

PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



Issue Two, Winter 2020

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THE FUTURE OF NEWS IN VIGO

As you will be aware, due to the Pandemic, production of the Vigo Journal was suspended earlier this year. Discussions on the future of the Journal took place at a recent Council meeting, and the decision was made, by the overwhelming majority of Council Members, to move away from paper copies of the Vigo Journal, initially for a trial period. It was felt that the future of news in Vigo needed to take a more modern turn.

VPC feel that it is more efficient to publish a regular newsletter online, as the information will be much more current. However, we note that it is important to still give people the opportunity to subscribe to a paper version if they wish. To this end, VPC will produce a regular newsletter, which will be posted on our website, and our Facebook page. If residents would like to receive a paper copy, they should contact the Clerk who will arrange for a paper version to be delivered.

Vigo Parish Council would like to say a huge THANK YOU to the team of local residents who have delivered the Vigo Journal to your doors for many years. Their assistance has been invaluable. Thank you all.

Please note, this will be the last newsletter that is delivered to every household – if you want to receive paper copies in the future, you must contact the Clerk by the end of February 2021. Details for contacting the Clerk are noted at the end of this newsletter.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that Mandie Jones, a local resident, has recently been co-opted onto the Council as a result of a Casual Vacancy.

We would like to welcome Mandie and look forward very much to working with her. Mandie has a lot of experience as a Parish Council Member, which we are sure will be invaluable.

In other news, one of our longest standing Council Members decided to hang up his VPC hat. Colin Talboys has been an integral part of the Vigo neighbourhood under many guises for many years, and he will be missed. We would like to wish Colin a quiet, relaxing retirement from the Council. We are, however, pleased to say that he has agreed to continue to advise us in his capacity of Tree Warden for the foreseeable future.

Due to the resignation of Colin, we once again have a vacancy on the Parish Council. If you are interested or would just like to find out what the role involves, please contact the Clerk by Friday 5th February. Discussions regarding filling the vacancy will take place at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 15th February.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS IN VIGO

Thank you to everyone who completed the Covenant Survey enclosed with the last edition of this newsletter. We were pleased to receive over 329 responses, which represents over 40% of households. As a result of the responses, formal proposals were put to the Parish Council, with regard to how covenants are enforced in the future. Full details of the responses and proposals can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

ON THE SUBJECT OF COVENANTS ~ We are being contacted by an increasing number of residents whose property sales are being held up due to solicitors discovering that alterations have been carried out to a property without the necessary approvals. Retrospective applications can be made, but carry a fee, and there is always a chance that the Parish Council may not be able to give approval. Always apply in advance of carrying out any work (approval needed for ALL changes to the external appearance of your property). Thank you.

MEETING DATES FOR 2020 / 2021

Monthly Parish Council Meetings are still being held remotely via the internet; Members of the Public are welcome to attend – please contact the Clerk for details (you will need to have access to Zoom). Details of the venue and time will be advised on the agenda, which will be published in advance of the meeting. Or phone the Clerk for details:

Monday 18th January 2021
Monday 15th February 2021
Monday 15th March 2021
Monday 12th April 2021

Monday 17th May 20
Monday 21st June 2021
Monday 19th July 2021
AGM 26th April 2021.



CHRISTMAS REFUSE COLLECTION DATES

Over the Festive and New Year period, collections will run a day late.

If your collection is normally on a Tuesday, the collection will be as normal on 22nd December (Rubbish and Food Waste) then you will have collections on Wednesday 30th December (Recycling & Food Waste) and on Wednesday 6th January (Rubbish and Food Waste). Collections return to normal on Tuesday 12th January.

If your collection is normally on a Wednesday, the collection will be as normal on 23rd December (Recycling and Food Waste), then you will have collections on Thursday 31st December (Rubbish and Food Waste) and on Thursday 7th January (Recycling and Food Waste). Collections return to normal on Wednesday 13th January.

More details can be found online at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/bins-and-recycling/bin-days/overview>

Contact us: clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk

or by phone 01732 823337 (Mon & Tues 9.30 – 4.30)

VIGO UNDERPASS REDECORATION PROJECT A PLEA FOR HELP!

This is our underpass when it had just been repainted some years ago. You will probably agree it is looking a little tired now.

Although we love the tree design on the outside, and would ideally just like to tidy this up, we would also like to hear other ideas. We would also like to look at repainting the inside completely.

Would you like to get involved in painting and updating our underpass? Do you have any ideas of what might look wonderful as a design? Or do you think we should just paint it a plain colour, so that we can overpaint any graffiti in the future?

We would love to get a group of local residents together to brainstorm what could be done to brighten up the underpass. If you have any ideas, or would like to get involved, please contact the Clerk.



COMMUNITY WARDENS FEELING FESTIVE

Our wonderful KCC Community Wardens (Mandy and Jacquie) continue to provide support to Vigo Residents during the ongoing pandemic. They have recently been involved in the “Give a Gift” project where 117 family games and puzzles were donated to local families across the Borough.



STREET CHAMPIONS

The Street Champions are a network of residents who have volunteered to improve the environment in their local area. Street Champions take pride in Gravesham and help the planet. To do this they need more Street Champions to join them in making a difference. Street Champions litter pick and report environmental crimes to help make Gravesham a cleaner, greener borough. They also provide leaflets to neighbours who need assistance in managing their waste responsibly.

At present there is ONLY ONE registered Street Champion in Vigo – it would be wonderful if more would volunteer. If you are interested in adopting a street or area, please fill in the online form:

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/street-care-and-cleaning/adopt-a-street/overview>

Following Government guidelines, the Parish Office is closed and our Clerk is working from home. Calls to the office are being diverted and will be answered during office hours on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Phone: 01732 823337

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS – What do you think?



We have been contacted by some residents to ask if we would consider reducing the frequency of grass cutting in certain areas, to allow wildflowers to flourish and provide a boost for Bees and insects that rely on such flowers. Other Councils are considering this, and some have done this.

We are not proposing to reduce our grass cutting frequency around the whole village, but are looking for areas where this might be a practical and sensible solution.

Do you have any strong thoughts on this? Would you like to nominate an area for consideration? We are going to post an online poll in the New Year, to gauge opinion so a decision can be made by Parish Council before the Spring.

If you do not have access to the Internet, and request a paper copy of our next newsletter, we will also at that time send out a paper poll for you to complete.

HEDGEHOG HIGHWAYS

Did you know that estimated Hedgehog numbers are already down 95% since the 1950s. In view of this drastic decline in the hedgehog population people are being encouraged by the Government, the Hedgehog Preservation Society and other bodies, to create Hedgehog Highways in their garden boundary fencing.

British gardens are becoming poorer homes for wildlife with increased paving, decking and reduced plant life. We are seeing a huge loss in connectivity between green spaces leaving hedgehogs isolated as properties have boundaries impenetrable to hedgehogs.



Hedgehog Highways are created by making space for hedgehogs to roam allowing them to seek food and habitat. A 13cm hole in the base of a fence allowing gardens to be connected, creating the pathways the hedgehogs need to survive

In July 2019 the Government Communities Secretary added a condition to planning guidelines recommending Hedgehog Highways for new housing estates with small holes in the fences to come as standard. The holes need only be 13cm square (the size of a CD case). Already fencing manufacturers have made these modified fences available to the public for new fencing projects or to retro fit into boundaries.

CENSUS 2021

Did you know the next census is due on 21st March 2021? Census Engagement Managers will work to maximize completion of the census, ideally online, across the area. Although households were able to complete the census online in 2011, take up was relatively low and most were returned in paper form. This census is Digital-First and it is hoped that three quarters of them will be completed online, though there will still be a paper option for those unable or unwilling to do so, as well as considerable support for anyone who needs help.

UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT OF FOWLERS STONE WOOD, HARVEL ROAD

Gravesham Borough Council were successful in obtaining a High Court Injunction with regard to the unauthorised development of Fowlers Stone Wood. Unfortunately the Land Owner continues to ignore the orders given in the injunction, and as such Gravesham Borough Council continue to gather evidence for their Legal Team to consider further action.

If you have evidence or information you wish to pass to the enforcement officer, please email planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk or phone 01474 337000.

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

Gravesham Borough Council are consulting on the Local Plan and want your views on the next 15-year planning strategy for our Borough. Responses are due by 31st December 2020, which is obviously looming, but Vigo Parish Council wanted to let you know that they have been working hard on studying the document and have spent many hours drafting a full response on behalf of the village. The response from Vigo Parish Council will be posted on their website in the very near future.

Gravesham local plan: <https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/consult.ti/REG18S2/consultationHome>

Vigo Parish Council website: www.vigo-kent.gov.uk

IN OTHER NEWS



VIGO Parish Council

We have recently installed bollards along Waterlow Road, to deter Country Park visitors from parking on the Parish side of the road. No Parking signs will be installed on the bollards over the next few weeks.

We have had some complaints about wheelie bins. Please be considerate about where you keep your bins, they should be kept on your own property, not on the footpaths, nor on Parish Land. Thank you.



Kent Highways are working hard to ensure that our drainage systems are fully functioning and clear. It is frustrating to see so many leaves fall into the gutter, and we are grateful to Gravesham Borough Council for continuing to road sweep on a regular basis. However, we would ask all residents to avoid blowing or sweeping leaves into the gutters under any circumstances. This will only serve to block the drains.

The Bus Shelter in Erskine Road (at the time of writing this newsletter) had begun to have the panels replaced, and already is looking so much improved. Hopefully by the New Year all panels will have been replaced. This has been funded partly by the Parish Council, and partly by a grant received from Kent County Council.



USEFUL CONTACTS

- If you are vulnerable and need urgent support that cannot be met through existing support networks, get in touch with [#KentTogether](#) who will be able to help.
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/.../health/coronavirus/kent-together>

If you're unable to use the online form, call the helpline on [03000 41 92 92](tel:03000419292) (text relay 18001 03000 41 92 92). Deaf British Sign Language users can text the Sensory Services team on 07920 154 315 for help making a request.

- Kent Fire and Rescue Service is still offering Safe and Well home visits and providing fire safety advice during the lockdown. They will have a chat with you on the phone to start with, which will take about 20 minutes. Then if you need a home visit, they will arrange one with you. Any visit to your home will be done as safely as possible, to protect you and their team. If you would like to talk to them about a Safe and Well visit or have any fire safety worries about your home, please call the Safe and Well team on [0800 923 7000](tel:08009237000) (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, voicemail outside these hours) and they will be happy to get in touch.

<https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/.../safe-and-well-visits/>

BUS TIMETABLE From 30th November until further notice.

Services to Gravesend depart from The Bay, Vigo.

MONDAY-FRIDAY

0714, 0813, 0914, 1016, 1116, 1246, 1416, 1508, 1615, 1721, 1839, 1941, 2027, 2127, 2227, 2327

SATURDAY

0646, 0816, 0946, 1116, 1246, 1416, 1546, 1716, 1846, 2027, 2127, 2227, 2327

Southbound Service to Sevenoaks:

MONDAY-FRIDAY

0603, 0719, 0828, 0939, 1109, 1239, 1409, 1542, 1717, 1817, 1959, 2059, 2159, 2259

[THESE LAST FOUR TO BOROUGH GREEN ONLY]

SATURDAY

0639, 0809, 0939, 1109, 1239, 1409, 1539, 1709, 1839, 1959, 2059, 2159, 2259

[THESE LAST FOUR TO BOROUGH GREEN ONLY]

Bus times are subject to change and we would advise that you check with Arriva before travelling

Potholes? Uneven pavements? Blocked drains? Faulty streetlights?

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 who will be able to help.*

Remember - future newsletters will be published online

***DON'T FORGET TO LET THE PARISH CLERK KNOW IF YOU WANT
TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PAPER COPIES***

Cold weather warning - Kent urged to keep warm and well

With cold and wintry weather predicted and Covid-19 social distancing restrictions in place, families across Kent are being urged to follow a few simple measures to keep their loved ones safe and healthy.

Prolonged cold weather can be a risk for anyone although vulnerable people, including the elderly and those with long-term medical conditions, are particularly at risk which creates further health concerns this winter season as Covid-19 cases are still prevalent in the community and those in vulnerable groups can be most at risk of severe symptoms

Simple tips such as making regular hot drinks and wearing several thin layers of clothes rather than one thick one can help to keep your body warm.

At home:

- Regular hot meals and drinks can help keep your body warm.
- Keep your home heated – set the heating to the right temperature (18-21C).
- If trying to save fuel, it is advisable to heat the living room during the day, the bathroom when needed and the bedroom, just before going to bed.
- Get the flu vaccine to protect yourself and others. This is free for anyone over 65, pregnant women, those with long term conditions, and children aged two to four. Details are available at GP surgeries or pharmacies and the vaccine is free for some people.
- Order repeat prescriptions in good time to make sure you have enough supply of any medicines you use.
- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked regularly and make sure the chimney has been swept recently.

If you need to go out:

- Wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles.
- Make sure you are not caught out by snow and ice; stay tuned to the weather forecast and plan ahead with food supplies.
- Get up-to-date traffic information at www.kenttraffic.info
- In periods of severe weather such as snow and ice, do not travel unless necessary.

***VIGO PARISH COUNCIL wish you all a safe, happy,
and healthy Christmas and New Year***

**If you would like to submit any articles, or advertise any Vigo events in a future issues
of our newsletter, please contact the Clerk.**

COVENANT SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY, AND PROPOSALS TO VIGO PARISH COUNCIL



1. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RETAIN THE OPEN PLAN DESIGN OF THE VILLAGE (303 responses)
Strongly Agree / Agree: 81% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 8%
Neither Agree or Disagree: 11%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

(i) That the Covenant regarding the open plan nature of the village is strongly enforced, and the rolling programme to deal with historical breaches of this covenant be continued.

(ii) In exceptional circumstances (to be discussed and agreed with VPC) low barriers may be permitted in between neighbours in detached properties. Where barriers are permitted, they must be either be at least 50% open OR if continuous less than 0.5 metres high.

REMINDER: No barriers can be erected without prior approval from VPC.

2. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR REAR AND SIDE FENCES TO BE UNIFORM IN HEIGHT AND POSITION FROM THE FOOTPATH (308 responses)
Strongly Agree / Agree: 56% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 19%
Neither Agree or Disagree: 25%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

Residents should maintain their rear and side garden fences at a maximum height of 1.8 metres, and at a minimum distance of 1.0 metre from any adjacent public footpath (permission to be sought before moving any fence). Low level planting (maximum height 0.9 metre) to fill the 1.0 metre gap MAY be permitted in exceptional circumstances, but approval needs to be given by VPC in advance.

3. WHERE CONCERNS ARE RAISED REGARDING SHORTCUTS BEING TAKEN ACROSS THE FRONT BOUNDARY OF A RESIDENT'S LAND, SHOULD VPC HAVE THE DISCRETION TO PERMIT A SMALL FENCE OR BOUNDARY TO DISCOURAGE THIS? (297 responses)
Strongly Agree / Agree: 79% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 13%
Neither Agree or Disagree: 8%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

If there is an issue with shortcuts being taken across resident's land, then a small barrier may be erected, maximum height of 0.5 metres. Style and design must be approved by the Parish Council in advance.

4. THE MATERIAL USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT WINDOWS SHOULD MATCH THOSE OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN. (297 responses)
Strongly Agree / Agree: 23% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 19%
Neither Agree or Disagree: 58%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

Residents should be permitted to replace their windows with either an aluminium, wooden or UPVC frame.

5. REPLACEMENT WINDOWS SHOULD CLOSELY MATCH THOSE OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN (PLAIN GLASS IN A WHITE FRAME (300 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 42% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 14%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 44%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

Only clear glass windows will to be approved (no leaded lights, or Georgian style windows). Privacy glass will be permitted where appropriate.

6. RESIDENTS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO CHOOSE THE COLOUR OF THEIR WINDOWS FROM A SPECIFIED LIST OF COLOURS (290 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 47% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 18%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 35%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

Window frames in white, grey or brown would be approved (a list of exact colours to be agreed by VPC and this list be made available to residents).

7. THE APPEARANCE OF HOUSES SHOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH THAT OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES (SHOULD SEEK TO BLEND IN) (299 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 63.5% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 12%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 24.5%

8. THE OVERALL ORIGINAL APPEARANCE OF PROPERTIES SHOULD BE MAINTAINED (329 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 53% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 27%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 20%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

Attached properties must maintain the original appearance of the build, and match neighbouring properties. Detached properties must be in keeping with the area, but VPC have discretion to approve a finish that does not exactly match the original. Radical changes will not be approved under any circumstances. If a detached property ever needed to be rebuilt, the new build should be in keeping with the rest of the street. Attached properties needing to be rebuilt should match the neighbours.

9. RESIDENTS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO CONVERT THEIR GARAGES INTO LIVING ACCOMMODATION (300 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 63% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 21%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 16%

10. QUESTION 9 (above) SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THERE BEING ADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE PARKING AVAILABLE (293 responses)
 Strongly Agree / Agree: 84% Strongly Disagree / Disagree: 7%
 Neither Agree or Disagree: 9%

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

VPC should continue to implement the current policy which states that garage conversions will only be permitted when there is adequate alternative off road parking available.

11. RESIDENTS SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO OPERATE BUSINESSES FROM HOME WHICH DO NOT NEGATIVELY IMPACT THEIR NEIGHBOURS (298 responses)

Strongly Agree / Agree:	78%	Strongly Disagree / Disagree:	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree:	8%		

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

The covenant regarding businesses operating from home will only be enforced if a nuisance were reported and could be evidenced.

12. RESIDENTS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE APPEARANCE OF THEIR PROPERTY, GARDEN AND FENCES TO A GOOD STANDARD (297 responses)

Strongly Agree / Agree:	95%	Strongly Disagree / Disagree:	3%
Neither Agree or Disagree:	2%		

Vigo Parish Council agreed that:

The PC should continue to write to those residents whose property had fallen into a state of disrepair, using other agencies (such as GBC) as and when appropriate.