

OFFTON and WILLISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2017 in the Village Hall

Present	Cllr K Earl (Chairman) Cllr M Bolton Cllr I Gilson Cllr S Warnes O Holtom (Clerk)	Cllr A Rumsey Cllr M Ratcliffe Cllr A Cox Cllr C Pinson Roxburgh District Cllr A Killett
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Invited Speakers

District Councillor	Anne Killett
Offton & Willisham Church	Rev Daniel Harrison
Community First Responders Group	Mark Holtom
Neighbourhood Watch for Offton	Kelvin Moody
Neighbourhood Watch for Willisham	Chris Storey
Offton Recorder	Silke Pinson Roxburgh
Willisham Recorder	Diane Hill
Village Hall Committee Chairman	Colin Pinson Roxburgh

Public present: Mrs S Bolton, Mr L Spurling.

1	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> Cllr D Parks, K Moody, Rev D Harrison, C Storey, S Pinson Roxburgh, D Hill.</p>
2	<p><u>Minutes of previous meeting 16th May 2016 to be agreed</u> - agreed and signed by chairman</p>
3	<p><u>Matters arising from 2016 minutes</u> - none</p>
4	<p><u>Chairman's Annual Report</u> The Chairman K Earl started his report by thanking Parish councillors, Parish clerk and County Councillor Julia Truelove for their work and support they had given him over the past year. The Chairman reported our progress with a number of activities and projects such as the affordable housing project, dealing with speeding problems in our parish, annual litter picking in Willisham, the Queen's 90th Birthday celebration, opening a new play area, etc. The Chairman praised Janet Crickmore and her team for their hard work in arranging an excellent Christmas party for the over sixties. The full report is attached.</p>
5	<p><u>District Councillor's Annual Report, Anne Killett</u> District Councillor Anne Killett reported about a new 2017/2018 Budget, the situation with planning applications in Mid Suffolk District and our parish particular, the developments for social housing in the District, grants distributions for community groups, progress with the Enterprise Park in Stowmarket and the new Waste and Leisure facilities. The full report attached.</p>
6	<p><u>Offton and Willisham Church report</u> – not provided</p>
7	<p><u>Community First Responders Group for Offton, Willisham and Somersham</u> Community First Responder Group co-ordinator Mr M Holtom reported that the group was now acting for about 2 years. Currently there are 3 CFRs and 2 medical equipment kits. Two CFRs are from Somersham, one – from Offton and none – from Willisham. The group is very grateful to the County Councillor Julia Truelove and the two local businesses for their financial support in an acquisition of the second medical kit. Since the start of this year it allows the group to be on duty 784 hours attending 9 call outs. Most calls were none-life threatening. There were four heart attack calls from which three patients survived. The full report is attached.</p>
8	<p><u>Neighbourhood Watch report for Offton by Kelvin Moody</u> – read by Chairman K Earl Since recently agreeing to take over this position, there hasn't been a great deal to report on.</p>

	Some alerts were posted on our notice board. The full report is attached.
9	<u>Neighbourhood Watch report for Willisham by Chris Storey</u> – read by Chairman K Earl There were not much crime activities apart of general alerts. The full report is attached.
10	<u>Affordable Housing project update</u> Cllr Bolton outlined in his report the developments in regard to this project. The council had five possible sites for consideration which now reduced to just two: at Castle Lane South and south of the Limeburners on the Ipswich Road. The progress is very slow and currently our preferred Affordable Housing Partner Hastoe is awaiting conclusions about these two sites from architects and SCC Highways department. The full report is attached.
11	<u>Claydon High School Report from the Head teacher Sarah Skinner</u> Written report was read by the Chairman K Earl – the report was submitted to us as our community is in the catchment area for the school. The report outlined the successful results for the students and the events carried out during the last year. If anyone would like a tour of the school, it could be booked into one of the monthly Open Mornings. The full report is attached.
12	<u>Village Recorders Report – Silke Pinson Roxburgh for Offton</u> Written report was read by the Chairman K Earl- the report commenced that the highlight of the year was the opening of the play area next to the village hall. Another significant event was a week of Art, Drama and Film. Village Hall was hosting various events during the year 2016: bowls, Gardening and Canasta Clubs, Cabaret, Country & Western and other. Several raising funds events were organised for the Offton church. She concluded her report with a thank you to the Parish Council for their support. The full report is attached. <u>Village Recorders Report –Diane Hill for Willisham</u> Written report was read by the Chairman - Many events were held in the village this year including coffee mornings and the “Lunch in the Garden” at Foxgloves to raise funds for the Willisham church, the annual walk on 7th May, the “Willisham Big Lunch” at North Acres on 5 th June and fundraising coffee morning at Foxgloves on 28 th November. The full report is attached.
13	<u>Village Hall Annual Report from the Charman Colin Pinson Roxburgh</u> The Charman Colin Pinson Roxburgh reported about the great success with the new play area installed this year. The hall usage is steadily increasing with a mix of private hirings and events organised by the committee. The committee is grateful to all volunteers for their help but more help required to maintain the play area as well as more plants needed for the landscaping. He concluded his report with a thank you to the Parish Council for their financial support and to the committee members for their diligence and dedication. The full report is attached.
14	<u>Parishioners’ questions</u> Some queries were raised about the recycling regime in the area, speeding issues on the road next to the play area, a limitation of the current capacity of Offton sewage system in the light of a possible new housing development, the lack of cooperation between organisations closing roads for consecutive repairs and the manners of road closures. The councillors expressed their concerns about the apathy of the parishioners to participate in our Annual meeting as only two members of the public attended out of 550 on the voting register.
	The meeting concluded at 8:40pm



Chairman's Report for Annual Parish Meeting on 15th May 2017.

As usual I would like to thank all Parish Councillors and Julia Truelove our Suffolk County Councillor for their support throughout the year. David Card was elected as our District Councillor in May 2015 but resigned in June 2016 and Anne Killett was subsequently elected to represent us. I must also thank Olga Holtom our Clerk who does an excellent job for me and the Parish Council making sure everything runs smoothly. Throughout the year your Council meets regularly to ensure that matters are attended to. The Affordable Housing project is something the Parish Council is working hard to bring in as it was found to be a requirement through the village plan and housing needs survey carried out in the two villages, Councillor Bolton will report on this later. The speeding problem at the junction of Wallow Lane onto the B1078 has also been looked at by meetings held with County Councillor Julia Truelove and we are waiting for SCC to make a final decision on this. A meeting was also held with SCC Highways about the junction of Castle Road and Bildeston Road in Offton and what could be done about the speeding there but no money was available for improvements. A team from Willisham again carried out their annual Litter Pick which resulted in many bags of litter being collected. Last Year 2016 was the Queen's 90th Birthday and to celebrate the occasion Offton combined this with their Village Fete at the Offton Church and Willisham with the Big Lunch held in North Acres. In July the Village Play area was opened, a good crowd of people attended and the children enjoyed the play equipment. I would like to thank the Village Hall Management Committee for all their hard work in bringing this together and also of course for running and maintaining this wonderful facility we have here, The Hall itself. In September Revd Daniel Harrison arrived as Priest in Charge of South Bosmere which includes the parishes of Offton and Willisham and I would like to wish him a long and happy time in our Parishes. In December we held our annual Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch here in the Village Hall which was almost packed to capacity and my thanks go to Janet Crickmore and her team for arranging this superb event again. I am pleased to report we will be purchasing the redundant BT telephone box in Willisham to relocate the defibrillator into from Willisham Hall which many residents considered was rather "out of the way". On a personal note I would like to advise you I will be representing the Parish Council at the Queen's Garden Party in May and thank the Parish Council for putting my name forward for selection to this prestigious occasion.

Mid Suffolk District Councillor's Annual Report May 2017

For Annual Meeting of the Parish, Offton and Willisham

Finance and Organisation

The Council has set a balanced budget for the next year and there has been a rise in Council Tax. A new Financial Strategy has now been set up; this involved borrowing up to £25M to invest for profit, through establishing an incorporated company structure for investment in commercial property. Government grants to councils are likely to be phased out in the next financial year or two, with Council able to retain 100% of local business rates as an alternative. The Council has decided to move the headquarters to Endeavour House in Ipswich and there will be a customer contact centre in Stowmarket. The Council has also decided to change to the Cabinet model of governance from May 2017.

Regionally, some Norfolk councils voted in the autumn of 2016 to reject the Suffolk and Norfolk Devolution Deal that went to public consultation in July/August 2016. Councils in Suffolk agreed to keep working on a possible 'Suffolk plus' deal, but there will be two changes of government since the Councils first began work with the then Local communities' secretary, and possible resulting change of emphasis from central government.

Planning

There were 8 planning applications submitted for Offton and 4 for Willisham over the year 2016/2017. Of these, 1, in Offton, was refused. The first Neighbourhood Plan in the District has been adopted for Mendlesham and many more communities are now working towards their own neighbourhood plans. Mid Suffolk District Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply for housing, with implications for the weight able to be attached to the Local Plan in determining planning applications. There was a second call for sites, in the summer of 2016/7, and those put forward are being reviewed. Parish and town councils were notified in early April 2017 about those sites put forward, of which there appear to be 2 in Offton and 2 in Willisham. These are not allocations, but have been drawn to the attention of MSDC for possible inclusion in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. MSDC and BDC are developing a Joint Local Plan, the work of site assessment is ongoing and will be completed in time for the publication of the consultation draft of the Local Plan (expected this summer).

Housing

14 of the new council homes for the District are now completed and in the hands of the occupiers and a DCLG grant has been secured to promote community led housing and kick start the delivery of more new affordable homes. 23 houses have been purchased in Mid Suffolk to help address the loss of council homes through the right to buy scheme. Many of the empty homes across the district have been brought back into occupation and the financial inclusion project has helped many tenants claim increased benefits and averted some evictions. The income gained from the Solar PV panels installed on council properties is up 70% on last year and the project has reduced CO₂ emissions by 3.7 million tonnes since 2014.

Enterprise

An enterprise park has been established in Stowmarket, which could attract several new businesses and up to 1000 new jobs. A number of initiatives are making good progress to encourage businesses in the area – Open for Business and Food Enterprise Zones as well as projects encouraging schools and businesses to work together to engage young people.

Communities

Over £300,000 in grants has been awarded to community groups across the district and represents about 12% of the total cost of the projects involved. The Countryside and Public Realm services are currently under review

Waste and Leisure

20 tonnes of glass is being collected for recycling each month and there is a 6.5% increase in the business waste service. A new leisure facilities strategy is currently being developed.

Anne Killett

Mid Suffolk District Councillor – Barking and Somersham Ward, anne.killett@midsuffolk.gov.uk,
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Community First Responders Group for Offton, Willisham and Somersham

Report for the Annual Parish meeting on 15/05/2017 by Group Co-ordinator Mark Holtom

Dates	Hours on duty		Callouts		
	MH	JC			
09 January 2017	0	0	0		
16 January 2017	13	18	31	1	Fainted
23 January 2017	15	24	39		
30 January 2017	61	71	132	2	Heart attack, chest pains
06 February 2017	7	20	27		
13 February 2017	31	31	62		
20 February 2017	35	18	53	1	UTI
27 February 2017	5	1	6	1	Stroke?
06 March 2017	26	0	26	2	Heart attack & fainted
13 March 2017	0	0	0		
20 March 2017	0	0	0		
27 March 2017	7	32	39		
03 April 2017	18	107	125		
10 April 2017	56	6	62	1	COPD
17 April 2017	10	25	35		
24 April 2017	47	0	47		
01 May 2017	24	18	42		
08 May 2017	11	40	51	1	Stroke
15 May 2017	7	0	7		
	373	411	784	9	

1. New equipment. A second kit has been purchased with help and support from local businesses and a grant from Cllr Julia Truelove
2. Since the 2nd kit has been purchased, the hours coverage has increased from 25 to about 50 hours per week.
3. Since 9/1 CFRs have been on duty 784 hours and attended 9 call outs.
4. Since 8th May we have had a new CFR join the group in Somersham.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH FOR OFFTON

Report by Mr Kelvin Moody

Since agreeing to take over the position of Neighbourhood Watch coordinator, there hasn't been a great deal to report on, I signed up to get e mail alerts from the Suffolk constabulary, which come through at regular intervals.

Reading the alerts it appears that rural crime either isn't reported or is actually very low, I posted one alert on the notice board that I thought was applicable to residents of Offton, that being about a rogue group of traders operating in the area. A lot of the alerts have been to advise of missing persons and subsequent finding. I have been made aware of one vehicle break in and the theft of some tools locally although this was some weeks ago and I only found out last week. The victim wished to remain anonymous.

Most reported crimes that I get advice about is reference credit card frauds which obviously isn't area specific but a plague for all.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH FOR WILLISHAM

Report by Mr Chris Storey

I have little information to assist on the neighbourhood watch as other than monitoring the Suffolk Police messages for any information that might be relevant and providing a contact for local people to ring, if they have any concerns about contacting the police first, there has been no activity. Unless crime rates increase and become a matter of concern I do not expect this to be any different in the coming year.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 15 MAY 2017

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT UPDATE

At this Annual Parish Meeting last year, I concluded by saying that Hastoes, our preferred Affordable Housing partner, and MSDC Planning Dept had just about exhausted all possible options in Willisham for a small AH development of six housing units, as appropriate land was not available for purchase. Their attention would soon turn to possible sites in Offton. This in fact has occurred.

The Parish Council had identified five possible sites for consideration. This list has been reduced to just two possible locations by Hastoes/MSDC but progress is painfully slow. Locations at Castle Lane South and south of the Limeburners on the Ipswich Road are being considered by Hastoes in partnership with their architects and SCC Highways Dept. The latter two agencies will report their considered opinions before Hastoes take any action to find out if the land owners will consider selling any land for an AH project. We are all waiting for their reports to Hastoes.

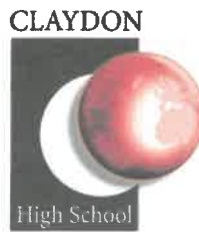
Last Wednesday 10 May I received the following message from the Senior Development Officer at Hastoes:

'By way of an update we are looking at Site 7 (Limeburners) and Site 8 (Castle Lane). In my last update I mentioned that the architect had fed back to me that the access for Castle Lane was preferable to the Limeburners site. I have asked for that to be clarified by Highways as you had expressed some concern that they may have got the sites the wrong way round. I know the Limeburners site is the Parish Councils' preferred site and I am still hopeful we can get Highways on side. I am trying to get a meeting arranged with the architect asap so we can finalise the most deliverable site. I appreciate how frustrating this part is as it always takes far longer than we would hope, but it is important that we get it right at the start to avoid any expensive issues at a later date.'

I have since spoken to Hastoes to press the PC's position, and the architects have asked for block drawing from Hastoes for the two sites which has been done. The architects have not visited the sites but taken their information from Google maps etc, and are not aware of the development at the old chicken shed site which has improved site visibility along Ipswich Road. As at today, the architects are supposed to be in discussions with Highways Dept, and we are waiting to hear the results of this.

Just for those who may be new to this ongoing program, a need for some AH was identified in a Local Housing Needs Survey undertaken in March 2014 on our behalf by Community Action Suffolk. Their report showed that 87.5% of respondents were in favour of an AH scheme for people with a local connection to the two villages. 330 survey forms were issued to all parishioners' homes and groups in Offton and Willisham, and 33% were returned (a similar return rate to a General Election!). Everyone in the two villages had a chance to state their views, and the Parish Council is acting on their wishes. If we can get a suitable site, accepted through the planning process, there should be just six small bungalow type units of 1 or 2 bedrooms. These homes will be for the exclusive use of people with local connections to Offton or Willisham, for ever. It will come nowhere near meeting the need of all people that have been identified by MSDC housing officers as having a local connection, but such a Rural Exception Site will never do that. This is not to be confused with the government's new push for thousands of affordable houses across the country. That is an entirely different type of scheme.

That concludes my update. Any questions?



PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

MARCH 2017

Students and staff were rewarded for their hard work and commitment with another great set of GCSE results last summer. Of the 148 pupils at Claydon High School, 70% of students achieved A*-C in both English and Maths. Students in Chemistry, Physics and Further Maths recorded a fantastic 100% A*-C success rate with top results in other subjects including: Biology 97%, English Language 85%, Spanish 85%, Business Studies 82%, Drama 81%, R.E. 80%, P.E. 80%, Media Studies 77% and Maths 75%. We are determined that our students are given every opportunity to be the best that they can be and they certainly excelled themselves. Students should all be very proud of what they have achieved, in terms of both academic success and the contribution they have made to school life over the past five years.

Once again, I am delighted to be able to offer opportunities for trips abroad and this year we have had three excursions. A group of Year 10 and 11 Spanish and Art students travelled to Barcelona in mid-October for four days; In December, students from across all year groups travelled to France, visiting the Christmas market in Lille; and during the February half-term holiday, a group of students travelled to Austria for our bi-annual ski trip. These trips give students an invaluable chance to broaden their knowledge of the world, practise their language skills and absorb the diversity, culture and architecture of these fantastic cities and towns.

We regularly invite authors, poets and speakers to the school to give presentations and hold workshops for different year groups. These visits prove to be extremely rewarding for all involved and are a great way to inspire and enthuse students about reading and writing. So far this year we have welcomed poet Luke Wright, author Cathy Cassidy, TV presenter and Journalist Bill Turnbull and local Lawyer and advocate to the Supreme Court, Mr Skippen.

Our annual WOW Week took place at the end of October. This involved three days of specially designed activities for each year group. Year 7 camped at Mersea Outdoor Centre, taking part in various team-building activities such as orienteering and rocket building. Years 8-10 participated in a Media based enterprise challenge, focused on creating an entrepreneurial spirit, developing leadership skills and accelerating employability skills. Year 11 students spent a day at a college, sixth form or university of their choice and worked with the YMCA on activities in school, finishing the week with a trip to Trinity Park for the Suffolk Skills Show.

Following on from WOW week, in December, Year 11 students took part in a 'Learning about Work Day'. Employers from local businesses came into school to act as business mentors and to work with small groups of students for the day, looking at CV and application form writing, conducting mock interviews and teaching them about employer expectations when applying for jobs. With only a few weeks to go, Year 11 continue to prepare for their exams and last half-term 140 students travelled to the Outdoor Centre in East Mersea, Essex to take part in an intense GCSE Bootcamp. This overnight event was a chance for Year 11 students to get together to learn vital revision strategies to take away with them as well as taking part in structured Maths and English revision within a classroom setting and enjoying some outdoor challenges.

We have had a very musical year so far with families, friends, governors, teachers and students enjoying a fantastic Christmas concert, featuring over 20 separate performances, involving more than 70 students across all year groups. There were string, brass, guitar, ukulele and woodwind

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ensembles as well as solo instrumental performances, choral pieces, rock band numbers and the inimitable staff choir! On 7th February a group of students were joined by local singer songwriter, Connor Ryan Adams and a team from I.E.M. (Industry Education in Music) to take part in a 'Battle of the Bands' music workshop and concert. Students from across all year groups split into groups to form nine separate 'bands' and spent the day composing original pop music from scratch. On 7th March, a talented group of 36 students performed in the Celebration of Schools' Music concert, held at the world famous concert hall at Snape Maltings. Finally, Year 10 GCSE students gave a Music Recital to friends and family in preparation for their exam. All our students have worked fantastically hard to give amazing performances. As I write this, auditions are imminent for our forthcoming 'Claydon Spotlights' show in July, featuring music, singing, drama and dance.

On 16th March, our school reporters from Years 7-10 were joined by guest visitors from NCS (National Citizens Service), Future Female Society, Volunteering Matters and The Teapot Project for the annual BBC School Report Day. This year took on the theme of Mental Health and Wellbeing with our own focus on 'making a difference in your local community'. Four lucky students joined Mark Murphy to co-host and produce BBC Radio Suffolk's breakfast show. Not only did they record a pre prepared interview with Stephen Skeet of Volunteering Matters, they read the weather, interviewed Dr Daniel Poulter MP live on air and then contributed to a live phone-in discussion with only a few minutes notice.

The PE department has had a successful year with some great sporting achievements in cross-country, table tennis and athletics. Year 11 GCSE students had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills when they ran a successful Year 6 Sports Morning for over 120 students from our feeder primary schools. A range of activities were on offer, including table tennis, badminton and fitness and rowing challenges. We have just held our annual Fun Run and look forward to Sports Day and our 'Sports Personality of the Year' awards evening in July.

In other areas of the school - Year 11 Business Studies students visited Colchester Zoo. GCSE Geography students travelled to Felixstowe to investigate the role of hard engineering in protecting our coastline. Art and Textile students visited The Knitting and Stitching show at Alexandra Palace in London. Year 10 and 11 GCSE Art students visited the Tate Modern in London. Year 8 and 10 students visited the renowned Design Museum in Kensington, London. A Maths team took part in the regional finals of the UK Team Maths Challenge at Framlingham College and our Science department held a week long timetable of activities and events to commemorate British Science Week.

We look forward to welcoming Year 6 students to the school in the summer term to take part in transition events designed to prepare them for when they start with us in September. Should you know of anyone moving into our catchment area please do let them know that we have a few places remaining.

We also have some lovely celebratory events planned, including a praise assembly and community tea party.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff, governors and the PTA for their continued hard work and to parents/carers for their ongoing support. If anyone would like a tour of the school, please feel free to book into one of our monthly Open Mornings – I would be delighted to meet you.

Sarah Skinner
Headteacher

Offton Village Report for the Year 2016

The highlight in Offton's year was probably the opening of the play area next to the village hall. The contractors started placing the equipment in the spring and once the grass seeds had sufficient coverage it was safe to open the grounds. It was, of course, very tempting to start using it before then, after all, the equipment was all ready to be used. But it was on the 16th July that all the children and various people involved in the project were invited to the grand opening. It was a lovely day and once the speeches had finished the children flooded in to make good use of the play area. There is also some equipment outside the children's area designed for adult fitness training.

Present were our MP Dan Poulter, County Councillor Julia Truelove, District councillor Anne Killett, a representative from Fenland Leisure who had provided the equipment, and other donors. A large portion of the funding came from Viridor, supported by Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council. It was through hard bargaining and laborious form filling by James Crickmore of the village hall committee and a belief in the project that it was possible to have this valuable outdoor facility in the village. And the constant use ever since the opening proves the need for such a facility, even in a small village such as ours.

Another event which brought the local community together was a week of Art, Drama, and Film. Most activities happened at the village hall, i.e. a drumming workshop, a painting taster class and art exhibition, as well as a talk on Danish art history. There were special films, but also a social evening with guitar music in Paul and Diane Hill's garden in Willisham.

In the council elections in May a new District Councillor was voted in due to the resignation of David Card (Conservative) prior to that. The new councillor is Anne Killett for the Green Party, who lives in Offton.

Also affecting everyone, of course, was the result of the referendum held on June, the 23rd 2016 where the question was asked if Britain should leave the EU or not. 52% of people chose to leave the EU.

In July this year work started at the former chicken rearing building at The Maltings on the Somersham Road. The roadside hedge was taken out in readiness for building work to the barn. The owners have planning permission to convert the former chicken rearing barn into a domestic dwelling, provided the outside appearance is preserved. Since September much work has been carried out on the land and so far the roof has been strengthened, but work is still in progress. This is a welcome development in the village as this building has been derelict for many years.

Since 2014, when our vicar Bernard Rose retired, the church was in an interregnum, but since September we have a new priest. It is Reverend David Daniel Harrison.

The village fete in the churchyard was again the major fundraiser for the church fabric, but was much affected by rain this year.

However, a great success was a talk by John Minns in the church in August. He had invited many of his friends and acquaintances and he incorporated stories around these friends into his talk. This raised another £600+ for the church.

The Offton bell ringers are hoping to raise enough money to fund a replacement for the No. 6 bell which was cast in 1470. This will cost more than £10,000. The hope is that the old bell will be used to strike hourly run by an electronic device. Unfortunately all the funding has to come through grants and public funding, as the diocese is not prepared to help with items not classed as fabric of the church.

The village hall is certainly used frequently: monthly by the gardening club, the Canasta club, and the coffee mornings, and twice weekly by the carpet bowls club. The committee also runs film evenings, usually 2 per month. Additionally fundraising events are held, such as Country & Western and a Cabaret event.

Phyllis Skelton, of Derrick Hill, Willisham, died 2 February 2016 and was buried in Willisham churchyard.

Betty Blunt, born in Offton, was buried 23 May 2016

Raymond Pinson-Roxburgh of Offton was buried at Offton on 7 June 2016

Christopher Morphew, of Castle Cottages, Offton died 30 November 2016

This concludes my report.

Once again I would like to thank the Parish Council for their financial support and their interest in the village recorders scheme.

Silke Pinson-Roxburgh
Offton Village Recorder

WILLISHAM RECORDERS REPORT 2016

January

It is great sadness that we learned of the death of Phyllis (Eileen) Skelton of Soots Cottage, Derrick Hill. Phyllis was our oldest church member and passed away on 30th January. Phyllis belied her ninety two years; she was lively and interesting, utterly reliable and had a great, some would say wicked, sense of humour. Above all, Phyllis was an inspiration to us and we shall miss her very much. Our love and prayers to Laird, her devoted husband and 'partner in crime', and to their family.

Quick look back to December to report that Jean and Jessie's coffee morning at Foxgloves raised a record £312. Thanks to them for all their hard work.

April

Church AGM takes place on April 7th

May

Annual "Willisham Walk" took place led by Richard Cage and Richard Last on the 7th. £185 raised for church funds, lovely evening walk with stunning views, one of the best yet.

Back by popular demand Gina Silburn will be appearing at the village hall in a James Bond themed evening on the 14th

Coffee morning at Foxgloves 21 May raised £264 for church

June

Martyn and Bev Hockley organised the "Willisham Big Lunch" at North Acres on the 5th, which was attended by many residents.

The brainchild of Jean Hardman and the first of its kind for us, a week long "Arts Festival" was held at various venues including the village hall. This consisted of various events including, Drumming, art exhibition, painting classes, music and poetry etc. A great success all round, who knew there were so many talented people amongst us!

July

Willisham and Offton village hall committee reports that they have been very busy this year and many things have achieved such as: new car park and footpath lights and changes to the interior with a new bar, new storage sheds. New childrens play round is due to open on the 16th July.

Opening of the new play area was eagerly awaited, the day came and it was a glorious summer afternoon and well attended. Our MP Dan Poulter attended and gave a small speech, he also congratulated committee member James Crickmore for all his hard work. It soon became obvious that this new play area was very popular with the children and has been used every day since.



August

Lunch in the Garden at Foxgloves! On the 21st. Time for us to sit down and eat lunch together for a good old gossip and catch up in the beautiful surroundings in Jean and Jessie's garden. In aid of church funds. The lunch went very well £375 raised for church. A fabulous cake made by Karen Perridge was raffled off and the lucky recipient (yours truly) was very happy!

September

The licensing of our new priest in charge of the eight parishes. Rev. Daniel Harrison, took place at Barking on 5th of Sep, we wish him well.

October

After being "vicarless" for so long it was good to meet our new vicar Dan at the harvest festival in Willisham. Produce went to the lighthouse foundation.

O&W parish council report the proposed removal of the pay phone in Willisham, lack of use being the reason. There will be a 90 day consultation period.

November

December

Coffee morning at foxgloves on 3rd.

Christmas lunch for the elderly residents of O&W also held on 3rd

Chairmans Report 2017 Offton & Willisham Village Hall

This year has seen a lot of activity with the play area used throughout the seasons and being a greater success than we could ever have hoped for.

The Hall usage is steadily increasing with a mix of private hirings and events organised by the committee.

An art group has started with a tutor advising both beginners and more advanced budding artists.

Equally, if you are a bit rusty on the dance floor, don't worry, just pop down to the Hall and attend the 'brush up your dancing' lessons.

We have as always the day to day running and hall maintenance to keep us busy. We now have a rota for grass cutting the play area with some new volunteers to help with this task.

We have acquired more plants for the landscaping and they have been planted, but many more are needed.

The general ground works i.e.: hedge, grass and garden work is always a time consuming job, but a necessary one.

As always our aim for the hall to progress is our priority and we are therefore always planning something new, which sometimes takes time to implement. Often funding is needed, and that is a task in itself.

The committee and I would like to thank all the people not on the committee who have helped this year. And we are pleased to say that we have some new volunteers. However, we will always be pleased to hear from anyone who has some spare time and would like to be involved. Please contact me. My number is below.

May I also highlight the fact that we have a website with all events listed for a quick reminder of upcoming events, just search Offton & Willisham village hall.

We remain financially sound thanks to our regular and special events.

I would like to thank the parish council for their continued financial support.

As always I thank the committee members for the diligence and dedication and effort they all put in to keep the hall the envy of many.

Colin P-R
01473 658213
Chairman