

HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, on Monday, 14th January 2019 at 7.30 p.m

Present: Cllr. P. Allinson (Chairman)
Councillors: A. Carroll, J. Grey, A. Howard, E. Jeffery,
A. Mendzil, P. Oakeshott, J. Papadopoulos, L. Pearton (also
Borough) and S. Sparks.

In attendance: 6 Parishioners
Peter Leakey and Vikki Brooke (Parish Advisors)

Apologies for absence: Cllrs Craske, Sweetland and Holmes
Paul Hassell – Kent Community Warden.

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence.
There were no alterations to the Register of Members Interests.
The Clerk had passed the Annual Play Site Inspection Report to the CDC

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on Monday, 19th November 2018, were confirmed and signed.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

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

- a. P. 1317. Matters Arising – Amenity Land. Confirmation had now been received regarding the availability of the land.
- b. P. 1317. Matters Arising – Uncut grass bank to Chilton Drive. At this might mean KCC adopting the land in question Cllr. Sweetland had now offered his help in this matter.
- c. P. 1318. A copy of the Memorial Hall lease document was now awaiting collection at the solicitor's office.
- d. P. 1319. IFC. A response was awaited regarding the clarification of the assignation of responsibility for the “decaying wooden sleeper retaining wall” at the Recreation Ground and the resurfacing works to The Landway.
- e. P. 1319. EMC. The salt bags would be delivered later this week.
- f. Website report. Clive Stanley had prepared a report updating Members regarding changes that had been made to the website. The Gardens for Pleasure competition winners and photographs of the winning garden and presentations of awards at Higham Library, Christmas Street Fayre, Warden and Councillors Drop In sessions, History Group sessions and Church Street temporary closure had all been added in addition to the usual PC Minutes and Agendas.

Cllr. Sparks confirmed that she and Cllr. Howard would compile a “check list” for the weekly inspection of the play equipment, as required by our Insurer, and also one for the defibrillator. Members were in agreement that they would all take a turn to carry out these inspections on a rota basis.

Cllr. Papadopoulos alerted Members that the wooden posts to the pavement in Forge Lane were still missing and Cllr. Sparks confirmed that these had been reported.

Cllr. Sparks confirmed the current offer price for additional defibrillators stood at £1250 per machine plus £400 to connect to an electrical supply (P. 1317 refers). Three additional locations had now been identified as being outside the Doctors Surgery, Three Crutches P H and the Garage to Chalk Road. Members were in agreement to approach Cllr. Sweetland for a grant from his Members Fund and Cllr. Sparks texted him from the meeting to try to secure his financial backing for this project.

Parishioners' Matters.

On behalf of the Friends of St. Marys, Fiona Spirals updated Members regarding the wide variety of events which had been held at the Church to raise funds for its upkeep since the

group was formed 10 years ago. As more events were planned for the forthcoming year to raise funds for the restoration of the spire and belfry, she highlighted the need to update existing literature and produce a brochure to help these fundraising efforts. Members unanimously agreed to award a grant of £1000 to the group.

Barry Sutherland alerted Members regarding a meeting he had attended at the Civic Centre on 18/12/18 when a petition had been presented to the Borough Council regarding building on Green Belt Land. Cllr. Sparks advised Members that the petition had been presented by Bob Lane on behalf of the Gravesham Rural Residents Group and was entitled "Do Not Build on Gravesham's Green Belt". Cllr. Allinson agreed to raise this item at the next meeting of Parish Council Chairmen.

Annual Parish Newsletter 2019

The Clerk reminded Members that she required copy material for the newsletter by 25/1/19. Cllr. Jeffery reported that it was hoped that the speaker for the Assembly this year would come from the Millbrook Garden Centre and talk about how the business was set up. This contact was also interested in taking over the judging of the Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition. Members agreed these proposals.

Village Plan Information and Communications – Update Report

The Clerk had circulated an update report on Key Theme 5 of the Village Plan (Information and Communications – Knowing What Is Going On). Cllr. Sparks reported that the Communications Group had met twice to review the current channels / systems of communication currently in use and to formulate some proposals. These included drafting a Communications Policy document and a set of Appendices to sit alongside this including Updated Standing Orders, Freedom of Information Policy, Privacy Policy, Social Media Policy and Complaints Procedure. It was hoped that these documents would be drafted for discussion at the April Parish Council Meeting and adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May. All new documents would be collated into a ring binder with a copy being given to each Parish Councillor and would be also posted on the Parish Council website. The Annual Review of the documents would take place in April each year with the revised documents being adopted at the May meeting. Members unanimously endorsed these timescales and actions.

To consider the updating of the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

It was agreed that the Clerk would forward copies of the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to the Chairman in the first instance for these to be revised and come back to the Parish Council for approval.

To consider the appointment of a part-time Finance / Administration Assistant.

Members were in agreement to explore the possibility of appointing an additional part-time assistant to deal with finance, communication and sub committees. The Clerk would liaise with KALC to agree a suitable job description which would be approved by the Parish Council before being advertised. This matter would be handled by the EMC.

Councillors' Matters.

County.

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

Borough.

Cllr. Pearton reported that the first Borough Council meeting of 2019 had not yet taken place.

Parish.

Cllr. Jeffery advised Members that she had reported fly tipping cases to both the Lower Higham Road and Canal Road.

Cllr. Pearton reported that the brick wall to Findhorn on Gads Hill was now leaning over the pavement. Cllr. Sparks agreed to report this on the parish portal.

Cllr. Grey reported instances of drivers spinning their car wheels on the railway bridge. Cllr. Sparks asked if times and dates could be passed to the Clerk who could forward these on to the PCSOs and Kent Community Warden. Cllr. Grey asked if it might be possible to try again to set up the first Dialogue Forum with RS Skips which had formed part of the planning approval. It was agreed that Cllr. Pearton would speak with Cllr. Les Hills to see if a joint meeting could be held. The Clerk reported that she and Cllr. Jeffery would inspect the trees to Church Street.

Cllr. Howard reported concerns from both Father James and Teresa Joblin regarding the collapse of the wall in front of the Church which it was believed was linked to drainage problems on Telegraph Hill.

Cllr. Sparks advised Members that to commemorate 80 years since the start of WW2 the Knit and Natter Group planned to organise a Poppy Project over the next four years and involve the children at the Primary School to hand knit poppies. She reminded Councillors to each complete the current consultation paper regarding Kent Libraries. Higham Library was to be given slightly increased opening hours and the Library Extra scheme was going well.

Cllr. Carroll reported problems at Merston Court at the first luncheon club after the Christmas break when the cooker had been discovered to be in a dirty condition and had been turned off.

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. 20180380 Gore Green Farm (east of Gore Green Road), Gore Green Road.

* AMENDED APPLICATION / REVISED DESCRIPTION * Proposed conversion of and alterations to listed timber frame barn into a 4 bedroom dwelling; conversion / rebuilding of stables into a 3 bedroom dwelling, with carports and store and including linked addition at the rear for kitchen/diner and living room; demolition and removal of outbuildings, structures and paraphernalia and replacement of cart shed with outbuilding for use as carports and bin store; new boundary treatments, landscaping and other ancillary works including provision of parking spaces; and provision of new access arrangements to Black Cottage.

Appln. no. 20181300 31, Ash Crescent

Construction of a dormer extension in the front roof slope and conversion of the roof space into habitable rooms.

Appln. no. 20181319 1, Whitehouse Farm Cottages, School Lane

Erection of two storey side extension, single storey front and rear extensions.

b. Community Development Committee

The Chairman reported that the new electric heaters had been installed to the Pavilion and UK Power Networks would enable the electrical board at the end of the week. The proposal to extend the kitchen had been approved and the kitchen units needed to be installed. Quotations were awaited for two new windows, a ramp, and new basins and toilets. Work to the trees in the Recreation Ground, identified as a result of the recent tree survey, would be carried out by JM Forbes Garden Solutions at a cost of £4920 (incl VAT). It was hoped to hold another Bonfire Night Firework Display in 2019 although the Chairman acknowledged that the large attendance at the 2018 event was partly due to the cancellation of the Borough Council event because of the Beluga whale in the River Thames

c. Infrastructure Committee

A report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting which provided an update from Kevin Gore on current road and traffic management issues under consideration. She had recently met with Cllrs. Sweetland and Pearton (as County and Borough representatives) to discuss these initiatives first hand. Cllr. Sparks reported that she was hopeful that KCC might be able to provide some additional salt bins and would request these through the Parish Portal.

d. Executive Management Committee

A report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting which listed expenditure ideas discussed at the recent Budget Workshop. Cllr. Jeffery reported that she was currently in discussion with caterers regarding buffet menus for the Parish Assembly. The Emergency Committee had organised a delivery of winter salt to the bins in the village. She reminded those present that the salt in these bins was for use on pavements and roads in the village and not residents driveways.

e. Higham Speedwatch

Peter Leakey reported that a total of 7 Speedwatch sessions had been held over a period of 8 hours 30 minutes. Details of a total of 26 vehicles which had exceeded the speed limit had been forwarded to the Police. The highest speed observed was 46 mph. The application which had been submitted to Kent Police to add Canal Road to the list of Speedwatch sites within the village had been turned down as it did not meet the necessary criteria.

f. Kent Community Warden

As Paul Hassell was attending a meeting at Cobham Parish Council no report was given.

Finance.

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

Clerks salary (November)	1110.22
KCC (LGPS November)	419.43
HMRC (PAYE/NI November)	208.18
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KCC (LGPS December)	419.43
HMRC (PAYE/NI December)	208.18
Expenses for use of room as office (1/10/18 to 31/12/18)	227.50
Clive Stanley (webmaster services (1/10/18 to 31/12/18)	214.50
Gravesham Borough Council (monthly rent for garage)	49.31
RS Skips (skip hire for Pavilion)	222.00
Christmas Buffet in Library	116.28
SSE (electricity for toilets)	23.43
Alan Howard (key safe)	17.99
Barge Group Ltd. (playground equipment repairs)	416.26
Cantia (tree survey for RG)	495.00
Peter Allinson (travel expenses)	21.15
KALC (Chairmans conference for 4 delegates)	288.00
EDF Energy (Pavilion electricity)	61.52
John Grey (travel expenses)	13.50
Sue Sparks (Village Plan)	17.13
EDF Energy (Pavilion electricity)	12.29
Peter Allinson (cradle seat for swing unit)	102.00
Peter Allinson (refreshments)	18.86
Peter Allinson (firework evening expenses)	21.52

St. Johns College (quarter year rent for RG due 25/12/18)

750.00

To confirm the precept requested for the 2019/2020 financial year.

The Clerk reported that the precept request for £86,520.68 for the financial year 2019/2020 had now been submitted to Gravesham Borough Council.

To receive a report from the Budget Workshop held on 7th January 2019

A report of the Budget Workshop held on 7/1/19 had been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting and the contents were agreed by all members to be a true record. The EMC Budget Meeting would take place on 21/1/19

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 agreed to forward a complaint from a Parishioner regarding the unauthorised use of land as a builders yard at a property on Telegraph Hill to the Enforcement Officer.
2. Members noted comments from residents in St. Johns Road regarding an alternative siting for the new salt bin and agreed the new location.
3. Members noted complaints from the Memorial Hall Lettings Secretary regarding the tidiness of the facility following Youth Club meeting nights.
4. Members noted the invitation received from the Higham History Group to the celebration of the new Higham Archive Collection in Higham Library on 28/1/19.
5. Members were in agreement to extend an invitation to the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, to attend a Coffee Morning in Higham to meet members of the local community.

To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting.

This would take place on Monday, 25th February 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 10.20 p.m. by the Chairman.