

**VIGO PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in Vigo Village Hall**

<b>Present</b>	Cllr Pat Banks (in the Chair); Cllr Dave Hawkins; Cllr Elliott Hulf; Cllr Mandie Jones; Mrs Joanne Glass (Clerk)
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**1] To elect the Chairman of Vigo Parish Council for the 2025/26 Council Year and to receive the declaration of acceptance of office from the Chairman.**

1. Cllr Banks would not stand as Chair; she was going to be stepping down from the Council later in the year following 18 years of being a Council Member (12 years as Chair). The Parish Council were grateful to Cllr Banks and thanked her for many years of service and hard work.

Cllr Haslem had sent apologies to the Clerk for the meeting but had indicated his willingness to stand as Chair for the year.

The following nomination was made for the office of Chairman:

- Cllr Jim Haslem: proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Hawkins.

There were no further nominations, and all members voted in favour of Cllr Haslem, who was therefore declared elected as Chairman of Vigo Parish Council for the 2025/26 year.

RESOLVED: That, owing to the absence of Councillor Haslem from the meeting, he be permitted to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at a subsequent date, such signing to take place no later than immediately prior to the commencement of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Full Council to be held on 15 May 2025.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**2] To elect the Vice-Chairman of Vigo Parish Council for the 2025/26 Council year and to receive the declaration of acceptance of office from the Vice-Chairman.**

2. The following nomination was made for the office of Vice-Chairman:

- Cllr Banks: proposed by Cllr Hawkins and seconded by Cllr Hulf.

There were no further nominations, and all members voted in favour of Cllr Banks, who was therefore declared elected as Vice-Chairman of Vigo Parish Council for the 2025/26 year.

Cllr Banks duly signed the acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

**3] To receive apologies for absence.**

3. Apologies were received (reasons given) and accepted from: Cllr Simon Chaplin; Cllr Sharon Cottam; Cllr Jim Haslem; Cllr Alan White; Cllr Andy Woolway.

**4] Declarations of Members' Interests:**

**To remind Members that if disclosures on their Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Forms have changed, they should update their forms within 28 days.**

4. Noted.

**To receive declarations of interests for the meeting (if any).**

5. None received.

**5] To approve the minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Matters arising from the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 meeting will be discussed at the Full Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

6. The minutes from the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were noted and agreed, then signed by Cllr Banks (as Chair) having been accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 meeting would be discussed at the Full Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

**6] To agree the schedule of the ordinary meetings (date, time and place) of the Full Council for 2025/26 up to and including the next Annual Meeting.**

7. The meeting dates for 2025/26 had been sent to all Members in advance of the meeting and were duly agreed.

Clerk to circulate the list of dates to relevant parties, and to publish the dates on the noticeboard and office door and website. Clerk to also book the small hall as the venue for the meetings.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**7] To review and approve the Council's Standing Orders.**

8. The Clerk noted that the Model Standing Orders had been updated. All references to "Chairman" had been changed to "Chair". All references to "his" had been changed to "their". All references to "he" had been changed to "they".

In addition, the following changes were noted:

Standing Order 14 (Code of Conduct): now only has one bullet point which reads: "Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office".

Standing Order 18 (Financial Controls and Procurement): had been updated as follows:

- 18(a)(v) "whether contracts with an estimate value below £60,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise". Noted that the contract value had increased from £25,000 to £60,000.
- References to the Contract Finders website had been removed.
- The requirement to advertise invitations to tender in the local newspaper had been removed.
- 18(f) had been removed and replaced with "Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details."

Noted that this standing order was now numbered 18 (e).

MOTION: That the Council's Standing Orders be updated to reflect the new Model Standing Orders (NALC 2025).

Proposed by Cllr Banks, seconded by Cllr Jones, all members voted in favour.

**8] To review and approve the Council's Financial Regulations.**

9. The Clerk had reviewed the latest Model Financial Regulations against the Parish Council's existing version. The following changes were noted:

- 3.9: ADD: "The Internal Auditor may not provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions".
- 4.4: "Unspent budgets for completed projects shall be placed in a reserve" ADD: "with the formal approval of full council."
- 5.4: "The full requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation" had been changed to read "the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation."
- 5.6: "The Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders" had now changed to "The Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council OR advertise...."
- 5.7: "For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts" had been changed to "For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices".
- 6.9: Existing: "The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments (only) in the following circumstances; (i) any payments of up to £500 excluding VAT within an agreed budget."

ADD the following;

(ii) "payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises."

(iii) "any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (or to comply with contractual terms), where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the council, where the Clerk / RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council."

- 7.1: ADD "No signatory should be involved in approving any payments for themselves".
- 17.3: ADD "The Clerk / RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers".

MOTION: That the Council's Financial Regulations be updated to reflect the new latest version (NALC 2025).

Proposed by Cllr Banks, seconded by Cllr Jones, all members voted in favour.

**9] To review and approve the Council's Code of Conduct.**

10. There had been no changes to this document.

**10] To review the Council's Delegation Policy**

11. The Clerk had re-drafted the delegation policy (to reflect the changes in the Financial Regulations). This document had been circulated to all Council Members in advance of the meeting.

MOTION: That the Delegation Policy be agreed.

Proposed by Cllr Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Banks, all members voted in favour.

**11] To review the Council's Working Party Membership.**

12. The working party membership was agreed as follows:

- FINANCE COMMITTEE:  
Cllr Haslem (Chair); Cllr Banks; Cllr Hawkins; Cllr Hulf; Cllr Woolway.
- GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:  
Cllr Woolway (Chair); Cllr Banks; Cllr Hawkins; Cllr White.
- COVENANTS:  
Cllr Banks (Chair); Cllr Haslem; Cllr Hawkins; Cllr White; Cllr Woolway.
- POLICIES:  
Cllr Haslem (Chair); Cllr Banks; Cllr Woolway.
- ENVIRONMENT (Ecology):  
Cllr Jones (Chair); Cllr Banks; Cllr Cottam, Cllr Woolway,  
Ms F Prince & Mr C Williams (both local residents)  
Mr C Talboys & Mr A Neild (Tree Wardens).
- ENVIRONMNET (Infrastructure):  
Cllr Haslem (Chair); Cllr Chaplin, Cllr Cottam & Cllr Hawkins.
- PLAY PARK:  
Cllr Woolway (Chair); Cllr Banks; Cllr Chaplin; Cllr Hawkins; Cllr Hulf & Cllr White.

It was agreed to disband the Drainage Working Party.

Working Parties were encouraged to write terms of reference for their groups.

The Clerk would circulate an updated working party commitment list to all Members.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**12] To review the Council's representatives on external bodies.**

13. The following representation was agreed:

- Kent Association of Local Councils (Gravesham): Cllr Banks & Cllr Haslem.
- Vigo Village Hall: Cllr Cottam.

- Joint Transportation Board: Cllr Chaplin.
- Trosley Country Park: Cllr Jones / Mr C Talboys (Tree Warden).
- Gravesham Rights of Way Committee: Cllr White.
- Vigo School Governor: Cllr Hulf.

**13] To approve appointment of Tree Warden.**

14. Mr Anthony Neild & Mr Colin Talboys would remain as Tree Wardens. All agreed.

**14] To review and approve the Council's and/or employees' subscriptions to other bodies.**

- 15.
- Kent Association of Local Councils. £645.18 (plus VAT) every April
  - Society of Local Council Clerks. £325.00 (for two memberships) every December.
  - Parish Online (Geoxsphere). £130.00 (plus VAT) every January.

Cllr Hulf proposed that these memberships (3) continue for the 2025/2026 year, this was seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed by all.

**15] To review and approve the inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment (Asset Register)**

16. The Clerk noted that the replacement values on the Asset Register were reviewed every five years and would next be reviewed in 2027. The insured value of assets was in excess of the replacement value at present (£263,293 vs £223,319), this was mainly due to the insured values being automatically increased (index linked) each year.

Cllr Banks proposed that the Asset Register be accepted as a true record, this was seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed by all.

**16] To note the arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks for 2025/26.**

17. The insurance schedule for 2025/26 had been circulated to all Members. The following salient points were noted:
- Long term agreement in place until November 2027 with HISCOX Insurance.
  - Fidelity Guarantee cover was in the sum of £250,000 and considered sufficient.
  - Clerk Cover was in the sum of £250 (maximum £2,500) and was considered sufficient.
  - Legal Expenses cover was in the sum of £100,000 (maximum available).

**17] To review and agree the Parish Council's Risk Assessment.**

18. There had been no changes to this document in the last twelve months. The document had been reviewed and was considered to be accurate.

MOTION: That the Council's Risk Assessment be agreed.

Proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Banks, all members voted in favour.

**18] To review and agree the Parish Council's Emergency Plan.**

19. This document was being reviewed and would go on the agenda for the June Parish Council meeting.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**19] To confirm that all councillors will receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via their COUNCIL email address.**

**20. MOTION:** That all councillors will receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via their COUNCIL email address.

Proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Hawkins, all members voted in favour.

**20] Finance:**

**a) To review the current bank account signatories and add any additional signatories.**

**21.** Existing account signatories were noted as Cllr Banks, Cllr Haslem, Cllr White & Cllr Woolway. Cllr Banks would only authorise payments in an emergency, and in line with the Financial Regulations. All agreed.

**b) To review the banking arrangements for 2025/2026**

**22.** Cllr Banks proposed that the banking arrangements for 2025/26 remain with Unity Trust Bank Limited (current and deposit account). This was seconded by Cllr Hawkins, and a vote showed that all members were in agreement.

**23.** The Clerk said that she would look into alternative provision for deposit accounts with a higher interest rate than that currently offered by Unity Trust.

**[Action: Clerk]**

**c) To review the Audit arrangements for 2025/2026 (appointment of Internal Auditor)**

**24.** The Clerk noted that the audit arrangements were currently as follows:

- Cllr Hawkins as Finance Councillor to do quarterly checks.
- Mr Lionel Robbins to act as Independent Internal Auditor.
- The External Auditor was Mazars LLP.

Cllr Hulf proposed that these arrangements be agreed by the Parish Council, Cllr Banks seconded this motion, and a vote showed that all Members were in agreement.

**d) To review the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.**

**25.** The Clerk reported that £3,030.44 had been spent under s.137 in the year ended 31.03.25

**e) To approve the list of regular payments (standing orders and direct debits).**

**26.** The following regular payments were noted and agreed by all:

- Nest Pension (Clerks pension)
- Gravesham Borough Council (refuse collection)
- British Telecom (telephone and broadband supplier)
- Highview Services (grounds contract)
- J&F Accountancy (payroll provision)
- Unity Trust (bank charges)
- Lloyds Bank (corporate multi-pay debit card)

21] **End of Year Finance**

**a) To note the internal audit report from Lionel Robbins, for the year ended 31.03.25**

27. The internal audit report from Mr Robbins had been received. No issues were noted. The financial records were found to be accurate and up to date. Nothing was found in the minutes to indicate any issues around leal obligations, the council's actions or its general functioning.

Mr Robbins had duly completed the annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 (page 3 of the AGAR).

**b) To review the effectiveness of the System of Internal Control.**

28. This document (Internal Control Statement) had been drafted by the Clerk and sent to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

MOTION: That the Internal Control Statement is agreed.

Proposed by Cllr Banks, seconded by Cllr Hawkins, all members voted in favour.

**c) To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 (AGAR Section One)**

29. Noted that the Internal Control Statement supports the Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 was reviewed and completed. Cllr Banks proposed this document was approved, this was seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed by all Members. Cllr Banks duly signed the document as Chair of the meeting.

**d) To review and agree the Accounting Statements 2024/25 (AGAR section 2).**

30. The Accounting Statements had been prepared & signed by the Clerk (RFO) in advance of the meeting. Cllr Banks proposed this document was approved, this was seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed by all Members. Cllr Banks duly signed the document as Chair of the meeting.

**e) To agree and approve the supporting documentation for the AGAR (bank reconciliation, and explanation of significant variances).**

31. The supporting documentation for the AGAR, bank reconciliation and explanation of significant variances were noted. Cllr Banks proposed these documents were approved, this was seconded by Cllr Hawkins and agreed by all Members.

**f) To agree the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights (proposed dates Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June to Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025).**

32. The proposed dates (3<sup>rd</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July) were proposed by Cllr Banks and seconded by Cllr Hawkins – agreed by all Members.

**g) To establish if there are any conflicts of interest between Parish Council Members and the External Auditor (Mazars LLP).**

33. There were no conflicts of interest noted.

**22] To review and approve the following policies:**

- 34.**
- CCTV Policy
  - GDPR Policy
  - Complaints Procedure
  - Solar Panels Policy
  - Covenant Policy
  - Grant Award Policy
  - Woodland Management (Tree Policy) & Tree Risk Assessment
  - Privacy Statement
  - Media Policy
  - Use of Village Green Policy
  - Memorial Bench Policy

It was noted that there had not been any changes to these policies. It was proposed by Cllr Jones that all the policies be approved for the upcoming year. Seconded by Cllr Banks and agreed by all.

- 35.** The Clerk noted that there were a number of policies that she would be working on drafting over the coming months, and these would be presented to the Parish Council for approval in due course.

**23] Chairman's Announcements.**

- 36.** None.

**24] Any Other Business**

- 37.** None.

**There being no other business, the Annual Parish Council meeting closed at 19.58 hrs.**