

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**Wednesday 9th March at 7.00pm**  
**Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

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

PC Laker (Neighbourhood Officer) and Mr Sinden (Community Warden) were also present.

Eight members of the public attended.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

There were no Apologies.

**3. Minutes of the 2009 Meeting**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 were agreed and signed as a true record.

**4. Matters Arising**

- The Chairman noted that the Parish Council is looking for measures to curb speeding, and is working with the Neighbourhood Officer – speed checks are being carried out at varying times and places. Cllr Plowright stated that the checks appeared to be effective, but the Chairman expressed concern that speeding may be taking place at school leaving times.
- The Chairman regretted the lack of progress regarding inadequate parking provision in Sandy Place, mainly due to financial constraints. Parking is for residents only, but the problem is exacerbated by non-residents; cards were provided by the Borough Council which were to be placed by a volunteer on the windscreen of offending vehicles. The Parish Council is monitoring the situation.
- Building of Junction 10A is on hold.
- Concerns re recycling and the possibility of fortnightly refuse collections were expressed at the 2010 meeting. The blue box scheme is being extended to Smeeth in late March, and refuse collections are still weekly.
- KCC is progressing the application to have the Church Road footpath designated a PROW. Cllr Thorpe is working closely with the officer.
- No action appears to have been taken by Kent Highway Services (KHS) to clear the gullies by the pond. Flooding has not, however, recurred, in spite of heavy rain, thanks to Cllr Lilley's efforts using drain rods.

**5. Financial Report**

The draft Statement of Accounts was circulated by the Clerk and questions invited from the floor.

The following points were raised:

- The Concurrent Functions Grant will continue to be paid, but a reduction of 30% will be phased in over a four year period. The Grant paid to Smeeth will also be lower due to a new formula which is however, thought to be fairer.
- The Council is asked to consider a donation to the Brabourne and Smeeth Allotment Society.

- Donations to other village societies were reviewed at the Budget meeting (November 2010), and an additional grant is to be given to the Village Hall Association for the improvements' project. Grants include: £700 (Village Hall); £500 (hall improvements); £500 (Playing Field Association). The latter was reduced from £600 as it may benefit from revenue generated by the Parish Council's proposed recycling initiative.
- After introduction of the blue box scheme, Scouts and Guides will continue to collect newspapers. Residents will be encouraged to recycle paper through the Scouts and Guides, by stickers attached to the blue boxes and a leaflet drop. Cardboard will not, however, be included. It was felt that the extension of the scheme to both parishes is due to the efforts of both Parish Councils over a number of years.

## 6. Any Other Business

The Chairman invited comments from members of the public.

- Residents from Sandy Place stated that parking is still a major problem: there are too few spaces for residents; non-residents park in the bays and on the verges. This prevents residents from parking and gives rise to hazards such as having to reverse out on to Woolpack Hill. The Chairman advised that a meeting had been held with the Borough Council to press for improvements (see Matters Arising), and one of the persistent offenders had been asked to desist. It was noted that there has been no discernible improvement in the situation and that no cards appear to have been put out. Cllr Plowright is to obtain costings for reinforcing mesh, and the Borough Council will be asked to reconsider its refusal to allow parking on the grass under the sycamore tree. An offer from another resident to take over the cards is to be passed to the Borough Council.
- A report of a possible hazard to properties in Sandy Place from trees in high winds in a neighbouring field, is to be passed to the Borough Council.
- The Council was asked what traffic calming measures were being taken in the region of Smeeth School. The Chairman advised that speed checks had been carried out. Introduction of a 20mph limit outside all schools was due to be raised at a meeting of the Joint Transportation Board on 8<sup>th</sup> March. There was disagreement as to whether passing traffic was slowed by cars parked outside the schools at the beginning and end of the school day. It was felt that full calming measures were needed, as it has been shown that reducing the speed limit had little effect.
- Potholes remain a problem in Church Road, and it is unlikely that the promised resurfacing will now take place. It was suggested that the increasing size and weight of agricultural vehicles contributes to the deterioration.
- Footway improvements along the A20 were welcomed.
- PC Laker and Mr Sinden advised that enforcement of residents-only parking in Sandy Place was possible if a system of parking permits was in place. This would be monitored by Traffic Wardens or reports of non-compliance from residents. The Borough Council is to be asked to canvass residents' opinion on a permit system. Residents were also advised to apply to the Borough Council for permission to drive over the grass and park on their property; this has been granted in other parts of the Borough, eg Bethersden.

The Chairman thanked all those who had attended the meeting, which closed at 8.05pm.