

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013**  
**at Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Mrs Williams (MW), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr Plowright (IP), Cllr Thorpe (GT), Cllr Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk ) (SW). Cllr Miss Martin (JM) and Cllr Howard (ward members) (WH), Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) (GK) and PCSO Gary Carr (GC) also attended. There were no members of the public present.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr A Robinson.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Herrick (Other Significant Interest): agenda item 15, Playing Field Association Steering Group member.

**4. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the meeting be approved and signed as a true record.**

**5. Matters Arising**

**5.1 Waste collection service** Noted that the scheme appeared to be operating successfully in the parish but some missed collections were reported. 54 properties in the borough have still not received bins. The relative size of each bin was queried, given that the volume of residuals should be less than that of recyclables. Sizes are to be reviewed, after which a smaller black bin can be requested. Extra recycling bins can be provided. The collection of black bags left beside bins is to cease. The increased recycling was welcomed. A report will be produced but a significant increase in the amount recycled will not appear in the figures until 2014-2105, as the scheme was introduced part way through the year. Collection information for halls and churches will be forthcoming soon.

**5.2 Meeting with Ann Barnes, Police and Crime Commissioner** Attended by Cllr Hinchliffe, who made the following points: i) Brabourne and Smeeth (joint pop. 3000) do not have a mobile police station, unlike Mersham (pop. 1000). Sites are being reviewed because of this type of anomaly. ii) The emphasis on youth (cf the Youth Commissioner) but no reference to the elderly, which goes against the demographics. No Commissioner for the elderly will be appointed, but reference to the elderly will be made in the next strategy. iii) Concerns regarding the high turnover of Neighbourhood Officers/PCSOs and lack of contact. PCSO Carr's active involvement was welcomed.

**5.3 Junction 10A** The Village Alliance had circulated an email regarding funding for a half junction, said to be forthcoming from ABC. Cllr Howard noted that this was based on misinformation – nothing had been put to Cabinet and therefore there is no agreement to spend money on J10A. There is no more information other than that already in the public domain. Cllr Howard stated that there would be misgivings were a half junction to be proposed – the Chairman noted that this reflects KALC's position. The Village Alliance had previously contacted ward members asking questions on J10A and Cllr Howard thought that the email to PCs had been prompted by the responses. Cllr Howard stated that he will be declaring a Pecuniary Interest when any proposals are made and will not, therefore be participating in discussions or the vote, but will forward residents' and PC's comments.

**5.4 Casual vacancy** No candidates meeting the qualifying criteria have yet been identified.

**5.5 Village defibrillator** Has been installed on an exterior wall at Orpins Stores and is monitored by CCTV. Cllr Hinchliffe is arranging a training meeting for 12 volunteers, on 17<sup>th</sup> September in Brabourne Baptist Church. Margaret Austen is to be asked if the defibrillator can be dedicated to Stuart (late Chairman of the PC).

MH

DH

**5.6 Parish Forum** Attended by Cllr Hinchliffe. The Leader (Cllr Clarkson) apologised for problems arising from the new waste collection. Gypsy and traveller site provision was discussed: noted that of the 44 sites in the borough only 1 is owned by ABC. 57 pitches are needed but no potential sites identified. Cllr Miss Martin suggested that parishes put forward sites rather than having them imposed. The Chairman agreed that PCs should address this. Cllr Howard noted that there are often more areas of conflict between traveller families than between families and the community.

**5.7 Possible merger of Smeeth and Brabourne parishes** Raised at the Brabourne meeting but Brabourne PC opposed a merger.

## 6. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

Mr Kingston's report is attached. He stated that a scam is in operation in which it is stated that an inheritance is to be received from deceased (named) relatives, but a deposit is needed to secure its release. All residents are asked to be vigilant and to ignore any such letters. Trading Standards are investigating.

Mr Kingston was asked to monitor parking in Lees Road as 3 vans routinely park too close to the junction, obscuring vision. If the situation does not improve police involvement may be necessary as an offence is being committed. Mr Kingston and PCSO Carr are to liaise.

GK/GC

PCSO Carr's report is attached. He noted that 7 additional PCSOs are either trained or in training, and a new PCSO will be deployed to Smeeth by November. He regretted that he could not attend all PC meetings but this was because he has to cover all of Saxon Shore and may also need to be deployed elsewhere for operational reasons.

Complaints had been received regarding youths accessing rear gardens in Sandy Place from woodland to the rear, and committing trespass. He has given advice to residents. Cllr Howard will ask the Housing Officer to ensure that fencing on properties owned by ABC is in good repair.

WH

## 7. Financial Report

### 7.1 Payments in accordance with the Budget.

**Resolved:**

**That the following payments be made in accordance with the Budget.**

#### Payments

Details	£
HMRC Q2	163.80
S Wood (net salary Aug)	218.55
S Wood (net salary Sept)	218.55
Barbara Podd (salary)	111.42
I Plowright (Speedwatch)	394.00
S Wood (expenses)	112.03
D Herrick (defibrillator key safe reimbursement)	7.99

#### Receipts

Details	£
VAT refund	455.58
Jane Martin (hall hire)	20.00

**Balance: £ 17999.19**

## 8. Planning Committee report

Cllr Thorpe (Planning Committee Chairman) reported on 2 applications.

Little Home Farm: planning permission had been granted for an upgrade and later an increase in size of a barn. An application has now been submitted to convert the barn to residential accommodation. The PC Planning Committee has objected and asked that it be determined by the Planning Committee if the Planning Officer is minded to support. Cllr Howard noted that he supports the PC's recommendation.

Ashbourne House, Hythe Road: an application was refused in 2005 for conversion of a garage to residential, because of the need to use the sewerage system from the Caldecott Foundation. The conversion went ahead despite the refusal using the plans that

<p>accompanied the 2005 application, and a retrospective application for planning permission was submitted in 2011. Martin Vink (Planning Development Manager ABC) has been seeking additional information and has asked for a time extension to the period allowed to determine the application. It is the Planning Committee's view that as the conversion was earlier refused, a decision to refuse should be made without further delay. Cllr Howard is to discuss this with Martin Vink.</p>	WH
<p><b>9. KALC</b> Cllr Herrick reported that there has been no meeting since the last meeting of the PC. Cllr Howard will report on the Rural Conference, to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> September but which coincides with the SPC Plan-it day.</p>	
<p><b>10. Footpaths and Highways</b></p>	
<p><b>10.1 Plain Road closure</b> Operated smoothly and completed ahead of schedule.</p>	
<p><b>10.2 A20 footpath</b> A response is awaited. The Clerk to pursue.</p>	SW
<p><b>10.3 Buses</b> No response from KCC Highways regarding problems caused by overhanging vegetation which forces traffic into the centre of the highway. The Clerk to pursue.</p>	SW
<p><b>10.4 Hythe Road</b> Westbound from Church Road is overgrown by vegetation. To be reported to KCC Highways.</p>	SW
<p><b>10.5 Sandy Place parking</b> A site meeting was held with Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager ABC), but concerns were raised by the Tree Officer and the Landscape Officer regarding the PC's proposal to remove the sycamore to allow 5 parking spaces to be put in. The tree is not subject to a TPO and residents do not wish to retain the tree. Cllr Howard is to discuss this with the officers involved.</p>	WH
<p><b>10.6 Buses</b> Cllr Plowright reported that the occupier of 8 Manor Leaze has been asked for his views on siting a flag outside his property. The existing stop on the other side of the road is dual but buses frequently fail to stop. Cllr Plowright asked that the PC be kept informed.</p>	
<p><b>10.7 Salt bags</b> A salt bin will be requested from KCC Highways for Woolpack Hill for winter 2013/14, but if this cannot be provided a 1 tonne salt bag will be ordered.</p>	SW
<p><b>10.8 KCC Highways seminar</b> To be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.</p>	
<p><b>11. Emergency Plan and Community Led Plan presentations</b></p>	
<p>Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the Steering Group met on 10<sup>th</sup> September at which the Constitution was agreed and signed; the Terms of Reference, definitions and guidelines agreed. All officer posts have been filled, including that of Treasurer (the Clerk) and a legal advisor (acting pro bono). Applications will be made for grants.</p>	
<p>Cllr Plowright stated that the Plan-it workshop for the Community Led Plan will take place on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr Thorpe is to invoice Carly Pettit for hire of the hall.</p>	GT
<p>There has been no response to the posters; information will be sent to Kentish Express and uploaded on to the parish website. All households in Brabourne and Smeeth will be leafleted by volunteers.</p>	SW
<p>The workshop will generate ideas, following which a questionnaire will be drawn up for distribution.</p>	
<p>The Chairman asked who would be chairing the groups. Cllr Hinchliffe advised that Richard Graham chairs the Steering Group and Tim Simpson chairs the Emergency Plan. Cllr Plowright stated that the chairman of the Community Led Plan will be appointed after Plan-it.</p>	
<p><b>12. Speedwatch</b></p>	
<p>Cllr Plowright reported that some sessions were disrupted because of the holidays, but 4 more volunteers have come forward. The speed of all traffic is being recorded to calculate the proportion exceeding the speed limit; on 6<sup>th</sup> September 20 of 50 vehicles were travelling at speeds in excess of the speed limit. PCSO Carr's involvement was welcomed. Cllr Plowright confirmed that he has sent the schedule to the Traffic Division. Cllr Plowright was thanked for his efforts.</p>	
<p>Cllr Thorpe noted that small notices are in place on lampposts in some areas stating that 'Speed monitored area' and he felt that these would be a deterrent. Cllr Plowright agreed and suggested that they be put up at the entrance to the villages.</p>	

### **13. Localism**

See agenda item 15.

### **14. Local Needs Housing**

Tessa O'Sullivan (Rural Housing Enabler, ACRK) is awaiting comments from the Planning Dept (ABC) on the layout of site 4 proposed by the owners; there has been no response from the owner of site 1. The Chairman stated that the agent for the owners of the land behind Fortescue Place had suggested a mixture of Local Needs and General Needs Housing. A meeting with the agent was postponed and has yet to be rearranged.

### **15. Playing fields**

Nothing to report.

### **16. Village handyman scheme**

The Chairman reported that a meeting to discuss the scheme was held in August and attended by representatives from Smeeth, Brabourne, Brook and Aldington Parish Councils, the ward members for Saxon Shore and Michelle Byrne (Funding and Partnerships Officer, ABC). ABC will advise on costs and funding for devolved services to any PC expressing an interest in the scheme. Cllr Miss Martin noted that Aldington PC had not decided against reintroducing a Handyman, but had misgivings regarding the way the pilot had been handled. She further noted that Aldington residents had given her positive feedback. The Chairman stated that Brook PC was interested in participating, and Cllr Miss Martin noted that Hastingleigh wished to take part but at a later date. It was agreed that Smeeth, Brabourne and Brook PCs should progress the project and not wait for a decision from Aldington.

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that Smeeth PC had registered an interest in the scheme in 2012 but there had been no apparent progress by ABC; the Clerk is to reregister the PC's interest. Michelle Byrne will then produce costings and the PCs will decide which services they wish to take over. Cllr Miss Martin is to liaise with Mersham, which has also expressed interest in the scheme.

SW  
JM

### **17. Correspondence**

**17.1** A letter of thanks from John Jamieson for the PC's good wishes on his retirement.

**17.2** Email from the Village Alliance (see 5.3).

### **18. Any Other Business**

**18.1** The Chairman regretted that the expression of support for a resident had not been published in Parish News. The Clerk is to contact the editor.

**18.2** Cllr Thorpe reported problems regarding delivery of post on a round in the parish. These have been taken up with the post worker concerned without success, and then reported to the Ashford Post Office but no response has been received. The Clerk will write to the Head Office at Tonbridge.

**18.3** Cllr Hinchliffe responded to a survey from KALC's Police Liaison Working Party re the role of Special Constables.

**18.4** Ward members' reports:

The John Lewis at Home Store will open in early November.

Construction of homes on an adjacent site has been brought forward because of the John Lewis store. Offices and a care home are thought to be being built nearby.

Dunelm Mill and B&M are taking premises on Sevington Business Park.

The TCAT team is working in the town centre, litter picking, maintaining flower beds and associated tasks; it is hoped to expand the scheme to outer areas.

New pop-up shops are about to open – ABC is actively encouraging new shops to open.

4G has arrived in Ashford and superfast broadband is to be introduced in 2014 at speeds claimed to be up to 24MB.

A Member Community Grant of £500 was awarded to the Fete Committee by Cllr Howard.

**18.5** Councillors were reminded that Fordred's Charity will be discussed at the next meeting.

SW

### **19. Date and time of next meeting**

13<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

### **Community Warden's report**

I have continued to monitor the tree that was damaged on the Green and another branch has been broken. I have spoken to children playing in the area and if required will visit the local school. Michael Hinchliffe kindly volunteered to tidy the damage.

I have also been told of one or two vehicles which have had their suspension lowered to the point where they ground on the road in the Warren, Bridge Road area, I have also received a complaint that the owners of the vehicles leave their tools about the footpath causing a hazard. I will try to speak to those concerned but I have been informed they may be leaving the village soon.

There was also a report of an assault and damage which I believe to be a domestic incident and police attended.

### **PCSO's report**

During August there was 1 report of Theft from a property in Plain Road, Smeeth. There were no ASB incidents reported to Kent Police Control Room, however local residents have reported incidents of youths getting into the gardens on Sandy Place by accessing woodland off Caroland Close.

In Brabourne Lees a male was arrested over criminal damage in Lees Road. I have investigated reports of youths causing problems on farmland in Lees Road and damage to trees at the Warren.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> September I spent time with the SID speedwatch team on Church Road. With the increased numbers of tractors and agricultural plant using country lanes and also schools reopening please be mindful of your speed.

There have been several sheds broken into in Ashford and I would advise residents to secure their property when it is not being used. Batteries have also been stolen from stock fences in rural locations so please keep a look out for any suspicious vehicles or persons and report this on our non emergency number 101.