

**VIGO PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting**  
**held in Vigo Village Hall on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present	Cllr Pat Banks (in the Chair); Cllr Simon Chaplin; Cllr Sharon Cottam; Cllr Dave Hawkins (until 20:39); Cllr Alan White; Cllr Andy Woolway. Mrs Joanne Glass (Clerk).
In Attendance	None.

**1] To receive Apologies for Absence**

**970.** Mr A Holloway (MP); Cllr Ejaz Aslam (GBC); Cllr Mike Germain (VPC); Cllr Mandie Jones (VPC); Cllr Jim Haslem (VPC); Ms M Cason (KCC Community Warden).

**2] To receive Declarations of Interest from Council Members (if any)**

**971.** None.

**3] Questions from the Press and Public**

**972.** None.

**4] Borough and County Council Representative Reports**

**973.** None.

**5] Police and Community Warden Reports**

**974.** Ms Cason had provided a report in her absence. The Community Wardens continued to provide support for:

- Agency identified vulnerable individuals. Visits are carried out and contact made. If appropriate referrals are made to supporting agencies.
- Submitting intelligence to the Gravesham Community Safety Unit and Kent Police.
- Reporting fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles to the appropriate agencies for removal.
- Referring to Kent Fire & Rescue Service for safety advice and smoke detectors for residents.
- As Flood Warden, providing Highways and residents with flood / storm support, safety advice and supporting residents to report Highway incidents.
- Attending the Pop-Up Café when duties allow, to provide attendees with advice regarding scams, doorstep crimes and financial abuse. At a recent Pop-Up Café, four referrals were generated to agencies for support.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE 2023: Ms Cason reported that the community, Asda, and the Rotary Club provided over 200 donations to support families and vulnerable individuals as part of this project. The gifts were distributed to Dartford and Gravesham families, as well as the Darenth Valley Hospital Childrens Resource Centre, and the North Kent Women & Children's Refuge.

**6] To approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**975.** The minutes from the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were noted and agreed, then signed by Cllr Banks (as Chair) having been accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**7] To formally ratify the decisions and actions taken by the Clerk under delegated powers, as discussed at the Meeting of Council Members held on 11<sup>th</sup> December (online).**

**976.** The decisions and actions taken by the Clerk under delegated powers, as discussed at the Meeting of the Council Members held on 11<sup>th</sup> December (online) were formally ratified by all Members present.

**8] To Discuss Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (not otherwise on the agenda)**

**977.** 306 / 308 BUS: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Cllr Banks would liaise with the Clerk to respond to the latest correspondence received (including the correct EQIA).

**[Action: Clerk / Cllr Banks]**

**978.** SUCCESSORS IN TITLE: No response had been received from Mr Baker; the Clerk would chase this up.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**979.** COMPLAINT REGARDING NO PARKING SIGNS ON WATERLOW ROAD: The Clerk had emailed the complainant to ask if he wished to attend the Formal Complaints Committee – the complainant felt they had clearly put their case in writing and did not wish to add anything further, so did not wish to attend the meeting. The Clerk had set a meeting date for 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (by zoom). Cllr Haslem, Cllr Hawkins & Cllr Woolway would form the committee on this occasion.

**[Action: ongoing]**

**980.** MEMORIAL BENCH: The Clerk had sought quotes for supplying metal benches in the smaller walled area of The Bay. The cost per metre of bench was £420 plus delivery. It was therefore anticipated that a cost for one bench in this area would be £500 (all costs included). An alternative would be to place a recycled wooden bench elsewhere in the village, which would also cost £500. The Clerk had updated Glam Squad.

**981.** HEARING LOOP FOR SMALL VILLAGE HALL: The Clerk had received information on the dimensions of the small hall, but still needed to find out about the floor and ceiling construction.

The Clerk had spoken to other Parish Councils and found that the only Parish which had used a Hearing Loop was Meopham, but this had been some years previously in The Windmill, it was a hearing loop which needed to be put out and set up each time it was needed. It was no longer used.

The Clerk understood that a hearing loop had recently been installed at High Halstow – the Clerk was waiting for further details on how this worked.

**[Action: ongoing]**

9] **Services**

**Grounds Maintenance**

982. The Clerk had drawn up a contract for Highview Services, which had now been duly signed.

983. Overgrown vegetation in the garage area to the side / rear of 30 The Coppice. The Clerk had written to No 20, 22, 30 & 32 The Coppice as agreed. The Clerk had received a response from all four residents, all of whom stated they were not responsible for the vegetation. The Clerk informed that two of the properties had changed hands fairly recently, and as such it was thought that previous owners had maintained this area (as a good will gesture) but now they had moved away, the area had become overgrown.

One of the new residents had offered to maintain this area, if the Parish Contractor could cut the area back / clear it in the first instance, as there was a lot of rubbish dumped in the vegetation. The resident asked if the Parish Council would give approval for this.

It was noted that the Parish Council could not give approval as the land did not belong to them (it was unregistered / in the name of the original developer) but that they would not object if the resident wished to maintain the area. The Clerk would ask Highview Services to clear the area initially, and then update the resident, thanking them for their offer.

**[Action: Clerk]**

984. ADMERS WOOD: The vegetation on the Admers Wood / Erskine Road junction had now been cut back further and was no longer a sight line issue. The Clerk had updated the resident, who was pleased the work had been done.

985. The Grounds Works record sheets for December / January had not been sent out yet, the Clerk would do this as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

986. Highview Services reported that the grass verge near 201 Highview was being damaged by vehicles on a fairly regular basis. It was agreed to have bollards installed in this location. Clerk to update Highview Services.

**[Action: Clerk]**

987. Beech Mast Garage Area: The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who asked if the woodland next to this area could be cut back, as it was encroaching and causing access issues to the garages. The Clerk would ask Highview Services to look into this.

**[Action: Clerk]**

988. The Clerk had been contacted by a resident regarding overgrown vegetation in a Highview car parking area. The Clerk had looked at the Parish Online maps and determined that the vegetation appeared to be coming from residential land. The Clerk would write to the resident and ask that the vegetation be cut back.

**[Action: Clerk]**

### **Grass Cutting**

989. Nothing to report.

### **Trees**

990. Chestnut Lane, Cherry Tree to the rear. The Clerk had chased the Tree Warden for a report on this tree, no response had been received as yet.

**[Action: ongoing]**

991. BUS ROUTE TREES: The flail work on Harvel Road had been carried out in December. There was just a very small amount of tree work left to be carried out which was scheduled in for February (Erskine Road).

**[Action: ongoing]**

992. Sight Line Issue, Waterlow Road: The Clerk had contacted the resident to state that the Parish Council would not be removing the tree stump, and that if they were still concerned about the sight line, they should contact Kent Highways. The resident had responded to say that they intended to speak to all Timberbank residents, and get their signed reaction. If they had credible support, they would revert to the Parish Council insisting that the stump be removed. The resident was disappointed that they had not been invited to a site meeting to discuss the matter, but the Parish Council noted no site meeting had been held. The resident's comments were noted, no further action to be taken at this point.

993. ADMERS WOOD: Resident enquiry regarding trees on Parish land in Admers Wood (Oak and Silver Birches). No formal update from the Tree Warden. The Clerk had chased this up by email.

**[Action: ongoing]**

994. \*\* Highview: Trees to the rear. The Clerk had emailed Highview Services to ask them to cost the work, and to let the Parish know if they could manage the project or if they needed additional help to carry out the work. It was expected that there would be at least five days work here, if not more. No update at present, Clerk to chase Highview Services.

**[Action: Clerk]**

995. Trees identified by Kent County Council as needing to be removed.

- Birch Trees opposite 34 Churchside & opposite 47 Churchside
- Wych Elm in Croftside

No update.

**[Action: ongoing]**

996. \*\*Hornbeams: tree to the side (likely on Parish Land). The Clerk had spoken to Highview Services in regard to removing this tree, but no update had been received as yet.

**[Action: ongoing]**

997. \*\* Highview: the Clerk had been contacted by a resident who was concerned about a large tree outside \*\* Highview. The resident noted that it had not been cut back for many years, and the branches were getting closer to the property. Additionally, the tree seemed to be creaking alarmingly. Highview Trees had inspected the tree and felt it was structurally sound but could do with being re-pollarded. This work would be added to the winter list. Clerk to update the resident.

**[Action: Clerk]**

998. \*\* Highview: The Clerk had been contacted by the owner of \*\*, who noted that a tree was blocking the access to the rear of their properties. The Clerk noted that the tree was on land belonging to \*\* Highview. The Clerk noted that the owner of \*\* should contact the Parish Council to ask for approval to remove the tree prior to any work being carried out.
999. The Clerk had been informed that an Ash Tree had split with part of it falling onto a fence in Chestnut Lane. The Tree appeared to be on Country Park land and as such the Clerk had reported it to the Park Rangers. There also appeared to be a boundary issue in this location which KCC would look into.
1000. \*\* Stonecroft. A Parish Tree had fallen (during a heavy storm) and damaged the corner of the roof at this property. KCC had come out and removed the tree as it had fallen over a weekend and was blocking a footpath (it had been reported to GBC who advised that it was reported to KCC). The Parish Contractor had inspected the fallen tree and reported that there was no indication that the tree was unsafe at all (the tree had even started to produce buds). The contractor advised that the tree next to the fallen tree should also be removed, this was agreed by the Parish Council. The resident had not made contact with the Parish Council, but had been made aware that it was a Parish Council tree.

**Future Tree Projects**

1001. Cllr Chaplin would call a working party meeting.

**[Action: Cllr Chaplin]**

**10] Planning**

**Local Authority Tree Preservation Applications**

1002. Chestnut Cottage, Harvel Road: Prune back 4 / 5 branches on a Hornbeam / Chestnut Tree. 20231271.  
The Clerk noted that the application stated that Vigo Parish Council did not object to the proposal but had advised the resident to contact GBC for approval.  
History: noted that VPC had advised the resident the Parish would have no objection to root pruning the trees (as the resident claimed the roots were affecting his patio and garden fence). No consent had been given to the resident to cut back overhanging branches.  
If there were any overhanging branches, then the Parish Council contractor would deal with them, the Parish Council did not encourage residents to engage contractors to work on Parish Council Trees.

The Clerk was to respond to the Planning Officer (copying in the resident) to state the following:

- Vigo Parish Council had not approved the removal of any branches.
- Vigo Parish Council had only approved some root pruning (to be carried out by a specialist contractor at no cost to the Council)
- The tree needed to be identified (species and location): stating “4 or 5 branches” from a tree “either a Hornbeam or Chestnut” was not adequate information.
- If there were overhanging branches, the Parish Council would carry out remedial works.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1003.** 42 The Coppice: Removal of 1 x Mature Chestnut and replant a replacement native tree. 20240009. No objections.

**Full Planning Applications**

- 1004.** None received at time of Agenda publication.

**Covenant Three Applications**

- 1005.** \*\* Highview: Application to relocate side / rear fence. The owner of \*\* Highview had spoken to the owner of \*\* Highview. The Clerk had been informed (by the owner of \*\*) that the owner of \*\* had agreed to the amended proposal. The Clerk had liaised with the owner of \*\* directly to confirm this. Covenant approval would now be given, based on the drawing produced by Cllr Haslem, previously agreed by Parish Members.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1006.** \*\* CROFTSIDE: The Clerk had emailed the resident as agreed, to ask for details of the cladding colour, before a formal letter could be sent. No response had been received as yet. The Clerk would chase this up.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1007.** \*\* Timberbank: new front door. The Clerk had written giving covenant approval as agreed.

- 1008.** \*\* Timberbank: New windows and doors. Installation of insulation under existing tile cladding. Extension of existing driveway. Installation of post and rope fence. This matter was discussed in full by Members. It was agreed the Parish Council would not approve a post and rope fence in this location, as it would be in breach of covenant three. There were no objections to the extension of the existing driveway as long as the surface was porous and provided adequate drainage. There were no objections to the new windows and doors. The Parish Council were pleased to see that insulation was being installed under the existing tile cladding with the tiles being re-fitted afterward, and therefore there were no objections. Clerk to write to the resident accordingly.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1009.** \*\* Beechmast: change of exterior from red tiles to grey cladding. The resident had clarified that his intention was to paint the existing red tiles (painting them grey). The Clerk had already informed the resident that the Parish Council would not approve

a change in the external finish of the property, as it was in a terrace where currently all the properties matched, and the Parish required that the appearance of the properties remained cohesive.

The resident had responded to give details of other properties where the tiles did not match the original. The resident also informed that when they purchased the property their solicitor informed that the covenant had no legal weight due to the developers no longer being in existence.

The resident felt that their terrace did not have a cohesive appearance as some were in a state of disrepair. The resident also felt that covenant 4 (no obstructing the footpath) & covenant 5 (maintaining the external appearance of the property) were not enforced as vehicles were often parked on the footpath, and some houses were in a state of disrepair.

The resident informed he would be proceeding with painting the tiles during the summer regardless of the lack of approval from the Parish Council.

The Clerk would chase up the Parish Council solicitor, who was drafting a letter regarding the Parish Council's power to enforce the covenant. Once this letter had been received, it would be forwarded to the resident.

In the meantime, the Clerk would write to the resident to state that the Parish Council did have the power to enforce the covenants as the successor in title, and that they had been misinformed by their solicitor. The Clerk would inform the resident that he did not have approval to change the exterior appearance of his property, and if he went ahead with the work, it would be recorded as a covenant breach and as such would cause issues as and when he sold his property.

It was also noted that the property had leaded windows – having checked online it seemed that the property had been sold with these windows, even though no covenant approval would have been given. The Clerk was to inform the resident that the windows were in breach of covenant and as such, when they were changed in the future, they should be returned to plain glass.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1010.** \*\* The Paddock: retrospective approval for garage conversion. It was noted that there were now two external "front doors" to the property (one being where the garage door had been). The Parish Council did not object to the garage conversion as long as the property was not divided into two properties internally. Clerk to respond.

The Clerk would advise the resident that they should check with Gravesham Borough Council's planning department to see if planning permission were needed in respect of the garage conversion.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1011.** \*\* The Paddock: change of cladding from white to grey. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed (by majority) that there would be no objection to changing the cladding to grey, as long as it was light grey. Clerk to confirm this with the resident and ask for a sample / photograph of the colour. One Council Member objected to the proposal.

**[Action: Clerk]**

### **Other Planning Matters**

- 1012.** None.

### **Fowlers Stone Wood Update**

- 1013.** Environmental Enforcement: Community Impact Statement. The Environmental Enforcement Team Manager had emailed to confirm that he had never received the Clerks email dated 1<sup>st</sup> November. This was the second email that had never been received. The Enforcement Manager suggested that the Clerk email him directly in future, rather than using the envirocrime email. He apologised for any inconvenience the email issue had caused.  
The original complaint about Fowlers Stone Wood, which fell under the Environment Enforcement remit was regarding the use of the site as an illegal waste site, and the burning of waste. The Enforcement Manager was not aware of any new allegations and as such it appeared the main crux of the issue remained the illegal development and generator noise, neither of which fell under his remit. If there were further allegations of illegal waste and / or burning of waste, he expected that Planning Enforcement would let him know.
- 1014.** Fowlers Stone Wood: Enforcement: The Clerk had been informed that an additional Enforcement Notice had been served on all interested parties (14<sup>th</sup> December). The notice came into effect on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, unless an appeal was lodged with the Planning Inspectorate before this date.

### **Enforcement Issues**

- 1015.** \*\* Churchside. The Clerk had emailed planning enforcement as agreed (stating the concerns about the front windows).

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1016.** \*\* Timberbank: unauthorised outbuilding in rear garden. Planning Enforcement had been informed that the owner intended to remove the building and replace it with a shed, by the end of January 2024.

**[Action: ongoing]**

## **11] Covenant Breaches & Enforcement of Restrictive Covenants & Properties in Disrepair.**

### **Properties in breach of covenant:**

- 1017.** \*\* HIGHVIEW: To relocate side & rear garden fence. Work to be carried out by the beginning of December. No update.

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1018.** \*\* The Paddock. An application for retrospective covenant approval had been received and is noted under Agenda Item 10 (Covenant Applications)

### **Update on properties in disrepair:**

- 1019.** Admers Wood property in disrepair: As agreed, the Clerk had sent copies of correspondence to the resident by recorded delivery. No response had been received. This matter would be reviewed at the February Parish Council meeting.

**[Action: ongoing]**

### **To discuss complaints regarding businesses being run from home.**

- 1020.** BUSINESS IN BREACH OF COVENANT:

The Clerk had been informed that the business was still running on a Saturday afternoon on occasions.

The Clerk had received a full response from the business owner, which had been forwarded (with consent) to all Members. The business owner informed that the grooming salon had been soundproofed before the end of November. There were 4 layers of soundproofing on the wall that abutted the neighbour's garden. All remaining walls had 3 layers, except sections where the noisier pieces of machinery were located, where 4 layers had been installed. The window that faced the neighbour had been blocked up and extra soundproofing applied. The ceiling and floor had been soundproofed. The air conditioning unit and the noisier of the driers had been relocated onto the opposite side of the salon.

It was noted that the Parish Council's last letter (dated 9<sup>th</sup> November) had stated "if you were to soundproof your workspace, the Parish Council would reconsider it's position on the matter".

The Parish Council agreed it would be a good idea to visit the site and inspect the soundproofing themselves and gauge the level of noise nuisance. Clerk to speak to the business owner to make arrangements regarding this.

It was also agreed to carry out up to three "spot checks", over an 8-week period, on a Saturday when the business was running, to gauge the levels of noise.

It was also noted that the business owner had made an assumption as to who had complained about the noise, and offered to meet them directly to discuss.

It was noted that the cockerel had died recently and therefore there were no longer issues with early morning crowing.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**12] To Discuss Requests from and Matters Regarding Residents.**

- 1021.** \*\* Highview: Unkempt land outside garden fence. A response had been received from the owner to state that the path had now been cleared. The residents had only recently moved to the property and were concentrating on internal works to the house at present. The garden was due to be overhauled in the Summer with a new boundary fence to be installed. At the present time the overgrown brambles on the outside of the fence were holding it up, and as such the resident did not intend to cut them back until the fence was replaced. The Parish Council had no objections to this, and the Clerk had responded to the resident accordingly.
- 1022.** \*\* Waterlow Road Post Box: it was noted that the label giving details of the nearest available post box was incorrect. The Clerk asked for more details and was told that the "nearest available post box" was listed as Vigo Hill, Trosley, when in fact it should say "The Bay" or "Highview". Clerk to report this to Royal Mail.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1023.** \*\* Enquiry re Fibre Broadband. The Clerk had responded to the enquiry as agreed.
- 1024.** Cllr Hawkins apologised and left the meeting at 20.39 hrs.

**13] The Bay**

1025. Post Box in need of refurbishment. No response from Mr Holloway, the Clerk had sent a chase up email.

**[Action: ongoing]**

1026. The Bay: responsibility for maintenance and upkeep. The Clerk had responded to the shop keeper to give details of which authority was responsible for which area. The Clerk had supplied an annotated map which clarified matters.
1027. The Clerk had been contacted by the Agent who managed The Bay, to say they were due to inspect the area, and would like to meet the Parish Council. The Clerk and Cllr White had met with the Managing Agent, but felt the meeting had not been particularly enlightening.

The Managing Agent was concerned about the amount of snow and ice in The Bay at the time of the visit. The Clerk informed that the Parish contractor gritted a path outside the shops as a gesture of good will (as it was not Parish owned) and that any other gritting in The Bay would be the responsibility of Gravesham Borough Council.

The Managing Agent had contacted their contractor to ask that both service yards (to the rear of the shops) and both walkway to the flats were added to the gritting schedule in the future.

1028. A complaint had been received about what appeared to be abandoned cars in the carparking area behind the Pharmacy. This had been reported to the Managing Agent for action.

**14] To discuss any Gravesham Borough Council issues and / or Kent Highways Issues**

1029. DOG DIRT BINS (provision of new bins throughout the village). The Clerk had chased this up with GBC.

**[Action: ongoing]**

1030. SIGN FOR ADMERS WOOD ENTRANCE (Small turning circle, delivery drivers beware). With Highview Services for installation.

**[Action: ongoing]**

1031. ADMERS WOOD: Faded "No Through Road" graphic. These stickers had now been received. The Clerk would get one installed on the Admers Wood road sign.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1032. Harvel Road Bus Stop Bin: Request for bin to be more securely fixed. Gravesham Borough Council had responded to state that the bolt holes at the bottom of the bin had worn away. The bin had now been replaced. The replacement bin was a larger one, as there had been no small ones in stock. If the larger bin worked better, they would leave it there.

1033. Gravesham Borough Council small electrical recycling banks. The Clerk was expecting promotional material at the end of January.

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1034.** "Pedestrians in Road" warning sign in the wrong position at the Waterlow Road / Timber bank junction. This sign had still not been moved. The Clerk would liaise with the Community Warden and Kent Highways accordingly.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1035.** Abandoned Car (Woodside). This had been there some weeks, despite the Community Wardens contacting the police about it. The Clerk contacted Cllr Aslam, who in turn contacted Mr Nicholas May (Parking & Environmental Enforcement Services Manager at GBC). Mr May had said an officer would attend and issue a 7-day abandoned vehicle notice. If the owner failed to claim ownership of the car, then it would be removed by GBC as an abandoned vehicle. The Clerk had updated the resident who made the original enquiry.
- 1036.** Electric Vehicle Charging Point Parking Spaces. The Clerk had responded to the resident as agreed, suggesting they contact Gravesham Borough Council direct. Cllr Banks would also raise this issue at the next Chairmans meeting with GBC.
- 1037.** Gravesham Borough Council now confirmed that they did not need an emergency number for the Parish Council (they had misunderstood the original request).

However, Cllr Banks had been contacted by a resident, who noted that there was no information on the Parish Council website about who to contact should there be any emergencies when the office is not open. Therefore, it was agreed it would still be useful to move ahead with investing in a Single Point of Access Number. Clerk to liaise with Cllr Hawkins regarding this.

**[Action: Clerk / Cllr Hawkins]**

- 1038.** The Clerk had received a complaint about the amount of rubbish on Harvel Road, from the A227 down to Erskine Road. The resident had contacted GBC several time by email and telephone, but nothing had been done. The Clerk had emailed Cllr Aslam and Cllr Bains regarding this matter. No response had been received as yet.

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1039.** The Clerk had received correspondence from GBC asking for an up-to-date contact form to be completed with regard to the Trade Waste collection. The Clerk would complete and return this.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1040.** Gravesham Borough Council had contacted the Clerk regarding the amount of mud that was around the paladin bins at the back of the hall. This made it dangerous for the GBC crew to collect the bins. Photographs had been supplied. A similar complaint had been received from the Village Hall as they found it difficult to use the bins due to the slippery surface. The Clerk had asked Highview Services to clear this area as much as they could, and this work had now been carried out. The Clerk had updated both GBC and the Village Hall Manager.

- 1041.** Muddy Puddle – Spine Path near Downswood. Cllr Banks had reported this to Kent Highways (reference 770883).

**[Action: ongoing]**

**15] To discuss & agree proposed ATC survey for March 2024**

- 1042.** The Clerk had emailed the Highways Liaison Officer to explain that the Parish Council did not wish to move ahead with virtual traffic calming at the present time, instead wishing to have a further Automatic Traffic Count carried out (ideally in the Spring) to look at the figures six months after the first count.

The Highways Liaison Officer was happy to assist with this and suggested that an ATC / Tube Survey be carried out in March. The Parish Council were happy with this approach and looked forward to the results of the survey in due course.

**16] Winter Maintenance / Gritting Requests**

- 1043.** SALT BINS: Request for Kent Highways to fill salt bins provided by the Parish Council. The Clerk had received a response to state that KCC would not be able to fulfil the request for additional bins if criteria is not met after carrying out a salt bin assessment at the location given.

KCC did not, as a matter of course, accept bids from Parish or District Councils for additional salt bins and these would be a maintenance and cost liability going forward. KCC recommended that the Parish contact their County Member to submit a CMG application to fund the additional salt bins requested.

The Clerk noted that the Parish were happy to fund the bins, they just wanted them added to the refill schedule. The Clerk would contact Cllr Sweetland to discuss.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1044.** The Clerk had received enquiries regarding salting / gritting particular areas in the village as follows:

- Paths surrounding Vigo School: resident felt paths were really dangerous and it was difficult when collecting children from school, especially with younger children / more than one child to manage.
- Admers Wood, near the top of the Underpass – there is a slight incline where people struggled to get round. A local resident collected grit from a nearby salt bin and gritted the area. In the past, the resident said Highview Services had gritted this area.

It was agreed that the Clerk should speak to Highview Services and establish what areas they have gritted in the past, and to ensure they were gritted moving forward. It may be that the areas above were not on the Parish gritting schedule.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1045.** In Timberbank the bins had not been collected due to the snow and icy conditions. Cllr White had reported the issue to Kent Highways, asking for the road to be gritted. KCC had responded to state that only roads classified as Locally Important, Major Strategic and Other Strategic are eligible for inclusion on the primary gritting routes. KCC worked round the clock during the adverse weather to keep the road network clear. The primary routes make up 30% of the road network (2586km) and it would not be possible to clear every road. Consideration is given to secondary routes after prolonged heavy frost and widespread snow.

It was noted that Vigo always seemed to get a much heavier fall of snow than other locations in Gravesham, due to its elevated position. The snow also stayed for longer, and icy roads and footpaths were a real problem in Vigo when they were not so much elsewhere.

The Clerk would speak to the Highways Liaison Officer to find out if there was anyway that Vigo could be prioritised when it came to gritting roads.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**17] Parking Issues**

- 1046.** \*\* Highview. Parking continued to be an issue in this location, with the resident continuing to park on their driveway despite the lack of a drop kerb. It was noted that this was a new resident and as such it was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter reminding them that a drop kerb should be applied for (as per the sales particulars for the house).

**[Action: Clerk]**

**18] Drainage & Flooding Issues**

- 1047.** Sunken ground around drainage / sewage cover in Waterlow Road. The Clerk had not received an update on these works but would email the Drainage Team to ask for one.

**[Action: Clerk]**

- 1048.** Ferndown flooding. The Clerk had written to the drainage team to suggest that the water tower soakaways are utilised to prevent any future issues. A response had been received to state that the Drainage Team would not generally utilise third party assets for drainage improvements, as they would be an unknown quantity and may be putting them into a use they weren't originally intended for.

There are also various legal implications in obtaining consent and securing those rights, which start becoming costly. For those reasons where drainage improvements or replacements are carried out, KCC would stick to new builds using s.100 Highways Act powers, which allow them to construct and maintain drains within highway land or in land near the highway.

The Clerk had updated the resident who had made the original suggestion.

- 1049.** Highview drains blocked: the Clerk had reported this to Kent Highways (stating that more than one drain was totally blocked with silt). Reference no. 766331. This was currently marked as "enquiry under investigation".

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1050.** Drainage and Flooding Issues in Timberbank (particularly around the Downs Wood junction).

The Clerk had reported the blocked gully grates in Downs Wood to Kent Highways (reference 766334). This was currently marked as "enquiry under investigation".

Highview Services had not looked at the sweet chestnut trees in this location. The Clerk would chase this up with them, to find out what (if any) work needed to be carried out to reduce the leaf fall.

**[Action: ongoing]**

**19] Street Lighting**

- 1051.** ELECTRICAL TESTING RESULTS / STRUCTURAL SURVEY RESULTS: Mr Bonner noted that some of the streetlights did have electrical faults as noted in the Electrical reports supplied by GBC. Mr Bonner would liaise with GBC regarding these matters.

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1052.** OUTSTANDING WORKS TO STREETLIGHTS, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY GBC / KCC. Mr Bonner had spent some considerable time reading reports and comparing issues noted and concluded that there were more than two items that needed to be addressed by KCC / GBC. Mr Bonner would liaise (on behalf of VPC) with GBC regarding these repairs.

**[Action: ongoing]**

- 1053.** The Clerk was to sk Mr May (GBC) if the Parish Council would get an official hand over letter, once all the outstanding issues had been resolved. Agreed not to pursue this until an update had been received on the two outstanding repairs.

**[Action: pending]**

**To discuss provision of SL7 LED lights along the centre path**

- 1054.** Spread of light on streetlights (centre path). It had been previously agreed to replace streetlight no. 7 & no. 35 with SL8 units to provide uniformity along the centre path. However, Mr Bonner had since responded to state that the engineer who serviced the lights in Vigo felt that the SL7 light (which provided a better spread of light) would fare well in Vigo and were not likely to be vandalised.

It was noted however that the SL7 lights were considerably more expensive, at £685 plus VAT as opposed to £380 plus VAT for an SL8 light. There were 8 lights along the centre path, so it would be expensive to upgrade them, especially as some were already LED units (SL8s). It was agreed not to pursue this at the present time.

Clerk to ask for no. 7 & no. 35 to be upgraded to SL8 as previously agreed.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**To discuss LED upgrade programme and agree the £5,000 spend**

- 1055.** LED UPGRADES: The Clerk had been informed that as at 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 there were 38 streetlights in Vigo that were not LED. Five of these were due to be upgraded as part of the annual inspection works (see minute below). This left 33 lights needing an upgrade. The budget of £5000 would fund 14 upgrades. It was agreed to move ahead with this and ask for the upgrade works to be carried out as soon as possible. The Parish were happy for Mr Bonner to identify those lights which needed to be upgraded as a priority. Clerk to liaise with Mr Bonner.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**To agree to fund the cost of works identified as part of the annual inspection (£3,274 which includes 6 x LED upgrades)**

1056. ANNUAL STREETLIGHTING INSPECTION REPORT: The Clerk reported that the costs to carry out all the work identified as part of the annual inspection would be £3,274. This was broken down as follows:

- Electrical Issues £845 / New LEDs required £2160 / Other issues £269

Total £3274. The Clerk noted that there were sufficient funds in the CCTV budget to cover these works. Therefore, the cost was agreed. Clerk to liaise with the Streetlighting Contractor accordingly.

There was also other work identified, which could be carried out by Highview Services (pruning work), and by the CCTV maintenance contractor (cleaning the CCTV cameras). Clerk to make arrangements for this work to be done.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**20] Land not in the ownership of Vigo Parish Council: To agree solicitors' costs of £2,500 in advance of any meeting taking place.**

1057. LAND IN THE OWNERSHIP OF THE CROWN ESTATE.  
KS Law (Mr C Eastland) had asked the Parish Council to pay £2,500 on account for the barrister advice (and associated costs) regarding adverse possession. The Clerk noted this was a higher figure than previously quoted, so had questioned this with the solicitor, who had confirmed the estimate at £2,500. The Clerk noted that previous estimates (July 2023) had been £1200 for Barristers advice, plus £230 per hour for Mr Eastland's time. However, Mr Eastland now estimated the Barristers costs to be £1500, plus his hourly rate, and felt the £2,500 estimate to be more realistic. The Clerk noted there was also an invoice received for £621 to cover the time already spent on the matter by the solicitor.  
It was agreed that the costs were quickly escalating and as such the Parish Council agreed unanimously to not pursue this matter through the solicitor any further. The Clerk would email the solicitor to ask him to close the file on this matter.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1058. Adverse Possession: Land to the rear of 112 – 200 Highview. Please refer to minute above. The Parish Council agreed that the solicitor should not pursue this matter any further. However, it was noted that as a map a been prepared in relation to this matter, the Clerk (with assistance from Council Members if necessary) would make an adverse possession case for this piece of land.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**21] Parking Issue**

1059. \*\* Timberbank: Highview Services to build a wooden planter to go on Parish Land to the front of this property.

**[Action: Highview Services]**

1060. Pavement Parking in Vigo. The Clerk had responded to the resident as agreed. Cllr Banks would also raise the matter at the next Chairs meeting.

**[Action: Cllr Banks]**

**22] Rural Housing Needs Survey**

1061. The Clerk had not yet contacted GBC / RACE but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**23] KCC Kent Parish Winter Support Scheme**

1062. The Clerk had been informed that the Kent Parish Council Winter Support Scheme had launched on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Applications were open for Town and Parish Councils to seek funding for either new or existing initiatives aimed at assisting individuals experiencing financial hardship due to the ongoing cost of living crisis.

It was agreed to liaise with the Community Wardens with regard to any projects that could use this grant funding (£1,000 available for a small sized Council).

**[Action: Clerk]**

**24] To Review & Agree the Vigo Parish Council Emergency Plan**

1063. Agreed to defer this to the February Parish Council meeting.

1064. The Clerk noted that Gravesham Borough Council were due to come and check the contents of the Emergency Case which was held in the village hall. Clerk to make arrangements.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**25] Councillor Patches**

1065. The next Councillor patch check lists had been due at the end of December. Only two had been received. Council Members were asked to complete their check lists as soon as possible.

**[Action: all Councillors]**

**26] To Receive an Update and Discuss Play Areas Issues (Play Park and Ballpark)**

**Ball Park**

1066. Nothing to note.

**Village Green Play Park**

1067. Nothing to note.

**27] Finance**

**To note any payments made since the last meeting**

1068.	31.12.23	D/D	Unity Trust Bank	25.20	Bank Charges
	04.01.24	D/D	Safelincs	5112.00	4 x defibrillators
	09.01.24	D/D	Nest Pension	128.99	Clerks Pension – December

**To authorise payments due**

1069. The following payments would be authorised by two Members (either Cllr Haslem, Cllr White or Cllr Woolway):

15.01.24	D/P	Robert Melish	157.50	Harvel Road Flail
15.01.24	D/P	Geosphere	156.00	Parish Online Annual Subscription
15.01.24	D/P	Streetlights Ltd	641.70	Quarterly Maintenance
15.01.24	D/P	Kingsley Smith	745.20	Legal Fees
15.01.24	D/P	Viking	10.14	Stationery
15.01.24	D/P	D Mackay	15.00	Window Cleaning – Bus Shelter
15.01.24	D/P	Pat Banks	95.00	Carbon Literacy Action Day
15.01.24	D/P	Joanne Glass	15.59	Zoom Fees
15.01.24	D/P	Joanne Glass	15.00	Land Registry Fees x 5
28.01.24	D/P	Joanne Glass	1875.13	Clerks Salary – January

**1070.** The following Standing Orders / Direct Debits were authorised:

22.01.24	D/D	Gravesham BC	90.30	Paladin Bin monthly payment
25.01.24	D/D	J&F Accounts	33.96	Payroll Charges - January
276.01.24	D/D	British Telecom	56.54	Telephone / Broadband
28.12.23	D/D	Highview Services	5212.20	Grounds Maintenance Contract

**1071.** Transfer of £10,000 from deposit account to current account to cover outgoings: agreed.

**To note any income received**

**1072.** £50: retrospective covenant three application fee: \* The Paddock.

**To discuss & agree Corporate Multi Pay Card application.**

**1073.** The Clerk had not yet completed the application form for this card, but would do so before the February meeting.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**Other Finance Issues to Note & RFO's Report**

**1074.** British Telecom D/D increase. Cllr Hawkins would look into the deals available and make a recommendation to Parish Council in due course.

**[Action: Cllr Hawkins]**

**1075.** Adobe Acrobat licence. Purchasing this was deferred pending the application for a Corporate Multi Pay Card.

**[Action: pending]**

**1076.** Cracked polycarbonate panel in Erskine Road bus shelter. GW Shelters had confirmed the quote cost as £256.63 plus VAT. This was agreed. Clerk to make arrangements for the work to be carried out.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**1077.** Additional One Drive storage: the Clerk had not yet upgraded this to 100GB but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**28] Defibrillator Upgrade Programme**

1078. Cllr Hawkins had ordered the four new defibrillators, which had now arrived. Cllr Hawkins would install them as soon as possible.

**[Action: Cllr Hawkins]**

1079. The Clerk had not yet spoken to the village hall committee to see if they would have any objections to a defibrillator being mounted on the outside of the village hall. The Clerk would do this as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1080. Existing Defibrillators: the Clerk had not yet spoken to Vigo Scouts but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**29] To receive the Chairs announcements**

1081. The following items had been put on the Chairs Meeting Agenda:

- Pavement parking.
- Parking on driveways where there is no dropped kerb.
- Fibre broadband.
- EV charging points.

The meeting had been cancelled, but GBC would provide a full response to the above points in due course.

**30] To receive the Clerk's Report and note correspondence received**

1082. D Day celebrations – the Clerk would look into this in the New Year (the Clerk had downloaded a guide to look at).

Plan Bee – the Clerk was to write an article about No Mow May, and provide photographs of the Vigo orchids, for a future edition of KALC News.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1083. KCC Resident Hubs (to be used in response to a national extended power outage). The Clerk had not yet spoken to the Village Hall Manager about this but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1084. ACCESS TO VILLAGE HALL: the Clerk not yet spoken to the Hall Manager about this but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1085. The KALC Newsletter (January 2024) had been received and circulated to all Members.

1086. The Clerk noted there was a public consultation on the Gravesend to Tilbury Ferry Service: concerns over funding available for the ferry meant it may stop running. The consultation was open until 4<sup>th</sup> February. The Clerk had posted this online.

**31] To agree nomination for KALC Community Award Scheme**

1087. KALC Community Awards Scheme for 2024. The Clerk had posted on Facebook to ask residents to put forward nominations for this award. Four nominations had been

received. There was some discussion regarding this, and as not all Members were present, it was agreed that the Clerk should email each Councillor to ask for their vote.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**32] Training**

1088. Nothing to report.

**33] Reports from other organisations**

1089. None received at time of Agenda publication.

**34] Working Party Reports**

**Environment Infrastructure Working Party**

1090. Lightbulbs (for those who had completed the Energy Saving Questionnaire). The Clerk had not distributed these at present but would do so as soon as possible.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1091. 968/840: REPAIR SHOP CAFÉ: The Clerk was still looking into this.

**[Action: Clerk]**

1092. The working party were due to meet on 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

**35] Any Other Urgent Business (at Chairman's Discretion)**

1093. None.

**There being no other business,  
the Full Parish Council Meeting was closed at 21.40 hours.**