

HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL.

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, on Monday, 8th April 2013 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Mrs J.M.Papadopoulos (Chairman)
Borough Councillor: Cllr. H. Craske.
Councillors: G.Ashby, A. Carroll, J. Grey,
P. Oakeshott, L. Pearton, B.Sutherland
and S.Wright.

In attendance: 3 Parishioners
Kent Community Warden Steve Gray
Liz Jeffery – Village Correspondent and Press Officer.

Apologies for absence: Received from Kent County Councillor Bryan Sweetland,
Cllrs. Howard, James and Mendzil. Clive Stanley.

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence.
There were no alterations to the Register of Members Interests.
The Clerk reported that the last inspection of the Recreation Ground had revealed no problems.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on Monday, 25th February 2013, were confirmed and signed.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

Including an update of actions from the last Minutes, the Clerk reported that:-

- a. P. 1081 Matters Arising. Potholes to London Bound slip road on WBP. It is understood that this stretch of road is maintained by the Highways Agency.
- b. P. 1082 Proposed safety improvements. Cllr. James had prepared an insert which had been placed in the centrefold of the Annual Newsletter asking Parishioners to identify additional mobility scooter crossing points within the village that should be considered.
- c. P. 1083. List of Highway Priorities in village. Our list of priorities had now been submitted to KCC.
- d. P. 1083. County Alan Casson had agreed to attend a Parish Council Meeting later in the year.
- e. Web site report. The Clerk reported that during the rolling 12 month period there had been a total of 40,462 hits to the Parish website with 3906 visitors in March alone. The web server hosting space had now been increased and the 2013 Newsletter had been added.

Parishioners' Matters.

None were brought to the notice of the Meeting.

To receive an update on the renewal of the Recreation Ground lease.

The Clerk reported that the decisions taken at the Parish Council Meeting held on 25/2 had been notified to Mr Franklin and it was understood that at the present time Mr Dixon had referred the matter back to the College. The Court date had now been put back until August and we had been advised that we could proceed with the two community events which would use the Recreation Ground this summer.

To finalise arrangements for the 2013 Annual Parish Assembly.

The Clerk reported that Kate Reeves of Higham Oven Bake would be providing the catering for the evening. The Chairman agreed to arrange for the drinks and glasses. It was understood that Jeremy Clarke would bring all the equipment he needed for his talk. James Pearson would speak about the Future Library Services project just before the interval. Jo Raff would have a display about Higham Youth Club and the new kitemark accreditation.

To discuss judging arrangements for the 2013 Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition

As the recent weather conditions had delayed growth in the gardens it was agreed that judging would have to take place later this year than usual. The Chairman agreed to contact Morton Grey and advise him accordingly.

To review and approve the risk assessment document.

Copies of the amended document had been circulated to Members prior to the Meeting. It was proposed by Cllr. Oakeshott, seconded by Cllr. Pearton and agreed by all members that the updated document should be approved and signed.

Community Events 2013

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had now been advised that it had been awarded £5000 funding by the Borough Council towards the cost of an Olympic Legacy event which would be entitled "In The Mood Tonight" and take place on 15/6. The Peninsula Big Band would provide an evening of musical nostalgia and those present could bring their picnic baskets and either listen to the music or get up for a dance on the special outdoor dance floor in a huge marquee. The evening would conclude with a musical firework display on the theme of the Diamond Jubilee of the Coronation. The annual Friday Night at the Proms event would be held on 12/7 and it was anticipated that tickets would go on sale from mid May.

Councillors' Matters.

County.

As Cllr. Sweetland did not attend the Meeting no report was given.

Borough.

Cllr. Pearton reported that work had already started on the new Theme Park development but had now stopped due to the discovery of a colony of rare jumping spiders.

Cllr. Craske revealed that figures from the 2011 census, just released, showed that in a ten year period from 2001 the population of the village had increased by only 24 people. Higham was now shown as having an older population. He reported that he had managed to overturn a proposal to permanently turn off street lighting from The Falstaff to the roundabout at the bottom of Gads Hill due to the problems with the slip road. Steve Gray confirmed that the dogging sign to the slip road had now been removed and the vegetation had been cleared. In answer to a question from Members regarding whether the Recreation Ground could be registered as a village green Cllr. Craske was of the opinion that it would fail on the legal test regarding whether people had used it "as of right" for at least 20 years – let or hindrance. He believed that the College would claim that it granted permission to use it and the matter could end up in a public enquiry which could be costly.

Parish.

Cllr Carroll reported that works vehicles had been parked on the corner of Oak Drive and Norah Lane for several days. As it was believed that these may be related to the building site in Norah Lane Cllr. Ashby agreed to contact the Enforcement Officer at the Borough Council. There was a deep pothole to School Lane close to the junction with Villa Road.

Cllr. Ashby reported that vegetation from around the Brambles had been cut back and thrown into the road. The Clerk agreed to contact Tony Atherton for an update.

Concern was expressed by Cllr. Grey that the new PCSO Claire Croucher was expected to cover a much larger area than PCSO Rob Meader who was assigned to Higham only. The Chairman reported that Sgt Katie Lee was to visit the Youth Club within the next couple of weeks and she hoped to be able to speak to her on this matter. She had written to thank PCSOs Meader and Hylands for all their support of the village and wish them well for their training to become police officers. Cllr. Grey was still awaiting contact from Tony Atherton regarding the post that had been knocked down outside his property in School Lane.

Cllr. Pearton reported that the potholes to the railway bridge had now been filled in.

Cllr. Sutherland reported vehicles being parked in St. Johns Road whose owners lived elsewhere in the village. No support had been forthcoming from the Borough Council.

BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS

Reports.

a. Planning.

Plans were available for the following planning applications which had been received and reviewed by the Planning Committee:-

Appln. no. 20130160 6, Villa Road.

Erection of single storey front extension to form a habitable room.

Appln. no. 20130147 Upshire House, 1, Hermitage Road.

Erection of part two storey and part three storey rear extension to form bedroom and enlarged bathroom/wc at lower ground floor, sun room, enlarged kitchen, wc and utility room at ground floor level with a bedroom at first floor level.

Appln. no. 20130178 4, Brookers Place, Chequers Street.

Demolition of existing garage and erection of single storey side extension to form kitchen and family room.

Appln. no. 20130116 Orchard, Church Street.

Erection of an agricultural building to replace existing.

Appln. no. 20130210 Cruste Croft, Watling Street.

Erection of side extension to existing detached garage.

Appln. no. 20130211 Glanaber, Watling Street.

Erection of side extension to existing detached garage.

Appln. no. 20130216 21, Fairview Drive.

Erection of first floor side extension to form enlarged bedroom and ensuite shower room/wc.

Appln. no. 20130016 34, Walmers Avenue.

Construction of pitched roof extension over existing ground floor side extension to form ensuite bathroom/wc.

d. Multi-Purpose Games Area.

Cllr. Sutherland reported that it was possible that one member of the Committee might have to step down due to ill health.

i. Merston Court.

The Chairman reported that W.I. members had been drafted in to help at the Club due to a shortage of cooks, drivers and hostesses.

m. Higham Neighbourhood Forum (formerly PACT)

Peter Leakey reported that the next meeting would be held on 4/6. Liz Jeffery agreed to publicise this in the local newspaper.

n. Kent Community Warden.

Steve Gray reported that a total of 8 counts of fly tipping had been collected and a litter pick requested. Unlit streetlights had been reported in Fairview Drive and Beech Grove. Several sheep found wandering in Bull Lane had been reunited with their owner. Steve Gray requested that Alan Casson be invited to a future meeting as he, and the Higham Neighbourhood Forum, had received complaints regarding inconsiderate parking.

p. Gads Hill School Development Committee.

Concern was expressed regarding the state of the road surface in Crutches Lane and the lack of double yellow lines along the A226. Cllr. Ashby also highlighted the need to reinstate the croquet lawn currently under a temporary car park and Cllr. Oakeshott was

anxious that the funding to put back the main house into good repair was ringfenced.
Cllr.Craske agreed to look into the 106 agreement and report back to Members.

Finance.

The Clerk presented the quarterly financial statement for the period 1/1/13 to 31/3/13. She asked for approval for the items shown below, this being proposed by Cllr.Oakeshott , seconded by Cllr Sutherland and agreed by all Members.

Joanne Raff (youth leader – February)	199.50
Southern Water (allotments)	17.68
Mrs Katie Reeves (food for APA under Sect. 150(2) LG Act 1972)	275.00
Medway Council (talk for APA under Sect. 150(2) LG Act 1972)	50.00
1 st Higham Scouts (Sect. 137/139 grant for newsletter delivery)	100.00
J.A.Stanley (preparation of 2013 newsletter)	293.00
Clive Stanley (webmaster services from 1/1/13 to 30/3/13)	115.50
Clerk’s salary (1/1/13 to 31/3/13 as net)	2772.42
Expenses for use of room as office (1/1/13 to 31/3/13)	227.50
Admin. Exps (1/1/13 to 31/3/13)	699.36
HMRC (PAYE/NI (employer/employee))	658.14
1 st Higham Scouts (Sect. 137/139 grant)	200.00
Higham Age Concern (Sect. 137/139 grant)	350.00
Higham with Merston PCC (Sect. 137/139 grant)	300.00
Higham Youth Club (Sect. 137/139 grant)	175.00
Willow Print Ltd. (2013 newsletter)	1139.00
NALC (Local Council Review)	50.00
Mr M. Papadopoulos (Christmas card original cheque lost)	41.96

The changes to both the Clerk’s and Youth Leader’s salaries, as agreed at the Budget and Finance Meeting, were endorsed unanimously by Members as were the increases to allotment rents for the 2013/2014 season to £20 for a full plot and £12 for a half plot.

Correspondence.

The correspondence folder had been available for perusal by all Members from 7.00 p.m. on that evening , but the Clerk drew Members’ attention to the following items:-

1. The date of the 2013 audit was noted as being 10/6.
2. Complaints had been received regarding non delivery of refuse/recyclable sacks to some parts of the village as well as Higham Library.
3. It was agreed that the Parish Council would adopt the KALC Community Awards Scheme.

To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting.

This was given as being Monday, 13th May 2013 at 7.30 p.m. for the Annual Parish Council Meeting followed by a Parish Council Meeting.

The Annual Parish Assembly would take place on 11th April at 7.30 p.m.

Any Other Business.

The Clerk reported that on 25/7 the Rude Mechanical Theatre Company would be performing The Harlequin Ghost of the Moon on the Recreation Ground. Members agreed not to make a charge for the use of the venue.

The Chairman thanked those Members present for all their help over the past year and Cllr. Oakeshott thanked Cllr. Papadopoulos for her excellent Chairmanship.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.