

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 13th November 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 (WH) (ward members), and PCSO Andrew Huckstepp (AH) also attended. Miss Willemina (Villy) Pereboom (VP) was present. There were no members of the public present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr G Kingston (Community Warden).

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright (Other Significant Interest): agenda item 10.3, Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan Steering Group members.

4. Co-option to fill casual vacancy

Resolved:

That Miss Wilhelmina Pereboom be co-opted to fill the vacancy that arose after the death of Cllr Austen.

5. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Undertaking to Observe the Code of Conduct were signed by Cllr Miss Pereboom and received by the Clerk as the Proper Officer.

6. Presentation by Jeremy Secker on the Smeeth sandpit site

Mr Secker and Mr Jones gave councillors a short briefing prior to the meeting. This was due to time constraints and the sensitive nature of some of the information, and was therefore presented before the start of the Parish Council meeting.

7. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 11th September 2013

Agenda item 13: See agenda item 15 should read agenda item 16.

Resolved:

Subject to this amendment, that the Minutes of the meeting be approved and signed as a true record.

8. Matters Arising

8.1 Waste collection service Noted that the scheme is operating well. One recent collection was missed, possibly due to adverse weather, but the team returned the next day to finish the round. Halls and churches have each received 1 green and 1 black bin. Recycling rates have increased to >50% of waste collected, exceeding the initial target; other areas have shown that the rate increases with time rather than decreases. Biffa's aim is that Ashford is in the top 10 for recycling in the country. Householders who have subscribed to the garden waste collection should notify Biffa when they move – the brown bin will then be removed. If Biffa is not contacted, the garden waste collection will continue from the property until the subscription expires.

8.2 Defibrillator training Attended by 15 volunteers. The equipment should be checked monthly and a return sent to the Ambulance Service. DH

8.3 Support letter Has been published in Parish News, with the consent and appreciation of the resident in question.

8.4 Postal problems A letter of complaint was sent to the Customer Services Advisor. The reply stated that a formal investigation would be instigated if details of missed deliveries could be given; the complaint had also been forwarded to the Ashford Sorting Office. Noted that the rounds have since been reorganised, with some being by vehicle, and bags replaced by trolleys for postal workers who walk the rounds. The situation is being monitored.

8.5 John Lewis at home store Opened on 7th November.

9. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

Mr Kingston's report is attached.

PCSO Huckstepp's report is attached.

PCSO Huckstepp was welcomed to the meeting.

He gave information on the break-in at Orpins Stores - the investigation is continuing with the help of CCTV coverage. PCSO Huckstepp advised that he has asked that a Mobile Police Contact Point be sited in Brabourne and Smeeth, when the locations are reviewed. Cllr Hinchliffe stated that he had raised this at a meeting with Ann Barnes (Police and Crime Commissioner). PCSO Huckstepp will visit Orpins Stores with a view to meeting residents, subject to permission from Miss Orgar. These visits will be publicised.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked if there was a central location in the village that could be used by the Community Warden and PCSO; Cllr Thorpe noted that Brabourne Baptist Church was used by the Community Warden, and the facility was offered for use by the PCSO.

This was welcomed by PCSO Huckstepp, who stated that he will be holding a surgery in the village hall on 18th November, but future surgeries would be in the Baptist Church because of its more central location.

10. Financial Report

10.1 Payments in accordance with the Budget.

Resolved:

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

Payments

Details	£
Parish Online (subscription renewal)	12.00
Allotment Society	25.00
Littlejohn (audit fee)	120.00
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club (donation)	150.00
S Wood (net salary Oct)	218.55
S Wood (net salary Nov)	218.55
Barbara Podd (salary)	93.93

Receipts

Details	£
Precept	4220.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	370.00
Council Tax Support Grant	390.00
NatWest interest	2.45
Smeeth Field Rent	175.00

Balance: £ 22336.05

10.2 Draft Budget for 2014-2015

The Clerk reported that a working party comprising 4 parish councillors (chosen at the KALC Ashford Area Committee meeting), 4 borough councillors and ABC Finance officers is holding a series of meetings to discuss parish funding. In addition to cuts in govt funding already announced, it is expected that the Autumn Statement will announce additional, larger cuts. To offset the impact on ABC's finances, it is likely that the Concurrent Functions Grant will be cut next year by more than the expected reduction. However, it will continue to be paid until 2017, ie for an 2 additional years. This will have to be agreed by the ABC Cabinet.

Cllr Miss Martin stated that the Council Tax Support Grant will be paid next year, and the street cleansing grant will continue to be paid at present.

The Clerk presented the draft Budget. This will be agreed at the January meeting, when the situation on funding will, it is hoped, be clearer.

10.3 Donation to the Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan

£100 had been given by Brabourne Parish Council, and had been spent on room hire,

refreshments at the workshop, and printing. It is hoped to send a leaflet and questionnaire to all households in the 2 parishes in January, and Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright asked that the PC considers making a donation towards the costs.

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council gives a donation of £100 to the Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan Steering Group.

10.4 A contribution to the costs of Speedwatch advisory signs

Cllr Turner agreed that these were an effective deterrent. Cllr Plowright stated that the signs are approx £3 each, but a discount would be given if 60 were purchased. Other PCs have expressed an interest in acquiring the signs: it is thought that 6 would be needed in Brabourne and Smeeth, the remainder would be sold on.

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council agrees a contribution towards the costs of the signs.

11. Planning Committee report

11.1 Cllr Thorpe (Planning Committee Chairman) reported on 5 applications.

Glen Avon, Plain Road - extension. The PC objected on the grounds of overlooking, but the application was permitted by ABC.

Greenacres, Pound Lane – extension to office accommodation. No objections from the PC.

Pendennis, Plain Road – side extension. Supported by the PC.

Land behind Dalveen, Plain Road – erection of chalet style bungalow with reserved matters. The PC objected because of a lack of clarity in the application, due to the reserved matters.

Bower Cottage, Church Road – extension. No objections from the PC.

11.2 BNRG renewables has identified a site at Park Farm, Pound Lane, Brabourne as a possible location for a solar power array and has offered to meet the PC to discuss the proposal. It was agreed to accept the offer, possibly at a joint meeting with Brabourne PC. Cllr Howard noted that the Cabinet ABC has approved guidelines on solar arrays.

12. KALC

Cllr Herrick reported that the last meeting was on 2nd October, the main item for discussion was Finance. The Minutes have been circulated and the next meeting is on 4th December.

13. Footpaths and Highways

13.1 A20 footpath No response, noted that pedestrians are walking in the road. Footpath between the Smeeth crossroads and the Caldecott Foundation is obstructed by overhanging trees. This will be reported to KCC Highways.

SW

13.2 Buses Bus companies should report problems caused by overhanging trees to KCC Highways Soft Landscaping Team. Bus station managers will be given this information.

SW/IP

13.3 Footpaths Cllr Thorpe reported that the online fault reporting facility elicited a rapid response when he uploaded details of 2 blocked footpaths.

The footpath opposite Smeeth School has been ploughed but does not appear to have been reinstated. The Clerk to report to KCC Highways.

SW

13.4 Sandy Place parking Cllr Howard reported that little progress had been made after the site meeting with Ray Wilkinson (ABC); the Planning officer (Laura Gregory) had objected to the proposed removal of the tree. Cllr Howard stated that he has met the Head of Housing and Paul McKenna (the Project Team) – both are supportive, given that the PC is willing to make a contribution. Cllr Howard suggested that the PC submits a planning application for the proposal, viz change of use, installation of a dropped kerb, removal of one tree and replanting with a native species. He will arrange a meeting with Paul McKenna and the PC prior to submission, to discuss the plans. It was noted that the PC may need to commission drawings, which would incur expenditure; plans could be sourced from Parish Online. Cllr Howard recommended that each element of the proposal be costed so that it could be adapted if the overall costs are too high.

WH

13.5 Salt bags A salt bin will be requested from KCC Highways for Woolpack Hill for winter 2014/15, the previous request having been refused as the quota of new bins had

SW

<p>been allocated. Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright offered to remove last winter's salt bag.</p> <p>13.6 Highways seminar There has been no feedback from the seminar of 22nd Oct – the presentations are available.</p>	MH/IP
<p>14. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan</p> <p>Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the next meeting of the Steering Group is on 3rd Dec. All households will be sent a questionnaire on both Plans in January – this will be publicised in December. The Group has a page on Facebook, which is regularly updated.</p>	
<p>15. Speedwatch</p> <p>Cllr Plowright reported that 8 sessions were carried out in Oct, near Andrew's Garage. A significant proportion of vehicles were exceeding the limit and had received warning letters from Kent Police. 3 more volunteers have come forward. Cllr Plowright stated that Mersham PC is interested in joining the scheme. Aldington PC was approached but there has been no reply; Cllr Martin to pursue.</p> <p>Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright reported that 80% of those receiving a second warning letter do not reoffend. Kent Police has offered to operate a radar trap in conjunction with Speedwatch.</p>	JM
<p>16. Localism</p> <p>See agenda item 18.</p>	
<p>17. Playing fields</p> <p>The Chairman stated that the Steering Group has not met since the last PC meeting.</p>	
<p>18. Village handyman</p> <p>The PC has registered its interest; discussions on funding for the scheme are ongoing at ABC. A meeting will be held on 15th November – Cllr Miss Martin will attend and report back. It is thought that funding will be forthcoming but would be restricted to the amount ABC would have spent on the services taken over. Cllr Miss Martin stated that of the other parishes, only Brabourne has expressed an interest.</p> <p>Cllr Plowright asked what would be the consequences were the PC to commit to the scheme, employ a handyman and then funding was withdrawn. Cllr Miss Martin suggested that funding be discussed with Wittersham PC, which is running a successful scheme and for which funding from ABC will cease.</p> <p>Cllr Miss Martin recommended the scheme, as it gives local control of services.</p>	JM
<p>19. Local Needs housing</p> <p>The Chairman reported that a joint meeting with Brabourne PC had been held with the agent for a landowner whose site may be appropriate. It is likely that implementation of a scheme would take approx 3 years, and would include a mix of Local Needs and market housing. The results of the housing needs survey were sent to the agent so he was aware of the identified need. The owner of one of the other sites put it forward when ABC asked to be notified of possible sites for development; Cllr Howard stated that this does not mean that the site would be approved, it could, however, still be an exception site. Tessa O'Sullivan is still trying to contact the owner of another site.</p>	
<p>20. Ashford Borough site submissions</p> <p>Three sites were put forward in Smeeth when ABC asked for landowners to submit potential development sites. Cllr Miss Martin stated that if the PC has any objections to any of the sites it should raise these now. If it fails to do so it will be taken that the PC agrees with the sites. She further stated that ABC will contact the PC asking for comments and how a public consultation should be carried out. Cllr Miss Martin noted that Aldington did not respond when a proposal for 40 homes was put forward for the 2008 Local Plan. It was, therefore, included in the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD. These homes are now being built, against residents' wishes. Cllr Miss Martin stated that if any of the sites are agreed, there is a requirement that 35% of the homes built would be affordable (in the rural areas these would be Local Needs).</p> <p>The Chairman stated that this showed the importance of the Community Led Plan, as this demonstrates what the community wants.</p> <p>Cllr Miss Pereboom asked if the number of homes on a given site is already decided; Cllr</p>	

Miss Martin said that there is some degree of flexibility but the sites have to be financially viable. Cllr Howard stated that the PC can comment on the number of houses, and do not have to put forward alternative sites if it suggests fewer houses on a given site. Cllr Miss Martin noted that there is a need to consider what expansion would be acceptable, particularly with response to 'windfall sites' (ie those not included in the Core Strategy). Cllr Howard stated that the PC could suggest that any development be phased.

21. Borough Council response to emails

Cllr Hinchliffe recommended that the Clerk keep a log of emails sent to ABC, KCC and KCC Highways to gauge response times or a failure to respond. A failure to respond within a reasonable time would be reported to the ward members. This was agreed. SW

22. Correspondence

22.1 Good Councillor's Guide, 4th edition (complimentary copy from KALC). Additional copies are to be purchased from KALC for councillors. SW

22.2 Tenants' Complaint Panel. The PC has been asked to put forward names of tenants who may wish to join the Panel. A list of tenants has been requested from ABC.

23. Any Other Business

23.1 Cllr Thorpe gave the statistics from the 2011 census: Brabourne - population 1040, Smeeth - 924. These show that the difference in population is not the often quoted figure of 400.

23.2 Cllr Miss Verepoom will be included in the circulation list for correspondence, after the Chairman.

23.3 Cllr Howard gave a brief update on Ashford's news: the Designer Outlet is being enlarged; Morrison's is opening a supermarket and petrol station; the Christmas lights will be switched on by Thomas the Tank Engine on 16th November. The KCC Highways online reporting tool has been improved. An energy efficiency guide was published in ACRK's Rural News.

23.4 The Chairman advised that the Clerk has the presentations given at the Rural Conference.

23.5 Cllr Howard stated that he has an information pack on how to engage young people in youth projects.

23.6 Cllr Miss Martin stated that there is information on the roll-out of the Rural Broadband project on the KCC website. There is a postcode checker re properties that will be included, but the information is vague. 85% of rural properties should benefit (although she noted that the speeds will only be ~2.5Mb/s). It is hoped that Defra will provide funding for the remaining 15%.

24. Resolution to exclude the public

It is proposed that, under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be dealt with, the public and press leave the meeting during discussion of item 25, namely distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

Resolved:

That the press and public leave the meeting during discussion of Fordred's Charity payments.

Following the passing of the Resolution, Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard left the meeting.

25. Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments

Resolved:

That Cllrs Thorpe and Hinchliffe distribute the payments, as agreed. MH/GT

26. Date and time of next meeting

8th January 2014 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.

Community Warden's report

Since my last report the village continues to be quiet and crime free so far as I am aware, and even Halloween and Guy Fawkes night seem to have passed off without incident. The only complaints I have received were regarding young children riding their bikes around the bungalows in Calland and some teenagers being a bit noisy in the area behind the estate agents shop, both which occurred during half term holidays and I have not been informed of any continuance of this sort.

We appear to have been comparatively fortunate in the amount of damage sustained during the storm and no major disruption was caused to transport or power links.

Graham Kingston

PCSO's report

This is the police report for Smeeth parish council's November meeting.

There has been no reported antisocial behaviour in the village during October. There have been two reported crimes in the village for the month of October. This was in relation to criminal damage at Mersham Le Hatch where it appears the offenders have cut the perimeter fence to gain access to the grounds; however there appears to have been no attempt to steal anything. The second is a vehicle crime where it appears that the number plates of a vehicle have been taken from outside the owner's address in The Ridgeway.

I would just like to make you aware that it is getting close to Christmas and at this time of the year we often see a rise in burglaries. This is because people are buying Christmas presents and thieves see this as an opportunity to steal high value items, so please be aware over the festive period and make sure that your homes are secure when you are not at home. Please be aware that it is also the time of the year where we see a rise in fuel thefts in rural locations so please be vigilant.

I would also like to make you aware that in the county as a whole we have seen an increase in phone scams. The Offenders are ringing elderly and vulnerable people claiming to be their bank or the police and asking for card details and pin numbers. I would just like to say that the Kent Police and your banks would not ring you asking for your details or your pin number so please do be aware and don't pass your details to anyone. If anyone has any queries or problems please feel free to contact me, my Email address is andrew.huckstep@Kent.pnn.police.uk

Police Contact Points for November:

Aldington Village Hall on Wednesday 20th Nov from 2pm to 3pm

Co-op layby, Wye High Street on Friday 6th December from 2pm to 3pm.

I will also be holding a surgery at Brabourne Village Hall at 6pm for an hour on the 18th of November before the Brabourne parish council meeting so please come and see me there if you have any queries.

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551