

VIGO PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 20th ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 27th APRIL 2021 at 7.30pm
Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Present:	Cllr Pat Banks (Chair); Cllr Mike Germain; Cllr Dave Hawkins; Cllr Mandie Jones; Cllr Alan White; Cllr Andy Woolway. Mrs Joanne Glass (Clerk).
In Attendance:	Mr Adam Holloway (MP) (left at 19:40). Mr Colin Talboys (Vigo Tree Warden); Mr Roland Graves.

1] Apologies for Absence

AP01 Cllr Jim Haslem (Vigo PC); Cllr Julie Marsh (Vigo PC). Cllr Bryan Sweetland (Kent County Council); Cllr Denise Tiran (Gravesham BC). Cllr Sheila Buchannan (Meopham PC); Cllr Rosemary Dymond (Cobham PC). Mr Ken Hill (Vigo Village Hall); Ms Carol Cox (Vigo Journal Editor). Mrs Janet Jones; Mrs Carole Baylis; Mr John Goodban.

2] Chairman's welcome to Guests, Electors, Members of the Public and Press

AP02 Cllr Banks welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

AP03 Cllr Banks invited Mr Holloway (MP) to address the meeting.

Mr Holloway hoped that everyone had been keeping well, and that the last year had not been too difficult for everyone. Mr Holloway was optimistic that things would slowly continue to improve (covid variants depending). Mr Holloway admitted it had been a long-haul so far and would continue to be so, and that the country would be paying the price of the pandemic for many months to come.

However, he did send good wishes to all Vigo residents, saying it had been heartening to see how people had pulled together during the pandemic. Mr Holloway had set up a "super neighbour" initiative which had been well received, with remarkable good deeds being carried out, an incredibly positive experience.

3] To confirm the minutes of the 19th Annual Parish Meeting (held on 29th April 2019)

AP04 It was noted that the 20th Annual Parish Meeting had been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The minutes of the 19th Annual Parish Meeting (24.04.19) were signed by the Chair, having been accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

4] Chairman's Annual Report

AP05 Cllr Banks provided the following Chairman's Annual Report:

The Annual Parish Meeting is a Legal Requirement and provides an opportunity for residents to meet their Councillors. It is also an opportunity for your Parish Council to share information with residents, explaining how the Precept was spent, how they have been working to look after Vigo and its residents. It also provides residents with the opportunity to ask questions.

A lot has happened in the last 2 years. We have welcomed new Councillors Julie Marsh, Dave Hawkins and Mandie Jones who joined the other Vigo Councillors Alan White, Andy Woolway, Mike Germain, Jim Haslem and myself, Pat Banks. We still have one vacancy on the Council.

We have set up a Vigo Parish Facebook page and a new Website. We have got used to holding meetings on-line. Our Clerk has worked from home and done a marvellous job – setting up and running our Village 'Super neighbours' scheme, running the Council and keeping us up to date with issues as they arise, and so much more!

Some regular things still happened: we continued to help keep the Village looking nice with organising and overseeing:

- grass mowing
- tree care
- general maintenance of the village verges, paths and woodland
- litter picking
- enforcing Covenants
- reviewing planning applications and changes to property requiring Covenant Approval

And then some not so regular happenings began: in June 2019 disaster hit Vigo, when our Village, at nearly 700ft above sea level was FLOODED! The rain was torrential, and the 50-year-old drains couldn't cope. Sadly, people were forced out of their homes. Investigations and pressure from VPC and residents, resulted in extensive drainage work being carried out, which is still going on.

In November 2019 Stansted and Fairseat History Society's World War 1 and 2 Exhibition, was held again in our Village Hall. It is worth visiting the Society's website: <https://stanstedhistory.org/>

In February 2020 new defibrillators were installed, one in The Paddock and one in Highview, to add to the one in Timberbank and the one in The Villager Pub. Cards showing the locations were sent to every house in Vigo.

March 2020: Disaster hit Vigo and the whole Nation and the whole World with the Coronavirus Pandemic and the 1st Lockdown – life changed for everyone. Vigo residents and our Community Wardens stepped up to help those who were shielding, with the Parish Clerk organising and linking people together. There were no village activities. A decision was made to cease production of the Vigo Journal, and this is now replaced by an on-line Newsletter.

The Pop-up Café was cancelled due to Covid, but they have made deliveries to vulnerable people who used the Café, which were well received, and they will be back in The Bay on 6th June. The VE/VJ Day celebrations were also cancelled, but we do hope to hold a fun day before too much longer.

Parking on Waterlow Road continued to be problematic, but after many meetings and discussions, Bryan Sweetland, our Kent County Council Member provided a grant which enabled us to install wooden bollards, and the Parish Council then added the No Parking Signs.

Fowlers Stone Wood, the unauthorised development of this site continued, with residents in Timberbank suffering badly as a result of the setting up of the 'encampment'. The retrospective Planning Application has been refused, and the Breach of the Injunction on the site is being taken back to the High Court. Gravesham Borough Council are considering issuing an Enforcement Order.

Covenants Consultation: VPC sent a questionnaire to every home in Vigo – thank you to everyone who responded. Around 350 responses were received, with most in favour of most of the Covenants. An update on Covenants will be issued soon.

Some Other Village Issues: The Erskine Road Bus Shelter was renovated, with a grant towards half the cost the Bus Shelter being received from Kent County Council. It was saddening to see that vandals destroyed the shelter before the refurbishment had even been completed. At some expense we bought a new CCTV camera which gives high quality images of the bus shelter, and we are pleased to report that the refurbishment is now finished and looks great.

Damage Caused by Quad Bikes and Motorbikes continues, our PCSO and Community Wardens are helping to sort this problem. CCTV is helping too. We are pleased to note that Official Warnings have been issued to some miscreants.

And finally, some big "Thank You's":

- To Jo, our Clerk for her tireless efforts, dedication and good humour, while trying to keep us Councillors on the right path! We really wouldn't manage without you!*
- To Paul Agley and his assistant Steph, who work tirelessly to keep the Village looking good and well maintained.*
- To 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.*
- To Carol Cox for having edited the excellent Vigo Journal for so long.*
- To Brian Sweetland - our KCC councillor who is always ready to help and support us.*
- To Denise Tiran and Ejaz Aslan for all their help and support.*
- To all the other Councillors on Vigo Parish Council for your help and support*
- And finally, to all the residents of Vigo Village! Thank you all.*

5] To receive reports from County and Borough Councillors

AP06 None received.

6] To receive reports from the Police and the Community Wardens

AP07 None received.

7] To receive any reports from Local Village Bodies and Organisations

AP08 Vigo Village Hall:

- Mr Hall had apologised that the Hall Accounts would not be available at the Parish Meeting, as they were not prepared as yet – partly due to Covid restrictions, and partly due to transferring over to a new accounting system.
- Cllr White informed that the hall had continued to be in use for most of the pandemic, as the preschool had been running (with covid-secure guidelines being adhered to). When the restrictions are lifted (June 2021) things will be more onerous for the hall staff as strict cleaning procedures must be implemented between hall users.
- The Hall had suffered quite a water leak, resulting in a large bill which was being disputed. The water leak had been repaired.
- The Village Hall AGM had been held by zoom.

8] Tree Warden's Report

AP09 Cllr Talboys read out the following report:

Much of this bi-annual tree report appears in previous reports mirroring the continual management process for trees. There are plenty of factors that influence our trees.

The strong winds and rain of recent years being the most obvious. Although constant monitoring and subsequent action has reduced the number of VPC trees damaged by wind, we should never be complacent.

Winter, this year, has been relatively uneventful. However, this Spring so far has been extremely dry but exceptionally cold with severe frosts. This followed an extended wet period. These factors may affect the trees later in the year: although it seems, at present, it is an exceptional year for tree blossom.

Through the tree management process, trees are constantly monitored. Those requiring works are prioritised for attention with safety again being the main criteria. On specific issues VPC always seeks formal arboreal advice and VPC will always listen and act on sound advice.

Again, we must report that Phythorthora in Sweet Chestnuts, Chalara in Ash trees and Birch polypore are currently present in our woods.

Tree Works carried out this period include the following:

- Phythorthora has resulted in the necessary removal of several large, sweet chestnuts in Highview woodland area and the main centre path between the shops and Croftside.
- The Commority Road bank also seems to be losing some trees through uprooting due to the composition of the bank.
- A large birch fell during the Christmas period due to root decay, but the tree showed no signs of distress and was subsequently cleared away.
- Removal of overhanging limbs following resident's requests and inspections at various locations throughout Vigo. Crown lifting over footpaths and carriageways to give the correct clearance height.

Goat Willows in Vigo appear to have reached the end of their safe life expectancy with some showing signs of die-back.

Some Ash in Harvel Road seem quite badly affected by Chalara and this has resulted in the need to fell a number of dead trees.

The decision is never taken lightly to remove any tree in Vigo, and this is why the monitoring of our trees is so important. The condition and age of each tree to be felled are factors in the action taken and the overall aim is to keep people and property safe.

It is noted that around 30% of the global landmass is forest cover. Some 13% of the UK is woodland (approximately 3 million hectares) of which around 1 million hectares is native woodland. Some 60% of Vigo is woodland.

Vigo covers an area of around 55 hectares (the whole area, including woodland, community land, houses and roads). It is estimated that there are around 30,000 trees in Vigo.

9] Finance Report

To receive the Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020.

AP010 The Financial Statement of the Parish Council's audited accounts for the year ended 31.03.2020 was noted by all present. These had been available on the Parish Council website for some time.

To receive the DRAFT actual vs budget spend for the year ended 31 March 2021.

AP11 The draft spend for the year ended 31.03.19 was noted by all present. This would be available on the Parish Council website. The Clerk took the meeting through the spreadsheet to explain any over or under spends, and invited questions (to which there were none).

11] Questions from the Press & Public.

AP12 None.

12] Any Other Business (at the Chairman's Discretion)

AP13 None.

The Meeting Closed at 8.45 pm