

**Minutes of a meeting
held on 13 December 2021 at 7:30 pm
Higham Memorial Hall, School Lane, Higham ME3 7JL**

Present	Cllr John Grey Cllr Liz Jeffery Cllr Nikki Fox Cllr Pam Holmes Cllr Alan Howard Cllr David Martin Cllr Sue Sparks Cllr Toni Stanton	Chairman Vice Chair
Apologies	Cllr Les Pearton Cllr Jamie Rivett	Also Borough Councillor
Members of public	1	

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm

Agenda No	Minute No	Discussion
1	72	<p>Apologies for absence¹</p> <p>Apologies were received from Bor. Cllr Les Pearton, confirming that he was unwell. It was proposed to accept the apology for the reason provided and it was unanimously accepted.</p> <p>PCSO is unable to attend due to her shift pattern.</p>
2	73	<p>Declarations of interest²</p> <p>None.</p>
3	74	<p>Public Session</p> <p>The Chairman suspended the meeting for the public to speak</p> <p>Only one member of the public was in attendance who came to express his concerns of the unlawful activities at Great Crabbles Orchard.</p> <p>Residents are unable to use the wood to walk their dogs or just generally take exercise. He had done all he could to stop these men</p>

¹ Local Government Act 1972

² Localism Act 2011, s29

but has been approached and didn't feel comfortable doing any more. He had contacted the local police and unfortunately there was little the PCSO could do about it. He felt he had no alternative but to escalate this issue to the Parish Council for members to take this forward to senior police officers.

The Chairman thanked the member of public for attending and providing his input.

PCSO Report – not present

Kent Community Warden report – not present

Peter Leakey – Speed watch report – not present but a report had been circulated only 2 weeks previously.

Parishioners matters as above.

4 75 Clerk's report (to bring Members up to date with current issues)

Clerk referred to her report as an Appendix.

5 76 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 22 November 2021

Minutes approved with a unanimous vote.

6 77 Parish Councillor matters

Cllr Nikki Fox – Allotments work. A few of the allotments are overgrown and some are vacant. Quotation for £750 from Grieg Fish to be cleared and wild life area to be cut back. Cllrs Fox and Sparks felt that the quotation was reasonable and acceptable and suggested Members accept the figure. There is a waiting list with 6 potential uses. Members voted unanimously to accept Grieg Fish quotation.

Cllr Pam Holmes – Youth Club had to be cancelled due to the heating not working and then another due to the COVID restrictions. She also reported that the Memorial Hall had increased their charges for the use of the hall.

Cllr Sue Sparks – Recreation Ground defib battery was due for renewal. She asked for a new battery to be purchased.

Cllr Liz Jeffery – For Parish information, there had been complaints from the Memorial Hall Committee regarding the parking in the car park. Trustees of the hall have made the decision to lock the car park on particular days.

Cllr Toni Stanton – there had been several thefts in the village and villagers had been sending confirmation photographs in the hope that the perpetrator of the crimes be caught.

Cllr John Grey – discussed the issue of obtaining the Parish own set of keys for the hall. Clerk to request from the Memorial hall.

Cllr Grey also confirmed that the Pavilion tenant had requested if it possible they could lay artificial in the garden area inside the fence to enable children to play outside in the fresh air without getting muddy. He asked for a show of hands and members agreed unanimously that they had no problem with this.

Borough Councillor matters – none present.

KCC representative – not present.

7 78 Crutches Lane issues - Cllr Pearton

Members had listened to the public speaker and voted unanimously to take this forward. Clerk to write a strongly worded letter to Kent Police Commissioner and Kent Police Constable for help to bring this issue to a conclusion.

Cllr Grey also confirmed that he as Chairman, Bor. Cllr Pearton, Bor. Cllr. Bob Lane to meet with PCSO Ellie Middleton and her Inspector to meet early in January.

8 79 Planning

Applications

Discussions on applications were to be held in January.

Nuralite – Cllr Rivett – no news

Street lighting – Cllr Martin

There had been a zoom meeting with KCC and Gravesham. They are surveying lighting to place in good order before the end of March. Nick May has every intention of handing the over in good order. If there were any urgent issues these could be repaired.

Cllr Martin is now in receipt of documentation to move forward on this. He also requested that the Clerk to contact Laser to work for us in this.

Cllr Martin also confirmed that these lights will need to be insured.

Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Sparks

An email had been sent to all on recent activities and can be read on LTC website.

Future Planning Meetings

Cllr Fox required clarification on Higham Parish Council Planning Application approval/comments.

There was a discussion on the way forward with Planning and Highways meetings. These both take up a lot of time in Parish Council meetings.

The Clerk explained that it would be possible to delegate powers to a Planning and Highways Committee to make decisions and take these decisions forward.

Cllr Fox proposed that Planning and Highways meetings were to be processed for next year to be held on the last Monday of each month and that the Parish delegate powers to this Committee for decisions to be made on both. This was seconded by Cllr Sparks and the vote was unanimous in favour of monthly meetings.

Cllr Sparks pointed out that the meetings must only be Planning and Highways and this was agreed. It was also agreed that there would then be no need for Planning and Highways to be on the Agenda for the Parish Council meetings.

9 80 Finance

Clerk explained that she would be changing the way she presented her Finance Statements which was accepted by Members.

Cllr Sparks proposed to accept the payments that had been made and Cllr Howard seconded. The vote was unanimous in favour.

Additional signatories for banking arrangements were discussed. Cllr Martin confirmed he would accept an invitation to join as a signatory as well as Cllr Holmes, Cllr Sparks and Cllr Rivett.

10 81 Highways Working Group

A report had been circulated.

A proposal had gone off to KCC for a 20 MPH speed limited.

The issue of the school and parking was discussed and this issue is being discussed with the school.

Lorry watch is still going on. Discussion on how we record this as evidence for any speeding cases.

11 82 Higham Memorial Hall lease - Cllr Martin

Cllr Martin confirmed that he has not heard anything further on this. He confirmed he would now contact the Trustees direct and move this forward.

12 83 Tree works and recreation ground issues – Cllr Fox

Cllr Fox confirmed that a meeting had been held but the Chair of the meeting Cllr Rivett had not circulated the minutes.

- Tree surveys done on the recreation ground

- Numbering the trees
- Engaging a tree contractor
- Checking the fencing around the recreation ground
Garden seat replacement

Play equipment – checks are done on a weekly and monthly basis by Gravesham and Graham Marchant is the contact.

13 84 The Queens Platinum – Cllrs Jeffery and Stanton

A meeting had been held in the library.

- Face painting had been discussed.
- Cllr Stanton had sent emails but not heard back.
- Cllr Jeffery also confirmed that there appeared to be some reluctance on the part of the village.
- Cllr Sparks had brought to the Council a crown that had been knitted and which the Knit and Natters were considering making for this occasion.
- Cllr encouraged red white and blue everywhere.

14 85 Policies to be considered

- Standing Orders – deferred to 10 January 2022
- Financial Regulations - deferred to 10 January 2022
- Code of Conduct – Cllr Stanton proposed and Cllr Grey seconded that the Code of Conduct be accepted as a Higham Parish Council Policy.

15 86 Climate Change – deferred to 10 January 2022

Cllr Howard confirmed that he attended a meeting hosted by KALC on Climate Change. He explained that KALC wanted parishes to add Climate Change to Agendas to make members and villagers alike more Climate Change aware.

16 87 Confirmation of next meeting 10 January 2022

17 88 Resolution to exclude the press and public

18 89 Personnel

- Contracts of employment were being finalised by Cllr Jamie Rivett who was not present at the meeting. It was decided that the issues of contracts be deferred until the next meeting on 10 January 2022
- Cllr Grey confirmed that he had spoken to the previous Clerk regarding the Parish historical documents and IT equipment that needed handing back to the Parish. A confirmation letter would be sent regarding the items.

The Chairman thanked the Members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30 pm

Signed _____

Chairman

10 January 2022

Tasks carried forward

- Clerk to write to Crime Commissioner and Kent Police Constable regarding Great Crabble Orchard in order that they might act.
- Clerk to contact Laser and maintenance companies who will maintain the street lighting.
- Clerk and Cllr Fox to liaise on insurance issues of the Sports field
- Clerk to enquire of insurance on street lighting
- Cllr Spark to check the farmland location that is up for sale – on the boundary of Medway and Gravesham land.