

HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, on Monday, 22nd July 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. J. Grey (Chairman)
Kent County Councillor: Cllr. Bryan Sweetland
Borough Councillor: Cllr. Harold Craske
Councillors: P. Allinson, R. Gilby, P. Holmes, E. Jeffery,
S. Mackie, A. Mendzil, L. Pearton (also Borough)
and S. Sparks.

In attendance: 8 Parishioners
Paul Hassell – Kent Community Warden.
Peter Leakey and Vikki Brooke (Parish Advisors)
Steve Taylor - Kent Community Warden Manager

Apologies for absence: Cllrs. Carroll and Howard
Clive Stanley - webmaster

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the following statement was read by the Clerk:-
The Parish Council was concerned to receive a letter of complaint from a resident of Lower Higham regarding the reporting of the handling of an email that he sent to us, in the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th April. The Parish Council, whilst accepting no liability, does acknowledge that "best practice" was not followed in this instance and would like to offer its sincere apologies for the distress that was caused and advise that it has since reviewed its procedures going forward. In future those residents attending the meeting, and contributing under "parishioners matters" will be asked if they wish their names to be published in the minutes, however it will be assumed that those corresponding by email will prefer to remain anonymous, unless they advise us otherwise in writing.

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence.
There were no alterations to the Register of Members Interests.
Weekly inspections by the GBC Park Ranger for insurance purposes and the latest PR6 (passed to the CDC) had been received.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on Monday, 13th May 2019, were confirmed and signed . Apologies were given to Paul Hassell who had been left off the attendance list for the meeting.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

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

- a. P. 1340. Cuxton tip. Following our last meeting the ruling was relaxed to again allow Higham residents to use the Cuxton tip.
- b. P. 1343. Parklife Event. As GBC wanted this event to proceed even though the toilets in the Pavilion were unavailable, Members gave permission for the use of the Recreation Ground for both car parking and the siting of a portaloos unit by the Borough Council.
- c. The Meeting with the Memorial Hall Management Committee regarding the renewal of the Memorial Hall lease had taken place on 15/7 and feedback had been passed to our solicitor.
- d. Website Report. In the absence of Clive Stanley the Clerk reported that recent updates had included audit completion notices, new Parish Council Members, representatives and sub committees, Council and Warden drop in posters, LTC web update information and an open letter from Nuralite re. Colas, in addition to the usual PC Minutes and Agendas. Clive Stanley had expressed his concern regarding the slow progress in refreshing the website to meet modern standards.

It was agreed that the Village Roads, Pavements and Lighting representatives would now be assumed as being part of the Infrastructure Committee.

Parishioners' Matters.

Ian Rolfe reported that under the terms of the newly created Passenger Benefit Fund, Higham Station had been awarded the sum of £80,000 which could only be spent on capital expenditure projects. This might include such items as providing a defibrillator for the station, secure cycle storage or the widening of pathways but sadly would not be able to achieve any of the current accessibility issues which would be too expensive. The Parish Council agreed to write in support of suggestions made by the Higham Station Passengers Group before the deadline at the end of the month. Members noted that the GTR franchise was due for renewal in 2021.

David Mead enquired if there was any news regarding the receipt of the Local Plan and if the new administration would be less sympathetic to development in the villages. Cllr. Craske confirmed that this document was expected to be received by the end of this year and he had not seen any indication that the villages would be viewed any differently than they had been. David Mead questioned the large carry over figure for the Parish Council reserves. Cllr. Allinson confirmed that the precept had been increased by only 1% this year and that if sub committees did not spend sums allocated to them in the budget this could lead to a misinterpretation in the figures. Members agreed that this should be made clearer to residents next year. David Mead felt that residents would like to know more about individual councillors' reasons for taking on the role of Parish Councillor and what skills they could bring to this office. This was noted and would be discussed further.

Information Meeting – Nuralite planning application

The Clerk confirmed that the Information Meeting for Parishioners regarding the Nuralite planning application would take place at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 4th September commencing at 7.30 p.m. The date had already been sent to all the parents at Higham Primary School via the "parent app" before the school broke up for the summer holidays. A leaflet would be prepared giving details of the meeting and on the reverse some suggested grounds for objection and these would be delivered to every home in the village. In addition, banners would be displayed in prominent places within the village and a copy of the leaflet would be displayed on the Parish Council website and its Facebook page.

To finalise arrangements for the 2019 Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition

Members gave the Clerk their nominations for gardens that they felt should be on the short list for the judging of the 2019 Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition by Lucy Barker the Plant Area Manager for the Millbrook Garden Company.

To review suggestions made by KCC to deal with the current problems of fly tipping.

Cllr. Sparks reported that the useful email received from Mike Whiting the KCC Cabinet Member for Waste had been circulated to Councillors for their information. It was reassuring to note that the Leader of Gravesham Council was committed to working with both KCC and the Police to collect evidence to bring the perpetrators to justice. It was important that all incidences of fly tipping were reported to Gravesham and the Country Eye app allowed for any photographs to be sent to them direct. KCC had suggested that this topic would be discussed at the Parish Seminar in the autumn and also possibly at a Gravesham Parishes Meeting.

Councillors' Matters.

County.

Cllr. Sweetland reported that the Springhead Recycling Depot at Pepper Hill was to close on 19/8 for a nine week period so that repairs could be carried out to the roof. He confirmed that recent figures had shown that the amount of fly tipping was not increasing but that more

people were aware of it as they used social media. He advised Parishioners to check if a contractor had a waste transfer licence as most instances of fly tipping were from criminals, builders and rogue traders. KCC had granted an additional £300,000 to facilitate the use of the tip at Cuxton. An additional £250,000 had also been allocated towards dealing with fly tipping and the Police would step up their involvement with higher fines and seizure of vehicles. Covert CCTV cameras would also be deployed.

Cllr. Sweetland reminded those present that the consultation for the proposed move of the White Horse Walk In centre at Gravesend to Darent Valley had now been extended to 21/10/19 and he urged everyone to respond.

Borough.

Cllr. Craske reported that the uncertainty regarding the White Horse Walk In Centre had seen many patients having to re-register in the area. He reported that the Grade 2 Listed Monument on Telegraph Hill called the Larkin Memorial currently required a large amount of work carried out on it to make it safe. The Borough Council was responsible for the repairs but until they were complete would be chaining the gate to the monument and placing barriers around it for safety reasons. Members were in agreement with these measures.

Parish.

Cllr. Pearton commented that most school buses accessing the village now seemed to be double deckers but were virtually empty. He confirmed that the Borough Council had signed up for the Payback Scheme and that help could now be offered for projects within the village.

Cllr. Jeffery reminded Members that they were welcome to come to the Sun Pond on Thursday when a survey of the old pond would be conducted and advice and costings given.

Cllr. Mendzil reported that she was currently investigating Environmentally Friendly Bus Shelters (Bee Shelters) as a replacement for the older bus shelters in the village.

Cllr. Sparks reminded Members about the Higham Poppy Project. Members agreed to support the group by giving a grant for them to purchase materials and storage boxes up to an estimated cost of £200.

Cllr. Allinson reminded Members that dates needed to be arranged for the Meetings of the three Standing Committees.

Cllr. Grey reported that he had been advised that wooden bollards currently knocked over and reported would not necessarily be replaced and he expressed particular concern for those missing at the traffic chicane outside the Memorial Hall.

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. 20190295 10, Peggoty Close

Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension to form kitchen and dining room.

Appln. no. 20190385 Little Mockbeggar, Town Road

*** REVISED DESCRIPTION *** Use of the land for the stationing of 4 X caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers all year round; the stationing of 16 X caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers from 01 March to 31 October and the unoccupied storage of the 16 caravans over winter.

Appln. no. 20190486 15, Oak Drive

Erection of single storey rear extension.

Appln. no. 20190517 12, Carton Road

Extension to existing front dormer.

Appln. no 20190290 Nuralite Industrial Estate, Canal Road

The proposal is for the systematic redevelopment of the existing Nuralite Site. This includes the importation of inert materials to cap, and landscape the historic asbestos landfill, thus containing its contamination risk. To demolish the existing buildings of the Nuralite Industrial Estate, deal with existing contamination, both through capping and removal of areas of hydrocarbon pollution, the laying of new service and utility infrastructure and the construction of 11 new purpose built light industrial type units and a site office.

Appln. no. 20190580 13, St. Johns Close

Erection of single storey rear extension to form lounge.

Appln. no. 20190537 3, Telegraph Hill

Erection of a single storey rear extension to form a garden room.

Appln. no. 20190569 Stonycroft, Telegraph Hill

Erection of a two storey front and side extension and single storey rear and front extension.

Appln. no. 20190662 11, Ash Crescent

Erection of single storey rear extension and extension to the rear dormer extension.

Appln. no. 20190686 1, Whitehouse Farm Cottages, School Lane

Demolition of existing single storey side extension and erection of part two storey and part single storey side extension.

Cllr. Craske offered to arrange a meeting for all Councillors to learn more about the planning application process and in the first instance agreed to produce a sheet outlining permitted grounds for objection for a planning application.

b. Community Development Committee

Notes from a Meeting of the CDC held on 3/6 had already been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting. The new Chairman of the Community Development Committee is Cllr. Stewart Mackie.

c. Infrastructure Committee

Cllr. Sparks reported that data had been collected at the Gardeners Junction regarding illegal turns and the number of two axle vehicles passing through the village to support an application for a weight restriction. More sessions were needed but this required more volunteers. Possibly KCC might provide a data logging strip across the road. Work on the wooden bollards by the pub was now complete and the slow sign had now been painted on the road by the junction. Drainage works to Hermitage Road were now also complete. Members referred works at The Landway back to the IFC as there was a possibility that KCC might make a contribution towards the cost. The sites for the three defibrillators needed to be notified to GBC and Cllr. Sparks thanked Cllr. Mendzil for her help in locating a partnership agreement form.

d. Executive Management Committee

There was nothing additional to report other than what had already been reported elsewhere in the Meeting.

e. Higham Speedwatch

Peter Leakey reported that a total of 17 Speedwatch sessions had been held over a period of 35 hours 30 minutes. Details of a total of 98 vehicles which had exceeded the speed limit had been forwarded to the Police. The highest speed observed was 46 mph. outside Buckland Farm.

f. Kent Community Warden

Paul Hassell reported that he had received a complaint that the footpath beside Meadows Stores which passed behind the cottages in Ville Road was now badly overgrown. He had advised the Memorial Hall Committee that signage should be displayed with a

disclaimer regarding anyone trying to climb on the roof of the Memorial Hall.

g. Kent Police

As the PCSOs did not attend the Meeting no report was given.

Finance.

The Clerk asked for approval for the items shown below, this being proposed by Cllr. Jeffery, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed by all Members.

Clerks salary (May)	1150.95
HMRC (PAYE/NI May)	212.62
KCC (LGPS May)	433.52
Clerks salary (June)	1150.95
HMRC (PAYE/NI June)	212.62
KCC (LGPS June)	433.52
Clerk (exps. use of room as office 1/4/19 to 30/6/19)	227.50
Clive Stanley (webmaster services 1/4/19 to 30/6/19)	131.63
BT (broadband)	181.47
GBC (Pavilion rates 3)	831.00
KALC (publication)	43.49
Business Stream (allotments water rates since April 2017)	414.56
Barclays Bank (deposit into new current account)	50,000.00
Kirstie Shepherd (catering – Retirement Event)	247.00
Clerk (keyboard player)	100.00
Clerk (Ukulele band donation)	75.00
Clerk (Village Club donation)	75.00
Clerk (refreshments)	153.09
ICO (Data Protection fee by D/D)	35.00
Sue Sparks (PCC coffee morning)	17.10
Sue Sparks (Village Plan printing)	7.00
Sue Sparks (supplies for gardening volunteers)	50.94
Mr P. Leahey (2000 dog bags)	47.90
SSE (toilets electricity)	43.37
GBC (rent for garage May by D/D)	60.35
GBC (rent for garage June by D/D)	60.35

To consider the Accounting Statements and Annual Return for Local Councils in England and Wales for the Year Ended 31st March 2019 as a whole.

Copies of both the Annual Return for Local Councils in England and Wales, and accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2019, had been circulated to Members prior to the Meeting having been signed by the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer.

Members again noted the comments made by Nigel Wharton regarding the Council conducting a review once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and the Clerk confirmed that all documents would now pass to the Independent Internal Auditor for inspection before being submitted.

To Approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1).

Members unanimously approved the Annual Governance Statement.

To Approve the whole Accounting Statements (Section 2).

Members unanimously approved the whole Accounting Statements.

Chairman to sign the Accounting Statements.

The Chairman signed the Accounting Statements.

Correspondence.

The correspondence folder had been available for perusal by all Members during the Meeting on that evening, but the Clerk drew Members' attention to the following items:-

1. Members raised no objection to the diversion of footpath NS 189
2. Members had been advised by LEJ Properties that Colas would be leaving the Nuralite site.
3. Concerns regarding the status of the parking bay outside Meadows Stores were passed to Cllr. Craske for clarification.

To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting

This was given as being Monday, 9th September 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

Any Other Business.

None was brought to the notice of the Meeting.

It was resolved that:-

“Pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from the following item because it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted that if members of the public are present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act”.

There being no other business, the Meeting was closed to members of the public at 10.15 p.m. by the Chairman.