

**Minutes of a meeting
held on 10 January 2022 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	Also Borough Councillor
	Cllr Sue Sparks	
	Cllr Toni Stanton	

Apologies Cllr Jamie Rivett

Members of public 1

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm

Agenda No	Minute No	Discussion
1	90	Apologies for absence¹ Apologies were received from Cllr. Jamie Rivett, confirming that he was unwell. It was proposed to accept the apology for the reason provided and it was unanimously accepted.
2	91	Declarations of interest² None.
3	92	Public session PCSO Report – not present Kent Community Warden report – not present Peter Leakey – Speed watch report – not present but a report had been circulated in the meeting. Clerk to ensure that the report is uploaded on to the website.

¹ Local Government Act 1972

² Localism Act 2011, s29

Public Session

Steve Sales rose to speak to the Members with regard to his application to join the Parish Council. Steve explained a little bit about himself and his family and where he lives. Steve spoke of the pride he felt of the village being a great place to live and wanted to help his community.

The Chairman declared an interest at this part as he confirmed that he had worked with Steve many years previously but they had not seen each other for a long time.

Cllr Fox also declared that she knew Steve too.

This was not an issue. Rather it confirmed that he was the right person for the role.

Cllr Sparks went on to propose that the Parish Council accept Steve's application as a Member and Cllr Jeffery seconded.

The vote in favour was unanimous.

The Clerk then provided Cllr Sales with the relevant paperwork for him to sign.

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting once more for a member of the public ("MOP") to speak. She had several questions.

One was to request that the Speedwatch reports be uploaded on to the website pages and Facebook to enable villagers to see the reports.

MOP then went on to ask what the Members were doing about HGV vehicles through the village. Was it an aspiration to have a ban on HGV? Cllr Sparks confirmed that the Members were on top of the issue. Lorries should not be driving through the village. Weight and width restrictions had been discussed between the Council, KCC and the police. The PCSO has not had very much feedback from the letters that had been sent to residents.

The Parish is considering how to collate more data re speed and numbers. The issue will be evidence based so any help with photographs to hand to the police will help.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the Council is working on a methodology to take this issue forward. This all ties in with the Highways Improvement Plan.

MOP further pointed out that R S Skips were now driving through with 3 skips onboard which was a highly dangerous situation.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the public is always welcome to attend Parish Council meetings and speak their minds.

There was a suggestion that a Facebook page where villagers could upload pictures of this nature but it was decided that it was preferable to send the images to the PCSO is collating the information.

MOP also asked about whether CCTV would be a possibility. It was confirmed that this is being investigated but there could be GDPR reasons regarding data but this idea had not been ruled out.

Parishioners matters as above.

4 93 Clerk's report (to bring Members up to date with current issues)

Clerk spoke to suggest that there should be two Committees. A Planning Committee and a Highways Committee. A member of KALC had provided Terms of Reference for the Parish to adapt and use and the Clerk confirmed that these were in the Agenda pack. The room had been booked for evening for the meetings.

5 94 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 29 November 2021

Cllr Pearton referred the Clerk to the Minutes of 18 October where the wording S.106 monies should have been replaced with S.106 Agreement. The Clerk apologised for the misinformation and confirmed that this would be rectified asap.

Cllr Pearton also referred the Clerk to the Extraordinary Audit of David Bucket where **Cllr Pearton's** name was mentioned. Cllr Pearton wanted clarification of the wording in the report. The Clerk confirmed that she would write to David Bucket requesting that the wording be changed to enable the paragraph to be read with the correct information.

Members confirmed the Minutes of 29 November were a true record of the meeting and confirmed by a show of hands.

Minutes approved with a unanimous vote.

6 95 Parish Councillor matters

Cllr Pearton had received complaints regarding fireworks going off early on New Years Eve. **Cllr Pearton** had also been liaising with the RSPCA on this subject due the effect the fireworks has on animals. Together they are investigating whether there is a law in place as to the timing of them.

There had also been an issue with Gas Guns from the farmers fields. **Cllr Pearton** had received complaints about these too. **Cllr Pearton** confirmed that he had contacted the farmer about this and the farmer concerned confirmed that he has 5. He needs to set these off in sequence to move the birds off his property. Members understood that the farmer has a right to protect his crops.

Cllr Fox confirmed that she had also investigated this issue. She had found that there is a Code of Practice as set by NFU that no more than 4 per hour and this must be a last resort.

Cllr Pearton confirmed that the farmer has restrictions on the timing of these guns. He uses them from 08:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. but in the summer he will extend the timings.

Cllr Pearton had organised additional litter bins for outside the shop. Clerk to liaise with Gravesham Borough Council regarding additional litter bins.

Cllr Fox would like the issue of storage container placed on the Agenda for February. With regard to Lorry Watch are registration numbers essential? It was concluded that there were to establish names of culprits.

Cllr Martin will be unable to attend the Planning meeting at the end of January. Would like to ensure the Members support Hayley in her planning application so that she does not get turned down again. **Cllr Pearton** confirmed that he was chasing the issue of Hayley's planning application.

Cllr Jeffery requested that the Annual Newsletter be added to the Agenda.

She also requested investigation into the bus shelter in Pear Tree Lane (which she understood was not in Higham). Would it be possible for Higham Clerk to contact Shorne Clerk to request they investigate their bus shelter due to the poor condition as it has been graffitied.

Cllr Jeffery went on to confirm that the Mayor has a lunch at Cobham hall and had circulated details to all members.

Cllr Sales confirmed that he understood the issues that had been discussed on the different matters discussed at the meeting and felt the Council should confirm to residents in some way what could be done. There is a level of expectation from villagers which is not always within the Council's remit.

Cllr Grey mentioned that there are a few street lights out but Cllr Martin confirmed they were on the list for updating.

On his way back from a meeting in Crutches Lane **Cllr Grey** noticed a large amount of rubble in the Gads Hill layby (off the A226) that had been fly tipped. **Cllr Holmes** confirmed that she had reported that issue.

Cllr Stanton brought up the issue of School Governor as she has been informed that she had not been accepted on the board.

Cllr Grey went on to say that he had been concerned that **Cllr Stanton** had not been accepted on to the Board of Governors for the Primary School. It was decided that a draft letter should be processed and then agreed to send the Primary School about this issue. Clerk and **Cllr Stanton** to liaise.

Borough Councillor matters

Cllr Pearton advised that consideration is being given for Uber to purchase the Gravesend Town Pier where they would be running a ferry from Gravesend into London with various stops en route. In the agreement, Uber must abide by conditions of maintenance; however, there would be a buy-back option if they do not adhere to the conditions.

Cllr Howard then commented that the Kings Ferry had stopped running their commuter line.

7 96 Crutches Lane Issues – Cllr Pearton

Cllr Pearton confirmed that the meeting with the Police and other Councillors had been successful. There are concerns about school children as this was a school route. There had been threats to MOP on the site. There is no easy fix. The police will be requesting that this could be listed as a **red zone**. CCTV cameras had been suggested and these are being considered.

Cllr Pearton confirmed that Shorne Parish Council had purchased wildlife cameras and this was then discussed by other members.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the police will be placing confirmation of their visits on Twitter and their Community site. She confirmed that MOP must report these sightings to enable the police to act on this. Without residents reporting this issue will come off the **red zone** list.

It was suggested that signs should be placed that the area is being monitored.

Cllr Pearton proposed that the Council purchase cameras to help this situation but there was no seconder and vote to confirm purchase.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the Council had requested for trees to be cut down on part of the A226 and lay-by that would leave the area open. This is another area where there is a problem. A request needs to go to KCC to cut these trees down. Members were unanimous in favour of contacting KCC.

Cllr Sales confirmed that the cameras needed to be visible to make them a deterrent.

Cllr Stanton felt that there was a GDPR issue.

Cllr Sparks confirmed that the idea of cameras needed a little more thought.

8 97 Finance

Cllr Fox was concerned that a payment had been made for a mobile phone which the Chairman would now be using. Cllr Fox was unaware that the idea had been finalised. Clerk confirmed that there had been an agreement to this in Council and that she would find the relevant minute that should have been recorded.

Clerk confirmed that she had secured the best possible contract on the phone as the provider had to be EE. Although Vodafone had been a cheaper option, in the Chairman’s home area, Vodafone do not offer a good enough reception. EE was the better option.

Cllr Grey confirmed that he had not been able to access his laptop for a week as he had been informed by Adam Holloway MP that **Cllr Grey** had been a victim of hacking. Clerk went on to explain that **Cllr Grey** had not been hacked, it was a well known scam attacking parish councils and preying on trusting Councillors who wanted to help their Chairman out of a difficult situation. Clerk went on to inform Councillors not to act on these requests.

Cllr Martin proposed to accept the payments that had been made and **Cllr Stanton** seconded. The vote was unanimous in favour.

9 98 Memorial Hall Lease Cllr Martin

The Parish solicitors had been chasing Memorial Hall solicitors for an update on the Trust Deed to enable the renewal of the lease. There has been no response at the time of the meeting.

10 99 Pavilion – now Higham Pre-School

Cllr Martin confirmed that the Council ought to be negotiating with Savills to separate the Sports Courts from the Pavilion building. This would enable St John College Cambridge to be entitled to half the rent from the Nursery but in turn would give the Nursery a better long term relationship with the Council.

Cllr Martin proposed that he start negotiations with Savills on the new lease and **Cllr Jeffery** seconded that motion. The vote in favour although not unanimous.

11 100 Street lighting Cllr Martin

Clerk to contact maintenance companies for quoting on maintenance contracts.

13 101 Tree Works Cllr Rivett

No update.

14 102 Queens Celebrations

Cllr Jeffery confirmed there is a grant available for this and requested that the Clerk look into this. Cllr Jeffery had provided details by email.

15 103 Policies to be considered

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations

Members confirmed that they had read and understood both the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and agreed that these be adopted for the Council. Vote was unanimous in favour.

16 104 Planning and Highways Committees

Confirmation of members and discuss possible Chairman.

Discuss Terms of Reference and draft Planning guidelines.

Planning Committee

Cllr Nikki Fox
Cllr Toni Stanton
Cllr Alan Howard
Cllr Steve Sales
Cllr Les Pearton
Cllr John Grey – ex officio
Cllr Liz Jeffery – ex officio

Highways Committee

Cllr Sue Sparks
Cllr Les Pearton
Cllr Steve Sales
Cllr David Martin
Cllr Alan Howard
Cllr Nikki Fox
Cllr Pam Holmes
Cllr John Grey – ex officio
Cllr Liz Jeffery – ex officio

Cllr Pearton then brought the subject of the application for change of use of property at Copperfields the Class C residential home in Villa Road. He confirmed that he requires more information on this issue. Cllr Pearton confirmed that he is in discussions with Amanda Grout and Richard Hart on the issue. The request is for change of use to a Children's Home. Cllr Pearton would like to ensure that this would be suitable for the village.

17 105 Chairman's award

Cllr Grey explained his idea on an award. The idea is that the Parish Council would be able to provide recognition to people in the village who had gone above and beyond to help others. This could be for either Parish Councillors or residents of Higham.

Cllr Grey felt that villagers and Councillors should be recognised for the work they do for the village. This would be in the form of a Certificate or plaque.

Cllr Pearton agreed that many residents do a lot of work outside of the Parish Council.

Cllr Sparks asked whether this would apply to a group of people and Cllr Grey confirmed this would be the case if agreed.

Cllr Jeffery had been part of the committee who dealt with applications and explained the procedure used by Gravesham Borough Council.

The Clerk confirmed that there could be no monetary award as it is a legal requirement that the Parish do not provide money to an individual.

Cllr Pearton proposed the idea and Cllr Jeffery seconded it. The vote was in favour.

Cllr Jeffery to take this forward.

18 106 Climate Change Cllr Alan Howard

Cllr Howard confirmed that the figures are available to show how we need to move forward as a village with Climate Change. He is hoping for a few members get together as a group to discuss climate change and provide figures for villagers to consider and act upon.

19 107 Confirmation of next meeting 14 February 2022

Confirmed.

20 108 Resolution to exclude the press and public for closed session

The Clerk read aloud a letter that had been received from Adam Holloway MP and members discussed the response to be made. Clerk to liaise with Cllr Martin to take this forward.

There was a discussion on retrieving the Parish records and equipment and account access from the previous Clerk's home address. Cllr Grey to discuss the way forward with family of previous Clerk.

Clerk to place purchase of Container/Office on February agenda.

The Clerk confirmed that she had not been able to discuss Employment Contracts with Cllr Rivett due to his unavailability as being unwell.

The Chairman thanked the Members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.50 pm

Signed _____

Chairman

[14 February 2022]

Tasks carried forward

- Clerk to write to David Bucket for change of wording in report
- Clerk to write to Lee Hooker at Gravesham Borough Council to thank them for the hard work in keeping the village clean but could we please have a few more visits.
- Cllr Jeffery to take forward the issue of the Chairman's ward.
- Clerk to request additional litter bins from Gravesham Council
- Storage Container/Office to be added to Agenda for February
- Clerk to contact Shorne Parish Clerk to request a tidy up of their Bus Shelter.
- Cllr Stanton to liaise with Clerk on draft letter to Board of Governors at the Primary School
- Cllr Sparks to contact KCC with regards to cutting trees back to help with Crabbles Wood issue
- Cllr Martin to commence negotiations with Savills regarding a new lease on Recreation Ground/Pavilion/Sports Courts
- Clerk to contact maintenance companies regarding street lighting
- Clerk to investigate grant on Queens Celebrations
- Cllr Howard to organise climate change working group
- Cllr Martin to draft letter to Adam Holloway MP
- Clerk to ensure Speedwatch report added to the website