

**VIGO PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE 24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2024 at 7.30pm in Vigo Village Hall**

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr Pat Banks; Cllr Simon Chaplin; Cllr Sharon Cottam; Cllr Mandie Jones; Cllr Alan White. Mrs Joanne Glass (Parish Clerk)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Cllr Sheila Buchanan (Meopham Parish Council) Mrs Lesley Boycott (Borough Alderman) 19 Members of the Public

**1] Apologies for Absence**

**AP01** Cllr Jim Haslem; Cllr Dave Hawkins; Cllr Andy Woolway (Vigo Parish Council)  
Cllr Bryan Sweetland (Kent County Council Member for Gravesham Rural)  
Cllr Ejaz Aslam (Gravesham Borough Council Member for Vigo)  
Cllr Cheryl Price (Meopham Parish Council)  
PC Joanne Hammond (Kent Police)  
Mr & Mrs Shelbrooke  
Mr & Mrs Talboys

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

**AP02** Cllr Banks welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3] To confirm the minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Parish Meeting (held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023)**

**AP03** The minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Parish Meeting (03.04.2023) were signed by the Chair, having been accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**4] Chairman's Annual Report**

**AP04** This year began with Parish Council elections, where our existing 9 councillors were returned unopposed. Sadly, Cllr Mike Germain passed away in January. He is much missed. This does mean that we now have vacancy for a councillor. Please contact our clerk if you might be interested.

Another memorial bench was installed in memory of Alan Basford, which is the same as the one installed for Jack West. Mike Germain volunteered with the NW Kent Countryside Partnership Group. They have asked if they can plant a tree in memory of Mike. It will be a rowan tree.

We have been trying to respond to the Climate Emergency. We are aware that insect, particularly bees and butterflies are in serious decline and so left some verges un-mown for the early summer. This allowed several species of wildflowers, including orchids, ox-eye daisies and rose garlic to grow. We are planning to leave some verges un-mown again this year.

Vigo is a lovely place for other wildlife too – birds, squirrels, badgers and foxes, for example. They are lovely to look at and people like to put food out for them. Sadly, food left on the ground attracts rats and full up foxes do not predate them. So please do not leave food out.

We have been responding to climate change in other ways too.

As you will remember, Vigo Parish Council (VPC) took over the ownership of our streetlights. As a result, repairs happen much more quickly now. To help reduce the energy used by our streetlights, we are replacing our old sodium lights with LEDs.

The electric vehicle charging points, installed in the village car park, by Gravesham Borough Council are being well used.

Your Parish Council investigated the possibility of installing kerb side charges. At £10,000-£15,000 they turned out to be far too expensive.

VPC obtained a Community Help grant from KCC and purchased LED light bulbs with it. The light bulbs were distributed free to residents, at the Vigo School fair.

We are investigating the possibility of setting up a monthly Repair Shop. If we are successful, it will take place here, in the Village Hall and if there are any skilled craftspeople who would like to offer their services, the organisers would be very happy to hear from you.

Another measure that would help to save a lot of energy, is home insulation. VPC are aware that some people have been improving their home insulation. We would be very happy if you could share your experiences with the Parish Council, so that we could disseminate good practice.

As usual, there were a number of issues that occurred during the year, but happily there were also solutions to many of these problems.

The first issue was the theft of 11 panels of fencing from the village playpark. With funding from our insurance company, they were replaced. At the same time as the fences were replaced, maintenance and repairs were carried out on various pieces of play equipment. So, the play park is, once again, in fine form.

We have issues with many ash trees suffering from ash die back disease. There are trees marked with orange crosses, waiting to be removed by Paul and Steph (our maintenance team).

Delivery vehicles have been driving on our verges – causes serious damage, as the ground is so wet. There was a major problem by Churchside, caused by an Amazon delivery driver. Jo, our clerk, sent photos to Amazon, who quickly responded and funded the cost of the repairs and purchasing and installing new bollards. The work was carried out by Paul and Steph.

We plan to employ a gardener this year, to clear and maintain the seating area in the Bay and to clear leaves in the autumn.

There has been a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour since last summer. A new beat officer introduced herself to us at last year's annual meeting and I think she may have helped to bring about this reduction.

Fowlers Stone Wood is another on-going problem. However, an Enforcement Order came into effect in January: the site should be cleared by 22<sup>nd</sup> April. There doesn't seem to be much evidence of clearing and so after 22<sup>nd</sup> April, we hope that Gravesham Borough Council will step in and ensure the site is cleared.

Another on-going issue is the reduction in our bus service. Despite making several representations, VPC has not been able to alter this. The response is always, 'what we have is better than the alternative – nothing!'

A few more things

VPC would like to remind everyone about the need to apply for Covenant permission, before any changes to the properties. During the year, the Parish Council reviewed and revised some aspects of the Covenants. The revised version is available on our website.

At Cllr Hawkins suggestion, we have purchased 4 new defibrillators, to replace the second-hand ones that he sourced for us, that he now felt need to be replaced.

We are hopeful, that following Jo's efforts and the intervention of Adam Holloway, the very sad looking post box in The Bay, will be repainted this month.

We would like to flag up the Pop-up café, (1<sup>st</sup> Friday in the month) which continues to be very successful. This is organised by Jo, our clerk, who does it in her own time and she is assisted by several willing volunteers.

The Parish council would like to remind you that a sum is set aside each year to help local organisations. They can apply for a grant of up to £250. If anyone would like to do this, just contact our clerk.

Nearly the end – last year we had a plan to paint the underpass, but unfortunately it didn't happen. Hopefully, we will be able to go ahead with this year and we will be looking for willing volunteers to help. Look out for details on the Parish Facebook page soon.

The final duty of the official part of the evening was to thank all the people who were involved with and had helped the Parish Council. Special mention was made of the Parish Clerk, the Maintenance team and fellow councillors.

**5] To receive reports from County and Borough Councillors**

**AP05** None.

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

**AP06** None.

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

**AP07** VIGO VILLAGE HALL:

Current Trustees: Alan White (Chairman); Ken Hill (Treasurer); Caroline Maclean (Secretary); Colin Evans; Jayne Gibson.

This report is for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Our mission is to provide and maintain premises to encourage and facilitate a true community spirit. We operate our village hall which is used by most of the community groups in the village. These include a pre-school, a club for older people, Girl Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, several keep fit groups and dance classes, Vigo Parish Council, and the Anglican Church, as well as various other groups.

The income actually paid into the bank account during the period was £34,987, the amount paid out from our account was £40,803. This means that the cash in the bank was depleted by £8,816. All figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest pound as necessary. Although the loss is of concern, it should be remembered that there was a one-off expense of over £7,000 and a period of around 3 months with no income from the pre-school.

During the year we had solar panels installed at a total cost of £17,054. The committee decided to commit to this expense to save money on future electricity bills and because our Chairman, Alan White, had managed to secure a £10,000 grant towards the project, thus reducing the cost to the hall to £7,054.

The 800 Club: We sold tickets to the value of £1,234 which was up £53 on last year. Although £600 was due in prize money only £350 was deduced from our account within the financial year.

Remembering that there are around 800 households in the village, it's disappointing that only around 60 households participated in the draw.

In December Sue Marrable, unfortunately had to give up running the preschool due to poor health. We therefore lost a valued user, and a significant part of our income. In April, a new preschool, Little Learners, was opened by Joanne Spalding.

It is the committee's intention to build up a cash reserve of £10,000 to be used for emergency repairs such as a replacement boiler.

Most of the hall hire prime slots are taken, therefore, there is limited opportunity to increase our hall hire income. We therefore realised we need to look at other ways of raising income including a renewed drive to increased 800 club members. We also intend to investigate the possibility of renting a room previously used by the pre-school as an office.

The Committee would like to thank our Hall Manager, Dani Howard, for continually looking for ways to save money and looking for any grants that might become available.

**8] Finance Report**

**To receive the Financial Statement of the Parish Council's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023**

**AP08** These were noted and received.

**To receive the DRAFT actual vs budget spend for the year ended 31 March 2024**

**AP09** This was noted and received.

**9] Presentation of the KALC Community Awards for 2024**

**AP10** The KALC Community Award for 2024 was awarded posthumously to Sue Marrable. Sue had run Sticky Fingers preschool for many years, and she had sadly passed away last year.

The award was presented "for many years of devotion to the young people of Vigo, nurturing and giving children a wonderful and positive start to their school lives".

The award was presented to Sue's husband and daughter.

**10] Presentation from Kirsty Gaunt, Gravesham Borough Council's Community Engagement Officer, on Photographic ID requirements for upcoming elections.**

**AP11** Ms Gaunt spent some time explaining the new rules which meant photographic identification would be needed to enable people to vote in the upcoming elections. Ms Gaunt explained what photo ID would be accepted, and what to do if you did not have this.

**11] Presentation from Paul Baylis, Local Historian. "The Waterlows".**

**AP12** Mr Paul Baylis, local historian, gave a presentation the history of Vigo entitled "The Waterlows" which was well received and enjoyed by all.

**12] Questions from the Press & Public.**

**AP13** None.

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

**AP14** None.

**The Meeting Closed and was followed by refreshments.**