

VIGO PARISH COUNCIL
Notes from the online zoom meeting held with Vigo Parish Council Members
on 9th January 2025.

Present	Cllr Pat Banks (in the Chair); Cllr Simon Chaplin; Cllr Sharo Cotam; Cllr Jim Haslem; Cllr Dave Hawkins; Cllr Elliott Hulf; Cllr Mandie Jones; Cllr Alan White; Cllr Andy Woolway. Mrs Joanne Glass (Clerk). Ms Clare Collings (Assistant Clerk).
In Attendance	None.

The scheduled Full Parish Council meeting had been cancelled due to snow. Councillors met by zoom to discuss issues, and the Clerk would action any points under delegated powers. All decisions would be ratified at the next Full Council Meeting in February 2025.

1] To receive apologies for absence

828. None.

2] To receive declarations of interest from members (if any)

829. None.

3] Questions from the press & public

830. None.

4] Borough & County Councillor representative reports

831. None.

5] Reports from Kent Police / Police issues to be noted

832. The latest Parish Council monthly update had been received from Kent Police. This had been circulated to all Members and also posted online. There were no reported crimes of note in Vigo for the December 2024 period.

833. The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who wished to report some antisocial behaviour (including firing catapults). The Clerk had encouraged the resident to report the matter to the police online.

6] To approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 12th December 2024

834. The minutes from the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 12th December 2024 were noted and agreed. They would be signed by Cllr Banks in person at the next Parish Council meeting, having been accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

7] To discuss matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)

835. FOOTBALL TRAINING: Mr Jarrett had responded to state that he had reached out to the Rugby Club but had not had a response as yet. Mr Jarrett was still interested in the possibility of using the village green. There were some concerns about damage to the grass on the village green. It was hoped that the Rugby Club would respond soon. Mr Jarret would also like to find out if there was any storage available in the village hall. The Clerk had emailed the Hall Manager and was waiting for a reply.

[Action: Clerk]

- 836.** ADVERSE POSSESSION: Land to the rear of 112 – 200 Highview. The Clerk had not applied for Adverse Possession as yet. The Clerk would discuss this with Cllr Banks in the New Year.

[Action: Clerk]

- 837.** HEARING LOOP FOR SMALL VILLAGE HALL: The Clerk had not set this up as yet but would do so as soon as possible.

[Action: Clerk]

- 838.** The Clerk noted that the Standing Orders would also need to be reviewed as 18f & 18g referred to the EU and therefore needed to be updated. This would be on the agenda for the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: Clerk]

- 839.** Wi-Fi in the village hall. The upgrade work had been carried out, funded by the Village Hall.

- 840.** DEFIBRILLATORS: The village hall committee had agreed the proposed location of the defibrillator (on the right-hand side of the entrance to the village hall). The new cabinet had arrived. Cllr Hawkins would now make the necessary arrangements.

Cllr White wondered whether it would be a good idea to have a sign elsewhere on the hall / in The Bay to point people in the right direction of the defibrillator, as it would be quite tucked away. It was agreed to wait and see how it looked once it was installed before making a decision.

[Action: Cllr Hawkins]

- 841.** Single Point of Access Number. Please see agenda item 27.

8]

Services

Grounds maintenance

- 842.** Overgrown vegetation in the garage area to the side / rear of 30 The Coppice. Highview Services to hire a digger to clear this area.

[Action: Highview Services]

- 843.** Grounds Works record sheets. *Post meeting note – the record sheets for November and December 2024 had been sent out. The Clerk would send the January 2025 records as soon as they were available.

[Action: Clerk]

- 844.** DAMAGE TO COMMUNITY LAND OUTSIDE VIGO SCHOOL. It was not clear if this land had been repaired / reinstated as yet. The Clerk would check and report back.

[Action: Clerk]

- 845.** ROAD SIGNS: Cllr Banks noted that all the road signs had been cleaned – the Clerk confirmed this work had been carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Team. The Clerk had thanked them for doing this work as they looked much improved as a result.

Grass cutting

846. Nothing to report.

Trees

847. Timberbank. Land ownership to the rear. The Clerk had looked into this and felt that the ownership of the land to the rear of the fences was not immediately clear. She would look into it further before writing to the residents.

[Action: Clerk]

848. THE GALLOPS: Tree which the resident felt was encroaching onto the roof. Tree on private land, no action required by the Parish Council. The Clerk had updated the resident.

849. DOWNSWOOD: The Clerk had emailed the Tree Preservation Officer at Gravesham Borough Council and also reported the matter as vandalism to the police (online). The Clerk had also spoken to the Parish Solicitor who had agreed to act on behalf of the Parish Council with regard to this matter. Highview Services would get a quote for a replacement cherry tree, and let the Clerk know how many hours work would be required to put right the damage to the Hornbeams. Once the Clerk had worked out the total cost of the damages, she would email Council Members.

[Action: Clerk]

850. Highview: request to remove / prune back existing conifer trees to the front, and plant climbers on the remaining trunks. The Clerk had written to the resident as agreed.

851. TREES ON HARVEL ROAD TO THE REAR OF HIGHVIEW. No update on this project. Clerk to chase Highview Services.

[Action: Clerk]

852. RUBBISH AND DUMPING TO THE REAR OF HIGHIEW PROPERTIES. The Clerk had not yet drafted a letter but would liaise with Cllr Banks regarding this in the New Year.

[Action: Clerk]

9]

Planning

Local authority tree preservation applications

853. 9 Croftside: 30% reduction to group of hornbeams, 30% reduction of a silver birch, and removal of 1 x silver birch (20241132). No objections.

Full planning applications

854. 20241043: 13 Stonecroft: Erection of a single storey rear extension with two roof lights. Erection of a front porch. Conversion of the garage to habitable space with one roof light. Removal of chimney stack. Changes to fenestration. The Clerk had responded to Gravesham Borough Council as agreed.

855. 20241032: 102 Timberbank: Demolition of garage. Erection of single storey side and front extension with three roof lights. Replacement of porch roof with pitched roof. The Clerk had responded to Gravesham Borough Council as agreed.

Covenant applications

856. Highview: replacement window, doors and shed (retrospective application). The payment for the retrospective application had been received. There were no objections to the application, the Clerk would write to give approval.

[Action: Clerk]

857. Churchside: replacement windows and doors (retrospective application). The payment for the retrospective application had been received. There were no objections to the application, the Clerk would write to give approval.

[Action: Clerk]

858. Highview: application to replace front door (details supplied). There were no objections to this. The Clerk was to write giving covenant approval.

[Action: Clerk]

Other planning matters

859. None.

Enforcement issues

860. Churchside. The Clerk had asked Planning Enforcement for an update but had not received one. The Clerk would chase this up.

[Action: Clerk]

861. ASH KEYS: property in a state of disrepair. No response from Planning Enforcement received as yet. Clerk to chase this up.

[Action: Clerk]

10] **Proposal from Cllr Chaplin: that the Parish Council discuss, review and reconsider the way the restrictive covenant is enforced with regard to hedges which are in front of the building line.**

862. Cllr Chaplin felt that the enforcement of covenant three (with regard to hedges in front of the building line) was unfair and not necessary. He felt that hedges should be maintained, ideally not across the front of a property, but hedges to the side, and between properties were, in his opinion, acceptable.
863. Cllr Chaplin noted that a recent post on Facebook (now removed) showed that many residents were not in favour of this covenant being enforced and were happy with hedges in front of the building line.
The Parish noted that the covenant enforcement policy was based on a survey that had been sent to all properties in the village, where the response to keeping the village open plan had been very positive.
864. There was some discussion about what constituted a hedge; for example, would a row of conifers that had formed a continuous barrier be considered a hedge?
865. Cllr Chaplin felt the approach by the Parish Council was inconsistent and people were not being treated fairly. He had done a quick survey of the village and found 46 hedges which were in front of the property building line.
It was agreed that a consistent approach was important. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council was aware of the number of breaches across the village (having done a survey some years ago), but that it was difficult to resolve all of these at one time, as each would require a letter, and often a site meeting, and then an agreement, and this all took time. This is why a rolling programme had been in place for some time.

866. Cllr White thanked Cllr Chaplin for raising this issue. The Parish Council agreed to hold a Covenant Working Party meeting to discuss the matter further. Cllr Chaplin was invited to attend. A report would be put to the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: ongoing]

867. Lastly, it was noted that the covenant leaflet online referred to "walls & fences" when it should actually say "walls, fences & hedges". Cllr Banks would correct this and update the website.

[Action: Cllr Banks]

11] Covenant breaches & enforcement of restrictive covenants & properties in disrepair

Properties in breach of covenant

868. Timberbank. Porch in front of the building line. This matter was now with the Parish Council solicitor. *Post meeting note; the solicitor had updated the Clerk via email on 16th January, this correspondence would be discussed / noted at the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: ongoing]

869. BEECHMAST: Front hedge and gate removed. Side hedge still in place. The Clerk would not send any further correspondence until after the Covenant Working Party had met and put a report to the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: pending]

870. BEECHMAST: The Clerk had arranged for Cllr Banks and Cllr Haslem to meet the resident (21st January) to discuss the large hedge at this property. A report on the site meeting would be presented to the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: pending]

871. WOODSIDE: Hedge to the front in breach of covenant. A site meeting was to be agreed. However, this had been postponed pending the Covenant Working Party meeting and a proposal being put to the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: pending]

872. WOODSIDE: Hedge to the front in breach of covenant. The Clerk had looked up the previous correspondence and provided it to the Covenant Working Party, for consideration at their next meeting.

[Action: Covenant Working Party]

873. DOWNSWOOD: Hedge to the front in breach of covenant. The Clerk had sent a standard breach letter. No response had been received as yet. The Clerk would write again.

[Action: Clerk]

874. TIMBERBANK: Noted that this property had installed grey cladding at some point. The Clerk had written to the owner to inform they were in breach of covenant. No further action would be taken at this time.

875. Cllr Jones noted a property in Churchside which appeared to be in breach of covenant, with a hedge and a gate. This would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting, after the covenant working party had put a proposal to Full Parish.

[Action: ongoing]

To discuss businesses being run from home (covenant breach)

876. The Clerk had formally written to the Dog Grooming Business, as agreed, to state that no further action would be taken at this point but should further complaints be received about the business causing a nuisance, the Parish Council would look into the matter again.

12] To note any update on matters being dealt with by the Parish Council solicitor

877. Timberbank: the solicitor apologised for not actioning and sending the letter (further to the suggested changes made by the Parish Council). He confirmed that this letter had now been sent to the resident (6th January).

13] To discuss requests from and matters regarding residents

878. TO AGREE THE LOCATION OF A MEMORIAL BENCH (Erskine Road, end of Chestnut Lane). The Clerk had not yet drafted a Memorial Bench Policy but would do so as soon as possible. The Clerk would also write to no.2 Chestnut Lane to ensure there were no objections to the placement. Lastly the Clerk would calculate an up-to-date charge for the purchase of the bench, the plaque, the delivery and installation.

*Post meeting note: the Clerk had written to property owners in Chestnut Lane. No response had been received as yet. The costings for the bench would be noted at the February Parish Council meeting.

[Action: Clerk]

879. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINT: The Clerk had responded to the resident as agreed.
880. The Clerk had received a complaint from a resident, regarding a cockerel in a nearby garden. The Parish Council advised that the resident should contact Environmental Health at Gravesham Borough Council for further advice regarding this. Clerk to update the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

881. The Clerk had received an enquiry from a resident regarding the ownership of the land to the rear of Highview, backing onto Commonory Road (in the area of 146 – 156). The Clerk noted that the land was unregistered, but the Parish Council did maintain it.

14] To review the Temporary Scheme of Delegation.

882. The Clerk would review this in time for the Annual Council Meeting.

15] To agree the design of the No Parking Signs on Waterlow Road

883. WATERLOW ROAD NO PARKING SIGNS: These signs had not been redesigned as yet. A draft design would be presented to a future Parish Council meeting.

[Action: Clerk]

16] The Bay

884. Nothing to note.

17] To discuss any Gravesham Borough Council issues and / or Kent Highways issues

- 885.** DOG DIRT / REFUSE BIN NEAR THE UNDERPASS (Admers Wood side) LOCATED IN WRONG POSITION. No update from GBC.

[Action: ongoing]

- 886.** SALT BINS (funded by Cllr Sweetland): no update – Clerk to chase. *Post meeting note: the salt bins will be installed by the end of January 2025.

The Clerk had asked for confirmation of the cost of refilling the bins, so that future expenditure could be budgeted for by the Parish Council. No response had been received. It was noted that the first THREE refills were included in the installation cost.

[Action: ongoing]

- 887.** An area of sunken footpath (Waterlow Road, between Croftside & Churchside) had been noted and reported to Kent Highways by the Clerk. Reference 850815.

[Action: ongoing]

- 888.** Trosley County Park had contacted the Clerk with regard to the ownership of a tree on the Waterlow Road verge. The tree had been hit by a car a few times, and the ranger felt it needed to be inspected. The tree was not on Trosley CP land, and the Clerk confirmed it was not on Parish Land. The Park Ranger had therefore reported it to Kent Highways. The Clerk had updated Highview Services for their information.

- 889.** The Clerk had received a report of a tree (which looked diseased) on the grass verge on Harvel Road, just outside the boundary fence of Linden Wood Manor. The Clerk had reported this to Kent Highways who had responded to say that they had assessed the tree and confirmed the main stem had died and was decaying. They would have the tree felled on a 2-month priority schedule.

- 890.** The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who was concerned about a property which had a driveway but no drop kerb onto the highway. The owner of the property where the driveway was would often put cones out to stop people blocking the driveway and would also knock on people's doors to get them to move cars. It was agreed that this would best be referred to Kent Highways. Clerk to update the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

18] Street lighting

- 891.** OUTSTANDING WORKS TO STREETLIGHTS, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY GBC / KCC. The Clerk had been advised that outstanding works were due to be completed in January 2025.

[Action: ongoing]

- 892.** STREET LIGHT OUTSIDE 140/142 HIGHVIEW: Request from resident to have the adjacent tree & bush cut back as it was impeding the light. Highview Services informed that there was no Parish vegetation causing an issue in this area. There was some vegetation owned by residents, however. The Clerk had asked the streetlighting contractor to assess the situation before any further action was taken.

[Action: ongoing]

- 893.** LED UPGRADES: The Clerk had emailed Mr Bonner and asked him to programme in the remaining eight LED upgrades. The Clerk had asked for a costing for the light in The Bay as it was not a standard unit.

[Action: ongoing]

19] Councillor Patches

- 894.** Further to the discussions regarding hedges in breach of covenant, Councillors were asked to note all hedges in front of the building line during their patch walk, so that an up-to-date list of breaches could be drawn up.

[Action: All Councillors]

20] To receive an update and discuss any play area issues (play park & ballpark)

- 895.** FEBRUARY 2024 REPORT (received November 2024): The Assistant Clerk would look through the report and get quotes for any remedial work required. The Assistant Clerk would also meet the Gravesham Borough Council playpark inspector on site to discuss any issues.

[Action: ongoing]

- 896.** PLAY PARK LITTER BIN: The Clerk had submitted a request for the existing (open top) bin to be replaced with a newer (more closed in) style bin. No update.

[Action: ongoing]

21] Community Warden – to note any progress / updates

- 897.** Community Warden Sponsorship. KALC had responded to the Parish Council to say that they were running a workshop on 29th January, with the Community Warden managers, to discuss sponsorship and how the system would work. Cllr Banks and the Clerk would attend.

Due to this, the Clerk had deferred formally responding to KCC regarding the agreed sponsorship, in case anything significant came to light during the workshop.

[Action: ongoing]

- 898.** Mrs P Shelbrooke (local resident) continued to liaise with Lauren Sullivan MP regarding the removal of the Community Service.

22] To note the Parish Council insurance renewal terms.

- 899.** This item had been put on the agenda in error, there were no issues to discuss.

23] Finance

To note any payments made since the last meeting

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|------|----------|-----|------|---------------|------------|
| 900. | 09.01.25 | D/D | Nest | Clerk pension | LGPSR 2013 |
|------|----------|-----|------|---------------|------------|

To authorise payments due

901. The following payments would be authorised by two of either Cllr Banks, Cllr Woolway, or Cllr White:

09.01.25	D/P	Parish Online	156.00	Annual Subscription	LGA 1972 s.111
09.01.25	D/P	IT Solutions	84.00	CCTV Service	LGA 1972 s.111
09.01.25	D/P	Hoists	12.00	Post Crete	OSA 1906 s 9&10
09.01.25	D/P	Mazars	504.00	Audit Fee	LGA 1972 s.111
09.01.25	D/P	IT Solutions	180.00	CCTV Repairs	LGA 1972 s.111
28.01.25	D/P	Salaries	2174.22	Jan salaries	LGA 1972 s.112(2)

902. **The following is a summary of the monthly spend on the Corporate Multi Pay Card (£211.19 to be paid by direct payment on 16.01.25)**

Zoom	15.59	Monthly Fee	LGA 1972 s.111
Zoom	143.81	Annual Fee	LGA 1972 s.111
Single Point Access Fee	28.80	Em. Phone	LGA 1972 s.111
Land Registry	14.00	Fees	LGA 1972 s.111
Microsoft 365	5.99	Monthly Storage	LGA 1972 s.111
Monthly Fee	3.00	Charges	LGA 1972 s.111

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

21.01.25	D/D	Gravesham BC	132.50	Paladin Bins	LA 1983 s.5
25.01.25	D/D	J&F Accounting	35.76	Payroll Fees	LGA 1972 s.111
28.01.25	D/D	Highview Services	5368.57	Grounds Maint.	OSA 1906 s 9&10
27.01.25	D/D	British Telecom	57.19	Phone & B.Band	LGA(FP)A 1963 s.5
					LGA 1972 s.111

904. A transfer of £10,000 was agreed to cover outgoings.

905. **INCOME: The following income was noted:**

23.12.24	Unity Trust	Credit Interest	540.90
03.01.25	15 Highview	Retro Cov 3	50.00
03.01.25	3 Churchside	Retro Cov 3	50.00

To note the actual vs budget spend for the period ended 31.12.24

906. Not available. This would be presented to a future meeting.

To note and agree the bank reconciliation for the period ended 31.12.24

907. Not available. This would be presented to a future meeting.

Other finance issues to note & Responsible Finance Officer's report

908. Adobe Acrobat licence. The Clerk had not yet done this but would do so as soon as possible.

[Action: Clerk]

909. KENT PARISH COUNCIL WINTER SUPPORT SCHEME: The Clerk had emailed the Community Warden to find out if all the vouchers had been given out.

[Action: ongoing]

910. Purchase of Ink Tank Printer. The Clerk would prepare a report for the February Parish Council meeting.

911. The end of year internal audit (with Mr Robbins) had been booked for Monday 28th April 2025.

24] To rescind the decision made regarding the precept & budget for 2025/2026 made at the Full Parish Council meeting in December 2024 and to formally agree a revised precept and budget for the period 01.04.2025 – 31.03.2026 in light of the adjusted tax base figure provided by Gravesham Borough Council. (Proposal from the Finance Committee)

912. In light of the updated tax base received from Gravesham Borough Council, the Finance Committee proposed that the precept be reduced by £1,100 (by moving money from reserves). This would mean the increase in precept would remain under 10%. The budget figure would remain the same.

The following figures were proposed by Cllr Haslem, and seconded by Cllr White:

2025/2026 Precept: £148,105

2025/2026 Budget: £169,830

This would represent a 9.95% increase. All agreed. Clerk to write to Gravesham Borough Council.

[Action: Clerk]

25] To receive the Chairs announcements

913. The next Parish Chairs meeting was scheduled for 15th January 2025. The Clerk had submitted the following agenda items as agreed.

- National Planning Policy Framework – impact for Gravesham Green Belt
- Abandoned Vehicle (caravan in Commority Lane).

26] To receive the Clerk's report and note correspondence received

914. Kent Libraries Home Library Service. The Clerk had advertised this on Facebook and on the Parish noticeboard.
915. The Clerk noted that the Electrical Equipment Testing (PAT) had been rescheduled for 17th January 2025.
916. The Parish Council had been invited to submit copy for the Spring edition of GBC's "Your Borough" magazine. The Clerk would write something and submit before the 24th January deadline. The magazine would be distributed w/c 17th March.

[Action: Clerk]

27] To note the new Out Of Hours Emergency Phone Number and to consider the purchase of a Parish Council mobile phone.

917. Cllr Hawkins had set up the Emergency Phone Number and this had now been publicised throughout the Parish. The calls would divert to the Clerks mobile phone. It was agreed that it would be best to purchase a Parish Council mobile moving forward. Cllr Woolway would look into this.

[Action: Woolway]

28] KALC Community Awards Scheme – to agree a formal nomination.

918. This was discussed and a nomination was proposed by Cllr Banks seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed unanimously. The Clerk would liaise with KALC regarding this.

[Action: Clerk]

29] Training

919. Cllr Hulf had attended KALC's "the Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils" online training. Slides from the session had been forwarded to all Members.
920. The Clerk had registered with SLCC to undertake her CiLCA qualification between December 2025 & December 2026.

30] Reports from other organisations

921. 825: The Clerk had provided the Repair Café with a key for the A0 noticeboard as agreed. It was noted that the Repair Café continued to be a success and they had booked out the village hall on a monthly basis for the year (every 2nd Saturday of the month).
922. The next Gravesham Rights of Way meeting was scheduled for 27th February 2025 at the Civic Centre (7pm).

31] Working Party Reports

923. 826: The Clerk had been contacted by Freya Prince, asking when the working group would be meeting to discuss wildflower planting / growing season. The Clerk had emailed Cllr Jones to ask if a working party would be scheduled soon.

[Action: Cllr Jones]

32] Any other urgent business (at Chairman's discretion)

924. None.

**There being no other business,
the meeting of the Full Parish Council was closed at 21.10 hours.**