

## **CHAIRMAN'S LETTER**

Dear Residents

It's nearly a year since I became Chairman of Higham Parish Council and the two things I've discovered are that time passes very quickly and our previous Chairman has been a hard act to follow!

Our long-standing Parish Councillor, Jennifer Papadopulos, did a sterling job for 15 years as Chairman robustly protecting our village and environment from numerous attacks, including Boris' Estuary Airport, the Lower Thames Crossing, renewal of the Recreation Ground lease and inappropriate development pressures, to name but a few.

It is with sadness that Jennifer has decided not to stand for re-election to the Parish Council in the forthcoming Local Elections on 2 May 2019, having served Higham as both a Parish Councillor, Vice-Chairman and Chairman for a continuous period of 36 years.

Another Councillor not seeking re-election is Pat Oakeshott, who has served as Parish Councillor, Vice-Chairman, Borough Councillor and Mayor of Gravesham for a continuous period of 32 years. Both Jennifer and Pat will be sorely missed for their vast experience and dedication to the well-being of Higham and its residents. We wish them well and hope they enjoy their 'retirement' from public service.

Although the last parish year (2018/19) seems to have passed quietly, apart from the 5th November Firework display, the Parish Council has been working hard in the background analysing the results of the 'Love Higham' Village Plan and producing a five-year plan of projects and improvements to the Community and Infrastructure of Higham. These projects have already started with the trimming and maintenance of the trees surrounding the Recreation Ground and, hopefully, as the year progresses you will notice other projects starting and being completed.

The 'Higham Village Volunteers' have actually been volunteering for over three years already with regular litter picks, gardening and maintaining the green spaces in the village and helping to minimise the continuing problem of dog fouling. It is a shame that the energy of these volunteers is used to clear up after inconsiderate residents, when their time could be spent to much better effect improving Higham into a village we can all feel proud of.

Following last year's 5th November Firework Celebration, the comments, received from residents, were so positive that the Parish Council has decided to hold another Bonfire Night Firework Display on, of course, Tuesday, 5 November 2019 – so please mark up your dairies now.

Finally, I have to thank all of the residents of Higham who so generously and selflessly give up their personal time to help our village thrive and flourish. There is a significant number of them, so please forgive me for not naming you individually or if I miss you out.

To the following residents I say thank you and please carry on the good work:

The Age Concern Luncheon Club volunteers, the Youth Club volunteers, The Memorial Hall Committee, Higham Village volunteers, the uniformed leaders of the Scout and Guide Associations, our local Churches, the Friends of St Mary's Church, our Kent, Borough and Parish Councillors, our Parish Clerk and finally the local farmers and volunteers who help keep Higham mobile during the spells of severe weather.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Parish Assembly on Thursday, 11 April 2019 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall.

Kindest regards to all Residents and wishing you a bright future in Higham.

*Peter Allinson,  
Chairman of Higham Parish Council*

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## **HAPPY RETIREMENT AND THANK YOU LADIES!!**

We would like to thank Michael Papadopoulos for the front cover photograph which shows Cllrs. Jennifer Papadopoulos and Pat Oakeshott as they retire from Higham Parish Council with a staggering total of 68 years of public service between them.

(Please see [Chairman's letter.](#))

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### **FROM THE PARISH CLERK**

What links Benny the Beluga whale\*, living in the River Thames off Gravesend, to the village of Higham?

The whale was first spotted in the river east of Gravesend in September 2018 feeding frequently near a group of barges moored on the Thames. Nicknamed "Benny", the whale (whose sex and age are unknown), appeared to have been enjoying the wealth of fish in the Thames which include flounder and whiting, and was totally oblivious of the hordes of journalists assembled on the riverbank or the helicopter which circled overhead streaming live footage to the nation. Although it is unusual for members of the species to be found alone, he appeared to be in good health, diving and surfacing and travelling around his immediate area as he foraged for food. Benny has been closely monitored by environmentalists who have been working hard to keep him safe from the numerous vessels which make their way

up and down the Thames on a daily basis, as well as ensuring that he is not disturbed or distressed by boats getting too close to him to have a look. But as a local expert put it ‘The Thames is not just full of fish it is also full of ships’. The river is the Heathrow Airport of the shipping world with nearly 11,000 vessels visiting the Thames every year.

This prompted Gravesham Council to launch a social media campaign codenamed #KeepBennySafe to encourage people to be mindful of the whale and give it lots of space. As part of this campaign its annual firework display in November 2018, which is usually launched from a barge in the river, was postponed as disturbing the whale would be in breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Highways England has also admitted that the presence of Benny has delayed the progress of necessary underground tests and surveys ahead of the application for formal planning permission for the Lower Thames Crossing as they have had to allocate more time than first anticipated to save disturbing the whale.

And what is the link between Benny and Higham? Well if you attended our Firework Night display in November last year you might have been surprised at the extra-large number of people who were there. Our display was publicised by GBC as an alternative to its own and this ensured that my telephone did not stop ringing with people asking how they could get to the village and where our display was going to be held.

If you missed our Bonfire Night Firework Display in 2018 we will be holding it again this year – just keep an eye open for our posters in the village or check our website or Facebook page for details nearer to the time.

Did you attend our Annual Parish Assembly in 2018? If not, make a note of this year’s date (11 April 2019) and make sure you come along for an excellent evening with refreshments. Our speaker will be Tammy Woodhouse from Millbrook Garden Centre and her talk is entitled ‘The History of Millbrook Garden Centre’. Tammy will give us an insight into how this family business, which was started locally 40 years ago, has grown to its present size.

*Linda Carnall,  
Parish Clerk*

\* Information regarding Benny current as at time of going to print (although he has not been seen for a while!).

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**RIP - COUNCILLORS PETER HART AND DICK BARLTROP**

Parishioners will be saddened to learn of the death of Cllr. Peter Hart who served two terms as a Higham Ward Borough Councillor from 1983 until 1991 and (with his wife Sylvia as Mayoress) became Mayor in 1988.

We are also sad to report the death of former Parish Councillor Dick Barltrop who retired from the Parish Council in June 1996 to move to Malvern but still kept in touch with his friends in the village as recently as last Christmas. Virtually singlehandedly Dick was responsible for frustrating the attempts to progress the Wainscott By-Pass for an 18-month period until, ultimately, we ran out of reasons why it should not be built.

Both Peter and Dick will be sadly missed by us all.

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## **INVITATION**

**You are cordially invited to attend the  
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY  
at HIGHAM MEMORIAL HALL  
on THURSDAY, 11TH APRIL 2019 at 7.30pm**

.....  
**Featuring a talk by  
TAMMY WOODHOUSE  
on  
'THE HISTORY OF MILLBROOK GARDEN CENTRE'**

**Tammy will give us an insight into how this family business was started 40  
years ago.**

**Buffet table will be provided.**

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## **O P E N H O U S E**

**at Higham Village Club**

**on Saturday, 8 June 2019**

**4.30pm until 6pm.**

**Please come and wish**

**JENNIFER PAPADOPULOS**

**and  
PAT OAKESHOTT**

**a happy retirement and enjoy a cuppa and cake with us all.**

**No need to book – just turn up on the day.**

<b>DATES FOR PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS – 2019 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall on:</b>	
Monday, 8 April	(Easter Monday 22 April).
<b>Thursday, 11 April</b>	<b>ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY.</b>
Monday, 13 May	Annual Parish Council Meeting.
Monday, 15 July	
Monday, 9 September	
Monday, 14 October	
Monday, 18 November	Budget and Finance meeting only.
Monday, 25 November	Christmas meeting with the Mayor of Gravesham.
<b>Members of the public are welcome to all meetings.</b>	

**DON'T FORGET!**

Hard copies of the Agendas and Minutes of all our meetings are available within Higham Library, as well as [here on our web site](http://www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk), which is: [www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk](http://www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk)

Dates for Parish Council meetings during 2019 are listed above. Members of the public are welcome to all meetings.

*Linda Carnall  
Parish Clerk*

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**CROSSING POINTS AND FOOTPATHS**

**PARISHIONERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED NOT TO OBSTRUCT  
MOBILITY SCOOTER CROSSING POINTS WITH DROPPED KERBS  
WITHIN THE VILLAGE BY PARKING OVER THEM AS THESE ARE NOW  
BEING MONITORED BY THE POLICE.**

PLEASE TAKE CARE NOT TO OBSTRUCT THE FOOTPATH IN ANY WAY  
FOR OTHERS.

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**SIMPLIFIED DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018/2019**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£</b>
Balance B/Fwd	95,844.97	Recreation Ground	3,926.88
Precept 2018/2019	86,449.98	General Administration	7,236.43
Allotment Rents	1,315.50	Allotments	0.00
Other Receipts	4,643.18	Miscellaneous Expenses	23,871.49
Flexi A/C Interest	38.69	Subscriptions and Fees	1,282.20
National Savings Investment a/c Interest	4.74	Clerk's Salary, N.I., PAYE, LGPS and expenses for provision of office	21,931.10
VAT Reclaim	1,882.18	VAT Paid	3,277.52
Grants received	1,650.00	Grants made	3,060.00
CDC/Village Plan	<u>1,060.10</u>	CDC/Village Plan	<u>7,170.85</u>
	<b>£192,889.34</b>		<b>£71,756.47</b>

**BALANCES IN HAND AS AT 31.3.2019**

	<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>
Lloyds Current Account	62,679.47		
Lloyds Flexi Account	57,793.42		
National Savings Investment Account	658.98		
Lloyds Special Projects Account	<u>1.00</u>		
	<b>£121,132.87</b>		<b>£121,132.87</b>
			<b>£192,889.34</b>

The balance carried forward reflects the unused general and specific contingency funds, as well as funds for work carried out, and for which invoices are still awaited.

A copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31.3.18 are available for public inspection in Higham Library.

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## **KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

It continues to be a very busy year at Kent County Council. At the moment we are just about to agree our budgets for 2019/20 and the council tax will be increased by just under 5% this year. That sounds like a big increase but the council tax element is just under 3% and then there's the 2% adult social services care charge which the government introduced a couple of years ago. Again, this year our funding from central government has been reduced by around £50m.

Over the last few months I've had a number of meetings with Highways England, Kent County Council Highways and the Borough Council on the plans to build the Lower Thames Crossing. Together with our MP, Adam Holloway and Bob Lane, I've met with Tim Jones from Highways England, he is the Project Director for the LTC. We had a fairly positive meeting and he explained some of their plans which included the enormous construction site that will be built adjacent to Thong and close to the Southern Valley Golf Course, which will close, probably within the next two years, if not sooner. The site will be the base for around 2,000 construction workers and this is quite worrying for local people. The only positive I can see and something that I've been pushing for is that these new jobs should be offered to local people. There is also an opportunity for dozens of new apprenticeships to be created for local young people.

Over the last 12 months I've been asked by several Parish Councils to fund quite a lot of traffic monitoring on local roads which may be useful to provide statistics as to the direction of traffic, the speed of traffic and whether the vehicles are cars or lorries. We can use this when challenging some of the Highways England assumptions.

On a positive note, our local schools in Gravesham Rural are all improving with many achieving OFSTED ratings of good or excellent. This has been largely down to the hard work of the teaching staff and governors supported by Kent County Council.

I am always available for any parishioners who need help or advice with any of KCC services and my contact details are at the bottom of this report.

As a KCC Member, I have a discretionary grant available which next year is being reduced from £20,000 to £15,000. Wherever possible, I discuss with local groups or Parish Councils where best to allocate the funding which is usually spent on community projects or small-scale Highways work that might need doing.

Over the last year, I have used the grant funding to:

- Help fund an educational summer camp for 1st Higham Scouts.
- Provided a number of public access Defibrillators/AEDs around our villages.
- Provided Yellow Salt/Grit road side bins, verge posts etc.

*Bryan Sweetland,*  
*KCC Councillor for Gravesham Rural*  
Telephone: 07976 309171 but e-mail is best: bryan.sweetland@kent.gov.uk

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## **KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (KALC)**

This organisation, of which Higham Parish Council is a member, helps local councils with legal advice, training and all matters arising from day-to-day business of your Council. Individual Councillors and Parish Clerks have access to the Association for this valuable service.

Usually two members of the Parish Council attend local meetings held for all Parishes within Gravesham Borough where local issues are raised and discussed. This may include local planning developments and their impact, lorry parking, the Lower Thames Crossing and Police matters.

An annual conference takes place at Ditton where our representative Councillors are able to talk with Councillors from other Kent Parishes to discuss various matters. The November 2018 conference marked the 71st Annual Meeting.

*Councillors John Grey and Alan Howard*

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## **REPORT FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR**

It was a very great pleasure and privilege for me to serve as Mayor of Gravesham. I thank all those who did me the great honour of presenting me with a magnificent portrait in full mayoral robes. I have donated this to the Parish Council. It will eventually be placed in the Memorial Hall, alongside that of a previous Mayor, Pat Oakeshott. My grateful thanks go to all.

As Mayor, my wife and I had performed over 280 engagements (not including meetings) over the whole Borough. After retiring from the Mayoralty, I had assumed that life would become somewhat easier. I was wrong. Apart from being invited back to many organisations, I have taken on many new duties. On retirement I was appointed immediately to the Council Cabinet, firstly taking on the portfolio of Community Services and then Housing. This has resulted in attending many meetings and events throughout the area. During this difficult time, I have tried to combine as many events and duties in Higham as is possible. I have and always will fight to defend the Parish from inappropriate development in the Green Belt and will continue to offer help and support with planning applications. With your help I will continue to do so.

The Borough Council is under constant pressure with reductions to its budget from central Government. However, I pay tribute to all the Council's staff for all they do to continue to provide essential services. They are dedicated professionals who have given over and above what is required of them.

I thank all of you for your help and encouragement.

*Harold Craske,  
Borough Councillor*

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### **VILLAGE CORRESPONDENT**

Higham has a village correspondent who is your link to the local press in the Gravesham area. If your group or association has any news they wish to share please contact LIZ JEFFERY on telephone 01474 747090 or by e-mail: jefferyelizabeth18@googlemail.com

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### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Over the past year residents' planning applications have been plentiful and it's pleasing that so many prefer to improve their homes rather than to move on. I am happy to report that the majority of applications have been recommended by Higham Parish Council for approval by Gravesham Borough Council which takes our comments into consideration. The Parish Council tries to support as many applications as it can but this is not always possible if the neighbours have concerns regarding the plans or they are not in keeping with the immediate area.

To maintain the ethos of the village I continue my pledge to try to preserve the Green Belt and this may impact on certain planning applications which infringe Green Belt land.

Please continue to submit your planning applications as we welcome improvement and enhancement of the village without unnecessary and unbecoming expansion.

*Les Pearton*

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### **RURAL HOUSING**

Your Parish Council strongly objected to 'Older Peoples Bungalow' and 'Mixed Housing' on Canal Road, as it was felt that it was too far away from any facilities (doctor's surgery, shops and library) with an infrequent bus service. Since the objections, it is hoped that the application has been abandoned by the Borough.

The other application for housing was at the back of the station car park. This was, again, considered unsuitable for living by the Parish Council and an objection was registered with the Borough. It was considered to be more suitable for the original plan for four industrial units to be built on the site.

*Pat Oakeshott*

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## **LOWER THAMES CROSSING**

Consultation took place between 10 October and 20 December 2018. Over 26,000 people responded to the questionnaire.

Highway's England say 'The next stage of the project's development will be to work through people's comments in detail and use them to produce an updated design which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for planning consent. The application and examination process will offer people a further opportunity to share their views on the project. Subject to statutory processes construction could start in 2021, with the new road opening to traffic in 2027.'

*Sue Sparks*

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## **HIGHAM COMMUNITY PAVILION**

During 2018, apart from the village volunteers improving and maintaining the outside grounds of the Pavilion, very little work was undertaken on the refurbishment of the interior.

I'm very pleased to announce that since the beginning of 2019 a new group of volunteers have joined the team, problems have been resolved and the interior refurbishment has progressed at a fast rate.

A new heating system was installed and commissioned in January, followed by the extension and fitting out of the kitchen. Progress is now being made on building a disabled toilet, refurbishing the existing toilets and fire exit and entrance ramps to allow disabled access to the building.

It is hoped to have a grand opening event for the Higham Community Pavilion in late summer or early autumn 2019, where Higham residents will be able to see what refurbishments the Pavilion has had and how their community groups will be able benefit from the facilities available.

*Peter Allinson,  
Pavilion Management Committee*

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## **RECREATION GROUND**

February 2019 witnessed the start of the Parish Council's five-year plan of maintenance and improvement works to the Recreation Ground.

The first phase of the work involved having a full survey of the condition of the 73 trees surrounding the Recreation Ground and the Multi Use Games Area.

Using the results of the survey, work was started in February to pollard and undertake preventative maintenance upon the most vulnerable trees. This work was then halted due to regulations designed to protect nesting birds and will restart in the autumn.

Other improvements to the Recreation Ground and its facilities are planned for the coming next five years to provide easier access, more play equipment and, ultimately, more activities and pleasure for the residents of Higham to enjoy.

The Recreation Ground is a great asset to Higham and village life, so please respect it and help to keep it free of litter and dog mess for all residents to enjoy.

*Peter Allinson*

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## **PROBLEMS!**

If you should spot a street light not lit or a pothole developing in a road please personally report it direct to Kent Highways on 03000 418181 or via their web site at [www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem](http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem) providing as much information as possible, for example, which property is the problem outside of, number on lamp standard, how deep the pothole is, etc, as this means that it will be dealt with more quickly and a specific reference number will be given for you to check on progress.

Thank you.

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## **RIGHTS OF WAYS**

I have walked most of the Rights of Ways in the Parish and found them in good order. Unfortunately, horse and rider are still using the footpaths and churning them up making some unwalkable in wet weather.

A footpath off Canal Road has been very overgrown with overgrowth from the railway land and there were also broken steps along the way. I informed the Rights of Way Officer and he has arranged a superb clearance, had the steps mended and even a hand rail fitted.

I have heard that the long-distance Thames Path from source to the barrier is being extended to the sea. This means that the public footpath from Gravesend past Shorne and Cliffe Fort will be improved.

*Anne Waugh*

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## **ALLOTMENTS**

Another busy year on the Allotments – especially with the long hot summer of 2018!

Tenants have been working hard to plant and harvest vegetable and fruit crops. It's very rewarding when you pick those first strawberries or pull up delicious carrots ..... as well as all the fresh air, exercise and fantastic views across the countryside and marshes down to the river.

If you like the sound of this and are interested in renting a plot (just £25 per year) there are some vacant plots, so get in touch and we can arrange a visit so that you can find out how it all works.

Contact the Parish Clerk by e-mail [highampc@hotmail.com](mailto:highampc@hotmail.com) or telephone 01474 822642.

*Sue Sparks*

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## **THANK YOU, HIGHAM VILLAGE!**

Once again thanks must go out to the residents of Higham for their generosity during 2018. A magnificent total of £2,435 was collected in Higham over two separate days of activities.

On Friday, 16 November the 1st Higham Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Leaders) along with village volunteers collected non-stop from 6am to 8.30pm at Higham Station, during the morning rush hour, outside the shops in School Lane during the day and going house-to-house, during the early evening. The generosity of the Village meant that £2,078 was passed onto the BBC 'Children in Need' Charity to help children less fortunate than us. This collection was the 30th consecutive year that the 1st Higham Scout Group have collected for 'Children in Need' and was the third highest total ever collected.

On Friday, 14 December the seventh Higham Christmas Fayre was held outside the parade of shops in School Lane. Sadly, our one market stall is not quite the size of the Manchester or Continental Christmas markets but we still managed to raise £357 which was split equally between The Kent Air Ambulance and the Ellenor Hospice, this being the largest amount collected so far.

Our thanks go out to all those who donated and especially to the residents who donated raffle prizes and Christmas items to sell, along with all the shops in the School Lane parade and the Higham Post Office for their generous sponsorship, raffle prizes and help on the day.

If you want to help or donate time, raffle prizes, Christmas items to sell or run another stall at the eighth Christmas Fayre, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Allinson on 01474 823806 for more details.

*Peter Allinson and Nigel Gillett*

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## **PARISH WEBMASTER**

Your single source on-line for local Higham events, news, photographs and information on village organisations, as well as Parish Council meeting dates and documents, is here: **[www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk](http://www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk)**. It has main village events and celebrations plus information on: Community Pavilion Project, Lower Thames Crossing, Councillor & Community Warden Surgeries, Gardens for Pleasure Competition and much, much more.

In the coming few weeks, a refreshed and restyled parish website will be launched. Have a look and let us know what you think!

Any village group or society is welcome to publish important information for the community. Please contact Linda Carnall, Parish Clerk, on 01474 822642 or e-mail [enquiries@higham-kent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@higham-kent-pc.gov.uk)

*Clive Stanley,  
Parish Webmaster*



## **SNOW!!**

A big thank you to those residents who cleared snow from their roads and pavements and helped their neighbours this winter.

We have a group of volunteers for our village Snow Team. They will respond to requests from residents – who need help clearing snow or getting shopping, as well as gritting some of the communal areas.

If you, or someone you know, needs help during snowy/icy weather – contact the Parish Council ([highampc@hotmail.com](mailto:highampc@hotmail.com) or telephone 01474 822642 or message us via the Higham Parish Council Facebook page).

Information about salt bins and gritting is on the Kent County Council website [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) or contact the Parish Council (e-mail and telephone number above).

The Parish Council has installed some additional salt bins and has supplies of extra salt.

**The salt/grit in the KCC bins and the Parish Council bins is only for use on the village pavements and roads. Please do not use it for your own drives and paths.**

If you would like to volunteer for the Snow Team, please contact the Parish Clerk.

*Liz Jeffery*

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## **SNOW AND ICE – USEFUL INFORMATION**

When snow and ice are forecast... just a reminder that the salt bins in the village have been filled by KCC. The mixture in the bins is for use on village roads and pavements. Please do not use it on your home drives and paths.

Updates on weather and road conditions will be posted here on the Parish Council Website or you can contact us via e-mail at: **enquiries@higham-kent-pc.gov.uk** or **telephone 01474 822642**.

Weather updates can be found at: [www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings#?date=2019-01-31](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings#?date=2019-01-31)

The Kent County Council Twitter account is a good source of information: <https://twitter.com/KentHighways>.

KCC Highways Traffic updates can be found at: [www.kenttraffic.info](http://www.kenttraffic.info)

Cold weather advice at <https://kccmediahub.net/cold-weather-warning-kent-urged-to-keep-warm-and-well745>



If you see fly tipping in progress – phone 999 and report it to the Police.

If you find fly tipping – report it to Gravesham Borough Council [www.gravesham.gov.uk/flytipping](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/flytipping) or phone 01474 337000.

If you are looking for someone to get rid of rubbish for you – follow these guidelines:

- 
- S**uspect ALL waste carriers
  - C**heck with the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 that the provider taking your waste away is licensed
  - R**efuse unexpected offers to have waste taken away
  - A**sk what will happen to your waste
  - P**aperwork should be obtained – get a full receipt

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## **DOGS**

Supplies of dog waste bags continue to be available for Higham residents from Higham Library.

DON'T FORGET AS LONG AS YOUR DOG WASTE IS IN A BAG IT CAN BE PLACED IN ANY RUBBISH BIN WITHIN THE VILLAGE.

BAG IT -- BIN IT!

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## **POWER CUT? CALL 105**

105 is a new three-digit national power cut phone line that people can call to report, or get information about, power cuts if you find yourself without power during severe weather or other incidents. Instead of calling your energy supply company (that you pay your bills to) the new 105 number will put you straight through to your local electricity network operator (in the case of Higham this is UK Power Networks).

You can also call 105 with any welfare concerns related to a power cut, or if you are worried about the safety of over or underground electricity cables or substations.

You can call 105 from most landlines or mobile phones and calls are free of charge.

More information can be found at: [www.powercut105.com](http://www.powercut105.com)

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## **VIRGIN CABLES BROADBAND CONNECTION SPEED**

If enough people register, then Virgin will consider laying cables, which would make a huge difference to the Broadband connection speed available in Higham. For more information, please go to:

<https://cablemystreet.virginmedia.com/#!/new-build>

It only takes a couple of minutes to register.

Thank you.

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## **HIGHAM GARDENS FOR PLEASURE COMPETITION 2018**

This is an [annual competition](#) organised by Higham Parish Council and judged on our behalf by horticultural officers from Gravesham Borough Council. There are no entry forms for Parishioners to complete as every front garden in the village is considered when the judges tour the Parish looking for gardens that give the passer-by the most visual pleasure. In reaching a final decision the judges award points for colour, choice of plants and cultivation, and the overall design of the garden.

Last year marked the 34th anniversary of the competition. The following prize-winners received their awards from the Deputy Mayor of Gravesham at a presentation before the Parish Council Meeting which was held on Monday, 26 November 2018 in Higham Library.

<b><u>FIRST PRIZE</u></b> (Silver Rose Bowl Trophy, Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Anne and Robin Miles, 13, Highwoods Close.
<b><u>SECOND PRIZE</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) June and Anthony Stevenson, 3, Hayes Close.
<b><u>THIRD PRIZE</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Jennifer and Michael Papadopulos, 'Hanklit', 12, Charles Dickens Avenue.
<b><u>'HIGHLY COMMENDED'</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) John Thornton, 26, Chilton Drive.
<b><u>'BEST HANGING BASKET AND CONTAINERS' FIRST PRIZE</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Heather Golding and Trevor King, 'The Banks', Chequers Street.
<b><u>'BEST HANGING BASKET AND CONTAINERS' JOINT SECOND PRIZE</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Sarah Wall, 5, Providence Cottages, Crutches Lane. Mary and Nigel Wright, 6, Providence Cottages, Crutches Lane.
<b><u>'BEST HANGING BASKET AND CONTAINERS' THIRD PRIZE</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Evelyn Leach, 'Highfields', 32 Telegraph Hill.
<b><u>'BEST HANGING BASKET AND CONTAINERS' – HIGHLY COMMENDED</u></b> (Garden Gift Token and framed certificate) Jacqueline and Timothy Cousins, 9, Vicarage Row, School Lane.
<b><u>'MOST COLOURFUL COMMUNITY FACILITY WITHIN HIGHAM'</u></b> Merston Court, Hermitage Road.

My name is Joanne Hartley and I am a Gravesham PCSO, currently covering Higham and surrounding areas. I will be spending a large amount of my time patrolling these locations including Higham, in order to deter crime and ASB and will be a visible presence as often as I can.

Crime often leaves victims feeling uncomfortable in their own homes – something that nobody should have to feel. Local police officers and PCSO's will continue to work hard to identify offenders and gather intelligence but would also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to take measures to help protect your property by taking the following simple but effective measures:

- If you are out of your home ensure all windows and doors are shut and locked, even if you are just in the garden.
- If you have not got one already, consider installing an alarm or security lights as they act as a deterrent.
- Keep valuable items and keys out of sight and away from windows and doors.
- Security mark your valuables, this makes them less desirable to thieves and can also help us to trace stolen goods. You can also register your valuables on immobilise.com which is a national property database.
- Record all serial numbers of your property, for example IMEI number on your mobile phone – on most mobile phones you can obtain this by simply typing \*#06#, serial numbers on televisions, laptops and other electrical equipment.

To finalise, we will continue to endeavour to attend community events such as fetes and please keep an eye on the Kent Police website and our social media such as Twitter, for any upcoming crime prevention events in the area.

*PCSO Joanne Hartley*

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## **COMMUNITY WARDEN**

It has now been a year since Steve Gray retired and I took his place as Warden for the area, this has gone very quickly. I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support and help over the past year. There has been a lot of good work which has taken place behind the scenes that the villagers are unaware of. The two biggest problems that I had when I took over the role were the lorry trailer and coach parked in Gad's Hill lay-by. Although this took a lot of work, I can confirm that they have now been removed for almost a year and the issue of dog fouling on the public footpaths, although it takes less than 15 seconds to clear the mess, put it a bag and dispose of it in an appropriate bin. Bags can be obtained free of charge from the library. These are much cheaper than the £1,000 fine which will be imposed on the owner, when successfully taken to court for the matter.

Higham is a lovely village and we must all do our bit to keep it so. The Warden Surgery has been successful; this is held in the village library on the last Thursday every month from 2.30 to 4pm, with people passing on information in relation to various issues. One of the issues resulted in the arrest of a person for selling stolen property. I would reiterate that any information provided at a Warden Surgery is handled in the strictest confidentiality.

Many thanks for your continued support.

*Paul Hassell, Community Warden*

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### **HIGHAM SPEED WATCH**

Higham Speed Watch is one of several schemes in Kent supported by Kent Police which monitors traffic speeds throughout the County. Although no drivers are prosecuted persistent offenders do receive a letter from the Police reminding them of the dangers of speeding. They may also carry out their own checks in areas where there have been a high number of speeding vehicles reported. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer to help keep Higham roads safe, please go to the Community Speed Watch website: [www.communityspeedwatch.co.uk](http://www.communityspeedwatch.co.uk) and click on register and follow the links to Higham Speed Watch Group. Or, you may e-mail me at [peter@pleakey.co.uk](mailto:peter@pleakey.co.uk)

Volunteers can come to as many or as few sessions which last one hour as they wish.

*Peter Leakey,  
Group Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 07815 721966.*

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### **HIGHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

As we move further into 2019 we reflect on the events of 2018. There have been many happy memories and a few sad ones. On 11 November we joined with the nation in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the ending of WWI. A Roll of Honour hangs on the wall of the church naming those from the Sunday School, both teachers and pupils who fought for their King and country. Four teachers and 46 pupils are listed. Eight of the lads made the supreme sacrifice and a couple of families lost two of their sons. They were the Rose brothers Norman (1915) and Charles (1918) both aged 18 years-old, from Frances Cottages, and the Ironmonger brothers Frank age 18 (1914) & Ira age 20 (1915) from Brookers Cottages. "We will remember them".

Ministers from a number of other churches continue to support us by sharing in the ministry every Sunday morning at 11am. You will be warmly welcomed if you

care to join us.

The Coffee Mornings in 2018 were again very successful and a number of good causes benefited to the sum of £1,200. Dates for your diaries for Coffee Mornings in 2019 are: 27 April; 25 May; 29 June; 27 July; 31 August and 28 September. These all take place from 10am until 12 noon. You are cordially invited to pop in and meet the neighbours and enjoy a chat and a cuppa.

*Peter Relf,*  
*Secretary*  
*01474 322195 / E-mail: pmyrw65@gmail.com*

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### **THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH**

2018 proved to be another busy year for The Friends of St Mary's Church. The events season started in May by a return visit by This is My Theatre and a magical performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. In June we had the return of the Quirky Quiz and on the 6th there was a talk by local author and conservationist Carol Donaldson and artist Fiona Spirals on their love and experiences of the North Kent Marshes. On 30 June we welcomed the City of Rochester Ensemble performing works by Mozart and Haydn. Higham Choral Group held their Summer Concert at

St Mary's on 7 July and on 28 July our ever-popular Jazz Night saw The Dave Bowdler Trio and international cabaret star Steve Galler, play to a sell-out audience. The final event in our calendar for 2018 saw a weekend of Arts and Crafts with artists and crafters encouraging visitors to explore their creative side and join in.

2019 marks 10 years since the current Friends of St Mary's were formed. To mark this anniversary, we have plenty of exciting events lined up for 2019. These include the return of This is My Theatre performing 'The Wind in the Willows', an evening with John Vigar, renowned Ecclesiastical Historian, including a talk entitled 'For Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals' (anyone who came to his talk entitled 'Murder, Sex and Mayhem in English Churches' know they are in for a treat). The Jazz night will return in August promising an evening of music by favourites such as: Glenn Miller, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and lots more. The full events list will be available soon.

We look forward to seeing you at our events in St Mary's Church in 2019.

*Katie Lee,*  
*Secretary*

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### **HIGHAM BOOK CLUB**

There is a new book club which runs in Higham Library on the first Thursday of the month from 6.45 to 8.45pm (times can be flexible). The Librarian has the featured book in the library so please ask.

*Amanda Mendzil*

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## **HIGHPARKS MEDICAL PRACTICE**

To say it's been a busy year in 2018 for the practice would be a slight understatement. In October 2018 Highcliffe Medical Practice merged with its neighbouring practice (The Parks Medical Practice) to form a new GP practice now known as Highparks Medical Practice.

Highparks Medical Practice now has 15,500 registered patients over four surgery sites listed below. The practice has six GP partners, four salaried GPs, a nursing team of eight and administrative and reception staff located at all sites.

The services the practice provides remains the same as before with the additional opportunity to access additional women's health services.

### GP Partners:

Dr Green.

Dr Nurcombe-Thorne.

Dr Hawarden.

Dr Stone.

Dr Hossain.

Dr Bell.

### Surgery Sites:

Cliffe Woods – Main Site.

Higham Surgery – Branch Site.

Wainscott Surgery – Branch Site.

Cliffe Surgery – Branch Site.

The practice website [www.highparksmedicalpractice.nhs.uk](http://www.highparksmedicalpractice.nhs.uk) has a list of all sites, opening times and the services that are available to registered patients.

Finally, our patient participation group are always looking for new members. If you would like to get involved and be part of discussions regarding future developments or wider NHS policy that will affect the practice please contact any reception to receive invites to the next meeting.

*Kevin Creasey*

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## **GAD'S HILL SCHOOL**

The summer of 2018 saw the retirement of the former Headmaster of Gad's Hill School, Mr David Craggs, who served the school for 18 years. Under his leadership, Gad's Hill developed from a small girls' school to the thriving community it is today. Mr Craggs oversaw the construction of our magnificent Junior School and Kindergarten building, providing much-needed additional teaching space, and introduced many of our music concerts, school and house

plays and a Combined Cadet Force. Along with the many Old Gadshillians who gathered to celebrate his retirement in July, we wish David a long and happy retirement.

The role that the school plays in the wider community of Higham is of vital importance to me. In November, I felt the profound privilege to be able to accompany our young Cadets as they paraded through the village to St John's Church to commemorate the Armistice Day centenary, to the beat of our marching band. Our Cadets were deeply moved by the opportunity to play a small part in such a significant event, and to join with representatives of other local youth groups.

As I take on my new role, I hope to find other ways in which to be able to engage with our local community. I have always greatly enjoyed events such as our Pensioners' Tea Party, attended by many of our friends from local residential homes, and I was delighted that we were recently able to help the 1st Higham Beaver & Cub Scouts in a small way through the donation of fruit from our kitchens. A number of local residents regularly attend our summer and Christmas fayres and it is always a pleasure to welcome them.

Gravesham Council organises tours of the home of Charles Dickens on our site, with expert guides and a very good cream tea, but if any local residents are interested in seeing more of the school grounds themselves, I would always be happy to make time to show you around. Similarly, please do feel that you can make contact with me should you have any questions or comments about the school.

*Paul K Savage,  
Headmaster*

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## **HIGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wow! 2018 was an interesting year for Pupils, Staff and Governors at Higham Primary School.

From September 2018, I have been leading Higham School as Acting Headteacher and Mrs Levy has stepped up to full time Deputy Head. Miss Emily Wright was then appointed as Office Manager from January 2019 and she is working hard to lead an already strong and dedicated team.

In February 2018 we took a number of our KS2 pupils to sing at the O2 in the 'Young Voices' concert. The children were amazing, a credit to the school and we are very proud of what they have achieved. The school choir, led by Mrs Cousins,

also performed at St George's Church in Gravesend in July and then performed a carol concert at the Copperfield's Care Home in December. Unfortunately, due to the weather we did not make it to St John's church in 2018 for either our Easter or Christmas service, however we have high hopes to be back there in April 2019 for our Easter service 2019.

2018 also brought the 'Higham Bake-off' for Children in Need, where the School Council worked tirelessly, with the support of Mrs Levy, to raise funds for Children in Need.

November brought 'a time to remember' and led by Mrs Cousins the children created our poppy display, with each pupil making a poppy to add to the poignant memory display in the school hall. This display achieved a mention on the BBC news website, a proud moment for all involved.

Higham School PTA have played an active role in the success of the school. Without the support and dedication of our Higham School PTA volunteers we would not have the resources or fantastic events that are on offer for the children. Thank you to Mrs Molloy and her team for all of their support.

Higham Primary school continues to be a thriving village school and we are proud of the success of each and every one of our pupils. We are grateful for all of the support received and we hope that 2019 will be another successful year for Higham Primary School.

*Mrs C Grattan,  
Acting Headteacher*

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### **Year 6 Pupils – Higham Primary School**

In April our Year 5 pupils headed off to PGL for an action-packed week. They enjoyed lots of new activities including the giant swing, robot wars, abseiling, raft building and rock climbing. Mr Walton updated everyone at school with the daily blog and the photos he uploaded each night, everyone had such good fun.

In 2018 we started our journey to becoming a more healthy school with the introduction of 'Walk on Wednesday', where each class takes some time out of the classroom to walk or jog around the school field. Our sports teams were busy too, competing against other local schools in events such as netball, athletics, basketball, kurling, active stacking, TAG rugby and football.

It was all change in September – we all moved up to a new class with new teachers and Mrs Grattan became our Acting Headteacher.

In November, we held an amazing 'Bake Off' to raise money for 'Children in Need' – the standard was extremely high and we all got to enjoy some fantastic cakes. Our lovely PTA made sure that Christmas was fun and treated us to a pantomime (Peter Pan) and a fun afternoon where we could win lots of prizes.

2018 was a good year and we are looking forward to another good one in 2019.

*Year 6 pupils,  
Tigers Class*

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## **GOVERNORS OF HIGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

2018 was a dramatic year for the Governors at Higham School.

In April 2018 Mrs Coombs, the Headteacher, notified me of her intention to leave Higham Primary School at the end of the academic year. Mrs Coombs had been the Headteacher since April 2009 and in those nine years the school had moved from being a Satisfactory School to a Good School (as judged by Ofsted), had embraced the National Curriculum changes in 2015 and has consistently delivered strong results showing that the children at Higham Primary School experienced a good and safe learning environment. I would like to publicly thank Mrs Coombs for her leadership of Higham Primary School over the last nine years.

This meant that the Governors had to make probably the most important decision that a Governing Body ever has to make in appointing a new Headteacher.

After receiving ten applications the Governors could not identify a suitable candidate to lead Higham Primary School and, therefore, we made the decision to appoint Mrs Grattan as Acting Headteacher for the academic year where she stepped up from her role of Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Levy stepped up to being a full time Deputy Headteacher.

After two terms of this academic year the Governors are extremely happy with the leadership of the school and I have received positive feedback from staff, parents and pupils regarding changes made since September including our Tree of Positivity which recognises pupils achievements in line with the term's focus, this term the focus is Kindness.

I am delighted to advise you that once again Ofsted judged Higham Primary School as a Good School with some fantastic comments from the Inspector about the teaching, leadership and behaviour of the school but even more pleasing were comments made about our pupils warmth and willingness to learn.

It is worth remembering that the School's achievements and the pupil's learning experiences are all being achieved at a time when the budgets are being trimmed across the country and less money is available for all schools from Central Government for learning resources at a

time when costs are increasing for utilities, insurances and taxation, as well as increased demands on staff time. GDPR legislation introduced in 2018 has meant the school has needed to review many practices as the legislation covers data held by the school. As I am sure you can imagine with 210 pupils learning being monitored over seven years the school holds a vast amount of data which needed to be reviewed to ensure compliance with the new legislation.

For these financial reasons, I am indebted to the Higham PTA for the support they provide financially following their hard work in organising school fayres, pupil discos and other fund-raising events. The parents and staff on the PTA work tirelessly and voluntarily for the good of the school. Without this support the school could not operate as it does so a big Thank You for that support to anyone associated with the PTA and everyone who supports their events.

I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, issue a plea to everyone in the village who drives past the school, particularly in the mornings and afternoons when pupils are arriving or leaving school. Please, please respect the rules of the road in terms of speed limits, zig zag lines, road safety and parking. The safety of our pupils is the paramount concern of Governors and my fear is that one day a child attending the school will be seriously injured outside the school in the morning or evening, particularly when it is darker in the winter months.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Governors who all supported me through this challenging year. The Governing Body give up their time and energy voluntarily for the benefit of the staff and pupils of the school and undertake their important roles tirelessly.

*Brian Maynard,  
Chair of Governors*

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## **HIGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL: PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

With another successful year of fund-raising under our belt, we feel fortunate to have the continued support of our school parents and local businesses and we are excited about the activities we have planned for the next year.

Our next big event is the sponsored Colour Run on Saturday, 6 July. Open to all pupils with on-the-day slots for their family and friends, children will complete an obstacle course whilst being pelted with coloured powdered paint! Villagers are very welcome to come along and support our participants, there will also be refreshments available on the day.

We are constantly having to come up with new ways to raise money and often end up seeking help from the same people and organisations. If you feel like you are able to give up your time to help out at some of our larger events, or have access to raffle prizes, such as vouchers, excursions or even materials to assist in the maintenance of the school buildings we would love to hear from you. This is why the PTA is such a vital cog in improving not only the physical environment of the school but enriching the educational experiences of the children while they are there.

Thanks to the support of school parents and the local community we have funded many fun activities such as workshops and a pantomime, paid for the coach costs to and from a national choir event at the O2 and invested in a brand new £2,000 PSHE package for the school.

As ever, thank you to everyone in the PTA and for your hard work and much-needed sense of humour, and to the parents for their support.

*Sarah Blair,  
Higham Primary School PTA*

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## **HIGHAM YOUTH CLUB**

2018 has been an excellent year for Higham Youth Club with the numbers of young people on the books growing steadily to more than 100. Each Wednesday evening sees, on average, a group of at least 40 happy and active young people enjoying the activities provided by the Youth Leaders from The Gr@nd.

Several activities are made available ranging from team games, table tennis and badminton in the main hall, and quieter activities in the small hall. This year has seen the production of some delicious chocolate brownies and pizzas.

Youth Leaders from The Gr@nd have also been working on Thursday evenings with some of the older teenagers in the village thanks to a grant awarded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. This has been on hold over the winter months but will start up again in the better weather.

Young people aged 10 to 16 are welcome at the Youth Club which runs on a Wednesday evening from 7.30 to 9.30pm in the Memorial Hall. Young People can start at the beginning of the term in which they turn 10 years old.

With the continuing growth of the Youth Club we would really welcome new adult volunteers. You wouldn't have to commit to every week as even if you can only manage to help once in a while it would be very welcome. If you are at all interested in being involved contact the number below or just pop in sometime and we will be glad to talk to you about what is needed.

For information on Higham Youth Club, please contact Stacey Manley as follows:

Telephone: 01474 320123 9.30am to 5pm // 07754 320671 6pm to 9pm  
E-mail: [stacey.manley@thegrand.org.uk](mailto:stacey.manley@thegrand.org.uk)

*Pam Holmes*

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## **MEMORIAL HALL**

The last year came and went much the same as previous years with one major exception – our long-serving Treasurer Marion Twyman has finally hung up her calculator and retired. The committee cannot thank her enough for her commitment to your village hall for so many

years. Thank you, Marion. All is not lost – we extend a huge welcome to our new Treasurer Rachel Martin who is also our long-suffering Letting Secretary.

All the main groups are still using the Hall, but like many other groups we are suffering with a lack of committee members. We desperately need ‘new blood’ on our committee. Each group that uses the Hall has a right to have a representative on our committee and we would be pleased to see any new volunteers.

A new toddler group has started on a Monday from 10am to 2pm which seems to have a lot of support – more details in the Parish Magazine.

We have had a major redecoration programme over the last year and are waiting for new fire doors to be fitted.

It has come to my notice that quite a few parishioners think that the Village Hall is funded by either Gravesham Council or the Parish Council – it is neither. We are totally self-funding and as such rely on our Boot Fairs and lettings for our income.

*Keith Bradley*

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### **THE SHAVES CHARITY**

The Trust's capital of £6,239 earned no interest in 2018 so no distribution was made. The Trustees remain unchanged and met on 11 August 2018 to consider how best to use the remaining money in keeping with the charity's objectives. The Trustees agreed that help might be given to people with limited financial resources having difficulty paying for hospital visits, school trips or funeral costs.

*Les Baker,  
Trustee*

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### **HIGHAM POPPY PROJECT -- WORLD WAR TWO 1939 - 1945**

2019 marks the 80th Anniversary of the start of World War Two. Higham Knit and Natter Group are working on an idea to make poppies over the next six years to go on display around the village.

The annual displays would be in various places (indoors and outdoors) running from late October and until just after Remembrance Day.

The poppies will be stored each year and gradually more poppies will be made so that by 2025 we will have a fantastic display and memorial to all those who lost their lives in WWII.

If you would like to make some poppies, we can provide instructions for knitting or crafting the flowers. We have some materials or you can use your own. Just get in touch with us – e-mail address below.

If you would like to get involved in the project in any other way or have some ideas please let us know.

Contact us via e-mail: [barbara.cousins@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.cousins@btinternet.com)

*Barbara Cousins*

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## **HOME LIBRARY SERVICE**

Are you unable to visit the library because of ill health, disability or your caring responsibilities? Let the library come to you. Our friendly volunteers can call at your home on a regular basis bringing you books (including large print), audio books, films and CDs of your choice. They will be happy to chat about the books you are enjoying and listen to what you would like to read.

If you are interested in this service or know of anyone else who may need it, please contact us on 0300 333 6022.

*Kent Libraries*

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## **HIGHAM LIBRARY**

Higham Library has had an exciting year with lots of changes taking place to enhance the services we offer to the community. The library now has the added benefit of a recently installed self-service machine and also a lovely new carpet.

The library is a regular hub of activity during our open hours but with the implementation of the Library Extra pilot our library is now open to customers that sign up to the scheme between 7am and 9pm.

The library is a very popular service in the village and a focal point for the local community. Many regular activities are held within the library and this year we have some new groups and activities that everyone is welcome to join:

**Higham Quilters** meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month between 7pm and 9pm, this group is for anyone interested in quilting.

Our **Knit & Natter** group meets weekly on a Tuesday evening between 6pm and 7.30pm, anyone that is interested in Knitting or Crochet is welcome to come along and join.

Our **Games & Crafts** group meet weekly on Saturdays between 10.30am and 11.30am.

If you are interested in books and reading, our **Higham Book Club** meet on the 1st Thursday of each month between 6.45pm and 8.45pm, all are welcome.

Our regular Wednesday morning **Talktime** group meet at 10.30am; the group is thriving with meetings still having over 20 people attend on a weekly basis. They, once again, held a very

successful coffee morning in aid of MacMillan and raised a substantial amount for the charity.

Our lively and friendly **Rhyme Time** session for parents and grandparents with babies and toddlers is led by our volunteer mums on Friday mornings during school term time at 9.30am. The session is followed by a **Parent and Carer Talktime** group at 10.30am. A volunteer is needed to help run Rhyme Time on a Friday 9.30 – 11.00am term time in the library. Please contact the Librarian for more information.

Our **Coffee & Chat** group have read some enjoyable books over the past year and meet the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm. If you enjoy reading, come along and join them.

We held our Community Family Fun Day on Thursday, 9 August, this was well attended. Many of our regular visitors came and enjoyed the many attractions that were on offer. Many thanks to all the volunteers and community partners who made this day the success it was.

We have free access to computers within the library, for those of you looking to improve your skills or learn the basics or you can look at our online resources including information on health, local and family history and a great deal more. All of our libraries have Wi-Fi access which you can log on to with your library card.

We offer a free Home Library Service to people unable to visit the library because of ill health, disability or caring responsibilities. Volunteers deliver books and other library items to the individual's home.

Many of our groups and activities run so successfully due to the commitment we receive from our volunteers, if you have some spare time on your hands and are interested in becoming a volunteer, Time2Give offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities in Kent Libraries, Registration and Archives.

If you are interested in any of the groups or activities that have been mentioned, please contact the staff at Higham Library on 03000 413131.

*Nicola Tubbs*  
*Customer Service Development Librarian,*  
*Gravesham District Libraries*

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### **AGE CONCERN LUNCHEON CLUB**

As usual the report is a plea for people to come and help us. We are still only able to run fortnightly due to a lack of cooks and hostesses. We can only take new members and go back to running the Club weekly with more help. Without this there will be NO CLUB.

The one good part of this Report is the very loyal group of volunteers who, by often doubling up, keep us going. I would like to thank Joan Campbell and her team of cooks, Carol Mason and her hostesses and Anne Carroll and the drivers. Finally, our thanks to the Parish Council for their continued support.

Despite our problems we still pride ourselves on continuing to provide a happy Club with first class meals.

As always, if you haven't already got the message, anyone who could join us to help for a few hours a month would be made very welcome.

*Barbara West*  
(Co-ordinator)

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## **KNIT AND NATTER GROUP**

This group meets in Higham Library on a Tuesday evening from 6 to 7.30pm. Beginners, experts and those in between are all welcome! Tea and biscuits and good company.

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## **TINY TOES BABY GROUP**

A baby group now runs on a Monday from 10am to 2pm at the Memorial Hall.

Please contact amygodman@hotmail.co.uk for more details.

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## **2ND HIGHAM BROWNIES**

Higham Brownies have had another enjoyable year.

The later part of last year saw some changes at both Rainbows and Brownies. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, both our Rainbow leader and one of our Brownies leaders decided to take a break from Girl Guiding. This resulted in Rainbows closing. Sharon is still running Brownies with the help of a new leader, Sarah, who is currently undergoing her Leadership Training with Girl Guiding UK.

The girls have enjoyed many activities during the last year such as Pizza Making, Rounders, Ready Steady Cook, Diwali and an evening of Highland Games. We have had themed evenings such as Beauty and the Beast, Roald Dahl, and Pooh Bear. They have also enjoyed crafts for Easter, Father's Day and Christmas. The girls entertained Mums and Grandmas with a show for Mother's Day. We were also involved in trialing new resources for Girl Guiding UK and voting for a new uniform design.

We joined Gad's Hill on Remembrance Sunday and paraded to the church with them for the Armistice Day Service.

We are very grateful to our Young Leaders Laura, Carmen, Lucy and Libby who help each week. They continue to be excellent role models to the Brownies.

If you would like your daughter to join our fun Brownie Group then please visit [www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested) to register her details or, alternatively, e-mail us at [2ndhighambrownies@gmail.com](mailto:2ndhighambrownies@gmail.com).

*Sharon Maynard, Tawny Owl*

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## **1ST HIGHAM SCOUT GROUP**

Higham Scout Group enjoyed a fun packed programme in 2018. We have a membership of approximately 58 young people and 14 adults and young leaders who give up their time voluntarily to enjoy activities together. We participated in the Remembrance Day service at St John's. As always, we collected an excellent amount for 'Children in Need' in November.

The Beavers and Cubs have enjoyed many activities, including outdoor ones thanks to good weather. These include District events, Summer camps and games evenings on the Recreation Ground. Several Beavers and Cubs achieved their Bronze and Silver Chief Scout Awards. Scouts have a full programme of activities where they are developing their outdoor, team building and cooking skills. Last year's Scout Summer camp was to celebrate the end of World War I. They camped in Belgium and took part in an emotional service in Ypres at the Menin Gate where they were the Flag party at the service, representing Higham and Kent. We held our annual BBQ and AGM with 100 children and adults enjoying the evening. If you like the sound of what we do come and join us, either as a young person or an adult helper.

Our meeting times are:

<b>Scout Group</b>	<b>Meet</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Beaver Scouts	Fridays: 5.30-6.30pm	Andrea Jarman 01474 822192
Cub Scouts	Fridays: 6.30-7.50pm	Andrea Jarman 01474 822192
Scouts	Fridays: 8-10pm	Peter Allinson 01474 823806
Explorer Scouts	Phoenix, Shorne	Carolyn Shulver 01474 823187

If your son or daughter would like to join us or you would like to help, please contact Carolyn on 01474 823187 or [csh\\_55@hotmail.com](mailto:csh_55@hotmail.com).

*Carolyn Shulver,  
Group Scout Leader*

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## **HIGHAM CHORAL GROUP**

Our aim is to perform a wide variety of music to provide something for everyone to enjoy when attending our concerts. The year started in March at Fordcombe near Tunbridge Wells. Here we performed a selection of stage, screen, church and popular music. We were joined by the local Junior school choir who sung beautifully. The Choral Group Bank Holiday tour in May was to Silsoe, Bedfordshire where we were made very welcome. The audience here thoroughly enjoyed our usual mixture of music including selections from

Queen, the best of Bond and a celebration of Britain. The atmosphere was fantastic and it made this social event one to remember.

In July we were hosted locally by St Mary's Church, Lower Higham. Classical selections included 'Carmina Burana' (Carl Orf) and more contemporary works included Ed Sheeran as well as selections from 'The Sound of Music'. We were joined by the Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir who performed music from around the world and 'The Greatest Showman' to a high standard. Our Christmas concert was also at a local venue, St John's in Higham. This had a more traditional theme including Congregational carols, a range of Christmas music including songs from 'Follow That Star' (Gritton) and festive readings based on cake! The Junior Church Choir made their debut with songs from Christmas films.

#### Our concerts for 2019

- 30 March                      St Nicholas Church, Strood.
- 6 July                              St John the Baptist Church, Meopham.
- 14 December                  St John's Church, Higham.

We are a sociable SATB choir performing a wide range of enjoyable music, so if you are interested in joining us please contact Sian Miller e-mail: shaney1@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone 01634 366050 or 07973 441433.

*Sian Miller*

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## **HIGHAM VILLAGE SPORTS ASSOCIATION**

The Sports Association has been reconstituted with a new committee, with the Chairperson now being Jamie Fox, Treasurer Tony Lopez and Secretary Mike Holmes. We would like to thank Pat Jeal and Linda Martin for their many years of service to the Sports Association and in general to the village community. They have both decided to retire from these posts although Pat continues to be active with Eagles FC.

The multi-purpose courts continue to be used regularly by the Higham Youth Club and also by other individuals during the spring and summer. We would like more people/groups to use the facility and with this in mind hope to raise enough funds to improve the surface in the near future.

Charges for using the facility have increased although they still remain reasonable at £10 per hour for adults and £6 for Under 16s. This is for the hire of the courts not per person. Club/team hire is £20. A £5 refundable deposit is required for the key which can be obtained from and returned to the village greengrocer.

*Mike Holmes*

*Secretary*

01474 824265 or 07743 762868

**Higham Village Sports Association**

The Association has very recently undergone a change of committee members, a huge thank you to Pat Jeal and Linda Martin for all the years of hard work they have put into running the association and maintaining the facility to allow continued use by the community.

The sports courts are still available to hire and arrangements can be made through the Village Greengrocers, however an on-line booking system is being looked into for the future.

The cost of hire will be:

#### Tennis Courts

- (Available May to September): £10 per hour for adults and £6 per hour for children under 16. (Bookings through greengrocers).
- Teams wishing to hire the facility will be charged £20 per hour.

Enquiries and booking arrangements should be made through the committee by contacting Nikki on 07956 596560.

Floodlights are available at an additional cost of £2 per token, each token lasts for one hour.

There are long term plans to improve the facilities available, however this will only be made possible by what is currently available being utilised allowing funds to be raised, together with any grants that are applied for being authorised. In the short term, however, we are planning to improve the facility to encourage Tennis, Netball and Football.

*Nikki Fox*

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## **HIGHAM BOWLING CLUB**

2018 has been a very good year for the club. Members have increased to almost 30 members. There is a wide variety in ages as the bowling club accept players aged 18 and over. It has been very heartening to see several younger members join and enjoy playing bowls.

The club purchased two new mats last year and another mat handling unit, and now occasionally use four mats when there is a full turn out of members. The scoring boards were replaced, thus making it easier to see the scores. On average we use three mats on a Monday night, with a good turn out and new members are always welcome. The Club has sets of bowls for anyone who would like to try the game before joining, and are welcome to use the bowls until they decide if they want to purchase their own bowls.

Higham Bowling Club is a strong club with new members welcome.

*Susanna Potter,*  
*Secretary*

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## **EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB**

Eagles football club is now in its 40th season and have nine teams running from under 7s to under 18s. The younger teams U/7 to U/12 in the North Kent Youth Football League and U/15 and three teams in U/18 in Medway Messenger Youth League. We also have five and six-year-olds training at Higham Primary School on Saturday mornings. All of our teams are managed by FA Level 1 qualified coaches. We are a FA Chartered Standard Club, ensuring we meet the coaching, first aid, child protection and organisation standards required by the FA.

The ethos of the club remains unchanged. We provide football opportunities to local children in a fun, safe and positive environment, where they further their football ability through encouragement and quality coaching. We play to win, but we do not win at all costs.

We have a number of club events throughout the year to bring all teams together and our end of season presentation day is a fun day for parents and players alike.

We are always open to new joiners. If interested, please contact Pat Jeal on 01474 822607 or use our club website: [www.highameagles.co.uk](http://www.highameagles.co.uk).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local businesses who have so kindly sponsored us over the past year.

*Pat Jeal*

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## **TAI CHI GROUP**

A Tai Chi group now meets in St John's Church Hall on a Wednesday morning from 8.30 until 9.30am. The cost is £4 per session. Beginners especially welcome. For further information, please contact Steve on 07999 346050 in advance as numbers are limited and also do visit our website at [www.shizendo.co.uk](http://www.shizendo.co.uk)

If the class is full, an alternative class runs at Cascades Leisure Centre.

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## **YOGA FLOW WITH LEAH**

The Yoga Flow with Leah club meets at St John's Church Hall on a Monday (11am to 12 noon), Tuesday (9 to 11.30am), Wednesday (6.15 to 8.30pm) and Friday (9.30am to 12 noon). For booking or further information, please contact Leah on 07565 392320 or visit the website: [www.yogaflowwithleah.com](http://www.yogaflowwithleah.com)

*Leah Ferreira,  
Yoga Therapist & Health Coach*

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## **HIGHAM VILLAGE HISTORY GROUP**

2018 was another successful and busy year for the History Group. Our bi-monthly talks were varied and well attended and in May Christoph Bull launched a brand new talk about the Hoo Peninsula. In April and September there were two more guided walks by Andrew Rootes, giving us the history of the most important buildings in the middle part of the village and in lower Higham. We took part in the Library's Community Day in July and put on a display of photographs entitled 'On the Street Where You Live'. It was great that so many people supported this event.

An exciting development for the group was the moving of our photographs and other archive material to the Higham Library. Thanks to a generous donation from the Parish Council, we have been able to purchase three cupboards and a map storage unit so that all the wonderful items can be stored safely and made more accessible.

**New for 2019:** Between 11am and 1pm on the first Friday of every month, members of the committee will be at the library so that you can come along with your enquiries and have access to our collections. You may also wish to donate photographs or lend them so that we can have copies made. Access to the collections at other times may be possible – contact details below:

E-mail: [info@highamvillagehistory.org.uk](mailto:info@highamvillagehistory.org.uk)

Website: [www.highamvillagehistory.org.uk](http://www.highamvillagehistory.org.uk)

*Kate Woollacott,*

*Secretary*

Telephone: 01634 718285

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## **HIGHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

We have had a fun-filled, lovely, enjoyable year. Many wonderful speakers and fun events that the committee have organised successfully.

Our year started with a delightful meal at the Knowle. Our Birthday party held at the Memorial Hall was a fun evening. We had an Ascot themed evening, with some wonderful hats and outfits, enjoyed by all. London theatre trips, 'School of Rock' and 'Kinky Boots' and, of course, a lovely meal.

Thank you to all of our Committee members and everyone that supports Higham WI.

*Kay Lakin,*

*Secretary*

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## **HIGHAM WRITERS GROUP**

The group meets monthly in the Higham Village Club 10.30am to 12.30pm.

We are a small group of mostly retired people who enjoy writing, reading our stories to each other, and listening to what others produce. Some of us enter competitions or get published. Others just enjoy the process.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Denise by telephone or e-mail, and we should be glad to see you.

E-mail: Deniseleppard@btinternet.com  
Telephone: 01474 822881

*Denise Leppard*

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## **HIARA**

Another successful year in our club, with a change of Chairman and committee members. The new team is very enthusiastic and have many different ideas on how to move forward in 2019.

Over the past year, we have had many interesting speakers at our meetings and so we look forward to lectures on 'Cheese Making', 'Fleet Street and Newspapers', 'Sotheby's Antiques' and Paul Harris on 'Landladies and Digs' later in the year. Do join us and listen to many other speakers as the year progresses.

During the year, we have lost a few members due to ill health, including our dear Diana Wheatley, our past Chairman, who worked so hard for HiARA.

Our other activities continue to be popular. Our Rambling Group seem to ramble whatever the weather throws at them and the craft afternoons produce lovely items by members. Curling and quizzes again are very popular and are well supported.

The ladies who run the Book Stall work hard to find us enough interesting books to keep us occupied during the dark winter nights.

Several entertainment evenings are planned, including our very popular Race Night.

Do come and join HiARA – you will be very welcome and you might even find that you enjoy HiARA!

*Pat Oakeshott*

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## **DANCE FITNESS CLASS FOR OVER 50'S**

This group meets at the Memorial Hall every Friday morning at 11am for one hour. No need to book just pay as you go. Cost is £7 per session. For further information, contact Rebecca Grumbridge on 07968 482762.

*Rebecca Grumbridge*

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## **THE CLAIRE BUCKLEY SCHOOL OF DANCING**

The Claire Buckley School of Dancing offers dancing classes at the Higham Memorial Hall every Tuesday from 4pm and Wednesday and Thursdays at Cliffe Woods Primary School.

We teach ballet, tap and jazz for both boys and girls from the age of three years. Our aim is for children to dance for enjoyment and this is a fun way to exercise and keep fit whilst also learning different styles of dance.

We are currently preparing for our 2019 show. We also entered our first ever competition and was placed fourth in the South East. This sent us to Blackpool for the finals where we came third in our category. We also auditioned to perform in Disneyland Paris and passed with flying colours, so we are looking forward to performing in October.

We currently have spaces in all our classes, so if you would like some information about any of the classes we offer, then please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Mobile: 07813 050493  
E-mail: cbuckley046@gmail.com

We can also be found on FACEBOOK.

*Claire Buckley*

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## **TURNER IRISH DANCE ACADEMY**

Classes take place at Higham Memorial Hall on a Monday as follows:

4pm: Age 3 – 5	4.45pm: Age 6+	6.15pm: Advanced
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Both boys and girls are invited to a free trial lesson. Please e-mail to book:  
Turneracademy@live.co.uk

Website: [www.turneracademy.co.uk](http://www.turneracademy.co.uk)

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## **DICKENS COUNTRY PROTECTION SOCIETY (DCPS)**

The Society has been very busy as usual this year, continuing the basic work of monitoring and commenting on (when considered appropriate), the various local planning applications being submitted to both Gravesham and Medway councils. The Society also continually keeps under review major plans affecting our area of interest and makes input and representations as and when possible. Detailed analysis can be found in our latest Newsletter which is sent out to Society members.

The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) consultation: After a gap of a year, Highways England published more (but not enough) details of their proposed Lower Thames Crossing in the statutory Consultation which ended on 20 December 2018. Significant negative changes included a greatly expanded junction with the A2 and two-lane service roads on both sides of the A2 which both mean that even more Green Belt land and Ancient Woodland will be

consumed by the project. The previously announced dropping of the proposed A226 junction and the slight increase to the tunnel length were welcomed but the latter change in particular still does not go far enough. Much more protection is needed for Chalk, Riverview and Thong. The present design prevents Gravesend East residents from accessing the A2 eastbound easily, as they do now. The proposals will greatly increase traffic on the M2, adding badly to congestion eastbound in the afternoon/evening commuting period, and on all interconnecting routes between the A2/M2 and M20. There will, consequently, also be increased traffic on local roads. DCPS, along with affected local Parish Councils, submitted representations and now awaits the analysis and responses.

Other items that are particularly worth mentioning are:

- Increasingly, planning applications that have been refused are being taken to Appeal. Three recent cases (one in Higham) concerning development in the Green Belt, where DCPS made representations, have all been dismissed.

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During 2018 Gravesham Borough Council consulted on updating key parts of its Local Plan. DCPS submitted representations seeking to protect the Green Belt generally and particularly including the strategic gap between Gravesend and the Medway towns.

- Medway Council have also continued to work on their Local Plan. This has to go through multiple consultations, to which DCPS has responded, and then pass formal inspections. Once published we will all know where Medway intend to locate building development, which could have direct impact on Higham being adjacent to Medway, and then there will be another consultation stage.
- DCPS objected to two very nearby Medway planning applications on Green Belt land: 135 houses north of Brompton Farm Road and 300 west of Rede Court Road.

On lighter matters:

- The Society will be holding its annual Barn Dance on Saturday, 11 May this year.

Society contact details: Mrs P Lippiatt, 01322 275389

*Mrs Susan Lindley,  
Committee Member of DCPS*

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**THAMES AND MEDWAY CANAL ASSOCIATION**

The Thames and Medway Canal Association have been very busy over the last year, one of the major projects being at the Mark Lane (Gravesend) end of the canal repairing the bank due to corroded gabions (stone filled mesh boxes which used to support the bank) adjacent to the slipway. This was successfully completed with local companies Mechanical Movements and Harlex Haulage Services providing the heavy plant together with the TMCA and members of the Inland Waterways Association.

Another major undertaking was to breach some bunds (dams) across the canal. The first bund was removed completely and the other two have now been reduced enough for a boat to pass. With the top up pumps now fully functioning this provides an additional 1.5km of canal in water which with a little more work this section should be fully navigable.

Discussions with Network Rail ensured that a new bridge be built for access to their track power area rather than filling in a section of canal as had first been proposed.

Undergrowth and reeds have been cut adjacent to the obelisk along Canal Road making it clearly visible. Litter bins have been provided by the TMCA at various locations adjacent to the benches along the towpath from Gravesend to Canal Road. The TMCA have agreed to be responsible for emptying them so we ask all who use the towpath to use them responsibly. We are now in the process of tidying the tree line along the Nuralite section with a view to clearing fallen trees from the water.

*Dave Parnell,  
Chairman*

### **Thames And Medway Canal Association**

The Thames and Medway Canal Association has approximately 90 members, of which we see about 20 at the occasional indoor meetings we organise. In December we had a joint meeting with the local Inland Waterways Association. We work at both present ends of the Canal. Maybe eventually in the future we may meet our friends in the middle.

*Angela Acott*

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### **HIGHAM VILLAGE CLUB**

Our Village Club can boast history going back over 130 years and continues to provide a welcoming atmosphere for members and their families. Having been part of the history of Higham for all this time we look forward to seeing as many members and their families throughout the year and welcome your support to the many events that take place within the Club.

We regularly have entertainment and special events throughout the year and our main hall and facilities can be hired for parties, weddings, funerals and anniversaries, for a small hire charge to members and non-members.

The Higham Village Club is organising a Real Ale, Cider & Gin Festival across Friday, 5 July (from 6pm) and Saturday, 6 July (from noon) which will be open to both members & non-members. Small entrance fee payable. We also have two great live bands on each of the dates. Full details will appear on the Club website [www.highamvillageclub.co.uk](http://www.highamvillageclub.co.uk).

We continue with our monthly Friday quiz night, Sunday evening bingo starting at 8.30pm, as well as the first Wednesday of every month starting at 2pm, along with special themed nights organised by the Entertainment Committee where we bring in entertainers for everyone's enjoyment.

All events are posted on our web site and also posted on Facebook and within the Club. If you visit our web site and 'sign up' you will be the first to know of events and offers within the Club.

We welcome Slimming World to the Club on Thursday evenings and our darts teams meet on a Monday and Tuesday night also. The Club boasts a full-size snooker table as well as a Pool table and our Golf Society remains as ever active, even if you are a high handicapper!

We also have a pigeon club. We can even cater for the gardeners within the village with allotments to the rear of the Club for a small annual fee, although you must be a member of the Club.

We are always looking for new members who wish to enjoy the facilities we offer, and our Bar Manager – Kerry and her team and Committee are grateful for the continued support we get from our members. If you have never been inside the Club come and see us and take a look. Membership is now open.

Alternatively check out our web site [www.highamvillageclub.co.uk](http://www.highamvillageclub.co.uk) or telephone 01474 822456 or e-mail: [highamvillageclub@aol.co.uk](mailto:highamvillageclub@aol.co.uk). We look forward to seeing old and new faces throughout the year on a regular basis.

*Mark Gray,  
Secretary on behalf of the Management Committee*