

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012**  
**At Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

Cllr Austen (Chairman) (SA), Cllr Herrick (Vice-chairman) (DH), Cllrs Hinchliffe (MH), Plowright (IP), Thorpe (GT), Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk ) (SW).

The meeting was attended by Cllr Wickham (county councillor), and Cllrs Wood (PW) and Howard (WH) (ward members. One member of the public was present.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lilley (GL) (prior commitment) and Mr Kingston (Community Warden) (GK).

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Plowright (Agenda item 9, planning application 12/00250/AS, National Grid plc – Personal, not Prejudicial).

**4. Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 be agreed and signed as a true record.**

**5. Matters Arising**

**5.1 Footpaths and Highways**

**5.1.1** Closure of Plain Road. Cllr Plowright noted that although there are notices re the closure in the buses, none has been posted on the bus stops. His offer to place these was welcomed.

Cllr Thorpe advised that buses would stop at John Child's Garage during the closure, the bus company having previously stated that they would stop only at The Woolpack.

**5.1.2** There has been no progress re the Church Road claimed footpath.

**5.1.3** Cllr Wickham advised that footway improvements along Hythe Road have been deferred due to cost. Cllr Plowright stated that the footway from the Sellindge/ Smeeth boundary was in need of repair, and it was noted that this runs past a number of employment sites, and The Caldecott. It was felt that improvements may encourage greater usage. The Chairman stated that the PC would press for the works to be carried out. Cllr Wood suggested using the Community Payback Scheme to help clear areas where soil has encroached on to the footway.

**5.2 Speeding in Smeeth** Cllr Plowright had asked Kent Police if the figures from the interactive speed sign could be used during Speedwatch, and a reply is awaited. More Speedwatch exercises are to be carried out, and Cllr Hinchliffe regretted the lack of Involvement from other volunteers.

**5.3 Parking in Sandy Place** Nothing further to add to the discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting (14<sup>th</sup> March 2012).

**5.4 Emergency Plan and Community Led Plan** Cllr Hinchliffe attended a training information day on Emergency Planning with Cllr Mrs Beavers (Brabourne PC representative). He reported that a public meeting has been arranged for 7.30pm, Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> April in the village hall to gauge public interest in producing an Emergency Plan and a Community Led Plan. Mrs Bugden (ACRK) and Mrs Gibbs (KCC) will speak.

Cllr Plowright is to produce colour posters and black and white leaflets, to be put in the shop, on noticeboards, and delivered to each household. Cllr Thorpe offered to distribute leaflets.

The meeting is to be publicised in Parish News and the KE, and information put on the parish website.

The Agenda and Chairman have yet to be finalised. The Chairman felt that a social time would be helpful, as volunteers could then be enlisted. Tea and coffee will be served.

The Chairman emphasised that the Community Led Plan should be led by the community, but with the support of the Parish Council.

**5.5 Broadband provision in Smeeth parish** The Clerk reported that KCC has received a govt

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grant of £9,870,000 to upgrade the infrastructure, and is now looking at need: there is a link to a KCC survey on the parish website. Cllr Wickham stated that there is an additional £10,000,000 from KCC and it is hoped that £20,000,000 will be forthcoming from the provider. He urged residents to complete the survey, and stated that the aim is 90% coverage in Kent by 2015.

**5.6 Housing Needs Survey** A desk top survey was carried out by Cllrs Herrick and Thorpe (for Smeeth Parish Council), and Cllrs Ede and Hickmott (Brabourne Parish Council), with Miss O’Sullivan (Rural Housing Enabler, ACRK). 9 sites were identified, following which a site tour was undertaken by Miss O’Sullivan and Cllr Thorpe – a tenth site was identified. A report on the sites is now with the Planning Dept, ABC. The owner of 1 site has indicated a willingness to sell. Cllr Wood asked to be kept informed of progress; he stated that Ashford is at the forefront of providing high quality, local needs housing. The Chairman welcomed the result.

**5.7 Code of Conduct and Information leaflet for agricultural traffic** The draft Code and leaflet were welcomed by Brabourne Parish Council, and are to be circulated to Smeeth Parish Councillors for comment. It is hoped to distribute the Code and leaflet in the Spring. Cllr Thorpe is preparing a map of footpaths in the area, for inclusion. Cllr Wood advised that new grants are available for agri-business, and will forward details to the Clerk.

**5.8 Dog Warden** Cllr Hinchliffe asked if the Dog Warden would visit the parish. The Clerk reported that the Dog Warden has been visiting the parish fortnightly in an unmarked van, but would, in future, use a marked van as a deterrent.

**5.8 Bridge repairs** Cllr Thorpe reported that a footpath bridge at Washington Farm, washed away during a storm in autumn 2011, has been reinstated.

## 6. Community Warden’s report

Mr Kingston’s report (attached) was circulated.

## 7. Financial Report

### 7.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget.

**Resolved:**

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

#### Payments

Details	£
Brabourne Parish Council (allotments)	2000.00
ABC (dog bin)	246.00
Mrs B Podd (salary)	109.44
S Wood (salary Feb)	215.39
S Wood (salary March)	215.39
S Wood (expenses)*	97.84
Westwell Parish Council (SLCC conference)	14.77
ACRK – membership renewal	35.00
Hall Assoc (donation)	700.00
Playing Fields’ Assoc (donation)	600.00
Footpaths’ Assoc (donation)	10.00
KALC (Planning Information Day)	72.00

#### Receipts

Details	£
Brabourne Parish Council (reimbursement)	2000.00

**Balance £ 13488.03**

## 8. Damage to verges in the parish

Further to the issues raised at the Annual Parish Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Cllr Hinchliffe recommended an initial, low key visit, by the Community Warden. If this were received sympathetically, a notice re parking may be sufficient. Cllr Plowright is to ascertain what conditions were imposed when planning permission was granted, for the information of the Community Warden.

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If a hostile reception is noted, then the problem will be taken to a higher level. The Clerk will canvass other parishes at the next KALC meeting of the Ashford Area Committee, and the Chairman recommended that it be raised at the next Parish Forum. Cllr Wood suggested that it be taken to the Rural Planning Conference (date and venue to be advised), which will be attended by the Police and KCC.

The Chairman noted that the verge should be reinstated – this is to be taken up with KCC (Highways).

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#### **9. Planning Committee Report**

Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on 7 planning applications. Of these, 6 were supported, and comments submitted on 1. He noted that 1 application was retrospective, and felt that such applications should attract a penalty from ABC as a deterrent. Of the 7 applications, 3 have been approved by ABC, and a decision is awaited on the remainder.

#### **10. KALC report**

The Vice-chairman reported that the Minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February had been circulated. The next meeting is on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

**11.1** St George's Day Parade: Smeeth Parish Council will be represented by the Vice-Chairman.

**11.2** Cllr Plowright asked for an update on the proposed lorry park, as it had been reported that an environmental impact assessment was to be undertaken. The Chairman noted that he had received reports of local property blight. Cllr Wood stated that there was little support for a lorry park at Smeeth, and that there were concerns as to the security implications for the Converter Station. There are a number of other sites that are more suitable, and ABC would support expansion of Waterbrook Park. In answer to a question from Cllr Hinchliffe, Cllr Wood stated that a public enquiry as to the location could not be held, but as KCC would be applying to KCC for planning permission, the process would be open to judicial review.

**11.3** New Kent Policing Model Survey Circulated to all councillors. The Clerk is to collate and submit responses.

**11.4** The Chairman informed councillors that Cllr Lilley had decided to step down from the PC due to pressure of other commitments. Cllr Lilley was thanked for his contribution to the Council; this was warmly endorsed by all present.

**11.5** Cllr Howard reported that the Olympic cyclist, Jamie Staff, had visited the parish with Team USA, generating considerable interest in both the sport and the Olympics.

**11.6** Cllr Wood stated that for the ninth year running, Ashford was imposing the lowest Council tax rate in Kent. The Budget for 2012-2013 was balanced, and the Budget for the foreseeable future showed a surplus.

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#### **12. 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 13, namely review of the Clerk's Spinal Column Point

**Resolved:**

**That the press and public be excluded during discussion of item 13, namely Review of Clerk's spinal column point**

Following the passing of the Resolution, the Chairman suspended the public part of the meeting and the members of the public present left the meeting.

#### **13. Review of Clerk's Spinal Column Point**

After debate, which included reference to monitoring of the Clerk's hours over the last 50 weeks:

**Resolved:**

**That the Clerk's hours be increased from 5 to 6 per week**

**Further resolved;**

**That the Clerk's Spinal Column Point be increased to 22**

**14. Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 7.00pm at Brabourne Baptist Church (Annual Meeting of the PC)

The meeting closed at 10.10pm

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**Community Warden Report**

I am sorry not to be able to deliver this report in person but unfortunately I have been off sick from work for a couple of weeks and have only returned to work today, and due to working practices cannot work this evening. Therefore I am not aware of what has been going on for a short while.

However, I would report that the Post Boxes recently damaged in the area have been replaced or repaired.

I have also received a complaint from a resident in Caroland Close about dog walkers allowing their dogs to foul on the public footpath which runs across a field at the end of the Close, and a request for a dog fouling bin in the area. The Dog Warden has been advised of this issue but I have not had the opportunity to follow up this matter yet.

I have not had confirmation of the exact dates of the road closure along Plain Road.

Following a meeting of the nominated parish councillors and KCC Highways, I made a quick survey of the vehicles resident in Sandy Place, and found from the nine dwellings the residents have ten vehicles and there are seven parking spaces. There are no allocated parking spaces and no disabled parking spaces. There is little evidence of people from the surrounding areas using the close as a parking area, but if all vehicles are at home plus any visitors to residents etc. there is already a shortfall.

Graham Kingston

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