

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 19th May 2010
At Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Austen (Chairman), Cllrs Herrick, Lilley, Plowright, Thorpe, Turner and Mrs Wood (Clerk).
Mr Richard Sinden (Community Warden) was also present.
Nine members of the public attended.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Missing (prior commitment), Cllrs Honey and Wood (borough councillors).

3. Declaration of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Election

Resolved:

That election of the following be Minuted.

Chairman	Cllr Austen
Vice-chairman	Cllr Missing
Planning Committee	Cllrs Missing, Herrick, Thorpe and Plowright
Playing Field representative	Cllr Lilley
Village Hall representative	Cllr Thorpe
KALC representative	Cllr Herrick
Internal Auditor	Mr J Coupe

5. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Signed by the Chairman and received by the Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council.

6. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Smeeth Parish Council held on 24th March 2010 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

7. Matters Arising

- **Church Road Footpath.** In hand with KCC.
- **Provision for young people.** The Chairman thanked the Community Warden for his proactive efforts in getting the Youth Van to visit. The Warden said that poor attendances had, unfortunately, led to its cancellation, but he also felt that it was less well equipped than the van that visits Tenterden. The demographics may also have changed – a similar situation had arisen in Bethersden and Charing. The position will be reviewed in 6 -12 months. The Warden said that as he had been unable to canvas the young people for their wishes due to lack of numbers, there may not be sufficient justification for expenditure on

large items of equipment. Alternatives have been suggested, such as a weekly minibus to the Ashford Youth Centre. Cllr Thorpe asked if there had been any reports of trouble, but was informed that there had only been 1 complaint in the last 9 months. In answer to a question from Cllr Lilley the Chairman replied that there were no youth groups at the Baptist Church, the only organization being the Scouts and Guides.

The Clerk advised that a Play Pack has been circulated by ABC, giving advice to groups on play provision.

An audit of play areas was carried out in summer 2009 by ABC, but heavily criticized. The Audit is to be repeated, with Parish Council involvement.

- **Footpaths and Highways.**

a) **Church Road** Cllr Lilley reported that 15 potholes had been repaired on 10th April, but others left despite being drawn to the attention of the contractors. This was raised with Kent Highways (KHS) and a return visit promised: this is still awaited. It was noted that there are many large potholes in Church Road and there have been reports of near misses as drivers sought to avoid them. The Community Warden is to make representations on behalf of Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils, on community safety grounds. The Parish Council will continue to press for action and the problem is also to be taken up with Cllr Wickham (county councillor). Details of how residents can report potholes will be published in Parish News.

b) **Action with Communities in Rural Kent Traffic Management Forum** Held on 21st April and attended by Cllr Plowright and the Clerk. Cllr Plowright stated that ACRK is facilitating liaison between parishes to try to resolve traffic problems – of main concern is speeding. ACRK asked Jacobs (KCC contractors) for its report on recommended speed limits, particularly at the entrances to villages and outside schools. This follows a county wide survey, but was told this could not be made available until after the election. It is hoped that a draft will now be forthcoming. Some parishes reported that Section 106 monies had not been passed to Parish Councils but, instead, to KHS. The Chairman noted that improvements at Smeeth crossroads had been carried out using Section 106 money arising from the Caldecott Foundation.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow members of the public present to raise any concerns: Mr Hinchliffe reported that the chevrons on the bend opposite the war memorial have gone, leaving the posts, which are bent. This is to be taken up with KHS. The Chairmen then reconvened the meeting.

c) **Lodge House footpath** In hand with the PROW office.

d) **Bus stop improvements** Details were circulated in advance and concerns expressed re the stop opposite Childs Garage have been resolved. Cllr Plowright reported that a contractor's vehicle was parked too close to the junction during the works – the Community Warden advised that the driver could be asked to move but other action is not enforceable.

e) **Repairs to A20 footpath** Nothing to report. It is hoped that money can be made available from Cllr Wickham's budget.

f) **Parking in Sandy Place** Approaches were made to ABC to improve parking provision, currently inadequate. It is reported that 2 inspections have taken place – the Clerk is to progress this with the borough. Complaints re vehicles parked causing obstructions or too close to the junction are to be taken up by the Community Warden, and can also be reported to ABC or the Police.

- **Speeding in Smeeth.** Speed checks were carried out recently on Plain Hill, but it was noted that this was out of peak hours, and results were not forthcoming. Cllr Lilley stated that this went against assurances given at the North Weald Police Forum by Inspector

Frayne. This will be taken up at the next Forum meeting, following which it may be necessary to write to Inspector Frayne.

The Community Warden stated that PC Darren Laker has asked to be notified of dates of Parish Council meetings.

- **Recycling facilities.** Cllr Plowright advised that this had not been discussed at meetings of the Playing Field Association, but Cllr Lilley noted that Mr P Dawson was in favour, in principle, but sought more information as to type, location and number of recycling skips. The Clerk said that grants for the concrete hardstanding may be available through ABC's Community Grants fund – applications are invited before 31st August with a decision due in October. Up to 3 quotes would be necessary to accompany the application – these are to be obtained from local companies by Cllrs Lilley and Plowright. The Clerk is to supply specifications for size and depth. Cllr Thorpe regretted that there were insufficient funds in the reserves to meet the costs and suggested that the Precept should rise to cover such projects. The Community Warden said that B&Q gives small grants to cover the costs of materials for community projects.

8. Report from Community Warden

The Warden noted that the Youth Van visits and potholes had been discussed under Matters Arising. He gave a talk to the May meeting of Smeeth WI on bogus callers, and is attending Café Wednesday at Brabourne Baptist Church on the first Wednesday of each month. Favourable feedback has been received.

Disruption to local traffic was reported due to the large numbers attending a recent funeral at St Mary's Church. Cllr Lilley stated that he had been on duty as a sidesman at the service and the large turnout, while a tribute to the deceased, had not been anticipated. The Rev le Rossignol will make arrangements for traffic control in the likely event of a recurrence.

9. Financial Report

To consider a donation to the Brabourne and Smeeth Playing Field Association

Resolved:

That a decision be deferred pending results of the recycling initiative and concomitant fundraising.

Further resolved:

That a copy of the accounts for the year ending March 2010 be requested.

To consider a donation to the Kent Agricultural Society

Resolved:

That the request be refused.

The Clerk presented the Statement of Accounts for the year and the Annual Return.

Resolved:

That the Statement of Accounts be approved.

Resolved:

That the Annual Return be approved.

Resolved:

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

Payments	£
Mrs B Podd (salary)	52.20
KALC (Standing Orders for Local Councils)	25.00

Westwell Parish Council (reimbursement for Clerk's copy of Standing Orders for Local Councils)	5.68
Brabourne Baptist Church (hire of hall)	72.00
Allianz (insurance premium)	456.61
S Wood (ink)	5.69
S Wood (refuse sacks)	22.85

Receipts	£
NatWest interest	1.19
Precept	3795.50
Concurrent Functions Grant	543.27
Smeeth Field rent	175.00

Balance: £ 11778.99

10. To Receive the Report of the Planning Committee.

There was no Planning Committee report in the absence of Cllr Missing, but Councillor Thorpe noted that there had been little activity. The Chairman reminded residents that planning applications can be viewed on the borough council and parish websites.

11. Report from KALC Representative

At the meeting on 13th April it was reported that Cllr Wickham (county councillor) had agreed to pay for red tarmac and 'Slow' markings outside Brabourne School.

New powers have been proposed for Parish Councils to put up new affordable housing.

The Minutes are being circulated and the next meeting is on 2nd June.

12. Litter collection on the playing field

The Chairman stated that the litter pickers were unable to include the playing field in their round because of time constraints, and there was uncertainty as to whether the young people were able to participate. The Clerk reported that the ABC Clean Team could provide a monthly service for a charge of about £22 per pick. The Community Warden stated that the Probation Service may be willing to undertake this as part of the Community Payback Scheme. This is to be pursued.

13. Circulation of all correspondence by emailing scanned paperwork

Cllr Plowright felt that correspondence bearing time critical information may be delayed when circulated as hard copy. He suggested that such items be scanned and emailed to councillors. The Chairman said that this would also ensure that all councillors received the information at the same time. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk scan and email such correspondence, the remainder being distributed as currently - either forwarded via email or sent round as hardcopy. This is to be reviewed at the next meeting.

14. Any Other Business

- Cllr Thorpe said that he had been appalled by the confusion at the polling station when voting opened for the General Election, when it became clear that not all of the electoral rolls were present. The Returning Officer asked electors to return later, by which time, it was hoped, the missing rolls would be available. The parish is part of Ashford Borough for local government, but Shepway for

parliamentary purposes, being in Folkestone constituency following a boundary change. Neither borough council was willing to take responsibility for the error. A letter is to be sent to the Chief Executives of both councils expressing disquiet and seeking reassurances that this situation does not recur.

- It was agreed not to enter ACRK's Village of the Year competition, as it is felt that small villages are at a disadvantage.
- KCC will no longer circulate planning applications out for consultation by hard copy. Consultees will have to view applications via the Planning Portal.
- Charlton Athletic Trust has offered evening sessions in its 'positive change programme' at a cost of £100 for 2 hours.
- Cllr Thorpe asked for an update on the composting operation and was advised that legal proceedings have been instigated by the Environment Agency requiring reinstatement of the land.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd September at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.