

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting of Vigo Parish Council, 30th April, 2018

Good evening everyone and welcome to another Annual Parish Meeting for Vigo. I am very sorry that I am unable to be with you this evening.

It is a legal requirement that Parish Councils in England hold an Annual Meeting with members of the Parish.

This meeting gives the Parish Council the opportunity to tell parishioners about projects that have been carried out in the past year and to explain where your money has been spent.

As well as informing you about Parish Council activities, we hope to have reports from other people and organisations that have links to Vigo. This will give a broader picture of what is happening in and around Vigo.

Parishioners are, of course, always invited to attend our normal Parish Meetings, which are much more formal affairs than this meeting. Residents are able to ask questions at these meetings but the time for these is limited.

During this evening's meeting however, parishioners are welcome to ask questions and raise issues, without time restrictions. We would just ask that questions are saved until the end of any report.

As usual, when the formal business of this meeting is complete, there will be an opportunity for parishioners to discuss individual concerns with councillors in a more relaxed atmosphere. You are all invited to join us for a glass of wine and hope that you will take this opportunity to chat with your councillors.

So, what has happened in Vigo in the last year:

Quite a lot!

There have been 2 major projects.

The first of these is the installation of a new CCTV system. This is much more extensive than our old system and now gives good coverage of the Bay, the children's play park and the main car park (by the school). Although the expenditure for a new CCTV system had not been specified in our budget talks, it became very clear early last year, that an updated system was urgently required. There were sufficient funds in the Parish Council reserves to allow us to go ahead with purchasing the new system.

There have already been several examples of the usefulness of the new system – including a major reduction in litter in the car park immediately following the installation.

The second project is just coming to an end. This began with the need to repair the children's play park fence, yet again! A discussion followed as to the benefit of replacing the wooden fence with a metal one and went on from there to 'why

don't we enlarge the play park while we are replacing the fence'?! We had been aware for some time that the playground equipment was not inclusive and so this would also be an opportunity to include some equipment that would also be accessible to children with disabilities.

A consultation with play ground users identified a number of new pieces of playground equipment they would like to see in the playground.

The Parish Council then applied for grants and were successful in obtaining grants from Kent County Council and Awards for All. Money was given by the Vigo Youth and Community group. The Parish Council added more, including monies raised at various fetes that had been designated for 'the youth of Vigo'.

Playground equipment isn't cheap and there was still a shortfall; so in order to cover this the Parish Council consulted all villagers about taking out a loan. The positive response to this allowed us to go ahead and apply for the loan and, more importantly to go ahead with the enlargement of the playground.

We are pleased to announce that the official opening of the enlarged play ground will take place next Monday – 8th May.

We are waiting for the Village Green to become drier and harder before the zip wire is installed.

You may have seen some new benches appearing in Vigo – mainly along the spine path. Our clerk organised for us to take part in a Tesco's token event. We were awarded enough money to fund 6 new benches. Paul, our maintenance contractor has been installing them.

Alongside these major projects, the regular business of the Council has continued. As always, we strive to keep the Village looking its best overseeing the grass mowing, the tree care and the general maintenance of the village verges, paths and woodland.

Another aspect to keeping the Village looking good is by monitoring changes that people want to make to their houses. We ask residents to keep to the covenants that are enshrined in everyone's' deeds and some time is spent at each meeting discussion applications from residents asking for Covenant approval for changes they want to make.

For several years the Council has given financial support to the Vigo Youth Club. This has been operated by the Gr@nd , based at Gravesend. Unfortunately for some time now, the numbers attending have been very low. The Parish Council has decided that it will not support this project for the coming year. It is hoped that KCC will fund the Gr@nd to run some sessions during the summer months.

Each year the Council puts aside some money that can be used to support local groups and organisations. Grants of up to £250 are available. Unfortunately, again this year, the Grant in Aid budget has been underspent. Please remember, if you are involved with a local organisation, you can apply to us for a grant.

Unfortunately, as usual this year there have been some incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. We have been in contact with the police on several occasions. It is important that we all report incidents as they happen, so that the authorities are aware of problems. You can now report incidents on line, as well as by phoning 101.

Ruts on the roadside verges has been a problem again. This has been a particular problem on the bend opposite the entrance to the Country Park. Ruts were caused by people parking dangerously on the bend in order to avoid paying to park in the car park. The Parish Council has now put cones on the bend. This has dissuaded people from parking on the bend but has not encouraged them to go in to the car park. They just park further down the road!

So, as always some not so good things have happened, but I am sure you will agree that the positive events far outweigh the negative!

Finally, as usual I would like to mention some of the many people who are very important to our Village life, obviously with apologies if I miss anyone out.

Jo Glass, our Clerk, who is always very cheerful and helpful. This year, she has been involved in a lot of extra work with the play park project, as well as all the day to day running of the Council. Writing the letters, making the phone calls, finding answers to queries, keeping up with legal changes and keeping us all on the straight and narrow! Without her knowledge and very able assistance, this council would definitely not function.

Paul Agle, our services contractor, without whom the Village would not look nearly so good. We must also thank him this year for his invaluable help with the play park project.

Community Wardens, Many Casson and Jacqui Fuller. Who are always proactive in the Village and give help and support in so very many ways.

Carol Cox who continues to produce our excellent Vigo Journal.

Leslie Boycott and Derek Shelbrooke - our Borough Councillors who are always ready with help and support

And Bryan Sweetland, our KCC member

Many, many thanks to you all.

And last but not least, I must, of course mention the other members of our Parish Council. Thank you to you all for the very valuable work you do and for the help and support you have given me. I look forward to working with you all again in the coming year.

Pat Banks