

PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



Issue Four, Winter 2022/2023

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WELCOME – HAPPY NEW YEAR

Vigo Parish Council would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year and welcome you to the latest Parish Council Newsletter, Edition Four (Winter 2022/2023). We hope you find the contents interesting and informative.

[If you know someone who is unable to access these newsletters online, and would rather receive a paper copy, please contact the Clerk](#)

NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

We are pleased to announce that Sharon Cottam, a local resident, was co-opted onto the Council in May last year, as a result of a Casual Vacancy.

This means that Vigo Parish Council has a full complement of nine members again, which is great news. We have enjoyed working with Sharon so far, and wish her a warm welcome to our Council.

MEETING DATES FOR 2022/2023

Full Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall (small hall). Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have a particular issue you would like to raise, please speak to the Clerk in advance. Agendas are published in advance in our noticeboard in The Bay, and on our website.

Monday 16 th January 2023	Monday 20 th February 2023
Monday 20 th March 2023	Monday 17 th April 2023
Monday 22 nd May 2023	Monday 19 th June 2023
Monday 17 th July 2023	No meeting in August

The Annual Parish Meeting (sometimes known as the Parish Assembly) will be held on Monday 3rd April 2023. This is the meeting where you can hear the Annual Report of the Parish Council, as well as updates on what local organisations have been up to over the last year.

We are also pleased that local historian, Christoph Bull will be giving a talk “Meopham’s past from A to Z” (V= Vigo).

More details to follow!

The Annual Meeting of the Council (where we elect our officers and agree our policies) will be held on Monday 15th May 2023.

How to contact the Parish Council:

By email: clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk Via our website: www.vigo-kent.gov.uk By phone: 01732 823337

Or by post: Vigo Parish Council, Vigo Village Hall, The Bay, Vigo, Gravesend, Kent. DA13 0TD

SUSTAINABLE WARMTH PROGRAMME – GRANTS AVAILABLE!



How could £10,000 in energy-efficiency upgrades transform your home?

Check if you're eligible for fully-funded energy-efficiency upgrades.

Apply before:
31st December 2022

#STAYWARM&SAVE

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Sustainable Warmth

e-on

Could a free, fully funded Sustainable Warmth Grant Transform Your Home and transform your carbon footprint?

Government-funded Sustainable Warmth grants are designed to support those households most impacted by rising energy bills check if you are eligible

www.eonenergy.com/green-homes-grant

Mandy Cason (Community Warden for Vigo) is supporting residents to apply for this grant. Please call her on 07977 981 931. Alternatively you can contact the Clerk for further information.

WINTER WEATHER – SNOW, SALT BINS AND GRITTING

Vigo was the recipient of a very heavy snow fall in December, which affected the village for a week or more. The Parish Council has had some complaints about the lack of gritting on the roads. Gritting the roads is the responsibility of Kent County Council (Highways) and any issues should be reported to them directly. You can report online: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Here you can report various Winter Maintenance Issues (Ice / Snow problems or issues with Salt Bins). Scroll down to Winter Maintenance on the drop-down menu.

The Parish Council have contacted Kent Highways and reported that all the salt bins need refilling. There are eight salt bins in the village at present, but Vigo Parish Council will be discussing the provision of more salt bins at the next Full Parish Council meeting.

Potholes? Uneven pavements? Blocked drains?

Report all of these issues to Kent Highways online at
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

If you can't report online or want further advice... please contact the Parish Clerk.

RED ROUTE BUSES – PROPOSED CHANGES TO 306 / 308 BUS SERVICE

We have received communication from the Public Transport Office at Kent County Council. As you may know, from October 2021, Red Route have taken over the 306 / 308 service. The Red Route service currently costs KCC a considerable amount of money, and they feel it performs very poorly in terms of value for money. Fuel prices have also increased, and Red Route have indicated that they cannot resource all of their work at current levels due to lack of drivers.

KCC have investigated the use of the service, post pandemic, to see if there is a more cost-effective way of operating the routes. The 306/308 bus service is the most expensive service that KCC currently funds. Proposed timetable changes are scheduled to come into force from February 2023.

Proposed Service:

The current timetable has significant school movements and operates with three peak buses. It is proposed to reduce this to two vehicles in the future. None of the school journeys will become unserved, although students on the afternoon bus back from Meopham School to Vigo will have to catch another service home from the school which runs 30 minutes later than the present bus.

The Monday to Friday daytime service will continue to run every 90 minutes. However, the first bus from Borough Green will now be at 07.38 with the last bus back from Sevenoaks at 15.26.

It is proposed to withdraw the evening buses between Bluewater, Gravesend and Borough Green.

On Saturdays it is proposed to maintain a 90-minute service between Gravesend and Vigo using just one bus and driver instead of the current two vehicles. As a result, there would not be a Saturday service between Vigo, Borough Green and Sevenoaks, except for route 6 between Seal and Sevenoaks. This will leave the 222 route to Tonbridge as the only Saturday service in Borough Green.

Vigo Parish Council are very concerned to read about these proposed changes and are in communications with KCC regarding this.

We have reached out to our County Council Member (Bryan Sweetland) and our Borough Council Members (Ejaz Aslam and Denise Tiran) as well as our MP (Adam Holloway).

Vigo Parish Council will continue to do what they can to stop these changes, which we feel will be entirely detrimental to those who live in the village.

If you would like to report any issues you have had with the bus service, please contact the Parish Clerk, who is collating information to pass onto KCC. clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk

STREETLIGHTS IN VIGO

As you may have read on our website, and in past newsletters, Gravesham Borough Council gave notice that they intended to terminate the agreement to maintain the Vigo Streetlights as from 1st April 2022.

Gravesham Borough Council had a responsibility to hand over the lights in good order – but Vigo Parish Council were aware that a number of streetlights were not working, and as such we made sure that a survey was undertaken to ensure that all faults were noted and recorded prior to the 1st April 2022.

The maintenance of the lights is now complicated, as who is responsible to carry out the work is dependent on the condition of the light at 1st April 2022. Faults noted prior to 1st April come under the remit of GBC, faults that have occurred since then will be repaired by the contractor engaged by the Parish Council.

We are hopeful that a full handover will happen in the coming months.

The Parish Council have put a budget aside to start upgrading our old lighting stock to LED, which will be more energy efficient. However, the increase in energy costs over the recent months has meant that some of that budget may need to be diverted to cover our electricity bills in the future, once the handover has happened.

In the meantime, please contact the Clerk if you notice any faults on the streetlights in the village – we will then be able to work out if the fault is to be repaired by Gravesham BC or by the Parish Contractor.

We are very pleased with our contractor (Streetlights Limited) – they do regular inspections of the lights in the village, including “night scouts” and we have found that repairs are carried out in a swift and efficient manner.

CCTV COVERAGE OF VIGO PLAY PARK

We have had a new “Pan / Tilt / Zoom” CCTV camera installed which covers the playpark on the village green. The coverage is excellent – we are able to zoom in on recorded footage and see the smallest of details.

This camera is in addition to a static camera which also covers the play park area, and forms part of a group of 15 cameras which the Parish Council have in total (covering the play park, the ball park, the car park, the village hall, The Bay and the bus stop on Erskine Road).



NUISANCE QUAD BIKES

Quad bikes continue to be a nuisance in the village. When the Parish Council are aware of issues, these are reported to the police. This CCTV image shows a quad bike being used to collect children from Vigo School. The quad then drives across The Bay which can only be considered reckless as there are many pedestrians in the area at that time.

UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT OF FOWLERS STONE WOOD, HARVEL ROAD

The Parish Council is dissatisfied that the unauthorised development of Fowlers Stone Wood has yet to be resolved.

We have been told that Gravesham Borough Council are working with their legal team and Legal Counsel regarding the on-going breaches of the injunction, and the non-compliance with an Issued Enforcement Notice. Counsel has advised Gravesham Borough Council that they need to commission some specialist advice, and this has not been straightforward. Gravesham Borough Council are working to get the work commissioned as soon as possible.

The Parish Council continue to press Gravesham Borough Council on this matter.

Planning on updating your windows and doors?

Looking to extend your property?

*Please remember that you need to seek covenant approval from the Parish Council **before** carrying out any works. There is no charge to apply. Please send details of your proposal to the Clerk, and it will be discussed at the next available Parish Council Meeting.*

DUMPING GARDEN WASTE IN THE WOODLAND OR ON PARISH LAND

There has been a number of incidents where garden waste (and general waste in some cases) have been dumped either on Parish Land or in the woodland areas. Clearing this up takes time and also takes resources away from other jobs that need doing. If you witness any dumping or are aware of who may be doing this – please contact the Clerk – all communications will be treated confidentially.

SEED SWAP / VIGO LIBRARY

Did you know we run a seed swap in Vigo? You can drop off any spare seeds you have (please clearly label them) and pick up any that you fancy from the box.

You can find the box in the library, in the village hall.

The library opening times are as follows:

Tuesday: Midday til 5pm
Wednesday: 2pm til 5pm
Friday: 2pm til 5pm
Saturday: 10am til 2pm



TREE SURGERY IN VIGO

The Autumn / Winter period is the time when our Contractors, Paul & Steph do the majority of tree surgery in the village.

We have a list of tree works which is made up of routine maintenance, work that we have identified, and work that has been identified as a result of residents contacting us.

If you have any concerns about trees, please contact the Clerk. An assessment will be made, and if work is required it will be programmed accordingly. All work is agreed by Full Council. Paul & Steph are not able to agree to any work unless it is under the direction of the Parish Council.

Under no circumstances should residents carry out work on Parish trees. Trees in Vigo are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

VPC do have a woodland management policy which clearly states what our commitment to tree work is – this can be viewed on our website www.vigo-kent.org (click on “The Council” and then on “Procedures & Policies”). If you would like a hard copy of these documents, please contact the Clerk.



Emergency or not?

The criteria for calling 999 (urgent) or 101 (non urgent) is as follows:
Call 999 if a crime is in progress, or there is a threat / danger to life and or property
Call 999 if there are nuisance bikes on busy roads or areas of high footfall
Call 999 if there are youths climbing on the village hall roof or the school roof
Your call will be assessed by a call handler and the appropriate action taken
Call 101 for non- urgent matters
(including nuisance bikes on community land in general, or low foot-fall areas)

BAT WALKS

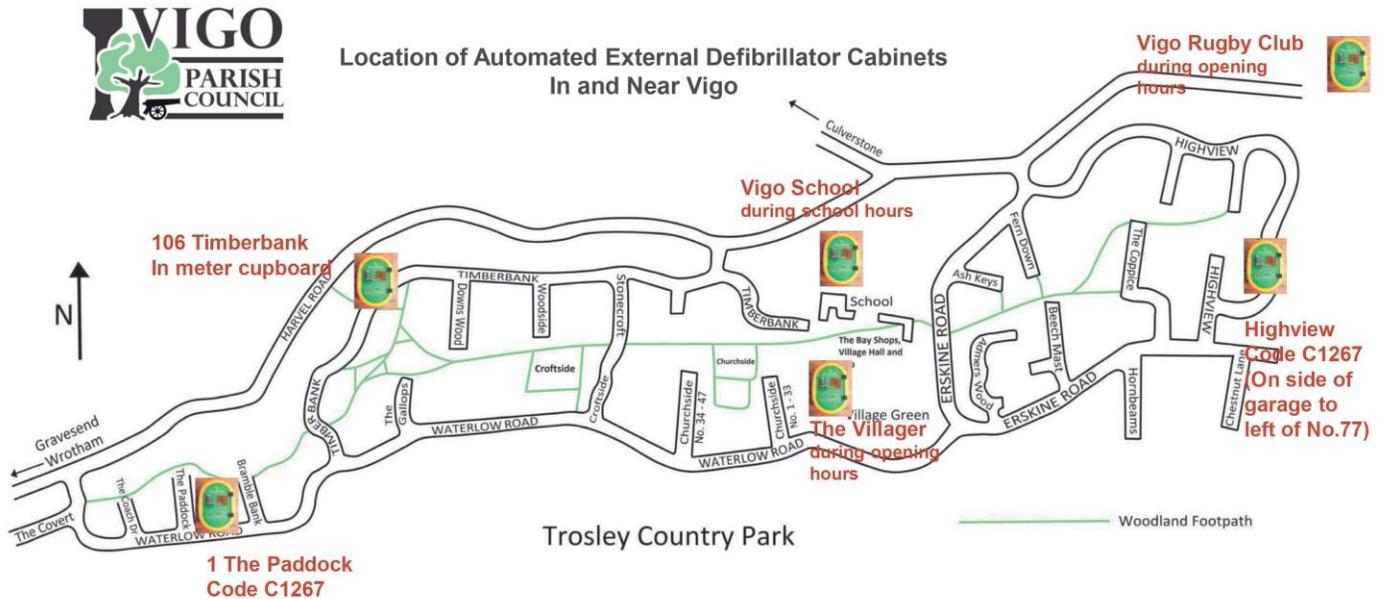
Back at the end of July we were really pleased to be able to offer two “Bat Walks” in the village. Vigo Parish Council are hugely grateful to Craig Williams who kindly ran the walks and passed on some of his wealth of knowledge to us. We may run more this year – if you would like to be put on a waiting list for future events, please contact the Clerk.



VIGO VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATORS

In October we ran two FREE defib / CPR training sessions in the village hall. Huge thanks to Cllr Dave Hawkins for running these sessions, and also to the Village Hall for providing the space at no charge. We may run further sessions this year – if you would like to be put on a waiting list, please email the Clerk.

We are fortunate to have six defibrillators in the village: please see the map below.



POP UP CAFE

We are really pleased to say that the Pop-Up Café is now being run by a group of volunteers in the village, and that the project continues to go from strength to strength.



This has proved to be fortuitous, as sadly the original Coffee Project is no longer running as Action With Communities in Rural Kent (the charity which started the project) is closing in the very near future. Although we are saddened to hear of the closure of ACRK and the many Pop-Up Cafés that will close as a result – we are pleased to say that the Vigo Café continues to run and is very popular and well attended. We meet on the first Friday of the month, in the small hall, between 10.30 and 12.30. We have around 30 visitors each time, and a warm welcome is guaranteed.

Disabled access is available, please go to the slope at the side of the hall, where a doorbell will be available – someone will come and let you in. Free hot drinks, cakes, biscuits, and fruit are available, but there are donation pots on the table for people to make a contribution if they can.

Future café dates are Friday 3rd February & Friday 3rd March.

The April café will be late due to the Easter weekend, so we will meet on Friday 14th April.



REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

LUDESDown & DISTRICT RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP:

We are a small friendly group that usually walks from The Cock Inn, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend DA13 0XB, at 11am on Wednesdays. We walk at a gentle pace for some 90 minutes in beautiful countryside. Occasionally we lead weekend walks. With four Socials a year in Luddesdown Village Hall and a twice-yearly Newsletter, we would be delighted if you joined us for a walk or two. Becoming a member costs £7 per person a year.

Please contact Walks Co-Ordinator Janet Ferguson by email janetferguson@hotmail.fr or our Chairman Gerry Minister by telephone on 01474 813 376. ‘

HARVEL WOMENS INSTITUTE

From Jean Prestige-Jones, President of Harvel WI.

This being the first report of 2023 may all the members of Harvel WI and myself wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year. We have had a great time in 2022 which we rounded off with a fabulous Christmas party in December. The food was absolutely delicious provided by our hard-working catering committee. All the committee members and a few willing helpers decorated the hall to make even more sparkle for the event.

The committee also work so hard and without them our WI would not function. So well done to you all. Our theme this year was Tinsel and Tiaras which was embraced by everyone. We had as our entertainment the wonderful singer Chris Till, who as always gave us the best music and laughter for the whole evening. I think everyone agreed it was a brilliant night and enjoyed by everyone. (My feet are testament to the amount of dancing that went on). As we look forward to 2023, I hope that it brings everything that our ladies wish for.

We already have our program for the coming months in place with even a talk by one of our own Harvel WI ladies who is now going to be speaking to us in February.

Our annual event of the Garden Trail has been brought forward to June as a lot of our volunteer gardeners say that this is better as the gardens are at their best. So, if anyone reading this is willing to open their garden for this event, we would love to hear from you as it is always well attended and a great day out.

We have had so many evenings of enjoyment and support for each other which, in these testing times it is most welcome to have the friendship of so many. We have had some new members this year but as I always say if anyone wishing to come along as a visitor to see if our WI is for them then we would love to see you. Again, a Happy New Year to one and all and as the song goes let's hope it's a good one.