

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 11th July 2012
At Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Austen (Chairman) (SA), Cllr Herrick (Vice-chairman) (DH), Cllr Mrs Williams (MW), Cllrs Hinchliffe (MH), Plowright (IP), Thorpe (GT), Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW).
The meeting was attended by the Community Warden (GK).
Two members of the public were present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Howard (ward member).

3. Adoption of the 2012 Code of Conduct

The Clerk advised that, under the Localism Act, the existing Code of Conduct ceased to have effect on 1st July 2012, and Parish Councils should adopt a new code. NALC has circulated a suggested new Code, but Councils may adopt another provided that it complies with the Act and the Nolan principles (the seven principles of public life).
The NALC Code has been modified by ABC to make it more relevant to the workings of Parish Councils, and guidance is also forthcoming from KALC. It is expected that the Code will be further modified. KALC has recommended that PCs adopt the same, or broadly similar, Code. Standing Orders will have to be modified to reflect the requirements of the new Code.

Pursuant to the new Act, councillors must declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – these will be lodged with the Monitoring Officer (ABC) and will be published on the Councils' websites; clarification is awaited on what information will be published and on which websites. The Clerk advised that Disclosure is mandatory, and failure to do so is a criminal offence.

The Chairman asked for councillors' comments on the new Code, Cllr Plowright offered to review the Code and collate comments.

All

Resolved:

That Cllr Plowright reviews the Code and brings recommendations to the next full meeting of the Parish Council.

IP

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct was signed by the Chairman and received by the Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council.

6. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 16th May, 2012 be agreed and signed as a true record.

7. Matters Arising

7.1 Footpaths and Highways

7.1.1 Church Road claimed footpath. A decision is awaited from the Planning Inspectorate, the objection having been withdrawn.

7.1.2 Footway improvements along Hythe Rd have been put forward to Cllr Wickham for inclusion in his Member Highways' Budget. No response as yet.

7.1.3 Sales of used cars on verges. The Community Warden is to pass details to Trading Standards.

GK

7.2 Speeding in Smeeth Cllr Plowright reported that 6 Speedwatch exercises have been carried out since January 2012, but no volunteers from Brabourne took part – this was regretted. More volunteers are needed, training will be given and the commitment is ~ 1.5 hours/ session. Data are sent to Kent Police, who will issue warning letters under certain circumstances (eg speed, number of occurrences). Vehicles travelling in excess of [speed limit + 10% + 2] are logged, plus use of a mobile phone or failure to wear a seat belt. Cllr Plowright stated that the equipment is on loan from Kent Police.

Information on the initiative is to be published in Parish News.	SW
7.3 Parking in Sandy Place Cllr Howard is still trying to arrange a site meeting with ABC officers, and it is hoped that to find a solution before the onset of winter.	
7.4 Community Led Plan (CLP) Cllr Plowright reported that 2 meetings have been held jointly with the Emergency Plan (EP) Committee. 6 volunteers have come forward but more are needed. It is hoped to identify organisations in the parish that may wish to be involved. A Steering Committee has been set up which will oversee both groups.	
7.5 Emergency Plan Cllr Hinchliffe advised that a meeting was held on 26 th June, and another volunteer recruited. A Constitution is to be drawn up, with input from ACRK. It is hoped that matters will be dealt with via email, rather than at meetings. The Chairman noted that the key difference between the plans is that the EP can be driven by the Parish Council, unlike the CLP which is community led. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that only 3 parish councillors can sit on the CLP Committee. Cllr Plowright advised that funding would go to the Steering Group, which will have responsibility for both groups' finance, and then be channelled either to the CLP or EP. A 'wish list' from local organisations would be helpful.	
7.6 Housing Needs Survey Miss Tessa O'Sullivan (Rural Housing Enabler, ACRK) will approach the landowner of 1 of the sites identified as suitable, subject to both Parish Councils' approval.	
7.7 Code of Conduct and Information leaflet for agricultural traffic These were distributed at the fete and will also be made available in Orpins Stores.	IP
7.8 Damage to verges in the parish The Community Warden advised that he had not noted any problems at the Rising Fives Nursery, during observation at peak periods. The 'in and out' system seems to be working; Cllr Hinchliffe noted that the condition of the verges has improved. Cllr Plowright stated that the combined problems of overgrown vegetation and increased size of agricultural vehicles has resulted in damage to verges. Cllr Thorpe noted that the problem has been worsened by the weather. The Community Warden suggested that a survey of traffic movements be carried out under the CLP. A survey of parish verges was suggested, to identify those at risk; Cllr Plowright to provide a parish map. Cllrs to pass information on damaged verges to Cllr Hinchliffe. Cllr Hinchliffe suggested that an online mapping tool could be helpful, and was asked to bring information to the next meeting.	IP All MH
8 Community Warden's report	
<p>I wish to thank the Parish Councils for their kind invitation to join them at the Village fete, which despite the windy weather I believe was a worthwhile first attempt.</p> <p>There has been a report of theft of calves from a local farm, which may have been happening over a few months.</p> <p>I was informed by a local resident that 'duster sellers' were in the village again claiming to raise money for the Armed Services, which was obviously wrong. While looking around the village I was contacted by Trading Standards to inform me of the same, so the message is being shared among the community.</p> <p>I have been involved in the Ashford area 'Safety in Action' event for primary school children in their last year at primary school, looking at various forms of safety – from road safety to internet safety – which was attended by the local primary school.</p> <p>I was requested by a resident to look at children going on to land (I believe an old quarry) off Plain Road, as some minor damage had been caused to a derelict building there, and advised them about their conduct.</p> <p>A search warrant was executed by Police and ABC Housing Dept in The Warren, an investigation is ongoing.</p> <p>At the request of the Parish Council I have looked into the matter of parents using the nursery in Plain Road, parking on the verge nearby, and I have not witnessed any problems. I have spoken to the proprietor of the nursery and she has confirmed that she has written and spoken to parents, and operates a system whereby there should be no need for parking on the verge – this appears to be working at present.</p> <p>General: I have been asked by Police to highlight that there have been a number of thefts from outbuildings in the surrounding area, and request that residents are vigilant.</p> <p>A motorcycle was taken during a burglary at Bockham Farm, West Brabourne.</p>	

9 Financial Report

9.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget.

Resolved:

That the following payments be made in accordance with the Budget

Payments

Details	£
Mrs B Podd (salary)	91.20
S Wood (net salary June)	212.15
S Wood (net salary July)	212.15
HMRC (Q1 payment)	159.00
S Wood (stationery)	7.92
KALC (Councillor workshop 7 th June)	72.00
S Wood (refuse sacks)	25.08
Information Commissioner (DPA renewal)	35.00

Receipts

Details	£
VAT refund	129.98

Balance £ 16481.45

10 Planning Committee Report

Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on 5 planning applications. No objections were raised to any of the applications, and comments submitted on 3.

11 KALC report

The Vice-chairman reported that the Minutes of the meeting 20th June had been circulated, Localism and Standards were among items discussed. The next meeting is on 18th July.

12 Village fete report

The Chairman and Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the Parish Councils' stand was well received, with a steady flow of visitors, including Lady Brabourne, the Mayor and the ward member.

A volunteer for each of the CLP and EP came forward, the latter being involved with emergency response for the ambulance service.

Parishioners raised a number of issues, including unkempt verges in East Brabourne (to be taken to Brabourne PC); extension of the 30mph speed limit in the parish, and introduction of a 40mph limit where the existing limit is 60mph.

The Chairman welcomed the contact and feedback, and felt that the Community Warden's presence was very helpful.

It was agreed to have a stand at the 2013 fete, councillors to have printed name badges.

SW

SW

13 Any Other Business

13.1 The Chairman has received a letter asking that the PC consider a 50mph speed limit on the A20, between Smeeth crossroads and the Secret Garden. Cllr Plowright suggested that it be extended to Sellindge, Cllr Mrs Williams agreed, but Cllr Thorpe felt it unnecessary. Cllr Plowright will research the Jacobs' Speed Review recommendations for the area. The Community Warden felt that KCC would not want a lower speed limit, given that traffic is diverted on to the A20 during Operation Stack. The Chairman noted that heavy vehicles pulling on to the A20 would welcome the lower limit. The Clerk to reply.

IP

SW

13.2 Cllr Thorpe noted that the A20 had not been levelled before recent resurfacing. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that, according to KCC, surface dressing is a more effective method.

13.3 Concerns were raised about the frequency of grass cutting on verges and visibility splays; overgrown footpaths were reported.

13.4 In answer to a question from Cllr Hinchliffe, the Clerk advised that it had not yet been possible to arrange a meeting with the Chairman of Aldington PC. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that expressions of interest should be lodged with ABC by November, for budgeting purposes – Michelle Byrne (ABC) has offered to give a presentation on Localism to PCs. The Chairman noted that funding for Localism is not yet clear.

13.5 Cllr Hinchliffe advised that smart water has now been applied to the War Memorial, and it

has been registered with the British Legion.

13.6 Cllr Hinchliffe reported that he attended a KALC training day on the Effective Councillor. He stated that PCs have to carry out a crime risk assessment for any action – the information to be circulated. MH

13.7 Cllr Hinchliffe stated that PCs have the right to pass bye-laws.

13.8 Cllr Plowright attended a presentation on 27th June on a bid to Defra for funding broadband in rural areas, this includes a number of properties in Smeeth. Letters are to be sent to these residents encouraging them to take part in the 'Make Kent Quicker' campaign.

13.9 Correspondence:

13.9.1 ABC Diamond Jubilee Civic Awards, introduced to celebrate HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and honour those who have delivered outstanding community service. Information is on the parish website and will be in August Parish news.

13.9.2 Brabourne and Smeeth Allotment Society. Request for a donation towards a mower and brush cutter.

14 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 12th September, 7.00pm at Brabourne Baptist Church

The meeting closed at 9.30pm