

# PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



Issue Three, Summer 2021

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the latest Parish Council Newsletter, Edition Three, which is being published slightly later than anticipated! You will see from the contents that we have, as always, been very busy at the Parish, and dealing with some big issues has meant that we have published this newsletter a bit later than we expected.

[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 Simon Chaplin, a local resident, has recently been co-opted onto the Council 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 would like to welcome Simon and look forward very much to working with him.

## MEETING DATES FOR 2021/2020

We are pleased to say that after 18 months or more of Virtual Meetings, Full Parish Council meetings are now being held again in the Village Hall. Agendas are published in advance in our noticeboard in The Bay, and on our website [www.vigo-pc.gov.uk](http://www.vigo-pc.gov.uk)

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2022
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2022

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### ***How to contact the Parish Council:***

By email: [clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@vigo-pc.gov.uk)

By phone: 01732 823337 (answerphone available)

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

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## PARISH OFFICE UPDATE

Our Clerk is still working from home and has been since March 2020 when the Covid Pandemic hit. However, we are anticipating that she will return to the office for two days each week (Mondays and Tuesdays) from mid-September onwards. The Clerk will continue to work the rest of her hours on a flexible basis from home during the remainder of the week.

We are aware there have been issues with the Parish phone during the last few months when the Clerk has been working from home. This is due to the landline being diverted to a mobile phone, which has been unreliable at times. However, we are in the process of changing our provider and these issues should be ironed out as a result.

## YEAR END ACCOUNTS



We are pleased to say that our accounts and associated record keeping received a positive report from our Independent Auditor earlier this year. Our Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31.03.2021 has now been submitted to the external auditor PKF Littlejohn. A copy of what was submitted, together with a spend analysis for the year 01.04.20 – 31.03.21 can be seen on our website: [www.vigo-pc.gov.uk](http://www.vigo-pc.gov.uk) (click on “The Council” and then on “Finance”).

If you would like a hard copy of any of the documents, please let the Clerk know.

## Vigo Village Green

VPC have applied for our Village Green to be officially classified as a “Green Space” with the Borough Council. This 2.2 hectare site is very well used by residents, and includes the both the village green and the play area. At present the land here is protected as it is not only located within the Green Belt, but it is also with an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Having it officially designated as a Green Space will give it additional protection against any future development. Vigo Parish Council are also looking into having the area registered as an official “Village Green” which will also give further protection.



## Vigo Play Park & Ball Park (MUGA)

We are pleased that we have been able to fully reopen the play park now that lockdown restrictions have been lifted. Our play park is regularly litter picked and inspected, and we hope that people find it a safe and welcoming environment. Please make full use of our picnic benches, but remember to take any rubbish home, or put it in the bins supplied. We are currently seeking quotes to replace some of the safety surfacing in the park, and will update should we decide to go ahead with this.

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*You should have received a letter giving an important update on how the restrictive covenants are enforced by the Parish Council. This is based on the information provided by residents who filled in the covenant survey some months ago (summarized in our last newsletter).*

*Please contact the Clerk if you have not received a copy of this important letter – it will be useful if you could keep it for your records and pass it onto any future owners of your property.*

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## STREETLIGHTS IN VIGO

Since 1984, there has been a formal agreement between Vigo Parish Council (VPC) and Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) regarding the maintenance of the streetlights in Vigo. This has meant that Gravesham Borough Council have funded the cost of running, repairing and maintaining the lights in Vigo.

In September 2020, GBC wrote to us, giving 18 months' notice that they intended to terminate the agreement (as per the terms). This means that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, VPC will be responsible for the management, maintenance and funding of street light repairs and replacements in the village.

There are three options for Vigo:

1. We ask Kent Highways to adopt all of the lights in Vigo. This would be at a considerable cost to the Parish as KCC will only adopt lights if they are upgraded to their specification. Not all lights would be adoptable.
2. VPC enter into service level agreement with Kent Highways, where VPC would own the lights, and fund repairs and replacements, but Kent Highways would carry out the works and invoice the Parish.
3. VPC enter into a service / maintenance agreement with an alternative contractor.

The lighting stock in Vigo is quite old, and as lights need repairing, they may need to be upgraded, as replacement parts are sometimes no longer available. Most of the lights in Vigo are concrete columns and are not LED lanterns. LED lanterns are much more energy efficient and require far less repairs.

Taking on ownership of the lights will mean arranging and funding the power supply, maintaining the lighting inventory, and organizing regular structural and electrical testing. VPC will also need to insure the lights.

VPC are currently engaging with other Parish Councils to find out how they manage their lighting stock. We are also speaking to other contractors to find out what service they can provide, and at what cost.

Updates are reported and discussed at Parish Council meetings, and it is anticipated that a decision regarding the future maintenance of the lights will be made before the end of the year.

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**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.*

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## **UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT OF FOWLERS STONE WOOD, HARVEL ROAD**

- The retrospective planning application to develop the land North of Harvel Road (part of Fowlers Stone Wood) submitted in February 2021 was REFUSED by Gravesham Borough Council in April. In the same month, the applicant (via an agent) lodged an appeal against the decision, with the Government's Planning Inspectorate. The appeal is to be heard as a Public Inquiry, which will take up to four days. The Inquiry is scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022.
- Vigo Parish Council, together with Meopham Parish Council, engaged a Planning Expert (SJM Planning) to assist with drafting a robust response to the planning appeal. This letter was submitted in time for the 13<sup>th</sup> July deadline. A copy of the letter can be viewed on the VPC website.
- A High Court Injunction was served to the land owner in September 2020, with a deadline for action of October 2020. The land owner has not complied with any of the terms of the injunction, as such Gravesham Borough Council submitted an application for Contempt of Court to the High Court. The High Court has listed this matter for a two-day hearing on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- In addition, Gravesham Borough Council have now served an Enforcement Notice on the land owner, for unauthorised change of use and development works. The notice, if not subject to an appeal, will come into effect on 30<sup>th</sup> August, and gives two calendar months to cease the unauthorised use and clear the site (i.e by 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021).

### **LEAF DEBRIS AND CLEARANCE:**

As the summer draws to a close, it is of course inevitable that our trees will start losing their foliage and as a result your gardens, and the village roads will be filled with autumn leaves.

We would urge residents not to leaf blow or clear leaves from their property toward the roads. We need to do everything we can to stop leaves blocking the drainage system in the village.

Blocked drains were a huge contributory factor to the floods we experienced in 2019 and everything possible needs to be done to ensure that the drains are not blocked – please do your part by not blowing leaves into the gutters. Thank you.

Vigo PC will continue to press Gravesham Borough Council for regular road sweeping.





## Grounds Maintenance & Tree Surgery in Vigo

As always, the Parish Council are really pleased with the work that is being carried out by our Grounds Maintenance Team, Paul & Steph do a great job and keep our village looking beautiful.

They carry out a daily litter pick of the main routes, and then spend their days cutting the huge amount of grass, weeding, clearing and tidying, and doing various odd jobs that the Clerk throws at them on a regular basis.

During the winter they carry out similar work, but the grass cutting is replaced by tree surgery. We only carry out urgent tree work during the summer, and all routine and non-urgent work is programmed for the Autumn / Winter season.

**If you need to put in a request for any work to be carried out, please do so via 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.**

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](http://www.vigo-kent.org) (click on “The Council” and then on “Procedures & Policies”).

Some examples of work carried out over recent months, before and after shots:

### **Before and after shots from the Recycling bins in the car park near the school:**



### **Before and after shots of Harvel Road**

**Over 20 black sacks were filled with rubbish from here and the surrounding area:**



## LITTER PICK

We have been approached by residents who would like to get involved in a voluntary litter pick of the village. Although we are very happy with the current service provided by our great village maintenance team, we are also sure they would be happy to have an extra pair of hands (or many pairs of hands!) when it comes to the litter in the village. We now have a long list of names of people who would like to help with this project, and the Clerk will now begin to co-ordinate this and arrange a date. Gravesham Borough Council have kindly offered to lend us supplies (high-vis jackets and litter picking equipment) and will also take away the rubbish that is collected. If you would like to join in the effort (date to be advised, but likely to be in September / October) then please contact the Clerk.

If you have a really keen interest in keeping your local area spick & span, then you could also consider becoming a “street champion”. These are people who have volunteered to improve the environment in their local area, by litter picking and reporting environmental crimes.



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



We would also like to give a huge thank you to the lady who regularly does a litter pick in the Highview area of the village, we understand she is out every day, in all weathers, clearing the area where she lives – we are very obliged to her for doing this – thank you.



## DOG DIRT BINS

VPC are considering asking Gravesham Borough Council to install more dog dirt bins in the village. We have already had positive feed back to this idea, and as such will be drawing up a list of ideas for GBC. We would be happy to consider suggestions for locations for additional bins, if you have any please do let the Clerk know.

## Flytipping



Gravesham Borough Council have a new enforcement officer in place, who is keen to work alongside Parish Council's to combat flytipping especially in the rural area. Any flytipping issues can be reported to GBC online. GBC have also told us that even though they will not remove flytipping on private land, they will prosecute offenders if they can, which is excellent news for the Parish Council.

## KCC Waste Consultation

Kent County Council would like to hear your views on the Household Waste Site Booking System. The system was introduced during the Covid Pandemic and KCC are considering whether to make it a permanent feature, or to return to the old system where there was no need to pre-book. The consultation can be accessed here <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/wasteconsultation> The consultation closes on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

## VIGO PARISH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY



Report from Cllr Mandie Jones:

This is a new Venture which will pull together existing procedures and look at new ideas in the light of current thinking and advice on Environmental issues.

The two main aims are to ensure that the maintenance of natural areas of the Parish are in line with best practice, and to involve residents in this maintenance and further improvement plans.

In the short term we will be looking at how and where areas are mown on Vigo and how we can create areas for pollinators in particular, in line with KCC's Plan Bee.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/nature-and-biodiversity/pollinators/kents-plan-bee-pollinator-action-plan>

If you would like to be involved in these discussions, please contact me direct.

In the longer term we hope to work with the Country Park and Vigo School and involve all residents in improving individual small areas for wildlife and sustainability.

[mandie.jones@vigo-pc.gov.uk](mailto:mandie.jones@vigo-pc.gov.uk)



## Pop-Up Cafe

We are really pleased to say that the Pop-Up Café has come back to Vigo, after not being with us during the pandemic. At the time of writing this, we have had three visits so far, which have been really well attended – with over 40 people attending the first event, and almost the same at the second. It was great to see everyone catching up after so long, it was a real sense of community spirit.

There is one more date for this year: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The café sets up in The Bay, outside the village hall, and is there from 10.30 til 12.30. Tea, cake and a warm welcome for all. Hope to see you there!

## OTHER UPDATES

**UNDERPASS REPAINTING:** This is still on our list of projects – we have again been hampered by the pandemic and the need to social distance. However, this will go ahead at some point in the future. We have received a few offers of help, but would always welcome more. If you have any ideas of how to decorate the underpass, or would like to help with the project itself, please do get in touch.

**PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY SERVICE:** Our local community really stepped up to the mark during the pandemic, with lots of people offering to help with prescription deliveries to those who were self-isolating or unable to get out because they were shielding. Things have definitely eased up now, and we are no longer coordinating this service as a result. We would really like to thank all those who helped with the requests, and also a huge thanks to our Community Wardens, Mandy & Jacquie who worked tirelessly through the pandemic making sure people had everything they needed. The Wardens not only delivered prescriptions, but food parcels and other assistance, and we are very grateful to them.

### Car Theft Prevention – Advice from our local PCSO Rob Meader.

Thieves can target vehicles which have keyless entry systems using digital scanners allowing the car to be unlocked without a trace of forced entry or damage. Regular remote locking fobs which require the car owner to press a button are not vulnerable to these crimes, it is only those cars which allow the owner to approach and unlock the car with the keys still in their pocket.



Advice for drivers with concerns about car security:

1. Understand the digital functions of your car: do you have a keyless entry system? If so, can the fob be switched off overnight? Speak to your dealer about software updates and whether new key fobs with added security are available.
2. Store keys away from household entry points: a keyless fob should be stored as far into your home as is possible, hampering a criminal's ability to detect and relay its signal.
3. Signal blocking pouches (Faraday pouches) will block the signal from a keyless entry fob. Keeping your keyless entry fob out of sight is not enough – thieves only need to gain proximity to the key to amplify the signal. Don't forget about your spare key! Make sure you test your signal blocking pouch or choose one that has the Secured by Design accreditation.

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### *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)*

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## Anti Social Behaviour, Nuisance Quads & Motorbikes

Vigo continues to be subjected to antisocial behaviour, often in the form of quad bikes being ridden on the footpaths and over the grass, and sometimes mini-motorbikes. We have good CCTV footage of these incidents (redacted examples below) – full footage has been supplied to the police. VPC are also going to be liaising with our local Borough Council Members to see what else can be done. If anyone has any information, knows who the perpetrators are, or is able to identify the vehicles, please contact the police, or email the Clerk.



### **WATERLOW ROAD PARKING:**

We are pleased to say that the bollards and No Parking signs in Waterlow Road appear to have solved the problem of inconsiderate parking. Visitors to the Country Park are now parking either inside the park, or on the country park side of the road outside. Although parking on the road still isn't ideal, by ensuring that the village side of Waterlow Road is kept clear, the access from side roads is now clearer, and there is less danger on the road. We would like to thank Cllr Bryan Sweetland who kindly provided the grant to have these bollards and signs installed.



**NO  
PARKING**

## The 800 Club – a Fundraiser for your Village Hall

The 800 club (so called because there are 800 houses in Vigo) was set up as a fundraiser for the village hall many years ago. There is a monthly prize of £50, but if the number drawn is not owned, the prize money is rolled over to the following month. Anyone can join the club, each number costs just £1 per month.



Over time, the number of entries has fallen, and now only around 8% of the village enters the draw.

If you would like to get involved, a form can be downloaded from the Village Hall website [www.vigovillagehall.org](http://www.vigovillagehall.org)

You can also check this website to see if you are a winner! If you would like a paper copy of the application form, please call the hall manager (Dani) and she will get one out to you. 01732 823905.

## A little Vigo History – Vigo Village Hall and the Vigo Junior Choir

### An article from one of our local Vigo residents:

I wonder how many current residents in Vigo were around when the Village Hall was built in 1980/81? What some people won't know is that work actually started in 1973, but for those of you not in the know, the building of the Village Hall was a long-drawn-out affair with many problems along the way. Gordon Taylor and his Vigo Residents Association Committee finally negotiated the completion seven years later with the help of grants, loans and generous contributions from people in the village.

Vigo Junior Choir was founded in 1979 by John MacKenzie - who still lives in the same house in Hornbeams - and the choir was invited to sing for the opening of the Village Hall. John wrote the words of a song in celebration of this to sing at the opening, penning the problems which had been encountered, referring to Gordon and other committee members by name in the song. The words were set to the well-known song from 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat' - 'Jacob and Sons' ("Way, way back many centuries ago...")

Since 'Joseph' was published by Novello - at that time based at Borough Green just down the hill - John thought it expedient to get their permission as they owned the copyright. Imagine the dismay when he received a letter a few days before the opening saying that Andrew Lloyd-Webber had refused permission for the choir to sing it! As the words were relevant only to that one occasion and would only be sung the once, and no financial gain was to be made, John felt it very churlish not to give permission to sing it. Undaunted, however, the choir recited it, instead of singing it, at the official opening of the hall and it went down very well.

The words are reproduced here, and the names may bring back memories for some of you. (You would need to know the tune of the song to get full benefit from it.)

## VIGO VILLAGE HALL SONG – 1980

Way, way back many centuries ago, not long after the bible began,  
Some people from our village sat round a table, and together they worked out a wonderful plan.

VIGO VILLAGE HALL!! - a place that could be used by anyone.  
VIGO VILLAGE HALL!! - nobody knew of the problems to come.

They needed a committee to discuss the situation, Mr. Leadbetter was the chairman in '69.  
Architects and covenants and contracts were discussed, Mr. Connick was the chairman who was next in line.

VIGO VILLAGE HALL!! - a place that could be used by anyone.  
VIGO VILLAGE HALL!! - nobody knew of the problems to come.

Work was started in September '73. Things went well at first but then .... CATASTROPHE!  
The builder went (our story tells), and started building something else.

Vigo Hall was elegant, the looks were fine,  
The tasteful style was the ultimate in good design,  
And this is why it caught the eye,  
The people stopped to stare ...  
.... For the building took so long,  
The tiles and roof were put on wrong!  
Such a dazzling hall of many problems,  
How we knew the hall had many problems.



Things were looking very black, the builder said he wouldn't come back!  
Such a stunning hall of many problems, how we knew the hall had many problems.

Gordon Taylor, he was Vigo's favourite son, of all the village, Gordon was the special one.  
His anger rendered such despair, that's how he lost his hair!  
And when Gordon graced the scene, committee worked out quite a scheme.  
Their astounding planning took the biscuit, quite the smoothest people in the district.  
They got grants from far and near, loans from there and loans from here,  
And at last in August 1980, work resumed and made us all elated  
Thanks to Gordon Taylor and Roger Brown, Ken Buchan, Andy Yallop, Martin Coslett-Derby,  
Ken Lingwood, Peter Sutherland, Claire Parker, Ian Miles, Vaughan Clarke and Margaret Allender,  
Mary Bond and Richard Moore, Peter Heydon ..... and most of YOU!

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*Do you need free, independent, confidential and impartial advice?  
North & West Kent Citizens Advice Bureau have a new phone number:  
0808 278 7810 (Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm)  
or by email [advice@nwkentcab.org.uk](mailto:advice@nwkentcab.org.uk)*

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## [A Tribute to Patricia Ann Griffin 23/7/1939 – 9/1/2021 \(by Dawn Foxwell\)](#)

Vigo School opened June 1969 and Tricia Griffin and Anne Jones started as catering assistants when their children started school. I got to know Tricia when I joined the school kitchen as assistant in the late 1980s. To help set the scene for those of you that remember the brilliant Victoria Wood's Dinner Ladies TV programme; couldn't better describe life in Vigo School Kitchen with the characters of Dolly and Jean fitting Tricia and Anne to a tee, with some very surreal occurrences!

Wendy Williams was Cook working alongside Tricia for several years, they all had lots of laughs, one memory that springs to Wendy's mind is when they got their first chest freezer in the kitchen. Wendy asked Tricia to get the fish fingers out only to hear Tricia shout for help!! She had fallen headfirst into the freezer with her legs in the air and could not get out as she was laughing so much.

Carole Baylis was Cook when I joined the kitchen and she left to get a "proper job" years later. I was asked to train as Cook; with Tricia and Anne Jones insisting I had a young brain to cope with it all. The work was very physical, hot and testing at times but confess it was a pleasure to work with the lovely team of ladies and learn my supervisory skills, which stood me in good stead.

Various changes from KCC to outside catering providers occurred every 2-3 years of my time there, which always involved reducing the number of staff from 6 to 4 to 2.5 assistants up until I left in 1996, putting a lot of additional work on us all. Tricia worked steadily and thoroughly to the KCC 'old school' cleaning practices. And when I took over as cook, I had a battle to persuade them that scrubbing the kitchen floor on hands and knees every day hygienically, was not time affective. This had become unworkable once staff numbers had been reduced and Tricia and Anne eventually agreed to use the mop and bucket - reluctantly.

Tricia would arrive and change her clothes in the kitchen office into her uniform, very often thinking of something that needed to be said to Anne and myself and appear in the kitchen in her under-slip for some time talking, giving no heed to the shocked delivery men. Another time Tricia put her hat on and didn't notice she hadn't put the rest of the uniform on and started to work.



After the meals were over, we would take our chairs outside onto the kitchen delivery loading bay to cool off with a cup of tea and cigarette for Tricia. She would be conscious of us non-smokers and shuffle her chair furthest away from us. One day Tricia waved at the delivery truck driver approaching our loading bay, and with a scream tipped herself and chair backwards into the shrubbery, which fortunately braced her fall some 36 inches. The scene of Tricia was a picture with arms and legs flaying about and revealing her stocking tops and suspenders, while the three of us tried to hoist Tricia back as she was falling further back and further down, as the bushes collapsed as they gave way under her. The rest of us were helpless with laughter to grab a moving limb and help pull her back. All to the entertainment of the delivery driver who got a great show that day!

Vigo School Cooks: Wendy, Carole and Dawn all agreed on reflection; that our time working in the Vigo County Primary School kitchen was one of the happiest jobs we have ever had. Happy, Happy Days.

God Bless Tricia now at peace, we will miss you.

*(Photo taken in 1992 shows L-R Beryl Tapsell, Tricia Griffin, Dawn Foxwell & Ann Jones).*