

**Minutes of a meeting
held on 29 November at 7:30 pm
Higham Memorial Hall, School Lane, Higham ME3 7JL**

Present

Cllr John Grey	Chairman
Cllr Liz Jeffery	Vice Chair
Cllr Nikki Fox	
Cllr Pam Holmes	
Cllr Alan Howard	
Cllr David Martin	
Cllr Les Pearton	Borough Councillor
Cllr Jamie Rivett	
Cllr Sue Sparks	

Bor. Cllr Harold Craske
The Mayor or Gravesham, Cllr Lyn Milner

Apologies Cllr Toni Stanton

Members of public 1

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm and asked the Councillors to introduce themselves to the Mayor.

Agenda No	Minute No	Discussion
1	62	Apologies for absence¹ Apologies were received from Cllr Toni Stanton confirming that she had family commitments and health concerns. It was proposed to accept the apology for the reason provided and it was unanimously accepted.
2	63	Declarations of interest² There were no declarations of interest.
3	64	Public Session PCSO Report – not present Kent Community Warden report – not present

¹ Local Government Act 1972

² Localism Act 2011, s29

Peter Leakey – Speed watch report – not present but a report had been received by the Clerk. Cllr Sue Sparks requested that the Speedwatch report should be placed on the public website and in turn the relevant Facebook pages.

Parishioners matters – None.

4 65 Clerk’s report (to bring Members up to date with current issues)

Clerk referred to her report as an Appendix.

There was some discussion on the Extraordinary Auditor’s Report. Bor. Cllr Craske spoke at length on the Auditor’s Report and felt that the wording of the report was badly placed. After further discussion it was felt that the Clerk should request clarification from the Auditor.

Having considered the Report, Cllr Sparks then outlined that the Parish could organise separate Planning Committee/Highways Committee meetings and this will be discussed at a further date.

5 66 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 18 October 2021

Cllr Pearton pointed out a couple of errors in the Minutes and the Clerk confirmed she would update to enable the Chairman to sign an updated copy.

6 67 Parish Councillor matters

Cllr Jeffery – RS Skips GBC confirmed by email the approved routes that the company can use. These should be circulated to all Councillors. This issue is ongoing. Cllr Howard checked on the salt bins.

Cllr Pearton - has reported the overgrowth along the Chalk Road pavement to Highways several times. Highways referred him back to Railways but it is definitely Highways.

Borough Councillor matters

Cllr Harold Craske confirmed he has a meeting with the Chief Executive every month, which was the first relating to discussing ward issues regarding Higham issues and will be followed up with future meetings.

Bor. Cllr Harold Craske spoke of the Local Government Boundary Report. It has been over 20 years since the Local Boroughs and Local Councils have been assessed by the Boundary Commission. The Commission decided it was time to review the arrangements for the whole of the borough of Gravesham looking first at the number of Councillors for the area and then the number of Wards themselves.

This resulted in reduction of 44 to 39. This would mean a more equitable distribution of electors relating to each Council. The number of Councillors for each ward will have to change to accommodate the loss of 5 members. The Boundary Commission have decided that the parishes of Higham and Shorne should be amalgamated and will be one new ward, although it was put to them that Shorne should remain as is with 1 Borough Councillor and Higham remain as is with 2 Borough Councillors.

Bor. Cllr Craske suggested to Members of the Parish that should they feel it necessary to make representation then they should do so before 10 January which is the deadline.

Bor. Cllr Pearton spoke to confirm that both he and Bor. Cllr Craske had a long discussion with the Chief Executive of Gravesham BC about the Heavy Goods Vehicles driving through Higham and the condition of the roads. Etc. Although the Chief Exec confirmed that these were matters for KCC Cllr Pearton pointed out to him that these issues were in his Borough and felt that something needed to be done about it. He then confirmed that he would seek a meeting with KCC to discuss this further.

Cllr Pearton also spoke about the weight limit on the bridge. CE confirmed that this would be checked.

Cllr Pearton also mentioned the planning applications that had been accepted on farmland. These had been accepted and not taken into account that the HGVs would be driving through the village.

There had been further complaints from neighbours of the Three Crutches pub whereby customers from the pub had been climbing on the play equipment and looking into neighbouring gardens which was unacceptable. There is now a time limit on the use of the play equipment. Up until 9.00pm in the summer months and 6.00pm in the winter months.

Cllr Pearton also confirmed that he had attended Housing Allocation Training.

He had also sent a letter to Southern Water about the collapsing of drains in School Lane and Forge Lane. They have not responded as yet.

Bor Cllr. Pearton was also arranging with Alan Holloway MP another meeting with South Eastern Railways to discuss how this will benefit Higham Station. They had spoken to Thameslink in a previous meeting. A waiting room had been proposed but the platform is too small for this. Negotiations are still ongoing. The handrails for the elderly have been added as well as the bike shelter.

Cllr Martin spoke through the chair to confirm that there is a hard standing which was former track sidings and a former waiting room that used to be on the coast bound platform. Cllr Pearton also confirmed that they were discussing the issue of a lift but this is ongoing. It is difficult for mothers with prams.

KCC representative – not in attendance

7 68

Planning

Applications

20211358 6 Carton Road

Erection of a detached garage to the front of the property

Cllr Pearton had no objection to this application.

20211336 Reynolds Fields, ME3 7LX25

Demolition of existing single storey garage, erection of a new garage with first floor extension over to form habitable rooms and erection of a single storey rear extension.

Cllr Pearton had no objection to this application

20211263 The Olive Tree, Telegraph Hill, ME3 7NW

Creation of an additional first floor level incorporating dormer windows to front and rear including internal alterations and erection of a front extension.

Cllr Pearton had no objection to this application.

20210904 80 Forge Lane

Cllr Pearton had no objection to this application

20211098 1 The Larches

Cllr Pearton had no objection to this application

20211236 11 Norah Lane, ME3 7EP

Roof alterations and insertion of dormer as part of a conversion of existing garage and garden store to form an annexe to be used ancillary to the main dwelling house

Cllr Pearton had concerns on this application and this had been refused.

20211102 41a Forge Lane has been approved

20211124 Hayleys of Higham had an application refused but Bor. Cllr Pearton is investigation this.

20211321 Malt Shovel Cottage Cllr Pearton had no objections

20211172 2 Martins Close Cllr Pearton had objected which has subsequently been refused.

The Members considered what Cllr Pearton had to report on the above applications and voted unanimously to accept those recommendations.

Nuralite – Cllr Rivett

Nothing to report. Cllr Rivett had walked past but nothing much going on.

Cllr Martin requested through the Chair whether there was any information on the S.106 Agreement but the Chair confirmed that there had been no information forthcoming.

Street lighting

At the time of the meeting the Street Lighting Working Group were still waiting to hear from Gravesham/KCC on the time and date of a zoom call to discuss this matter further.

Lower Thames Crossing

Cllr Sparks confirmed that she had not had anything specific with regards to Higham from National Highways (previously Highways England). She had circulated a report on Sharepoint.

8 69 Finance

There was a discussion on the cost of the WCs standing charge.

Members confirmed by voting unanimously that they approved the payments that had been paid by the Clerk.

9 70 Highways Working Group

Cllr Sparks spoke to confirm that she had received information from KCC that a bid for £10,000 could be applied for, for various traffic calming and other items but not for main schemes. The deadline for the application was 13 December 2021.

How do we decide what our priority is?

Having a safe route through the village?

It was agreed that a working group would discuss this and put forward an application.

At this point the Chairman declared the meeting closed as the allotted time for the meeting had ended.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor for attending.

The Mayor thanked the Members for inviting her to the meeting. She was very interested to hear of the extra ramps required for the

disabled and mothers with pushchairs at the Station. She confirmed that disabilities are sometimes hidden and not always seen.

- 10** **Tree works and recreation ground issues**
Referred to next meeting
- 11** **The Queens Platinum deferred to 10 January 2022**
- 12** **Policies to be considered – deferred to 10 January 2022**
- Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Code of Conduct
- 13** **Climate Change – deferred to 10 January 2022**
- 14** **Confirmation of next meeting 10 January 2022**
- 15** **Resolution to exclude the press and public**
- 16** **Personnel – deferred to 10 January 2022**
- Meeting closed at 9.30 pm**

Signed _____

Chairman

10 January 2022

Tasks carried forward

- Clerk to amend Minutes of the last meeting
- Clerk to circulate routes that RS Skips should be using to Councillors
- Clerk to place Cllr Sparks report on Highways on the website
- Clerk to follow up on the cost of the WCs. Do we need to cancel or refer to Memorial Hall trustees.