Lime tree back to the boundary.

16/507970/FULL – Lorenden School - Trees in Conservation Area Notification – application, Lime tree: to remove ivy & epicormics growth, tree can be pruned, reduce crown by approx. 5-7 meters. Wellingtonia: to remove the ivy from the crown of the tree, removing torn and hung up branches. Cedar: remove the large stub and various hanging branches.

16/507295/FULL – Sunnyholme Eastling Road – application for construction of master bedroom and ensuite in roof space with rear facing full height dormer and balcony. OPC noted that its concern of the overlooking of the neighbouring property had been addressed by SBC by way of condition.

16/507543/Full – Hillside, Well Lane – application for demolition of timber store to rear, erection of first floor rear extension with the creation of balcony to rear, insertion of external staircase, part loft conversion incorporating dormer window to front and erection of front porch, and changes to fenestration.

009/17 Finance

2017-18 Precept

DCLG have confirmed that they will not be subjecting local authorities and parish councils to referendum principles over precept-raising in 2017-18.

The Clerk circulated a note of the current status of bank accounts, reserves, and expenditure in the current year, with details of previous years' expenditure and other financial data. This formed the basis of the discussion on precept for the forthcoming financial year. In 2017-18 there are likely to be higher costs related to meetings, EDF energy for street lighting; grass cutting, and possible relocation or purchase of parish noticeboard. There is also phase II of the upgrading of footway lighting which will give provide in the long term energy cost savings as well as improved lighting. There may be expenditure needed on the playground. Advice from NALC also recommends having a training budget. Councillors noted that reserves are likely to be only modestly increased over last year's levels and are below those recommended by the internal auditor. Councillors also were cognizant of pending inflation, but also the financial means of some parishioners. All of this meant that the Parish Council should seek to make a balanced decision.

Accordingly it was resolved to increase the precept from £7,000 to £7,250 in 2017-18. This represents a 2.92% increase. It was noted that the actual increase in payment by each dwelling in the parish would only be very modest. The additional council tax for band D properties will be £26.05 compared to £25.31 in 2016/17, an increase of £0.74 for the whole year. The parish council has not lightly agreed the increase and will continue to look critically at expenditure to see where savings might be made.

Chairman provided Councillors with new authorised signatory bank mandate forms that are to be completed and taken in person to Nat West Bank with the relevant ID, to enable the bank mandate to be brought up to date. Cllrs to progress.

Current Account payments

Chq No 1263	Ospringe Parish Church – room hire 4/01/17	£20.00
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Internal Auditor – Clark has contacted Lionel Robbins as the OPC internal auditor. Meeting to be arranged.

010/17 Correspondence

1. KALC Kent Minerals and waste Sites Plans- Call for Sites. Noted. No sites in OPC
2. Swale Enforcement email from Jeff Tutt – Clerk to follow up
3. Tree planting in your area. Noted
4. Mummery Court street light.
5. KALC Training and Development Policy/Plan and Training Budget. Noted. Discuss at February meeting
6. New Word Press Website. Noted Chairman and Cllr Flynn to progress
7. Country Eye App. Noted. Cllr Williams to review and report.
8. NALC no extension of referendum principles. Noted.
9. NALC Bulletin on national developments and meetings. Noted.
10. Membership renewal at KALC. Noted
11. KALC Parish News. Noted
12. KALC Communications and Media Conference 19th Jan 2017. Noted.
13. Andrew Bowles County report for November and December. Noted. Deadline 4th February if OPC wish to apply for funds.
14. NALC revised Legal Topic Notes [1) Policing in your area. 2) Trespass to Land and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. 3) Adverse Possession Claims. Noted. Handed to Chairman.

011/17 Dates for meetings 2017/18

The Clerk circulated a list of suggested dates and the parish council agreed to these dates.

1st February 2017

8th March 2017

5th April 2017

10th May 2017

7th June 2017

19th July 2017

7th September 2017 (Thursday)

11th October 2017

8th November 2017

6th December 2017

3rd January 2018

012/17 Members' reports

There were no Members' reports.

013/17 Any other business

Transparency Fund Grant Application.

The Clerk spoke regarding the Transparency Fund that is available to assist Parish Councils in meeting their obligations regarding the audit requirements. Councillors agreed that an application should be submitted to the KALC. Clerk to progress

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Next meeting: Wednesday 1st February 2017 at 7.30 pm