

Minutes

**Parish Council Meeting held on
9 May 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 Alan Howard	
	Cllr Les Pearton	Also Borough Councillor
	Cllr Jamie Rivett	
	Cllr Steve Sales	
	Cllr Sue Sparks	
	Cllr Toni Stanton	
	Cllr David Martin	
Absent:	Cllr Pam Holmes	
	Cllr David Martin	
Members of Public	1	

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm

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1	1	Election of Chairman Cllr Howard nominated Cllr Grey for the position as Chairman Cllr Sparks seconded the motion and the vote in favour was unanimous.
2	2	To receive the Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if the Chairman is not present, to resolve that such Declaration be made at or before the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council Cllr Grey completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
3	3	Election of Vice-Chairman Cllr Grey nominated Cllr Jeffery for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. Cllr Howard seconded the nomination. The vote in favour was unanimous.
4	4	To receive the Vice-Chairman’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if the Chairman is not present, to resolve that such Declaration be made at or before the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council Cllr Jeffery completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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The Chairman then thanked all Councillors for voting for him and Cllr Jeffery again and was pleased that Councillors had confidence in the both for another year in office.

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Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Holmes and Cllr Martin. The vote was in favour to accept the reasons for the absence. There were also apologies from Bor. Cllr Harold Craske.

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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PUBLIC SESSION¹

A member of public spoke to thank the Parish Council on the work that had been carried out regarding the bollards on Lower Rocheter road.

Peter Leakey read out his report which is appended to these Minutes.

Cllr Howard made a call out for more volunteers for the speed watch sessions. Clerk to ask on Facebook and the Council website.

Cllr Pearton also thanked all the work that is done in speed watch. He also asked if there was any recourse to the motorists who had been reported.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the PCSOs hand deliver any notices and the motorists could earn points of fines.

Cllr Grey requested reports on the work carried out and Cllr Sparks confirmed that this is possible to download from the system that Mr Leakey is uploading to.

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PCSO and Kent Community Warden reports

Not present.

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

Clerk read through various items on her report and explained that she had been liaising on the Street Lighting.

Cllr Pearton was concerned about broken lighting. He had taken a call from a resident who reported a light broken and although KCC had been out to repair, the light was still not working. Clerk confirmed that she had the same conversation with the resident. This broken light is on the repair list that sites with GBC and Clerk is liaising with GBC.

¹ Public session only 15 minutes in total, resident has 5 minutes to speak

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Clerk confirmed that she had been liaising with regards to the Parish Pension Scheme. Cllr Pearton asked for further clarification which was explained to members.

Clerk spoke of the policies that she had processed.

Clerk spoke of the work she had carried out on her Employment Contract. There was a discussion around the working hours of both the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk.

There was a difference of an opinion on whether the Clerk could reduce her hours and for the Assistant Clerk to increase her hours. This was not settled.

With regard to the wording on liaising with GBC on planning issues Cllr Pearton requested that the Clerk remove the wording Clerk are not allowed to liaise with Borough Councils. Clerk confirmed that she will remove the wording from her report.

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Councillors matters

Cllr Pearton confirmed that pot holes are being fixed. Cllr Howard had organised the bollards to be fixed.

With regard to Merston Court, progress is being made and as yet no complaints have been made.

Cllr Jeffery circulated a thank you card from the previous Clerk which was appreciated by all members.

Cllr Jeffery confirmed that she had joined Cllr Grey to meet with Linda Carnall and partially resolved the outstanding issues of Parish property.

The Annual Assembly had come in within budget which had been pleasing. The attendance had been poor and disappointing. Cllr Jeffery suggested inviting the Mayor to the Annual Assembly rather than the usual November meeting.

The prize giving of the best garden could also be at the Annual Assembly which is an idea that could be placed on the next agenda for discussion.

Bus stop graffiti was reported and subsequently removed. Cllr Pearton confirmed that there could be funding for cameras to aid stopping this. This had been put to Bor Cllr Craske for taking forward.

The Annual Assembly Working Group would need to regroup earlier to enable the Newsletter to be finalised earlier next year.

Cllr Stanton addressed the subject of the GP surgery. She had personally had a bad experience that day and would be taking her complaint forward. It was concluded in discussions with members that there is nothing that the Parish Council could do. Each villager with a complaint needs to raise a complaint

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with the surgery. If they had not heard back within a short period of time then the villager could take this forward.

Cllr Fox requested information on the Noticeboard. She enquired as to whether the Parish install it or KCC. Clerk confirmed that the Parish install the noticeboard but have to gain permission from KCC for its installation. Clerk is taking this application forward.

Cllr Fox also suggested that a PC Surgery by way of a pop up café would be a great idea. Once the Café opens then this would be instigated, hopefully.

Cllr Fox also mentioned that the parking at Gads Hill School needs to be addressed.

Cllr Sales complained that there were many illegal motorbikes speeding through the village. He had had discussions with police whilst in Gravesend and apparently this issue was such a low priority that this is not dealt with. The police will not chase. Cllr Sparks insisted that villagers must go online and report otherwise these figures are not true figures.

Cllr Grey confirmed that he had received an email from Mark Cullen who works at Darenth Valley Hospital. There will be an NHS Big Tea on 5 July 2022 but villagers could run a Tea at any time. Cllr Grey wanted to know if there was any appetite for this in the village.

Cllr Grey also spoke of pavement parking. He had contacted Bor. Cllr Craske about this subject and Cllr Craske had suggested that the Parish consider passing a resolution for a “no parking zone” and then take this forward. Cllr Pearton suggested considering particular roads in Higham that could be a “no parking zone”. Cllr Sparks confirmed that the Department of Transport had carried out a consultation on parking on pavements but as yet there had been no conclusions circulated. Cllr Sparks suggested the Parish wait until the outcome of the consultation in the event that there would be a change nationally.

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Borough Councillor reports

Bor Cllr Pearton confirmed that the Theme Park applicants were still trying to keep the application alive. The RSPB were fighting against it for their protection of birds. Heritage England were also fighting against.

The Lower Thames Crossing is still in consultation.

Cllr Jeffery asked whether Cllr Pearton had heard any news from the boundary commission and he confirmed that there had not been any.

Cllr Pearton also confirmed that the trains to and from Higham will now be back to 2 per hour. He had fought for these timings to be reinstated and had been successful.

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To appoint representatives:

KALC Gravesham Area (2) – John Grey and Alan Howard
Police Liaison Committee (2) – John Grey and Alan Howard
Higham Memorial Hall (1) – John Grey

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To appoint Committees and Working Group members

Planning Committee

Les Pearton
Alan Howard
Toni Stanton
Nikki Fox
Jamie Rivett
John Grey ex officio
Liz Jeffery ex officio

Highways Committee

Sue Sparks
David Martin
Pam Holmes
Alan Howard
Jamie Rivett
Les Pearton
John Grey ex officio
Liz Jeffery ex officio

Personnel Committee (not public) John Grey and Liz Jeffery

Allotments Working Group – Alan Howard, Sue Sparks Nikki Fox

Village Plan Working Group – needs to be reviewed

Recreation Ground Working Group – Jamie Rivett, Nikki Fox, Alan Howard

Defibrillators Working Group – Sue Sparks, Alan Howard, Nikki Fox

Lower Thames Crossing Working Group – David Martin, Jamie Rivett, Sue Sparks and David Mead

Lorry Watch Working Group – sits with Highways Committee

Climate Change Working Group – Alan Howard, Nikki Fox and John Grey

Gravesham Right of Way Group (added during the meeting) – Alan Howard, Sue Sparks and Liz Jeffery

Higham Village Sports Association -

Chairman - Jamie Fox
Vice Chair – Cllr Pam Holmes
Secretary - Mike Holmes
Treasurer - Tony Lopes

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Bookings Officer – Cllr Nikki Fox

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To appoint to other posts

- Advisors - Peter Leakey and David Mead
- Footpaths Officer – Alan Howard
- Tree Warden – Recreation Group
- Rural Housing – Toni Stanton and John Grey
- Transport Board Representatives – Toni Stanton and Liz Jeffery

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Policies – deferred until next meeting

Standing Orders
Financial Regulations
Code of Conduct
Dispute Resolution Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy

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To propose acceptance of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2022.

Unanimous in agreement.

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Finance

Members confirmed that the insurance proposed by Cllr David Martin should be agreed with BHIB.

Clerk enquired as to whether any members had requested a quotation from Senseco. All members confirmed that they had not commissioned this report. Clerk to enquire on why we had received this.

To propose acceptance of accounts 2021/2022

Clerk explained to members what had been processed for the accounts. They had been approved and signed off by the Internal Auditor and now required approval of the Council and signed off by the Chairman and the Clerk and RFO.

There was a proposal and an acceptance and approval unanimous.

To propose acceptance of payments made or to be made

Cllr Fox questioned the mobile phone payments and the rental received from the Pre-School.

Cllr Sparks proposed and Cllr Howard seconded the payments. The vote in favour of acceptance was unanimous.

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18	18	<p>Memorial Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on new lease <p>There had been no movement on the lease due to the Parish making an enquiry on the land at the side of the building. Cllr Martin to take this forward.</p>
19	19	<p>Queens 70th Jubilee Celebration</p> <p>Working meeting was to go ahead in the library.</p> <p>Cllr Stanton confirmed that she and Cllr Jeffery and Cllr Grey had attended the school to judge a competition for the jubilee. There had been 43 entries which were all outstanding. Cllr Stanton would source chocolate coins as prizes for the children.</p> <p>Councillors also confirmed unanimously that £10 book tokens should be purchased.</p>
20	20	<p>Operation London Bridge</p> <p>This is the code name for the passing of the Queen. Working Group needs to be agreed to enable the Parish to mourn in line with protocol.</p> <p>Cllr Jeffery suggested that once the Jubilee celebrations are over then the Group should then change its name to Operation London Bridge.</p>
21	21	<p>Gardening Competition</p> <p>In explanation Cllr Jeffery explained that members would be given particular roads to check and identify which garden was pleasant to look at by the passer by. These recommendations would then go on a short list. The short list would then go to a Horticulturalist for their expert opinion. There will be several different categories. Prize Giving would be either at the Autumn Parish Council meeting or the Annual Assembly.</p> <p>Clerk Godwin to take forward with regards to lists of roads.</p> <p>Clerk to advertise on parish website and Facebook page.</p>
22	22	<p>Chairman's Award</p> <p>Cllr Jeffery confirmed that she had forwarded a draft Nomination Form to the Clerk for consideration by members. Clerk to circulate to all for approval.</p>
23	23	<p>Confirmation of date of next meeting 13 June 2022</p>
24	24	<p>Personnel</p> <p><i>Employment Contacts</i></p> <p>Cllr Grey considered moving this issue to the next meeting but Cllr Rivett</p>

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No **No**

proposed that a discussion point should be made between both employees within the next two weeks in order that the contracts be finalised in the next meeting.

Cllr Grey confirmed he and Cllr Jeffery had analysed the contracts and amended as they felt fit.

Cllr Rivett confirmed that he would meet with both Cllr Grey and Cllr Jeffery to discuss the way forward.

The Clerk confirmed that she would contact SLCC to ensure that her needs are covered in the contract.

Pensions

Both Linda Atkinson and Lesley Godwin confirmed that they were not interested in entering into a pension with the council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.10 pm

Signed Cllr John Grey
 Chairman

Dated 13 June 2022

- Clerk to circulate PCSO details for members to be able to discuss issues directly.
- Clerk to change profile picture to Clerk and not Acting Clerk
- Clerk to process a Health & Safety Policy
- Clerk to contact GBC, Community Warden and PCSO to request more be done around parking around the schools in Higham
- Clerk to contact Memorial Hall booking clerk to confirm that Cllr Grey will be attending meetings as Parish Council representative.
- Clerk to organise Village Plan process and consultation
- Clerk to organise grant funding for defibrillator
- Clerk to enquire with Senseco as to their report.
- Clerk Godwin to process lists of names of roads for the Gardening Competition.
- Clerk to advertise Gardening Competition on parish website and Facebook

Speed Watch Report

**All vehicles reported 16 March 2022 to 5 May 2022
15 speed watch sessions were held totalling 60 hours at roadside**

Site	Direction of traffic	Sessions held	Vehicles reported	Time at road side	Highest speed
Buckland Farm	Towards Higham Station	2	30		Under 45 mph*
Higham Primary School	Towards Lower Higham	2	Nil		Under 35 mph
Higham Primary School	Towards village centre	2	17		45 mph
School Lane	Towards Higham Railway Station	2	2		46 mph
Total		8	49	60 hours	46 mph

*Minimum speed for reporting 30 mph is 35 mph