

HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting followed by a Parish Council Meeting held at the Memorial Hall, School Lane on Monday, 21st May 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr.P.Allinson (Chairman)
Kent County Councillor: Bryan Sweetland
Councillors :A. Carroll, J. Grey, P. Holmes, A. Howard,
E. Jeffery, A. Mendzil, P. Oakeshott, J. Papadopoulos,
L. Pearton and S. Sparks.

In attendance: 2 Parishioners.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Harold Craske
Kent Community Warden Paul Hassell
PCSOs Kirsty Lowe and Frankie Stack

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

Cllr. Papadopoulos called for nominations for the position of Chairman by secret ballot.
Cllr. Allinson was elected as Chairman by a majority vote.

2. THE CHAIRMAN SIGNED HIS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORM.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman by secret ballot.
Cllr. Grey was elected as Vice Chairman by a majority vote.

4. ELECTION OF COMMITTEES.

It was proposed by Cllr. Papadopoulos, seconded by Cllr. Pearton and agreed by all Members present that the following committees should continue to be evaluated over the forthcoming year:-

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CDC)

Chairman Cllr. Allinson

Vice Chairman Cllr. Pearton

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (IFC)

Chairman Cllr. Sparks

Vice Chairman Cllr. Howard

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (EMC)

Chairman Cllr. Jeffery

Vice Chairman Cllr. Howard (substitute Cllr. Allinson)

5. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES.

These were agreed as follows:-

- a. K.A.L.C. - Cllrs Grey and Howard.
- b. Memorial Hall - Cllr. Oakeshott
- c. Village Transport - Cllrs. Howard, Grey and Jeffery.
- d. Merston Court - Cllr. Papadopoulos.
- e. G.R.O.W.C. - Cllrs. Howard and Sparks (substitute Cllr. Jeffery)
- f. Governing Body of Higham Primary School - Cllr. Pearton
- g. Police Advisory - Cllrs. Grey and Howard.
- h. Chalk Liaison Group - Cllrs. Oakeshott and Pearton
- i. Rural Housing - Cllrs. Oakeshott and Grey.
- j. Village Roads, Pavements and Lighting – Cllrs Sparks, Carroll, Grey and Peter Leakey.
- k. Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition – ALL MEMBERS
- l. Press Officer – Cllr. Jeffery.

- 6.** The Chairman thanked Liz Jeffery for continuing to act as the Parish Council Press Officer in addition to her roles as the Village Press Correspondent and Parish Councillor.

7. The Clerk proposed a vote of thanks to both Cllr Jennifer Papadopulos and Cllr. Anne Carroll for their help in providing and serving refreshments at Meetings. Cllr. Papadopulos thanked all Members for the support they had given her during her 15 years as Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

It was proposed by Cllr.Oakeshott, seconded by Cllr. Howard, and agreed unanimously by all Members present that Standing Orders, including amendments for the Annual Parish Assembly, Financial Regulations, and Delegated Powers for the Planning Committee, should be adopted.

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence.

There were no alterations to the Register of Members Interests.

The Clerk had passed the recent PR6 form to the CDC

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on Monday, 16th April 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. 1289. Matters Arising. A follow up email had been sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner as there had been no response from the local police following the reporting of instances of fly tipping. Acting Inspector Allen Searle of the Gravesham Community Safety Unit had made contact wishing to liaise with the Parish Council for the duration of a two month local fly tipping initiative. Cllr. Sparks asked Members to continue to notify her of any instances of fly tipping they had discovered in the village.
- b. P. 1290. Parish. The damage to the wooden bollard in Forge Lane had been reported. Members noted that Tony Atherton had now retired from the Kent County Council.
- c. It had been hoped to discuss the problem of anti-social behaviour in the lay by off Gads Hill but representatives from Kent Police had again given apologies for the Meeting and the item had therefore been taken off the agenda. Members expressed concern that the last time a PCSO had attended a Parish Council Meeting was September 2017.
- d. P. 1293 Correspondence. A full refund for costs paid towards the Volunteer Support Warden had now been made by KCC.

Parishioners' Matters.

None were brought to the notice of the Meeting.

Expression of interest as a Parish Council Advisor

Cllr. Sparks introduced Vikki Brooke who had approached the Parish Council offering her time as a volunteer advisor. Vikki outlined her current involvement with various village groups and stressed her enthusiasm to do more for the village. Following discussion Parish Councillors were in agreement to offer her this opportunity and Cllr. Sparks agreed to work out in greater detail where she would be involved. Parish Councillors thanked Vikki for attending the meeting and looked forward to the help that she would provide.

To receive an update on the preparations for the introduction of GDPR

Cllr Sparks had produced a report which had been circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting. Cllr. Sparks reported that she and the Clerk had now met with other Clerks and Parish Councillors from the other Gravesham Rural Parishes to further discuss how to start

the implementation process. The legislation would come into force on 25/5 and it had recently been decided by Parliament that Parish Councils did not need to appoint a Data Protection Officer although they would still need to comply with the Legislation. She and the Clerk were being assisted by two local residents who had experience of implementing the new legislation in their work places and were happy to share this knowledge of the process and law to help set up an Action Plan. She outlined the key components of this and the document forms an addendum to these minutes. Members were in agreement to endorse this Action Plan approach, together with the implementation of a Parish Council email domain, Clive Stanley would set up an individual email address for each Parish Councillor and hold a tutorial session to ensure that everyone was confident to use it. Members were advised to read the relevant Information Commissioners Briefing Paper which was available online, and each would review and list their own paper and electronic files containing personal information, for which a template would be provided.

To finalise arrangements for the 2018 Higham Gardens for Pleasure Competition.

The Clerk reported that Martin Wates of GBC Horticulture Department had kindly agreed to judge the short list of gardens for the 2018 competition but was unwilling to do it again as it fell at such a busy time for his department. Parish Councillors signed up for roads to view to produce the short list for this year's competition. It was unanimously agreed by all Members that the prize money for the competition would be increased to £150

To arrange dates for Parish Council Meetings in 2019.

The Clerk had circulated details of dates for Meetings in 2019 prior to the Meeting and the following were agreed:-

Mondays:- 14th January, 25th February, 8th April, 13th May (Annual Parish Council Meeting with Parish Council Meeting), 8th July, 9th September, 14th October, 18th November (Budget and Finance only) , and 25th November (Christmas Meeting with the Mayor of Gravesham).

The Annual Parish Assembly would take place on Thursday, 11th April 2019.

The remaining dates for Meetings in 2018 were as follows:-

Mondays:- 10th September, 15th October, 19th November (Budget and Finance only) and 26th November (Christmas Meeting with the Mayor of Gravesham).

The Parish Council election would take place on Thursday, 2nd May 2019.

Councillors' Matters.

County.

Cllr. Sweetland reported that once again the KCC budget allocation had been reduced, this time by £70m for the forthcoming financial year. This shortfall had to be shared between statutory and non- statutory services (of which the latter was the most popular with the electorate). A sum of £8m had been awarded from Central Government for pothole repairs, to which KCC had added £2m from reserves and a pothole blitz was now underway.

The Clerk enquired if a date was known when the Pepperhill refuse depot would reopen following the recent fire. Cllr. Sweetland replied that it was unlikely to be before the end of the summer.

Borough.

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

Parish.

Cllr. Oakeshott reported that she had received a complaint regarding the parking area in front of the parade of shops which needed brickwork rebuilding and complete re-surfacing. The

Chairman undertook to investigate who owned the area in front of the shops by speaking to the various shopkeepers.

Cllr. Pearton reported that the Headteacher at Higham Primary School was retiring at the end of the Summer Term and the Deputy Head would take over the running of the school in September until an appointment had been made. He had noted that a Jaguar car with flat tyres had been parked to the bus stop in Forge Lane.

Cllr. Grey expressed concern that the CPZ was not being adequately monitored in view of the proposed car park works at Higham Station. It appeared that the cost of a resident pass had increased to £15 per annum. Cllr. Grey reported that although the grass verge had been cut the grass cuttings had been left behind. Cllr. Pearton confirmed that cuts now only took place twice a year and only the front edge was cut leaving a strip at the back for the wildlife.

Cllr. Carroll reported on a new procedure for ensuring that the Borough Council was happy with the state of tidiness of the kitchen at Merston Court following the Luncheon Club.

Cllr. Holmes reported that quite a few children from the village were unsuccessful in securing a place at Higham Primary School this year due to the sibling clause and had had to accept places as far away as Cliffe and River View Park.

The Chairman advised that he intended raising the problems of the cutting of grass verges, parked cars at bus stops and the current problems in the Gads Hill lay by at the forthcoming Meeting of Parish Chairmen on 23/5.

REFRESHMENT BREAK

Reports

a. Planning

Plans were available for the following planning applications which had been received and reviewed by the Planning Committee:-

Appln. no. 20180446 2, Twin Cottages, Gravesend Road

Erection of single storey rear and side extension, installation of Juliet balcony to rear first floor bedroom and formation of one new parking space.

Appln. no. 20180420 27, Chilton Drive

Erection of front and rear dormers, conversion of loft space into habitable rooms, single storey rear extension and raised rear patio.

Appln. no. 20180437 41, Forge Lane

Proposed side and rear extensions, conversion of roof to create gable ends, removal of existing bay with hipped roof. Partial demolition of garage and addition of 2 car detached garage side extension with room above. Improvements to driveway access and general landscaping.

Appln. no. 20180481 9, Hollytree Drive

Demolition of single storey rear extensions and erection of part single storey and part two storey side and rear extensions to form entrance lobby.

Appln. no 20180380 Gore Green Farm (East of Gore Green Road), Gore Green Road

Proposed conversion of and alterations to listed timber frame barn into a 4 bedroom dwelling; conversion/rebuilding of stables into a 3 bedroom dwelling; demolition and removal of outbuildings, structures and paraphernalia; boundary treatments, landscaping and other ancillary works; and provision of new access arrangements to Black Cottage.

b. Community Development Committee

The Chairman reported that the Peninsula Band had been booked for the event on 20/7 and a meeting would take place soon with the Firework Company to discuss the programme for Bonfire Night. It had been agreed that the sub lease for the Pavilion would be in the name of Higham Community Leisure at an annual rent of £100. The Clerk would now contact the solicitor to progress this document. It was agreed that the Parish Council would pay the first installment of £594.09 for the Pavilion rates so as not to lose this facility. Information was now to hand regarding the application for Charity

Status and once the sub lease had been signed the application would be submitted. Consideration would be given to the possibility of asking for an extension to the lease. It was hoped that the Youth Club Committee would start to take financial decisions on behalf of the club on a termly basis. The Grand would be asked to quote for the cost of Youth Provision in the village from September.

c. Infrastructure Committee

Cllr. Sparks had circulated a written report to Members prior to the Meeting. Costs had been obtained for additional street lighting in School Lane from Alexandra Cottages to Steadman Close. Members agreed to consult with other neighbours in the area to see if there were any objections before further discussion at a future meeting. Members were asked to consider getting involved in the Task and Finish Groups associated with the Higham Village Plan and details would be emailed to everyone. Informal consultation would be taking place with residents local to the two potential improvement sites (the top of Forge Lane and the Gardeners junction). Members were in agreement that the IFC would draft a letter for residents for approval by the Parish Council. Litter picking in the village continued to be well supported and pupils at Gads Hill School would design a new poster. Members were in agreement with the estimated costs for a prize and printing of £150, and the purchase of additional litter pick equipment for the estimated cost of £100. A list of locations for additional litter bins was being prepared by the IFC and Members were in agreement that this should be submitted to GBC for consideration. Continued fly tipping to Crutches Lane might be improved if Higham worked with Shorne PC and Members approved this new approach. Local funding and sponsorship would be sought for additional planting projects and vacant allotments would be promoted in The Bridge, Village Voices, on the Website and on the Facebook page. The IFC would bring a proposal for a social event to thank all volunteers for their efforts. Local disruption to train services was expected with the introduction of the new Thameslink timetable. The next Community Surgeries would be held on 31/5 and 28/6 in Higham Library. The Public Meeting in Higham for the Local Plan Review would take place at the Memorial Hall on 30/5. Members were in agreement to a donation of £25 being made in lieu of charges for the use of the Hall.

d. Executive Management Committee

There was nothing to report.

f. Kent Community Warden.

In the absence of Paul Hassell the Clerk reported that it was hoped that the trailer unit to the lay by would be removed over the next few days. The coach had also been reported for having no tax and had been visited by the Police on several occasions. It had been observed that lorries were now using this lay by for overnight parking and consideration would need to be given to an overnight parking ban. Contractors working at the Copperfields Residential Home in Villa Road had caused problems for local residents with vans being parked on the corner of Chilton Drive. Members expressed concern that the Kent Community Warden was again unable to attend the Meeting.

Finance.

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

Clerks salary (March net)	1085.54
HMRC (PAYE/NI March)	208.20
KCC (LGPS March)	411.23
Clerks salary (April net)	1110.22
HMRC (PAYE/NI April)	208.18

KCC (LGPS April)	419.43
Clerk (exps. use of room as office 1/1/18 to 31/3/18)	227.50
Clerk (annual storage rental)	100.00
British Telecommunications plc (broadband)	170.97
EDF Energy (Pavilion electricity)	62.92
Elizabeth Hart (delivery of Local Plan Review flyer)	250.00
KALC (subscription 2018)	1248.24
A Stones Throw Design (Love Higham leaflet)	210.00
SSE (electricity for public toilets)	31.91
Elizabeth Jeffery (clerking expenses for APA)	50.00
Higham Age Concern (Sect. 137/139 grant)	400.00
MJ Read and Co. (preparation of annual accounts/annual return 2018)	624.00
BHIB (insurance renewal premium 2018)	1600.90
Singlewell Stationery and Print Ltd. (2018 newsletter)	1071.00
Singlewell Stationery and Print Ltd. (Village Plan)	564.56
Sue Sparks (Local Plan Review notices)	6.00
Sue Sparks (Local Plan Review signs)	3.90
St. Johns College (quarter year rent for RG due 25/6/18)	750.00
Singlewell Stationery and Print Ltd (Village Plan)	245.18

To consider the Accounting Statements and Annual Return for Local Councils in England and Wales for the Year Ended 31st March 2018 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 2018, 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. Being mindful of comments made at the 2017 Audit, Members had sought advice from KALC regarding carrying out an internal audit and names of people able to undertake this were now to hand.

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 from 7.00 p.m. on that evening, but the Clerk drew Members attention to the following item:-

1. Members noted a request for a grant to help purchase a new lawnmower by the Eagles FC Cllr. Sparks outlined the benefit of this to the wider community. It was agreed to request details of the mower and the latest set of audited accounts so that this item could be discussed further at the next meeting.

To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting.

This was given as being Monday, 2nd July 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

Any Other Business.

None was brought to the notice of the Meeting.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 11.15 p.m.