

## Minutes

Parish Council Meeting held on  
14 February 2022 at 7:30 pm  
Higham Memorial Hall, School Lane, Higham ME3 7JL

**Present**

Cllr John Grey	Chairman
Cllr Liz Jeffery	Vice Chair
Cllr Nikki Fox	
Cllr Pam Holmes	
Cllr Alan Howard	
Cllr David Martin	
Cllr Les Pearton	Also Borough Councillor
Cllr Sue Sparks	

**Apologies**

Cllr Jamie Rivett
Cllr Toni Stanton

Members of public 1

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm

- | Item         | Description   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>1 109</b> | <b>Apologies for absence<sup>1</sup></b><br><br>Apologies had been received from both Cllr Rivett and Cllr Stanton with illness in both instances. Apologies were unanimously accepted. Bor Cllr Harold Craske also sent apologies. |
| <b>2 110</b> | <b>Declarations of interest<sup>2</sup></b><br><br>None.  |
| <b>3 111</b> | <b>Public Session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PCSO report</li><li>• Kent Community Warden report (Paul Hassell now retired)</li><li>• Peter Leakey – Speedwatch report</li></ul>                                    |

<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act 1972

<sup>2</sup> Localism Act 2011, s29

**Item Description**

- Members of public opportunity to ask questions <sup>3</sup>

The PCSO as not present and had not provided a monthly report but had submitted an annual report for the Annual Newsletter.

A Community Warden was not present and no report had been submitted.

The Speedwatch report was provided by Peter Leakey

11 January to 9 February

Venue	Sessions	Time	Vehicles reported
Buckland Farm	7	7 hrs	37 vehicles
Highland View	2		1 vehicle 35 mph
Higham Primary School	2	2 hrs	1 vehicle 36 mph

**4 112 Clerk’s report (to bring Members up to date with current issues)**

The Clerk had circulated her report to Councillors and asked for comments.

With regard to the WCs at the Memorial hall, the cost of these to the Parish Council will be removed once the Memorial Hall lease was finalised.

The **Bus stop** discussed in previous meetings had been confirmed to be in the Parish of Shorne but Shorne Parish Council has relinquished responsibility for it. Cllr Jeffery reported graffiti to Gravesham Borough Council.

**Auditor Report** - Cllr Fox wanted clarification on the comments from the Monitoring Officer of Gravesham Borough Council. There was discussion on the report and a possible Addendum to the report to clarify the position.

Cllr Pearton requested the Clerk contact the Auditor to add an Addendum to clarify the position was required. Clerk to discuss this with David Bucket, Auditor.

**Training.** It was confirmed that every member of the Council would like training. Clerk to identify what training is available and exactly what is required. Face to face in May would be preferable.

**5 113 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 10 January 2022**

Approved with unanimous vote.

<sup>3</sup> Standing Orders state that the Public Session will only take place for 15 minutes with a member of public having only 5 minutes to ask their question. Councillors are not obliged to answer immediately.

**Item Description**

**6 114 Parish Councillor matters**

- van consistently being parked on pavement. Registration number has been taken. Clerk to write to owners of the vehicle.
- Railway Bridge has been mended
- **heat pumps in Merston Court.** Cllr Pearton confirmed that Gravesham had to look into cutting costs of heating. Day room over £7,000 per year just for the day room. By introducing the heat pumps this would be a significant saving for GBC. Cllr Pearton confirmed that the project was safe and there will be savings. Pipework guaranteed for 100 years. Units have a lifespan of 20-25 years. Cllr Grey considered it would have been prudent for Gravesham Borough Council to let the Parish Council know.
- **mobile phone agreement.** Clerk was questioned on the agreement and confirmed that the EE contract was preferred as the Vodafone contract although cheaper reception was insufficient.
- Cllr Sparks provided details which should go on to the website for
  - Lower Thames Crossing. 4 Community drop in events.
  - Litter picking sessions
  - Great British spring clean
  - Consultation of Kent Libraries – Cllr Sales volunteered to complete the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council
  - Lorry watch – collating volunteers
- School lane resident leaves out bins all the time. Clerk to write to the Occupants property School lane to let them know that it is against the rules. Permanently on grass verge which is not right.

**Borough Councillor matters**

- 3 Crutches have issues with play equipment which should not be in use. The enforcement officers are dealing with the issue.
- Issues with the car park. Motorists are entering and leaving the car park through Crutches lane now that the hedges have been moved. Reported to Gravesham BC and KCC.
- On a recent Planning Application there was an issue of a square “boundary stone” along the A226. After enquiries made it transpired to be a milestone which showed how many miles it was to London and to Dover. Plates had been removed to disorientate any enemy infiltrators during the second world war. There have been conditions placed on the planning application that the milestone be left as is. There are plans to

Item	Description
	<p>have a preservation on the milestone. This should not affect the planning application for an extension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fly tipping.</b> There had been reported at Two Gates Kennels, Lower Rochester road - FS400193824. Also, at Canal Road - FS400196368.</li> <li>• <b>Thameslink</b> – reduced service. Worried about the school children journey. Thameslink have agreed to replace earlier morning but not the afternoon journey as this will affect peak time journeys.</li> <li>• <b>Litter bins</b> -an appointment had been scheduled to meet George Simmonds to check around the village to see where the additional litter bins should be placed.</li> </ul>

**7 115 Finance**

Members discussed the payments for the electricity and water charges for the WC in the car park of the Memorial Hall.

Cllr Sparks proposed to accept the payments made and to be made from the bank account by the Clerk and Cllr Howard seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous in favour of accepting.

**8 116 Committees**

There was a discussion to clarify the Committee members.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- Cllr Nikki Fox
- Cllr Alan Howard
- Cllr Toni Stanton
- Cllr Les Pearton
- Cllr John Grey *ex officio*
- Cllr Liz Jeffery *ex officio*

**HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE**

- Cllr Sue Sparks
- Cllr Pam Holmes
- Cllr Les Pearton
- Cllr Alan Howard
- Cllr David Martin
- Cllr Steve Sales
- Cllr John Grey *ex officio*
- Cllr Liz Jeffery *ex officio*

Item	Description
	There was a discussion to establish what actions could be done by members and what should be done by the Clerk as per statute.
<b>9 117</b>	<b>Higham Memorial Hall Lease Cllr Martin</b>
	Trustees of the Hall have been in communication with the Charities Commission to clarify the Trust Deed position.
	There was a discussion on the WC and they will be part of the package with the lease is renewed.
<b>10 118</b>	<b>Higham Preschool</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Martin to contact Savills regarding separating the Pavilion and the Sports Court.</li> <li>• Would the facility be needed for the Queens Jubilee? It would be best practice to inform them sooner than later.</li> <li>• Clerk informed that she would be invoicing the pre-school for payment of rent</li> <li>• Cllr Homes confirmed that the Pavilion Committee had been dissolved and the funds in hand will be distributed between the Memorial Hall and the Sports Association.</li> </ul>
<b>11 119</b>	<b>Streeting Lighting Cllr Martin</b>
	Discussion on the position. It is expected that the Parish will take the responsibility of the street lighting and have a maintenance contractor on board.
	Cllr Martin explained that it would be more cost effective to take on the contract rather than hand the responsibility to KCC which would cost the Parish Council hundreds of thousands of pounds.
	The Highways Committee will responsible for considering any issues going forward.
<b>12 120</b>	<b>Office/Storage</b>
	Discussion on whether it would be cost effective and viable to purchase a portacabin or storage container. A storage container with windows and facilities could be purchased for approximately £5,000. There would be an additional cost for positioning. The address could be registered with the post office. Planning permission would need to be obtained.
<b>13 121</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>
	<p>Cllr Jeffery confirmed that the first meeting had been held and tasks were delegated to obtain necessary reports. All reports to be in by 24 February. All was in hand.</p> <p>Cllr Jeffery went on to confirm that preparations were also in hand for the catering of the Parish Meeting which would be held in April. A speaker had been commissioned to speak at the meeting.</p>
<b>14 122</b>	<b>Tree works and Recreation Ground Cllr Rivett</b>
	Nothing to report.
<b>15 123</b>	<b>The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Cllr Jeffery and Cllr Stanton</b>
	<p>Working Group Meeting to be held for further organising of events.</p> <p>Cllr Pearton confirmed that he had received a request for a residents in Ash Crescent in order to plant a tree. They are organising a Street Party and they hope to raise money for an ash tree. GBC have agreed that a tree can be planted and possible positions being considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triangle land at Beech Grove and Mountbatten Avenue</li> <li>• Triangle of land opposite the Post Office and The Gardeners</li> <li>• Alongside the eco bus stop on the main road A226.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual Chairman's Award Cllr Liz Jeffery</b></p> <p>Will be discussed and progressed after the Annual Assembly in April.</p>
<b>17 124</b>	<b>Climate change Cllr Howard</b>
	Nothing to report. Future plan in progress.
<b>18 125</b>	<b>Confirmation of next meeting</b>
	14 March 2022
<b>19 126</b>	<b>Resolution to exclude the press and the public</b>
	<p>To resolve<sup>4</sup> that the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information.</p> <p>No public present.</p>

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<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**Item            Description**

**20    127    Advisors to the Council**

**Parish Advisor** - Discussed the draft and confirmed changes on the role.

**Employment Contracts** - discussion on the Employment Contracts of both the Clerk and the Admin Assistant and the Clerk would confirm the changes once advice had been obtained from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Meeting Closed 9:47 p.m.

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**Cllr John Grey**  
**Chairman**  
**Dated 14 March 2022**