

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Held at 5.00pm on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011**  
**At Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

Cllr Austen (Chairman), Cllrs Herrick, Hinchliffe, Lilley, Plowright, Thorpe, Turner and Mrs Wood (Clerk).

Councillor William Howard (Borough Councillor) and Mr Richard Sinden (Community Warden) were also present.

Three members of the public attended.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

PC Darren Laker (Neighbourhood Officer).

**3. Declaration of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**4. Election**

**Resolved:**

**That election of the following be Minuted.**

<b>Chairman</b>	Cllr Austen
<b>Vice-chairman</b>	Cllr Herrick
<b>Planning Committee</b>	Cllrs Thorpe, Herrick, Hinchliffe and Plowright
<b>Playing Field representative</b>	Cllrs Lilley and Plowright
<b>Village Hall representative</b>	Cllr Thorpe
<b>KALC representatives</b>	Cllrs Herrick and Plowright

**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 Annual Parish Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011, and the Minutes of the Meeting of Smeeth Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011, be approved and confirmed as true records.**

**7. Matters Arising**

- **Recycling facilities.** Cllr Howard noted that cardboard cannot be recycled under the blue box scheme at present, but this and plastics' recycling will be reviewed at the end of the current contract. He stated that plastics are incinerated with other waste, and the burning of plastics raises the operating temperature, resulting in increased efficiency. Cllr Turner felt that recycling is preferable as plastics are from oil, and disagreed with Cllr Howard's comment that transport to a recycling plant is less environmentally friendly.

The blue box scheme was welcomed but there were concerns as to the time that the boxes should be put out (to minimize vandalism), and a complaint from Cllr Thorpe on the absence of the promised sticker promoting the Scouts and Guides' newspaper collection. As this was not the experience of other councillors it was thought that this was an oversight. Cllr Plowright reported that there had been no decrease in the amount of paper collected by the Scouts and Guides.

The Chairman was advised that the grant application is on hold, pending a review of the scheme.

- **Footpaths and Highways.**

- a) Church Road footpath. Cllr Thorpe advised that a decision is due in July.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow a member of the public present to address the Parish Council regarding the footpath. The Council was advised that the path runs through a field under grass for use as a silage crop and for 'dry' cows. Walkers are welcomed, but dogs should be on leads and not allowed to run loose in the field due to the hazards posed by dog faeces. If a cow were to eat grass contaminated with dog faeces this may cause disease, and a parasite (*Neospora*) present in the excrement can cause cows to abort. There is no treatment for the disease and the cow may have to be culled.

It was reported that a fence of barbed wire had been erected to prevent horses straying from the next field, but this had been cut. The Community Warden (Mr Sinden) advised that this be reported to the Police. He would also put up a poster about dog fouling.

Additional problems of dog fouling were also reported in the area.

The Chairman said that dog fouling is a problem in other areas of the parish, and noted that people are not following the Country Code. In response to a suggestion from Cllr Hinchliffe, Mr Sinden is to source signs about the Code.

Cllr Howard said that this had been raised by residents during canvassing for the election and felt that the education of children - 'Pester Power' – may be a solution. It was recommended that a member of the farming community visit local schools to explain the Country Code, and that the current programme of school visits to the farm may be helpful. Mr Sinden suggested that an item be sent to Parish News.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked when the Dog Wardens had last been in the parish, and that there had been no responses to his messages. This is to be followed up by Cllr Howard. Mr Sinden hopes to include a parish map in Parish News showing location of dog bins.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

- b) Cllr Hinchliffe reported that there are no dropped kerbs on the footway near Joe Farm, causing difficulties for mobility scooters. Cllr Howard suggested contacting Cllr Wickham (County Councillor) for help, using KCC member funds for highway improvements.
- c) Cllr Hinchliffe asked if the litter collector could be approached re cleaning parish road signs, but was advised by the Chairman that this is the responsibility of Kent Highway Services (KHS). Cllr Howard noted that a pilot scheme ('Handyman') is operating in Aldington, under which ABC pays a sum to the Parish Council to employ someone to undertake minor repairs. If successful this would be extended to other parishes, and could include cleaning the road signs.
- d) Cllr Lilley noted that trees are overhanging the footpath in Church Road – this is to be reported to KHS.
- e) Clearance of vegetation on Public Rights of Way will no longer be carried out in the parish by the Countryside Access Service, due to financial constraints.
- f) Cllr Thorpe is pressing the Service for repairs to a bridge washed away in February.
- g) Complaints are still being received regarding failure of buses to stop at Pound Lane, as some drivers seem unaware of the duality of the stop. The Clerk advised that

Stagecoach has taken this up with drivers. KHS wishes to put up a bus stop, and although problems have been encountered regarding ownership of the site, it is hopeful of a resolution. Telegraph poles are not used to display bus flags as BT charges high rental fees. Cllr Howard stated that buses should stop anywhere it was safe to do so. The Clerk noted that the Kentish Express has asked for details of the problem.

- **Speeding in Smeeth.** Cllr Plowright advised that checks have recently been carried out during the early morning. It is hoped to implement Speedwatch, and PC Laker will carry out the necessary risk assessment. The Clerk advised that the Police require that Speedwatch is on the insurance policy. The Chairman recommended interactive flashing signs near the school, Cllr Howard said that Cllr Wickham may be able to offer help from his Highways' Fund.
- **Recycling facilities (contd.).** Cllr Turner said that Environmental Services should again be asked what materials are suitable for recycling, given their lack of response to the previous request. Cllr Howard noted that ABC supports local initiatives, and recommended a skip for cardboard, with revenue going to a local organization. Cllr Plowright said that the Parish Council had hoped to set up a recycling facility with proceeds to the PFA, but this had been superseded by introduction of the blue box. Concerns had also been raised re safety of glass recycling, although cardboard could also pose a risk were it to be ignited. Cllr Turner suggested that ABC be asked whether or not the Parish Council should go ahead with a skip for cardboard. Cllr Howard stated that it is unknown what would be included in the new contract, with different proposals from other companies. Cllr Plowright concluded that it may not be cost effective to put in hardstanding for a skip, given the possibility of cardboard collection after 2013.
- **Traffic Management Forum.** Cllr Plowright reported that the Forum had circulated a survey of Highways' Issues to all parishes, and responses had been received from 13 of the 39. The data were collated and a powerpoint presentation of the findings given to Mr John Burr (Director, KHS) at a meeting of the Forum. The next meeting is in July, at Pluckley.

#### **8. Report from Community Warden**

Mr Sinden noted that the period has been quiet, and following completion of training is now qualified for another 3 years as a first-aider. A series of ramps have been excavated in the private woodlands behind the school: those involved have been warned not to make them larger, to clear litter and not to encroach on the path.

He has again been attending Café Wednesday; has offered 'Stranger Danger' training to the Scouts and Guides, and toured the polling stations during the local elections. Allotment security marking is underway elsewhere in the borough, and any materials left over will be shared between Aldington and Brabourne.

Mr Sinden then announced that he is taking up the post of Community Warden in Wye, after 2 years 8 months in his current post. The new warden is Mr Graham Kingston, who served in Kent Police for 31 years and has experience in Youth Offending Panels.

The Chairman thanked Mr Sinden for his involvement in the parish, which was much appreciated. Cllr Lilley proposed a Vote of Thanks to Mr Sinden, which was carried unanimously.

Mr Kingston is to be invited to attend the next meeting.

#### **9. Report from Neighbourhood Officer**

PC Laker was unable to be present or to submit a report, following an accident. He was wished a speedy recovery.

## 10. Financial Report

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	£
KALC (annual subscription)	318.86
Brabourne Baptist Church (hire of hall)	72.00
S Wood (salary April)	215.39
S Wood (salary May)	215.39

Receipts	£
NatWest interest	1.62
Street Cleansing Grant	531.99
Precept	3795.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	445.00
Smeeth Field rent	175.00

**Balance: £ 14643.70**

**VAT refund awaited of £87.87**

### **To consider quotations for renewal of the Parish Council insurance policy**

The following quotations have been received:

Aon Ltd (existing insurer) £493.44

Zurich £325.77

Ariva £383.87 or £364.68 for a 3 year contract

**Resolved:**

**That the quotation from Zurich be accepted.**

### **To consider a loan to Brabourne Parish Council for the allotment project**

The Clerk reported that Brabourne Parish Council is applying to the Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Scheme for a grant of over £13000 for start-up costs for the allotment project. If the grant is approved, it is paid on receipt of paid invoices. However, Brabourne Parish Council has insufficient funds to cover these, and is therefore requesting a loan of £5000 from Smeeth Parish Council.

The Clerk confirmed that no expenditure would be incurred if the grant is not approved, that no funds would be drawn down until invoices are received, and that the grant would be paid within 3 weeks of receipt of the invoices.

**Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council agrees to a loan of £5000 to Brabourne Parish Council, subject to the following conditions: that the loan offer is withdrawn if the grant is refused; that funds are not released until invoices have been received; and that the loan be repaid within a reasonable time after the grant has been paid to Brabourne Parish Council.**

### **To consider a donation to the Brabourne and Smeeth Allotments Society**

**Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council make a contribution of £250 to the Brabourne and Smeeth Allotment Society to assist with start-up costs.**

**11. To Receive the Report of the Planning Committee.**

Councillor Thorpe noted that there had been only one application of significance, to convert the Old Rake Shed in Church Road to small office accommodation. It was thought that if this derelict site were not redeveloped it would continue to deteriorate and would be an eyesore at the entrance to the village. The proposed development is sensitively designed, would not detract from the area and is in keeping with the Oak Room, although it is noted that there is office space nearby. Comments have been submitted, particularly in relation to traffic issues as the entrance to the site is on Church Road.

An application for bunding at Walnut Tree Farm was approved, and was thought to have been put in place to prevent rainwater runoff.

**12. Report from KALC Representative**

The Vice-chairman reported that the Minutes will be circulated as soon as they are available. The next meeting is the AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**13. Registration of Smeeth Parish Council for PAYE**

The Parish Council has been registered with HMRC as an employer, and will submit the required information online as soon as the activation code is received. Advice from HMRC's helpline indicated that deductions for tax would be taken from the Clerk's salary from Westwell Parish Council, this being the highest salary. Nil returns would be made quarterly to HMRC by Smeeth Parish Council.

**14. Parking in Sandy Place**

The Chairman stated that a letter had been sent by the Parish Council to all residents in Sandy Place, informing them of the Council's actions to date. Cllr Plowright has put several options to Housing Services in an attempt to resolve the situation. No reply has yet been received; this is to be taken up by Cllr Howard. The Chairman noted that Mrs Robinson had written to Housing Services about the situation but the reply was disappointing. Cllr Lilley reported that there is still parking on the verge. Cllr Howard stated that he will press for a solution although he is aware that the planned Maintenance Budget has been stretched.

The Chairman advised that an inspection of trees on the bank to the rear had shown them to be safe, but another had been felled illegally. This is being investigated by ABC.

**15. Any Other Business**

- Cllr Hinchliffe asked if there had been any progress on the Brabourne Parish Council initiative to buy The Warren for use as a village green. The Clerk advised that negotiations with ABC had been suspended until after the elections.
- Cllr Howard advised that both Peter Wood and he had been returned as borough councillors for Saxon Shore at the recent elections, and that Cllr Wood had been re-elected as Leader, ABC.

**16. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 7.00pm, Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.