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Guest speakers: Vicky Weller and Nicola Thomas - Probation Officers, Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust

3.1 Vicky Weller and Nicola Thomas thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to speak to the meeting. An explanation was given of how Probation Officers fit into the Criminal Justice system. A crime is committed and the criminal is arrested and taken to Court. The Probation Service compile a report, to make a proposal depending on the severity of the crime, and the Court can follow or ignore.

3.2 Statistics show that of 8000 criminals 30% are in prison and 70% are in the community on licence.

3.3 Some of the reasons criminals commit crime are: drugs, alcohol, attitude towards society, peer pressure, family upbringing; siblings and/or parents are criminals, mental health problems, lack of accommodation and employment, learning difficulties and basic opportunism.

3.4 Offenders don't always have accommodation, employment, family, friends or food so to be imprisoned gives them accommodation and three meals a day. Impact of prison is different for different people and the Probation Service put services into place to make the individuals not want to go to prison.

3.5 Statistically offenders who have less than a 12 month sentence reoffend whereas if a sentence is over 12 months the offender is assessed and challenged as to why they committed the crime. Offender will be released on licence which involves the Probation Service approving accommodation and employment and monitors and restricts the activities of the offender.

3.6 Domestic violence offenders 'prefer' a prison sentence as is over within 8 weeks to 6 months whereas if a prison sentence is not given the offender is on probation for 2 years.

3.7 The Probation Service work with the police, drug and alcohol agencies, childrens services and many other agencies depending on the crime.

3.8 Probation Officers are educated to degree level and have to undergo a 2 year on the job training programme and achieve NVQ level 4. Probation Officers are risk assessors and have to provide an unbiased service. As part of their training and their job the Probation Officers have to go into prison.

3.9 Probation Officers commence working with offenders from the day of sentencing until day of release and follow up afterwards.

3.10 The Probation Service is always looking for community projects and Surrey and Sussex Probationary Trust would like to hear from anyone who is aware of any available projects.

Questions and answers:

Q. What happens if an offender sentenced to community service does not turn up?

A. All absences have to be evidenced and if not then the offender will go to prison.

4	<p><u>Vote of thanks to guest speaker</u> Mrs Liz Parker gave a vote of thanks to the guest speakers, Vicky Weller and Nicola Thomas. She commented that she found the presentation most enlightening, and appreciated them giving up their time.</p>	
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Annual Report & Question and Answer Session

5.1 The Chair introduced the Parish Councillors to the audience.

5.2 The Chair explained that, to be compliant, the Parish Council had adopted a committee structure. Although the Parish Council meetings are held bi-monthly excluding the month of August, Planning is held every 3 weeks, F & GP is held quarterly and Burial is held approximately every 3 months.

5.3 Terry Dillon explained that the F & GP Committee approve cheques, monitor the budget, and review income either from the precept (TCDC) or from burials which is unpredictable due to the variance in fees whether a resident or non-resident of Oxted.

5.4 The Staffing Committee, although meeting 3-4 times last year will only be meeting once this year. This committee is responsible for recruitment/shortlisting candidates/interviews/annual appraisal and remuneration.

5.5 Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings however, they would be requested to leave if there were items to discuss under a Part 2 section. The public have 3 minutes to speak. Agendas are put on all the Parish Council notice boards and the dates are on the website.

5.6 Robert Wingate reported on the Queens Diamond Jubilee. The main event of the year being the Picnic in the Park held in Master Park in June; the event was well attended and everyone enjoyed the event. In addition 3 public benches were purchased and placed in Hurst Green and Oxted North; bulb planting was undertaken on Hurst Green Common. 2 pieces of play equipment were purchased; one is in King George VI playing field in Hurst Green and the second one will be placed in Master Park.

5.7 The Chairman reported that the Parish Councillors and Clerk continue to monitor the condition of the roads and report pot holes to SCC.

5.8 Cllr Beverley Connolly, Vice-Chairman of TDC, thanked all for attending the meeting and for inviting her. She complimented the Parish Council on the very thorough and detailed annual report and they should be justly proud of all they have achieved. Cllr Connolly was very impressed with the enlightening speakers particularly as she has been a victim of crime. She finished by confirming the Green Belt will be protected by the District and Parish Councillors.

5.9 The Chairman thanked Beverley Connolly for giving up her valuable time to attend the meeting.

5.10 Master Park attendees thanked the Parish Council for its continued funding and invited all attending to become a friend of Master Park.

Questions

Q. How is the Green Belt being protected

A. No application has, as yet, been received however, it is understood that after a TPO had been issued trees were damaged which will not

	<p>The Chair thanked members of the public for attending, and closed the meeting at 8.58pm.</p>	
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