

VIGO PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting
held in Vigo Village Hall on Thursday 13th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Present	Cllr Pat Banks (in the Chair); Cllr Elliott Hulf; Cllr Mandie Jones; Cllr Alan White. Mrs Joanne Glass (Clerk).
In Attendance	None.

1] To receive apologies for absence

- 925.** Cllr Simon Chaplin; Cllr Sharon Cottam; Cllr Jim Haslem; Cllr Dave Hawkins; Cllr Andy Woolway.

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

- 926.** None.

3] Questions from the press & public

- 927.** None.

4] Borough & County Councillor representative reports

- 928.** None.

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

- 929.** The Parish Council monthly update for January 2025 had been received from the Gravesham Rural Beat team. There had been ten crimes of note, but only one of these in Vigo. The report from Vigo was regarding nuisance youths who shot a ball bearing through a conservatory door.

A police operation to target nuisance vehicles will be recommenced as soon as officers were available. This would run throughout the year.

A large number of calls had been received regarding the trees that had been cut down along White Post Lane / junction Copt Hall Road. Police were collating all the calls and were conducting enquiries. Three crime reports had been raised. Police would welcome any CCTV / mobile phone footage of the incident taking place. The planning enforcement team at Gravesham Borough Council had been made aware of all the information the police had and had been involved in site visits. They would take any actions open to them regarding the site on White Post Lane.

- 930.** Catapults: The Clerk reported that issues with youths and catapults continued. A local resident had seen an incident on 13th January which had been reported to the police. The resident had spoken to the Clerk, as they had been able to identify one of the youths in question. The Clerk had passed this information onto the police.
- 931.** The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who was concerned about suspicious behaviour in one of the Highview parking areas (to the side of his property). He had reported this to the police but had not had an update. The Clerk had chased this up with the police but had not received a reply.
- 932.** Fraud Prevention Advice available to residents: The Fraud Prevention Co-Ordinator from the North Division of Kent Police had contacted the Parish Council. They were able to attend any community groups and organisations to provide presentations, talks and drop-in sessions to raise awareness of the threat of fraud.

Some topics covered would be fraudulent calls, emails and text messages, romance fraud, rogue trader fraud, gift card fraud and investment fraud.

The Clerk had put a post on Facebook to make enquiries as to whether residents would be interested in a session if it were organised. Only one response had been received. To ensure that everyone in Vigo were aware of the sessions, the Clerk would look at putting an article in the Annual Newsletter to ask people to contact the office if they would be interested in an event.

[Action: Clerk]

- 933.** Kent Fire & Rescue – home fire safety visits. The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who was concerned about a visit she had received from a caller stating they were from Kent Fire & Rescue carrying out home fire safety checks – the resident was unsure if the caller was genuine and as such did not let them into their house. The caller gave a letter to the resident who brought it over to the Clerk. The Clerk made enquiries and found out that the call was genuine. The Clerk was advised that if people were unsure, they should take the letter from the caller and call the number where the persons identity could be confirmed.

The Clerk would mention this issue to the Community Warden when she was back in the village, so that perhaps she could liaise with Kent Fire & Rescue to support them on their calls to provide reassurance.

[Action: Clerk]

6] To formally ratify decisions made (and actioned by the Clerk under delegated powers) during the online meeting held on 9th January 2025.

- 934.** The decision made at the online meeting held on 9th January, and subsequently actioned by the Clerk under delegated powers, were formally ratified by Council (unanimously). The notes of the meeting were signed as a record.

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

- 935.** FOOTBALL TRAINING: The Hall Manager had confirmed that there was no storage available in the village hall. The Clerk would respond to Mr Jarrett to inform him of this. The Clerk would also find out if the rugby club had been able to accommodate the training sessions. If they were not able to help, and if Mr Jarrett wished the Parish Council to fully consider an application to use the village green, further details would be needed (dates, time, numbers) along with provision of the relevant paperwork (insurance, DBS checks etc). Clerk to email Mr Jarrett.

[Action: Clerk]

- 936.** HEARING LOOP FOR SMALL VILLAGE HALL: The Clerk had not set this up as yet but would do so as soon as possible.
- 937.** DEFIBRILLATORS: Relocation of existing defibrillator in The Villager, to the outside of the village hall. No update from Cllr Hawkins. The Clerk noted that the defibrillator maps would need to be re-printed. Reprinted maps could be delivered with the Annual Report.

[Action: Cllr Hawkins / Clerk]

938. 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]

939. PURCHASE OF PARISH COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE. No update.

[Action: Cllr Woolway]

940. KALC Community Award Scheme: The Clerk had put the nomination forward to KALC as agreed. The award would be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

8]

Services

Grounds maintenance

941. Overgrown vegetation in the garage area to the side / rear of 30 The Coppice. Highview Services to hire a digger to clear this area. The Clerk has asked Highview Services for an update but had not received one as yet.

[Action: Highview Services]

942. Grounds Works record sheets. The record sheets for January 2025 had been sent out.

943. DAMAGE TO COMMUNITY LAND OUTSIDE VIGO SCHOOL. It was not clear if this land had been repaired / reinstated as yet as the area was covered with chip board, building materials and Heras fencing. The area would be checked once the works to the school roof had been completed.

[Action: ongoing]

944. RUTS: in addition to the damage to community land outside the school, noted above, it had been observed that more damage had been caused to other areas of community land in and around the car park area. It was thought that this was partly due to vehicles accessing the site for the roof works at Vigo School. The Clerk was to check on the CCTV cameras.

[Action: Clerk]

945. There had been an issue with rubbish / builder's bags being stored / dumped on Parish land to the front of 291 – 297 Highview. The Clerk had written to all properties to ask that this practice ceases, and any rubbish is removed.

946. Timberbank. It was noted that the ground leading to the garages in Timberbank was badly rutted. The owners had contacted the Clerk about installing an area of grasscrete to stop this issue, but the resident had never got back to the Clerk to move this forward (the Clerk had prepared a draft agreement for consideration). It was agreed to write to the resident to ask that they cease causing damage to the land and repair it to a good standard. The Parish Council reserved the right to install bollards in this location to prevent any further damage.

[Action: Clerk]

947. Highview. Noted that there was considerable fly tipping to the rear of a Highview property. This seemed to be as a result of work that had been carried out to their rear garden, including installing a wooden outbuilding. Clerk to write to the resident to ask that the area is cleared.

[Action: Clerk]

- 948.** Timberbank: it appeared that the owner of this property had swept a considerable number of leaves from their property onto the highway. This had been cleared by Highview Services to avoid any issues with the drains in the area. It had taken two people half an hour to clear the area, plus the time taken to dispose of the leaves.

Evidence had been found in the leaves which gave an indication of where they had been swept from. The Clerk was to write to the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

Grass cutting

- 949.** Nothing to report.

Trees

- 950.** 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]

- 951.** TREES ON HARVEL ROAD TO THE REAR OF HIGHVIEW. The Clerk had suggested that NPC Tree Surgery may be able to assist with the work in this area. This company used specialist mechanical equipment which may be useful in this project. Highview Services met with NPC to discuss, and they recommended the use of a Merlo Rotating Telehandler, plus industrial chipper, for two days at a cost of £3,050. After some discussion it was agreed this would not be the best solution for this site, as it would not be possible to pick and choose particular stems to coppice on a multi-stemmed tree, and the work in general would not be done in a particularly sympathetic manner. It was agreed that if assistance were required, then manual labour would be the best, either with an additional tree surgeon, or additional climbers. Clerk to speak to Highview Services.

[Action: Clerk]

- 952.** 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.

[Action: Clerk]

- 953.** Ferndown: The resident had contacted the Clerk to chase up the outstanding work at this property (dead silver birch to be removed). The Clerk would speak to Highview Services regarding this.

[Action: Clerk]

- 954.** Highview: The Clerk had received correspondence regarding a tree on communal land, which they felt was lopsided and beginning to lean. Highview Services had inspected the tree and agreed to carry out a crown lift and remove some dead wood. This would be put on the tree list. Clerk to update the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

- 955.** GARDENING CONTRACT: The Clerk reported that 200 daffodil bulbs had been planted out and were beginning to show. The leaf collection in Timberbank over the Autumn period had gone well.

Mr Chidgey now planned to sand down and repaint the bollards / cannon balls in The Bay when the weather was warmer. The Clerk informed that Mr Chidgey was happy to take on the planting and watering of the hanging baskets this year. These would need to be collected from Cllr Banks.

[Action: Clerk]

9] To formally agree action regarding unauthorised tree work carried out.

- 956.** DOWNSWOOD: It was noted that the costs involved in remedial work to the Hornbeams, and the cost of planting a replacement cherry tree would be in the region of £1,200. It was agreed unanimously by all Council Members present that the Parish Council solicitor should be instructed to recover these costs from the resident. Clerk to update the solicitor.

[Action: Clerk]

10] To note insurance claim against Parish trees in Highview

- 957.** Highview: A letter had been received from Environmental Services (part of Innovation Group Property Limited) regarding subsidence damage identified at Highview. The letter advised that engineers were undertaking comprehensive site investigations to ascertain the precise nature and cause of the damage. Initial investigations suggested that vegetation in the ownership of the Parish Council may be a significant factor. An Arboricultural Report had been supplied. The Parish Council were asked to inspect the vegetation. Once further information was made available to the Parish Council (when the site investigations had been concluded) the Parish Council would need to advise of the action that would be taken to manage the vegetation. The Clerk would acknowledge the letter from Innovation Group Environmental Services. The Clerk would speak to Highview Services to confirm that the vegetation was on Parish Council land, and then the letter would be forwarded onto the Parish Council insurers.

[Action: Clerk]

11] Planning

Local authority tree preservation applications

- 958.** None at the time of agenda publication.

Full planning applications

- 959.** 39 Admers Wood: Erection of single storey rear and front extensions with roof lights (20250017). No objections. Clerk to respond to GBC Planning accordingly.

[Action: Clerk]

Covenant applications

- 960.** Highview: replacement window, doors and shed (retrospective application). The Clerk had written giving approval as agreed.
- 961.** Churchside: replacement windows and doors (retrospective application). The Clerk had written giving approval as agreed.
- 962.** Highview: application to replace front door (details supplied). The Clerk had written giving covenant approval as agreed.

963. The Clerk had been contacted about a timber outbuilding which had been erected in a Highview rear garden. Photographs had been supplied. The building appeared quite large but was not excessive in height. It was agreed to write to the resident to ask for further details, such as dimensions, whether it had permanent foundations, and if there were services installed. Covenant approval would be required in any case.

[Action: Clerk]

964. Timberbank: application to install new windows and doors. Details had been supplied. There were no objections, the Clerk was to write giving covenant approval.

[Action: Clerk]

Other planning matters

965. None.

Enforcement issues

966. Churchside. No update.

[Action: ongoing]

967. ASH KEYS: property in a state of disrepair. No update.

[Action: ongoing]

12]

Proposal from the Covenant Working Party. In summary:

- **To alter the wording of the policy document**
- **To add an additional sentence to the standard covenant letter**
- **To identify all properties currently in breach of covenant 3b**

968. The covenant working party had met, notes from the meeting, including full details of the above proposals, were put to Full Council.

969. **PROPOSAL: To alter the wording of the policy document as follows (additional text noted in italics and underlined):**

Approval to erect a new boundary wall, fence or hedge would not normally be given in the following circumstances:

- a) Where the fence hedge or wall extends beyond the building line (the furthest point reached by the front of the original building without regard to the position of neighbouring properties) or across the front of a property, except as indicated in e) below.

Applications for the following will normally be considered favourably:

- e) To grow a hedge of up to 1m or to erect a picket type fence up to 0.5m along the side boundaries (not front of properties, principally where the property adjoins a footpath.
We acknowledge that there are a number of legacy exceptions to this policy, which we will seek to address as part of a rolling programme.

These changes to the policy document were proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr White, and agreed unanimously by all present.

970. **PROPOSAL: To add an additional sentence to the standard covenant 3 breach letter (additional text noted in italics and underlined):**

Vigo Parish Council asks that you removed this wall / fence / hedge by no later than 2 months from the date of this letter.

Vigo Parish Council does consider permitting a low hedge (max 1m) or a small picket type fence (max 0.5m) in certain extenuating circumstances, such as where a property sides onto a footpath.

If you feel there are serious extenuating circumstances as to why you should be allowed to keep your wall / fence / hedge, please contact the Parish Clerk (by telephone, email or letter).

These changes to the standard covenant 3 breach letter were proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr White, and agreed unanimously by all present.

971. PROPOSAL: To identify all properties currently in breach of covenant 3.

Proposal for Councillors to identify all properties currently in breach of Covenant 3b when carrying out their next Councillor Patch survey.

Following this (and after removing residents who already have an agreement) a general letter to be sent to all such residents, informing them that they are currently in contravention and that the Parish Council is undertaking a rolling programme to deal with all contraventions. Residents would receive another letter when their area is at the top of the programme.

This proposal was discussed in detail, and it was suggested that instead of writing to all residents in breach of covenant 3b at once, it may be better to put an article in the Annual Report (which would be hand delivered to all properties) to state that the Parish Council would be in touch with all residents who were in breach of covenant 3b in due course. This approach was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr White and agreed by all present.

Councillors to identify breaches. Clerk to draft an article for the newsletter.

[Action: All Members / Clerk]

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

Properties in breach of covenant

- 972.** BEECHMAST: Front hedge and gate removed. Side hedge still in place. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the resident to thank them for carrying out the work to remove the hedge and gate to the front of the property.

It was noted that the side hedge still needed to be reduced. The Parish Council would be happy to meet with the resident to discuss the matter in person, Clerk to reach out and arrange a meeting.

It was noted that the cuttings from the hedge that was removed from the front had been dumped on Parish land to the rear. The Clerk (when writing to arrange a site meeting) would ask that these were removed as soon as possible, as they were impeding tree work being carried out in the area.

[Action: Clerk]

- 973.** BEECHMAST: Cllr Banks and Cllr Haslem had met the resident. Cllr Banks had provided notes from the meeting to Council. In view of the age of the current Leylandii cypress trees, which constituted a hedge, and due to concerns that a drastic reduction in the height of these trees may cause heave and therefore damage the resident's property and the adjoining footpath, the following was proposed:

The height was to be reduced to and maintained at a maximum height of 1.8m (six feet). All cuttings must be disposed of and not left to rot at the base of the hedge. The trees / hedge must be maintained so that they do not encroach on the footpath. This was agreed by all. Clerk to write to the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

- 974.** WOODSIDE: Hedge to the front in breach of covenant. Now that the covenant working party proposals had been agreed, the Clerk was to arrange a site meeting to discuss the covenant breach at this property.

[Action: Clerk]

- 975.** WOODSIDE: Hedge to the front in breach of covenant. It was noted that the Parish Council had previously (in 2013) agreed that the hedge (both side and front) could be maintained at a height of 2.5 metres. Although there is no legal limit to the height of a hedge, anything over 2m is considered "high". The original agreement stated that there were two slow growing conifers next to the drive, which did not need to be cut back at that time. The conifer beside the drive was now very large and did need to be reduced. The hedge has been in existence for many years. The following proposal was made by the covenant working party:

- That the height of the hedge both front and side) be reduced to, and maintained at a maximum height of 2 metres, to meet the current guidelines.
- The large conifer tree to be reduced and maintained at a maximum height of 2 metres.
- The hedge to be cut back from the footpath.

This proposal was agreed by all. Clerk to write to the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

- 976.** 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]

- 977.** Churchside: this property appeared to be in breach of covenant with a fence, a gate and a hedge in various locations around the property. Photographs had been taken to illustrate the issue. It was agreed that it would be best to hold a site meeting to discuss this with the resident. Clerk to write and make arrangements.

[Action: Clerk]

- 978.** The Paddock: noted that the property had a fence which was in breach of covenant (photographs supplied). It was agreed to write to the resident regarding this. It was also noted that there was a large hedge which was also a covenant breach. It was not clear if this belonged to no.9 or the neighbouring property. Clerk to write to both properties.

[Action: Clerk]

- 979.** Croftside: Noted that there was a lot of rubbish located on the front garden and that the soffits had fallen off leaving the property exposed. The Clerk was to write to the resident regarding this.

[Action: Clerk]

- 980.** Stonecroft: It was noted that the newly erected fence to the side was in excess of six feet in height. The fence panels were thought to be six feet in height, but they were topped with a small amount of open trellis work. It was agreed there were no objections to this and that no further action would be taken. (Approval had previously been given for the fence to be replaced like for like).

14] Restrictive Covenants: running a business from home: to note enquiry from resident.

981. Timberbank: The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who wished to work from home, operating a small beauty business from a garden room. The resident was aware of the restrictive covenants and wanted to know if the covenant regarding business was still enforced. The business would not run every day and would only run in daytime hours with minimal to no noise impact.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to ask if the garden room was already in place, or if they were looking to have one erected. The garden room would not be able to have plumbing installed and would only be able to have electricity and water available. The Clerk was to explain that the Parish Council only enforces the covenant regarding businesses if a compliant is made or a nuisance is caused.

[Action: Clerk]

15] To note any update on covenant breach issue being dealt with by the Parish Council solicitor

982. Timberbank. Porch in front of the building line. The Parish Council Solicitor had received a response from the resident, questioning the covenants, and the existence of Jondy Investments. The solicitor was happy to draft a response, which would cost in the region of £300 - £450. This cost was agreed by all Members present. Clerk to update the solicitor.

[Action: Clerk]

16] To discuss requests from and matters regarding residents

983. Cockerel: the Clerk had advised the resident to contact Environmental Health as agreed.
984. Highview: garage area. The Clerk had received a phone call from the resident regarding antisocial behaviour in the car park area to the side of his property. The resident had reported this to Kent Police but had not received a response. The Clerk had emailed Kent Police for an update but had not received one as yet.

The resident had spoken to the Parish Council some years ago about his proposal to secure the car park by installing a gate, and asking the Parish Council to assist with getting a fence replaced. This would prevent the car park being used as a cut through to the rugby club. For various reasons this did not move forward, and the resident would like to revisit this matter again.

It was agreed that Cllr Jones, Cllr Banks (and possibly Cllr Haslem) would meet with the resident to discuss his concerns and ideas. Then a formal proposal (if any) could be brought to a Parish Council meeting. The Clerk was to arrange a meeting (ideally for a Thursday evening in the village hall).

[Action: Clerk]

985. The Clerk had received an enquiry from a resident asking if a neighbour needed to get permission for the installation of a wood burner flue at the rear of the house. Since installation the resident had been getting a wood smoke smell throughout their property. The resident would speak to the neighbour, but asked if the problem wasn't resolved, was there any action the Parish could take.

The Parish Council felt that covenant approval should be applied for, as the installation of the flue would constitute a change to the external appearance of the property. The Clerk would write to the neighbour.

The Parish Council advised that the resident should also speak to Environmental Health should the problem with the wood smoke smell not be resolved. Clerk to update the resident.

[Action: Clerk]

986. The Clerk had received complaints that the librarian (on a Tuesday) was not putting the A-frame sign outside the hall, and therefore, due to the hall being locked (because of the pre-school) it was not clear if the library was open or not. The door to the small hall was often closed as well. The Clerk had spoken to Kent Libraries regarding this matter.

It was also noted that the doorbell was not always answered promptly and sometimes visitors left as they thought the library or Parish Council may not be open. It was felt that it was not ideal that the village hall was locked during the day, but if there was no alternative to this, then the pre-school needed to ensure that the bell was answered promptly. The Clerk would speak to the hall manager.

[Action: Clerk]

987. The Clerk had been contacted by a resident who was concerned that a dropped kerb in Admers Wood (leading from a footpath onto the main Highway) was often blocked by vehicles and as a result there was nowhere safely for pushchairs, prams and wheelchairs to exit the footpath and cross the road, without crossing the grass or bumping over the kerb. The resident asked if a sign could be put up to deter people from parking across the drop kerb. The Parish Council agreed to erect a sign in this location. The Clerk would also report the issue to Kent Highways to see if a white line could be painted.

[Action: Clerk]

17] Gas mains replacement works update

988. The Clerk reported that the Gas Mains replacement works in Vigo had been delayed. A new timetable had been issued. The roads due to be worked on were Highview, The Coppice, and the footpath between The Coppice & Beech Mast. The "spoil area" would now be located in a Highview cul-de-sac.

18] To discuss issues with rodents at the rear of the village hall

989. There had been an increased presence of rats at the rear of the village hall and in the village hall garden area. It was thought that part of the problem was that cartons of milk for the pre-school were being delivered to the rear of the hall. These cartons had been chewed open. The following had been actioned:
- Preschool to arrange alternative delivery location for the milk (front of hall)
 - Clerk had arranged for GBC to put bungs in the paladin bins
 - Very little recycling was done by the village hall, so the Hall Manager had arranged to have the recycling bin replaced with a general waste bin so there was more general waste capacity
 - Hall users were encouraged to make sure that all rubbish was securely bagged and put in the bins provided

- The Parish contractor had put up two rat traps on the hall fence. The traps had been set off 6 times so far.

The situation would be monitored going forward.

19]

The Bay

990. There had been an issue with one of the shops in The Bay and the Managing Agent. The Clerk updated the Council on this matter for their information. There was an issue with rent increases and high service charges, among other things. The Clerk, Cllr Banks and Cllr Haslem had met with the shop owner to discuss the situation and offer any assistance that they could.
991. The Parish Council felt they had an interest in making sure that the shops in The Bay remained trading. As a rural village with limited transport links, it was imperative that Vigo residents had easy access by foot to services such as the Post Office & Pharmacy, along with the grocery store and other shops in The Bay. The Clerk had written to the Managing Agent asking for an update on the shop units in The Bay. The Parish Council were concerned about the empty units and the level of maintenance around the shops, particularly to the rear. The Managing Agent responded to state that unit 8 (formerly the florist) had an active lease, but there had been delays opening the shop for trading. It was anticipated that the shop (now to be a café) would open in the forthcoming weeks. Unit 6 (Gaming Shop) had ceased trading. The Managing Agent were in negotiations with the tenants to determine the next steps. The Managing Agent offered to meet the Parish Council on site to discuss any issues with maintenance. They were scheduled to carry out property inspections on 12th February. The Parish Council had not been able to meet them at such short notice, but would be pleased to meet the agent at another time by prior arrangement. The Managing Agent informed that there had been a decrease in the current Service Charge budget year (from March). Many tenants were struggling to meet their service charge and rent obligations but had implemented payment plans where possible. However, this restricted available funds for both programmed and reactive works, hampering and impacting the agent's ability to maintain the property effectively.
992. Some residents had voiced concern that if the shops were not able to successfully run in The Bay, that the units may be turned into housing. The Clerk believed this to be unlikely but would seek advice from Gravesham Borough Council.

[Action: Clerk]

20]

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

993. DOG DIRT / REFUSE BIN NEAR THE UNDERPASS (Admers Wood side) LOCATED IN WRONG POSITION. No update from GBC. It was noted that the rusty base from the original bin was still in the ground and was hazardous. The Clerk was to chase this matter up urgently.

[Action: Clerk]

994. An area of sunken footpath (Waterlow Road, between Croftside & Churchside) had been noted and reported to Kent Highways by the Clerk. Reference 850815. The Clerk noted that the Highways Reporting Tool had this marked as "Not Highways, passed to others".

995. 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 Clerk had reported this to Kent Highways (866693).

If Kent Highways were unable to assist, the Clerk would write to the resident (the Clerk had written previously regarding the matter in April 2024). Clerk to update the resident who had made the original enquiry.

[Action: Clerk]

996. The Clerk had been contacted regarding an untaxed vehicle in Highview, which had been there for some months. There was broken asbestos sheets visible in the open end of the truck. This vehicle had been reported to the DVLA as it had no tax or MOT. The Clerk would report this to Gravesham Borough Council.

[Action: Clerk]

997. The Clerk had also reported another suspected abandoned vehicle in Ash Keys to Gravesham Borough Council, who would now look into the matter.

[Action: ongoing]

998. The Clerk had reported blocked drains (in Highview) to Kent Highways and had received a response to state that the drains would be cleared as part of the cyclical cleansing programme. The Clerk was to respond and ask Highways when this would be likely to happen as the drains appeared to be entirely blocked.

[Action: Clerk]

21] Winter Maintenance

999. SALT BINS: The Clerk noted that the salt bins should have been installed by the end of January, but she was unclear if this had happened as yet. Clerk to check.

[Action: Clerk]

1000. The Clerk had received a number of calls regarding the footpaths and roads in the village following a fairly heavy snow fall in January. The Clerk had responded to state that these enquiries regarding clearance of snow and ice should be forwarded to Kent Highways.

The Parish Council contractor did carry out some snow and ice clearance, but only around the front of the shops in The Bay.

1001. The school had contacted the Clerk regarding the dangerous conditions outside the school, they had had parents complaining and some people had fallen over. It was noted that this was not Parish land, and it was not the responsibility of the Parish Council to clear the area. However, on this one occasion, the Clerk reported that the Parish Council contractor had laid some grit down as a gesture of good will.

The school reported that there was no salt in the salt bin. This had been reported to Kent Highways.

1002. The Clerk had reported all the salt bins as needing to be refilled. The Assistant Clerk suggested that signs be put inside the bins giving details of who to contact should the bins need refilling. It was agreed this would be a good idea. Clerk / Assistant Clerk to action.

22] Street lighting

- 1003.** OUTSTANDING WORKS TO STREETLIGHTS, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY GBC / KCC. No update.

[Action: ongoing]

- 1004.** STREET LIGHT OUTSIDE 140/142 HIGHVIEW: Request from resident to have the adjacent tree & bush cut back as it was impeding the light. The streetlighting contractor had confirmed there was no issue that needed to be addressed at this location.
- 1005.** LED UPGRADES: The Clerk had emailed Mr Bonner and asked him to programme in the remaining eight LED upgrades. The Clerk had been informed that the streetlight in The Bay could be replaced with a standard LED upgrade. The work to upgrade these eight lights would be programmed in as soon as possible (currently waiting for new stock to arrive).

[Action: ongoing]

- 1006.** COLUMN REPAIR IN THE COACH DRIVE: Column no.3 (BTAM001) in The Coach Drive needed to be repaired. The mains cut out supply was too low and it was not possible to get the door key in far enough to open the door. The original repair had been carried out by contractors engaged on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council. GBC agreed to carry out remedial work, but due to the way the original concrete column was installed, the cable entry hole faced the residents driveway rather than the road, and there was not enough space between the column and driveway to dig a hole.

The concrete column has a 300mm vertical crack at the top (noted a year ago) and therefore it would not be unreasonable to replace it. The streetlighting contractor suggested that it may be cheaper to replace the column now, while GBC are still involved in this remedial work, as GBC may offer to fund the supply relocation.

It was agreed, after some discussion, to fund £1,500 for a new column, on the proviso that GBC would fund the connection charges. This was proposed by Cllr Banks, seconded by Cllr White and agreed by all Members. Clerk to update the Streetlighting contractor.

[Action: Clerk]

23] Councillor Patches

- 1007.** 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]

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

- 1008.** FEBRUARY 2024 REPORT (received November 2024): The Assistant Clerk would look through the report and get quotes for any remedial work required.

[Action: ongoing]

- 1009.** The Assistant Clerk had met the GBC playpark inspector on site and discussed the Timber Trail. The inspector thought it likely that the Timber Trail would be flagged up in the annual report as it was quite old and showing signs of rot.

The inspector thought it likely that it would need to be removed. The Assistant Clerk would seek costings to have it removed, and costings to have it removed AND replaced.

[Action: Assistant Clerk]

1010. 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]

25] Community Warden – to note any progress / updates

1011. Community Warden Sponsorship. Cllr Banks & the Clerk had attended the KALC workshop to discuss sponsoring Community Wardens. Both reported that no new information had been made available. KCC's legal team were still in the process of drafting a contract in relation to the sponsorship scheme, and this would be made available as soon as possible.
1012. Mark Rolfe (KCC Head of Community Protection) had agreed to meet with Cllr Banks & the Clerk (outside of the KALC organised workshop) to discuss retaining Ms Cason as the Community Warden, and to consider placing her back in Vigo before April.

Mr Rolfe had assured, that as long as Ms Cason was happy to return to Vigo, KCC would not have a problem with actioning this. He would liaise with the management team responsible for Ms Cason and report back.

Additionally, although KCC could not fund Ms Cason coming back before April, they would be happy to do so if the Parish Council were to fund this themselves. The Clerk reported that it would cost £1,038 to fund Ms Cason for one day a week for the six-week period mid-February to end March.

Cllr Banks proposed that the Parish Council take £1,038 from reserves to fund the warden provision for six weeks, and this was seconded by Cllr Jones. All agreed. Clerk to liaise with Mr Rolfe.

[Action: Clerk]

26] Memorial Bench: to agree costs and installation

1013. 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 had written to the owners of the closest Chestnut Lane property to make sure there were no objections to the placement of the memorial bench. The residents had until 10th March to respond.

[Action: ongoing]

1014. The Clerk noted the expected costs of purchasing and installing a memorial bench. The total costs were £599 plus VAT. This included the bench, delivery, a memorial plaque, and installation costs. Members agreed this cost. The Clerk would update the person who wished to donate the bench, to ensure they were happy to proceed.

[Action: Clerk]

27] Finance

To note any payments made since the last meeting

1015. 07.02.25 D/D Nest 137.45 Clerk pension LGPSR 2013

To authorise payments due

1016. The following payments would be authorised by Cllr Banks & Cllr White:

13.02.25	D/P	Hoist & Co Fencing	6.00	Post Mix	OSA 1906 s 9&10
13.02.25	D/P	Streetlights	641.70	Quarterly Maint.	PCA 1957 ss.3(1) & 7, HA 1980 s.301
13.02.25	D/P	Daryl Chidgey	257.99	Gardening	OSA 1906 s 9&10
13.02.25	D/P	Vigo Village Hall	1380.15	Rent	LGA 1972 s.111
			<u>66.96</u>	Pop Up Café	LGA 1972 s.137
			1380.15	TOTAL	
13.02.25	D/P	Vigo Village Hall	163.68	Repair Café Rent	LGA 1972 s.137
28.02.25	D/P	Salaries	2174.22	Jan salaries	LGA 1972 s.112(2)

1017. **The following is a summary of the monthly spend on the Corporate Multi Pay Card (£69.50 to be paid by direct payment on 17.02.25)**

Good Nature Traps	30.95	Rat Trap Bait	LGA 1972 s.111
Single Point Access Fee	29.56	Em. Phone	LGA 1972 s.111
Microsoft 365	5.99	Monthly Storage	LGA 1972 s.111
Monthly Fee	3.00	Charges	LGA 1972 s.111

1018. **The following Standing Orders / Direct Debits were authorised:**

31.01.25	D/D	Unity Trust Bank	8.10	Service Charge	LGA 1972 s.111
21.02.25	D/D	Gravesham BC	94.00	Paladin Bins	LA 1983 s.5
25.02.25	D/D	J&F Accounting	35.76	Payroll Fees	LGA 1972 s.111
27.01.25	D/D	British Telecom	57.19	Phone & B.Band	LGA(FP)A 1963 s.5
					LGA 1972 s.111
28.02.25	D/D	Highview Services	5368.57	Grounds Maint.	OSA 1906 s 9&10
28.02.25	D/D	Unity Trust Bank	8.40	Service Charge	LGA 1972 s.111

1019. The transfer of £10,000 agreed at the January Parish Council meeting had been set up but not authorised on the banking system (in error).
Therefore, a transfer of £21,000 was agreed to cover this month's outgoings and the £10,000 from January that should have been transferred.

1020. **INCOME: The following income was noted:**

None.

To note increase in rent charges for office and hall usage.

1021. The Clerk noted the increased hall and office rental prices from January 2025. The weekly cost of the office hire was £99.14. This was reduced to £94.14 per week as the Parish Council provided the Broadband service free of charge to other hall users. Parish Council Members were agreeable to this discount. Clerk to respond to the hall manager to say there were no issues.

[Action: Clerk]

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

1022. Adobe Acrobat licence. The Clerk had not yet done this but would do so as soon as possible.

[Action: Clerk]

1023. KENT PARISH COUNCIL WINTER SUPPORT SCHEME: The Clerk had confirmed with the Community Warden that all the supermarket vouchers had been given out.
1024. The Clerk had written to Gravesham Borough Council to inform them of the precept requirement for 2025/2026 as agreed.
1025. The Clerk noted that one of the CCTV Hard Drives had failed and needed to be replaced. The quote for a new one was £80 for 4TB or £180 for 8TB. It was agreed to go for the larger size to increase the amount of storage available. Clerk to speak to IT Solutions Kent regarding this upgrade.

[Action: Clerk]

28] Parish Council Support Scheme – to agree an application

1026. Kent County Council Financial Hardship Team had secured funds from Kent and Medway Public Health through Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Team for a third round of the Parish Council Support Scheme. Parish Councils were invited to apply for a grant of up to £1,000 to deliver local initiatives supporting people in financial hardship, specifically linked to isolation and loneliness as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Clerk had investigated projects that could be funded under this scheme. The Clerk suggested that "programmes to teach digital skills" specifically to the older population may be useful. Age UK offered tuition (home visits) from £25. These visits would cover email / Skype (to stay in touch with family and friends), how the internet can help research an interest, how to shop online safely, how to understand the latest version of windows, and how to use iPads and tablets.

It was agreed that arranging some of these visits would be very useful – the Clerk was to find out more information and submit a grant application accordingly (deadline 21st February 2025).

[Action: Clerk]

29] To note the Government consultation on Standards and Conduct and agree a Parish response.

1027. The Clerk noted the Government consultation on Standards and Conduct. This was discussed by Members, who were happy for the Clerk to submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council. Council Members were also invited to respond to the consultation on an individual basis as well.

[Action: Clerk]

30] To receive the Chairs announcements

- 1028.** Cllr Banks announced that she would be moving away from Vigo during the year, and as such would not stand as Chairman at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Banks would speak to J&F Accountancy to let them know (someone else would need to be the contact for dealing with them regarding salaries).

The Parish Council office (Clerk / Assistant Clerk) would take over running the Parish website.

Council Members were encouraged to consider who would stand for election as Chairman in due course, so that a handover could take place in good time.

- 1029.** The Clerk noted that Cllr Banks was usually very involved in Parish Council work, and if a new Chairman did not take such an active role, there may be a need for increased hours in the Parish Office. This was duly noted. Cllr Banks would think about the amount of time she spent on Parish Council work on average, so that this could be considered moving forward.

- 1030.** Council Members were reminded, politely, to check their emails regularly and respond in a timely manner.

The Clerk had researched the number of emails sent over the last six months and reported that the most emails in a month had been 40 (including original emails and replies) (January 2025). The least had been 24 (August 2024).

The Clerk asked if it would be easier if the emails were flagged in some way – to show at a glance if they were for information only, or something that needed a reply, or if they were urgent. It was agreed this would be useful; the Clerk would look into this.

[Action: Clerk]

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

- 1031.** The Clerk had submitted copy for "Your Borough" magazine as agreed.

- 1032.** The latest edition of KALC News had been available to all Council Members.

- 1033.** Noted that Kent County Council was carrying out a consultation where residents could suggest locations for on street electric vehicle charging points. The Clerk would advertise this on Facebook.

[Action: Clerk]

- 1034.** The Clerk had made enquiries to Hemsley Conservation Centre (Fairseat) to see if they would consider being a speaker at the Annual Parish Council meeting in April. This had been suggested by the Assistant Clerk. No response had been received as yet.

[Action: ongoing]

- 1035.** The Clerk had been made aware of the potential closure of Highparks Doctors Surgery in Higham. Higham Parish Council had asked for the Parish Council's support in publicising a petition regarding this. Parish Council members were happy for this to be posted on the Vigo website and Facebook page.

[Action: Clerk]

32] To note the Clerks report on requirement for new office printer and agree costs.

- 1036.** Purchase of Ink Tank Printer. The Clerk had prepared a report for Parish Council consideration. Eco Tank Printers were much cheaper to run as they ran on bottled ink, rather than expensive ink cartridges.

The Clerks recommendation was to purchase Epsom ET5800 at a cost of £608 (plus VAT). Despite the initial outlay, the costs saving over a three-year period would be approximately £700 (based on current ink usage). This purchase was proposed by Cllr Banks, seconded by Cllr White and agreed by all.

Cllr Hulf suggested that an additional 3 year warranty be purchased. He had researched this and found that it could be purchased (via Currys) for around £80. This was also agreed by all.

Clerk to make the necessary arrangements to purchase the printer.

[Action: Clerk]

33] Adverse Possession

- 1037.** ADVERSE POSSESSION: Land to the rear of 112 – 200 Highview. The Clerk had emailed the Parish Council solicitor regarding this matter. He was very happy to act for the Parish Council. The solicitor had sent quite a lot of information on how and if adverse possession could be claimed. There was not sufficient time to discuss this at the February Parish Council meeting, so the matter would be deferred to March.

[Action: Clerk]

34] To agree update to Standing Order no. 18f & 18g.

- 1038.** 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. The Clerk had sent an email showing the original standing order(s) and the proposed new one. The new standing order read:

Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

Cllr Hulf proposed that the standing orders be amended, replacing 18f & 18g with the updated standing order above. This was seconded by Cllr Banks and agree by all. The Clerk would update the document.

[Action: Clerk]

35] Devolution

- 1039.** The leaders of Kent County Council and Medway Council had formally expressed Kent's interest in joining the Devolution Priority Programme, following unanimous support from the KCC cabinet on 9th January. If accepted Kent would undergo a transformative restructure of its local government. Details of what this may entail had been sent to all Members.

However, the Clerk had since been informed (5th February) that Kent had not been included on the Devolution Priority Programme. The leaders of Kent County Council and Medway Council had expressed their disappointment at this news.

36] Training

1040. Nothing to report.

37] Reports from other organisations

1041. The next Trosley Liaison Group meeting was scheduled for 8th October (3pm in the Hamilton Room, Trosley CP). The Clerk had sent this information to Cllr Jones and Mr Talboys. Cllr Jones had confirmed that she would be able to attend.

1042. Vigo Village Hall Committee were low on numbers, with only five members at present. They were currently advertising for new committee members.

38] Working Party Reports

1043. 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]

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

1044. None.

**There being no other business,
the meeting of the Full Parish Council was closed at 22.00 hours.**