

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 24th March at 7.00pm

Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr S Austen (Chairman, Smeeth Parish Council), Cllrs Missing (Vice-Chairman), Herrick, Plowright, Thorpe, Turner and Mrs S Wood (Clerk).

Cllr Wood (borough councillor) was also present.

Three members of the public attended.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lilley (prior commitment), Honey and Mr R Sinden (Community Warden).

3. Minutes of the 2009 Meeting

The Minutes were available for inspection.

4. Matters Arising

- The Chairman noted that speeding continues to be a problem in Church Road.
- There have been no further reported problems of on-road parking in The Ridgeway.
- An application to have the Church Road footpath designated as a Public Right of Way has been submitted to KCC.
- The Clerk read a communication from Cllr Lilley in which he thanked Kent Highways Services (KHS) for its prompt action in closing Church Road and pumping away surface water during the recent floods. He suggested that the pond be cleared out to prevent a recurrence. The Vice-chairman noted that an overflow pipe was flushed out many years ago – this had resolved a similar problem, and recommended that this be done again as a remedial measure. The Chairman commented that the severe winter weather had exacerbated the problem.

5. Financial Report

The draft Statement of Accounts was circulated by the Clerk.

The Chairman reported receipts of £9394.41, balance brought forward from 2008/09 of £4029.91, expenditure of £6120.26, giving a balance to carry forward of £7304.06.

The Chairman stated that the reserves needed to be sufficient to fund the cost of a by-election, should this be necessary. He congratulated Mr and Mrs Podd for their excellent work when collecting litter. He noted that the invoice for the hire of the hall had not yet been received – Cllr Thorpe explained that this was due to his recent holiday and that the invoice would be submitted shortly. The Clerk advised that the hire costs should be approx £100.

The Chairman stated that the Precept would be kept to £7000 – there would be no increase this year. It was hoped that it would be possible to maintain donations to local societies.

6. Any Other Business

- The Chairman said that the Parish Council continues to press for measures to curb speeding in the village, and resolution of other Highways issues. It had worked with the Borough Council on the production of a Flood Plan.

The Chairman then invited comments from members of the public present.

- Residents in Sandy Place noted that they had raised the problem of inadequate parking provision at the last Parish Council meeting. The Clerk advised that their concerns had been passed to the

Borough Council. It was reported that 'Inspectors' had visited recently to evaluate the situation, although the Parish Council has not been informed of any action. Cllr Wood is to pursue this with the Borough Council.

- Cllr Wood gave an update on the lorry park. He stated that the cost was originally given as £30,000,000, but that the actual cost was likely to be £80,000,000 and possibly higher. Other measures are being looked at, including a fourth bridge over the Thames and M20 improvements; consultants are looking at transport issues. There is no government funding for the lorry park.

The Vice-chairman asked about junction 10A on the M20. Cllr Wood replied that this has been approved but has been suspended until finance is available – it is, therefore, unlikely for several years. He stated that if junction 10A is held up, then so is the expansion of Ashford, eg at Cheeseman's Green.

Cllr Wood reported that the leader (Cllr Clokie) is stepping down in May 2010. Cllr Bartlett will be the new leader, and Cllr Wood the deputy leader. They are both opposed to the lorry park and Cheeseman's Green – there will be a new philosophy of managed growth and it will not be developer led. Cllr Wood cited the development at Calland, Smeeth, which has been built to higher standards than other developments. Standards used at Calland, eg of space, insulation, housing density, will be set as the minimum standard.

- The Chairman advised that there will be a constituency boundary change at the next election, all of the Saxon Shore will be Shepway. Cllr Wood said that Shepway and Ashford Borough Council will be working closely together.
- Cllr Wood noted that the refuse collection will be retendered next year. The Vice-chairman felt that the borough lags behind other areas with respect to recycling. Cllr Wood confirmed that the borough would not move to fortnightly collections, and that recycling at parish level will be encouraged to ease the collections. This could raise revenue for the village.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.