

HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, on Monday, 25th February 2019 at 7.30 p.m

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

In attendance: 6 Parishioners
Paul Hassell – Kent Community Warden.
Steve Taylor – Warden Manager.
PCSOs Kirsty Lowe and Rebekah Bruce.
Peter Leakey (Parish Advisor)
Clive Stanley – webmaster.

Apologies for absence: Kent County Councillor - Cllr. Bryan Sweetland
Vikki Brooke (Parish Advisor)

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting a period of silence was observed in memory of former Borough Councillor Peter Hart and Parish Councillor Dick Barltrop who had both died since the last meeting.

The Chairman accepted apologies for absence.

There were no alterations to the Register of Members Interests.

A risk assessment of the Recreation Ground had been carried out by Cllrs. Sparks and Howard and this document could be found within the correspondence folder. The Clerk confirmed that, as requested by our insurer BHIB, the Recreation Ground play equipment was now being inspected on a weekly basis by the GBC Park Ranger and his findings notified to the Parish Council by email.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on Monday, 14th January 2019, were confirmed and signed.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

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

- a. P. 1321. The Memorial Hall lease document had now been collected from our Solicitor.
- b. P. 1321 The Solicitor had confirmed that the Parish Council was responsible for the “decaying wooden sleeper retaining wall” and any additional resurfacing works to the Landway.
- c. P.1321. The salt bags had been delivered and were now in the salt store.
- d. P.1322. Updating various documents. Copies of all relevant documents were now with the Chairman.
- e. P. 1323. RS Skips had again declined to meet with the Parish Council.
- f. P. 1325. Correspondence. The Enforcement Officer was now dealing with the Telegraph Hill property.
- g. P. 1325. Correspondence. The salt bin would be located in Hermitage Road as requested by the residents.
- h. Website Report. Clive Stanley reported that recent updates to the website had included a winter weather warning and cold weather advice, LTC update and link to the BBC 1 South East “Inside Out” TV programme, local urgent health care preliminary survey, a draft Privacy Policy in addition to the usual PC Minutes and Agendas.

Cllr. Pearton agreed to speak with David Turner regarding the possible misinterpretation of comments made by him at the Borough Council Meeting on 18/12/18 regarding building on

Green Belt land within the Borough. He would ask Cllr. Turner if he could write to the Parish Council to set the record straight.

Parishioners' Matters.

Cllr. Oakeshott reported that she had received a complaint from a Parishioner regarding noisy youngsters hanging about outside Meadows Stores in Forge Lane in the evening. The Chairman reported that he and Cllr. Sparks had investigated and spoken to the shop owner. There was excellent CCTV coverage and only 2 youngsters were allowed in the shop at a time. A sign would be displayed to ask patrons to leave the shop quietly.

Annual Parish Newsletter and Annual Parish Assembly 2019.

The Clerk reported that the cost of the Newsletter from Singlewell Stationery would be £1088. Liz Hart would carry out the delivery again for £250. The catering for the Assembly would be by Kelly King of Fabulous Finger Foods who had produced a new style menu for the evening. It was agreed to cater for 35 guests.

To resolve that the Parish Council engages with EIS to explore options for setting up a new website and facebook page under Key Theme 5 of the adopted Higham Village Plan

An update on Key Theme 5 of the adopted Higham Village Plan had been circulated to Members prior to the Meeting. Cllr. Sparks explained that the aim was to improve and update the current website and increase the number of hits. She reported that a small working group had researched and assessed other Parish Council websites to discover what key principles should guide them in the update and improvement of our own with the ultimate aim being that in future we would be able to manage it ourselves. The group then looked at options available to redesign and build a new site. It was their recommendation that the Parish Council should engage with EIS to explore options for setting up a new website and Facebook page. Cllr. Mendzil suggested that RNIB could be invited to test the final product to assess for accessibility. Members unanimously agreed to adopt the recommendations of the sub group.

Councillors' Matters.

County.

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

Borough.

Cllr. Craske reported that Council tax would rise in Gravesham by 2.94% which was equivalent to 11p per week. He praised the efforts of the Gravesham Council officers who managed to keep the council within its agreed budget without making too many cuts. He alerted Members to a proposal to close both the Minor Injuries Unit in Gravesend and the GP Drop in Centre and re-locate both to new premises at Darent Valley Hospital. A consultation was currently underway and he urged everyone to respond. The Clerk would circulate a link by email. The Mayors Charity Dinner, partly organised by Cllr. Jeffery, had enabled a donation in excess of £1000 towards the Mayors Charities.

Parish.

Cllr. Grey reported that RS Skips had applied for a new Operators Licence for its site in Lower Shorne to increase the number of vehicles and trailers that it kept on site and had explained that this was necessary as it could not dispose of older vehicles on the second hand market at the present time. Members were mindful that meetings between RS Skips and the Parish Council (recommended as part of the KCC planning approval for the site) had still not gone ahead after a two year period. Members unanimously agreed to object to the application for the new licence on the grounds that there was no communication between KCC and the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and approval of this application could potentially mean that more vehicles would use the village roads to access the site. Cllr. Grey also reported that the verge to School Lane continued to be churned up by traffic parking on it and suggested

that it needed another post installed at the end. Consideration also needed to be given to the verge outside Dickens Court. He understood that appointment times at Higham Surgery had increased since the Practice had joined with that in a neighbouring area and the Cliffe Woods surgery was now the Head Office. Members expressed concern that as Higham was the only branch surgery within Gravesham and the rest were in Medway it would not wish to see it closed down. Cllr. Sparks had spoken to the Practice Manager during the preparation of the Village Plan and agreed to facilitate a meeting with him so that Members could express their views.

Cllr. Sparks reported that as 2019 marked the 80th Anniversary of the start of World War Two the Knit and Natter Group were working on an idea to make poppies over the next six years to go on display around the village. The poppies would be stored each year so that gradually more would be made thus resulting in a fantastic display by 2025. It was hoped that a bid might be submitted for KCC Member Funding towards the costs of this project.

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. 20190046 7, Colewood Drive

Erection of a two storey and single storey rear extension.

Appln. no. 20190033 24, St. Johns Road.

Application for a minor material amendment to planning permission reference no. 20170870 for the re-organisation of ground floor to enable loft conversion; erection of side and rear extension (to integrate garage for motorcycle, and kitchen and utility provision) and chalet style one-and-a-half storey rear extension; loft conversion including front and rear facing dormers and installation of Velux windows over staircase and to bathrooms; to allow removal of the gable glazing and installation of a Juliette balcony, side and rear extension reduction in the eaves and ridge height incorporating an alteration to the extension to increase the pathway width along the side of the property and installation of Velux windows over the kitchen pitched roof.

Appln. no 20170661 Site of 24, Telegraph Hill

** AMENDED APPLICATION / REVISED PLANS ** Retention of engineering operations within the rear garden comprising terracing, retaining walls and fencing and perimeter path.

Appln. no. 20181094 The Three Crutches, Old Watling Street

** REVISED DESCRIPTION / REVISED PLANS ** Erection of 2 no. detached dwellings with associated car parking and amenity space following reconfiguration of the Three Crutches PH car park and amenity space.

Appln. no. 20190105 Ardna Grena, Gravesend Road

Construction of new roof incorporating roof lights and an increase in height to provide habitable rooms in the roof space, erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension and construction of new roof over existing garage incorporating a canopy to the front.

Appln. no. 20190156 33, School Lane

Erection of single storey rear extension to form dining room and lounge.

- b. Community Development Committee
The Chairman updated Members regarding recent improvement works carried out at The Pavilion. The firework display had been booked for 5/11/19 but forms still needed to be completed and a deposit sent.
- c. Infrastructure Committee
An update had already been circulated to Councillors who approved all the associated expenditure costs. Cllr. Sparks reported that little progress had been made with the road improvement schemes due to pressure of work for Kent Highways staff. It was expected that the bollards would be installed in front of The Gardeners PH and an update was awaited regarding the drainage issues on Telegraph Hill. Advice had been given by a second contractor that drainage works needed to be completed on School Lane before any re-surfacing of The Landway could take place. An update regarding the CCTV signs to the lay by on Gads Hill to deter activity was awaited but SWA had proposed to install a gate across the lay-by in Crutches Lane and was in discussions with Shorne Parish Council. Posters and fliers would be produced to advertise the forthcoming Litter Pick on 30/3 and 31/3. The first phase of the tree works to the Recreation Ground would take place this week. An additional tree needed to be felled at a cost of £408 (incl. VAT) and Members unanimously approved this. KCC had agreed to fund the cost of one defibrillator and £350 had been received from the Knit and Natter Group towards another. The Clerk was asked to contact KALC to see if a licence was necessary for those buildings “hosting” the defibrillators. Members approved the actions necessary to progress the purchase and installation of the three machines. A “One Year On” display for the Village Plan was planned and possibly a celebration event later in the year.
- d. Executive Management Committee
The menu for the Annual Parish Assembly had been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting. It was agreed to hold a joint CDC / IFC / EMC Meeting on 11/3/19 which would include looking at the Standing Orders and listing other documents which needed to be updated. The Clerk agreed to book the Memorial Hall.
- e. Higham Speedwatch
Peter Leakey reported that a total of 11 Speedwatch sessions had been held over a period of 10 hours 51 minutes. Details of a total of 71 vehicles which had exceeded the speed limit had been forwarded to the Police. The highest speed observed was 46 mph. outside Buckland Farm. Another 4 or 5 sessions were planned later this week.
- f. Kent Community Warden
Paul Hassell reported that he had received a complaint from a resident of Brice Road regarding the practice of chalking around dog mess found on the pavement in the village before it was removed. The Parking Enforcement team had been involved regarding continued parking outside the Copperfields Residential Home in Villa Road. He warned Members that the impending closure of the lay-by to Four Elms Hill, Hoo, used by lorries delivering to the new Amazon depot on the Hoo Peninsula, might mean that the lay-by to Gads Hill was used more frequently and advised them to monitor the situation. Warden Manager Steve Taylor reported that the Community Wardens were now working closely with Trading Standards particularly with regard to investigating fly tipping. He asked those present to report all incidences to Paul and keep an eye open for any evidence on site that could lead to a prosecution.
- g. Kent Police
PCSOs Kirsty Lowe and Rebekah Bruce were present at the Meeting. They reminded those present that PCSO Joanne Hartley continued to hold her monthly surgery at Hayley’s Tea Rooms and this was advertised by a poster in the window or on social media. Incidences of fly tipping were being recorded on the GBC interactive map.

Finance.

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

Clerks salary (January)	1110.22
KCC (LGPS January)	419.43
HMRC (PAYE/NI January)	208.18
Gravesham Borough Council (monthly rent for garage)	59.15
British Telecommunication plc (broadband)	181.47
SSE (electricity for toilets)	38.65
Alan Howard (head torches)	29.98
Mr P. Leahey (2000 dog bags)	40.99
Clerk (emergency planning)	95.30
Clerk (printer cartridges and stationery)	175.33
Friends of St. Marys (S.137/139 grant)	1000.00
Business Stream (water for toilets)	39.58
Sue Sparks (new padlock and keys for RG)	64.31
Martin Fielder-White (internal audit)	80.00
G. Knight (website maintenance)	95.00
Donation in memory of Peter Hart	50.00
Donation in memory of Dick Barltrop	50.00
St Johns College (quarter year rent for RG due 25/03/19)	750.00

To receive and ratify the report from the EMC Budget Meeting held on Monday, 21st January 2019.

A copy of the budget agreed at the Meeting held on Monday, 21st January 2019 had been circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting. It was proposed by Cllr. Sparks, seconded by Cllr. Pearton, and agreed by all Members that this be accepted as a true record.

To consider the effectiveness of the current system of internal control and audit as required under Regulations 4 and 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2003)

At the Budget Meeting Members had reviewed the effectiveness of the current system of internal control and audit as required under Regulations 4 and 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2003). It was agreed that Nigel Wharton should be asked to carry out the usual preparation for audit as in previous years and Martin Fielder-White would carry out the internal audit (as he had done in 2018). The Notice of Audit would be displayed on noticeboards within the village and also on the Parish Council website.

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. She would attend a briefing meeting for the forthcoming Parish Council election at the Civic Centre on 13/3/19.
2. The leaning wall at Findhorn was being monitored by the building inspector.
3. It was agreed to invite the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner to a Coffee Morning in Higham Library on a Friday morning sometime in either May or June – date to be confirmed by Kent Police.

To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting.

This would take place on Monday, 8th April 2019.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Pearton reported activity at both Shorne Mead Fort and Buckland Farm with concrete plant observed. He would keep an eye on the situation. Cllr. Pearton suggested that residents could be asked to submit any photographs they had taken of the village and the best of these could be turned into a calendar.

The Clerk reported that she had been advised that the Surveyor would visit the village on 6/3/19.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 10.40 p.m.