

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting of Vigo Parish Council, 29th April, 2019

Good evening everyone and welcome to another Annual Parish Meeting for Vigo. Another year has flown by, and this year marks 4 years since the last elections – where does the time go?

Sadly, three members of our Parish Council have decided that they will not stand again for election – more about this later

The next election for our Borough and Parish councils is on 2nd May. As, I am sure, you will have heard, Vigo Parish Council will be having an uncontested election – we have positions for 9 councillors and only 6 people put their names forward for election, so we need of 3 more people to get us to a full complement. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in joining our happy band, then please chat to our Clerk or a Councillor at the end of the formal part of this evening – you could be co-opted and not need to stand for election.

So, why are we having this meeting – well it is a legal requirement that we hold an Annual Meeting with members of the Parish. But that aside, this meeting provides an opportunity for your Parish Council to explain what it does and to highlight projects that have been carried out in the past year. It lets you, the Parishioners, find out where your money has been spent.

Also, at this meeting, we hope to have reports from other people and organisations that have links to Vigo. This will give a broader picture of what is happening in and around Vigo.

And you will have the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues that are important to you. We would just ask that you wait until the end of a report before doing so.

As usual, when the formal business of this meeting is complete, there will be an opportunity for parishioners to discuss individual concerns with councillors in a more relaxed atmosphere. You are all invited to join us for a glass of wine and hope that you will take this opportunity to chat with your councillors and volunteer to become a Councillor for the next term of office!

So, what has been happening in Vigo in the last year:

There haven't been any major new projects this year. The two major projects from last year, the CCTV and the Playpark have been finished and are now being put to good use.

The CCTV does seem to continue to have a positive effect on behaviour in the Bay and the Car Park.

The official opening of the Playpark took place on the last May Bank Holiday last year. The weather was super and there was a quite a gathering to see the Deputy

Mayor of Gravesham (Lesley Boycott) cut the ribbon and let the children rush into the playground.

The new playground and the zip wire do seem to be a great success. It is always a delight to see these being so well used. Even on quite miserable days, there are nearly always children there.

On a not so happy note, there has sadly been some vandalism of the new picnic tables. If anyone ever has any information they can pass on to our Clerk regarding acts of vandalism, we would be very grateful.

The regular duties of the Council continue as usual. A lot of time and expense is used in trying to keep the Village looking its best - overseeing the grass mowing, the tree care and the general maintenance of the village verges, paths and woodland. It is especially important to ensure that trees are monitored to ensure they are healthy and where safety issues are found, these are dealt with as soon as possible.

Litter is regularly picked from the main routes through the Village. Unfortunately, we do not have the money to pay someone to litter pick every side road and cul-de-sac. We would ask residents to take responsibility for their own roads.

The covenants that are enshrined in everyone's deeds also help to maintain the appearance of the Village. Some time is spent at each Parish Council meeting discussing applications from residents asking for Covenant approval for changes they want to make to their property. In the vast majority of cases Covenant approval is given and should the proposed changes not be in keeping with the aims of the covenant, advice is always given.

Each year I remind people that the Council puts aside some money that can be used to support local groups and organisations. Grants of up to £250 are available. As has been the case for the last few years, the Grants in Aid budget has again been underspent this year. Please remember, if you are involved with a local organisation, it is very easy to apply to us for a grant, simply pop in to see our Clerk and she will give you a form, or if you can't pop in, then you can contact her by email or phone.

Ruts on the roadside verges continue to be a problem, but I think less than in previous years.

The problem with people parking on the verge opposite the Country Park has improved – the yellow cones do seem to have stopped parking on the verge. People do still park further down the road, rather than pay to go into the Country Park. Some local residents have very kindly been leafleting the cars parked on Waterlow Road and in side roads, to inform them of the excellent deal that is

available from KCC, for a season ticket to park in several of their Country Parks. I'm not sure how many car parkers have taken this up, but it may have persuaded a few.

The conversion of the Water Tower into a mobile phone station caused consternation among many people. Unfortunately, installing mobile phone masts is a permitted development right and there was little that could be done to prevent the work going ahead. The contractors have left the site in rather a mess, and we are chasing them to put it right.

Now before we come to the part of my talk where I where I am going to talk about some of the many people who are very important to running of our Parish Council, I thought we could have a few minutes in case anyone has any questions they would like to raise.

Before embarking on my thanks, with apologies if I miss anyone out, I have a very pleasant duty to perform and that is to ask Lesley, in her role as Deputy Mayor, to make a presentation to a lady who is and always has been involved in so many areas of life in Vigo. That lady is Janet Jones. I will leave Lesley to say a few words about Janet's roles in the Village and to tell you a bit more about the certificate.

Now I need to say my thanks to those who are not departing.

So, firstly, Jo Glass, our Clerk, who has, as usual been our main support and guide. Among the many tasks she carries out for us are writing letters, making phone calls, finding answers to queries, keeping up with legal changes and keeping us all on the straight and narrow! As I have said before, without her knowledge and very able assistance, this council would definitely not function.

And Paul Agle, our services contractor, without whom the Village would not look nearly so good. The range of tasks that he carries out become greater and more varied with every year that passes.

Then there are our Community Wardens, Mandy Casson and Jacqui Fuller. Who are always proactive in the Village and give help and support in so very many ways.

And Carol Cox who continues to produce our excellent Vigo Journal.

And Bryan Sweetland, our KCC member

And last but not least, I must, of course mention the other members of our Parish Council. Thank you to you all for the very valuable work you do and for the help and support you have given me.

Many, many thanks and I look forward to working with most, but sadly not all, of you again in the coming year.

So, who is escaping?!

Firstly, our Borough Councillors, Leslie Boycott and Derek Shelbrooke who have always been ready with their help and support. Sadly neither Lesley or Derek are standing as Councillors for Gravesham in the forth coming elections, so we will no longer be able to call on their services. We don't know who our new Borough Councillors will be, but they will have a lot to live up to.

I would like to present you both with certificates to show our gratitude for all your support.

Now, also very sadly, we have to say goodbye to 3 of our Parish Councillors. These 3 people have all served on VPC for quite a few years. They have been active in the Parish Council and have always been willing to offer help and support when needed.

So, firstly I would like to present Sue Connor with this certificate and plant. Sue has been on the Council for 8 years. She has always offered wise counsel and she has taken on the task of sorting out and uploading the 'Vigo at 50' material. I am hopeful that she will continue to be involved in this project.

Next is John Goodban, who has also served for 8 years. Again, a steady influence; John has been involved with the Council as our Finance Councillor, making regular checks on the Parish Finances. His services in this role will be greatly missed. Again I would like to present him with this certificate and plant.

Last but definitely not least is Roland Graves He has been a member of VPC since the very beginning, which means he has been a councillor for 19 years! So I guess you could say that he really has done his duty for the Parish. Roland has always been a great support to me and the other councillors, with a calm and considered approach to any problems. He always seems able to find the right words for any situation. I really don't know how we are going to manage without Roland.

Please accept this certificate and plant in grateful thanks for all you have done.

Pat Banks