

Smeeth Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 15th May 2013 at 7.00pm
Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Williams (MW), Cllrs Hinchliffe (MH), Plowright (IP) and Turner (MT), and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW).
Cllr Howard (WH) (ward member) attended. Four members of the public were present.

2. Apologies for Absence

Mr G Kingston (Community Warden) and Cllr Miss Martin (ward member) (report attached).

3. Declaration of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Election

Resolved:

That the election of the following be Minuted:

Chairman: Cllr Herrick

Vice-chairman: Cllr Thorpe

Planning Committee: Cllrs Thorpe (Chairman), Herrick, Hinchliffe and Plowright

Playing Field representatives: Cllr Plowright

Village Hall representative: Cllr Thorpe

KALC representatives: Cllr Mrs Williams and Cllr Herrick

Smeeth Primary School Local Education Authority Governor: Cllr Turner

5. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved:

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct, was signed by the Chairman and received by the Proper Officer.

6. General Power of Competence

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council satisfies itself that it continues to meet the eligibility criteria for the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) 2012 adopted at its meeting held on 14th November 2012; such Power ceasing to have effect if the criteria cease to be met and unless a further Resolution is passed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

7. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th March 2013 and the meeting of the Parish Council held on 13th March 2013 be approved and confirmed as true records.

8. Matters Arising

8.1 Arrangements are being made to ensure that the 2014 St George's Day Parade takes place, following difficulties encountered in 2013 which led to its cancellation.

8.2 The Chairman reported that recyclable items are no longer kept separate when collected; Cllr Howard advised that these are sorted mechanically at the depot. He reported that an information leaflet will be delivered to each household, plus a letter specific to the household giving information on the service to be provided. The recycling collection will be expanded to include textiles and small electrical items.

8.3 The Chairman reported problems arising from a failure to empty the dog waste bins. Cllr Howard advised that a schedule for regular emptying will be introduced after a review of the usage of the bins

8.4 Collection of garden waste has begun. Cllr Howard noted that across the Ashford Borough Council area it had been estimated that 600 households would subscribe, but over 2000 had signed up. New subscribers can apply by phoning ABC or via the ABC website (it was noted that the latter facility is not yet available).

- 8.5 The Council's comments on the Police Commissioner's Crime Plan were acknowledged.
- 8.6 Cllr Hinchliffe is to attend a meeting with Ann Barnes (Police Commissioner) – the Police Forum no longer exists and parishes will liaise with a designated senior officer.
- 8.7 Consultations have been circulated to all councillors.
- 8.8 Proposals for Junction 10A were discussed at the KALC meeting; Cllr Howard will declare an Interest as his parents live in Mersham, near the site. No planning application has yet been received for the distribution centre, and the request to the Highways Agency has been delayed because financing is under review. The site is owned by AXA but there is no confirmation that Amazon will occupy the distribution centre, and employment opportunities are unknown.

9. Community Warden's report

No report in Mr Kingston's absence.

10. Financial Report

10.1 To approve the Statement of Accounts for the Year

Resolved:

That the Statement of Accounts be approved

10.2 To approve the Annual Return

Resolved:

That the Annual Return be approved

10.3 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

That the following payments be agreed

Payments

Details	£
HMRC (PAYE Q4)	159.00
S Wood (net salary April)	218.55
S Wood (net salary May)	218.55
S Wood (refuse sacks, photocopying, stationery)	34.34
KALC (annual subscription)	317.35
Zurich Municipal (insurance renewal)	320.65
Barbara Podd (salary)	111.42
HMRC (PAYE Q1)	163.20
Hire of church hall	117.00

Receipts

Details	£
NatWest interest	2.16
ABC - Precept	4220.00
ABC – Concurrent Functions Grant	370.00
ABC – Council Tax Support Grant	390.00
Smeeth Field Rent	175.00
VAT refund	103.54
Footpaths Association – donation returned	10.00

Balance £ 20190.69

11 Planning Committee report

Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on the following applications:

New sewage works on the Sellenge/Smeeth/Aldington boundary.

Manse Field: 2 semi-detached properties. Approved by the Planning Committee, incorporating the amendments suggested by the Parish Councils.

Haywain Cottage, Woolpack Hill: conservatory. Approved.

Katoomba, Woolpack Hill: retrospective application for a summerhouse. Approved.

Decisions on the following applications are awaited:

Evegate Farm: new equipment store and pergola. No objections from the Parish Council.
 Evegate Business Park: stationing of mobile home during refurbishment. Comments submitted.
 7 Ramstone Close: new single storey garage. No objections.

Cllr Plowright noted that the bus stop on Plain Hill had been obstructed by delivery vehicles during recent works and asked if this should be a planning consideration. Cllr Howard stated that planning officers can attach conditions for such situations. Cllr Thorpe noted this for future applications.

The Chairman advised that there will be a presentation at the July meeting on 'Plan-it' – the Local Plan to 2030.

12 Report from KALC representative

The Chairman stated that the Minutes of the last meeting on 20th March have been circulated; there were discussions on J10A, Localism and Precept setting. The next meeting is on 22nd May, and the next Parish Forum is on 24th July.

13 Footpaths and Highways (including parking issues)

13.1 Footpaths and Highways

- 13.1.1 It is not known if the trial dig on the A20 footpath has been carried out. SW
- 13.1.2 Church Road resurfacing is complete, but the white lining has yet to be carried out SW
- 13.1.3 Find and Fix is operating.
- 13.1.4 Mersham le Hatch: works to rectify the flooding problem are to be carried out during the current financial year.
- 13.1.5 Flooding at the entrance to Hatch Park will be reported to Highways. SW
- 13.1.6 Works to overhead power lines: next planned closure of Plain Road is in late July.
- 13.1.7 Overgrown vegetation in Knatchbull Way has been cleared.
- 13.1.8 The request for safety measures at the Canterbury Road/Plain Road junction was refused.
- 13.1.9 Mr Kingston is to be asked to monitor the verges at Manor Leaze. SW
- 13.1.10 Cllr Hinchliffe advised that having walked many of the footpaths in the parish few problems were encountered. Cllr Hinchliffe hopes to submit a full report at the next Parish Council meeting. The Clerk reported that no footpaths in the parish are included in Highways maintenance schedule. This will be passed to the Ramblers Association. MH
- 13.1.11 KCC has circulated a letter outlining residents' responsibilities for overhanging vegetation. It is not known if this will be sent to residents; the information will be in Parish News and is on the parish website. MH

13.2 Sandy Place parking The Clerk reported that Paul Hills (Housing, Ashford Borough Council) has stated that no funding is available for a scheme, but did not respond to the Parish Council's proposals. Cllr Howard will press for a meeting between Mr Hills and the Parish Council; it will be stressed that the Parish Council is willing to contribute to the costs, and a Member Community Grant may be awarded. The Chairman suggested that the Housing Dept produces costs for the scheme - this was agreed by Cllr Howard. A Sandy Place resident is to meet Mr Hills to discuss her concerns, and will pass results of the meeting to the Clerk.

The Council was informed that a number of trees have been felled in the woods to the rear of Sandy Place. The Clerk will pass this to the Tree Officer, Ashford Borough Council. Cllr Mrs Williams will ascertain who owns the land. SW
MW

14 Local Needs Housing

- 14.1 Tessa O'Sullivan (Rural Housing Enabler, ACRK) is contacting the owner of site 10.
- 14.2 Land behind Fortescue Place. Following an approach from Kent Planning (agents for the landowner), a representative will be invited to meet the Parish Council to discuss possible proposals for Local Needs Housing.
- 14.3 The owner of site 4 is no longer wishes to sell the land for local needs housing and wishes to develop the land privately.

15. Localism

Cllr Howard confirmed that the Aldington Village Handyman scheme has ended, and that the Borough Council will pay 50% of the costs of the scheme in other parishes. Costs to Parish

Councils would be reduced if operating in a cluster. The Chairman noted that Smeeth Parish Council has expressed an interest in the scheme. Cllr Howard and Cllr Miss Martin will arrange a meeting between Smeeth and neighbouring parishes.

16. Speedwatch

Cllr Plowright reported that 4 sessions were held in April, and a rota for future sessions is being drawn up by Cllr Hinchliffe. Cllr Howard asked if the Speedwatch equipment could be shared with other parishes: Cllr Plowright advised that this would strengthen the case for a KCC Member Community Grant.

A grant of £300 towards purchase was awarded by Cllr Howard – this is not time-limited.

Cllr Plowright suggested that the Community Warden and Village Handyman carry out Speedwatch in the parishes.

Cllr Hinchliffe attended a seminar organised by Kent Police; one suggestion was to raise awareness by demonstrating the equipment at village events. Cllr Plowright thought that calibrating the equipment for walking speed would generate interest.

MH

17. Playing fields

The Chairman advised that the Playing Field Committee is submitting a grant application to the De Haan Trust for developing the playing field, and hopes to increase the area by incorporating part of the adjoining field. Cllr Mrs Williams asked that consideration be given to widening Church Road at the pinch point given the potential increase in use of the playing field.

18. Community Led and Emergency Plans

Cllr Hinchliffe stated that the last meeting was cancelled because it was inquorate. A relaunch is being planned by Richard Graham, Tim Simpson, Cllrs Plowright and Hinchliffe on July 2nd at Scout HQ. Coloured flyers will be delivered to all households in the parishes, and the event will be publicised by posters, in Parish News and on the parish websites. Printing costs will be borne by the Parish Councils.

19. Co-option of councillor to fill vacancy

Cllr Mrs Williams reported that Matthew Austen (son of the late Stuart Austen, Chairman of the Parish Council) has come forward. Mr Austen is to be co-opted at the July meeting.

20. Tenure of Parish Council Chairman

Cllr Hinchliffe asked if there should be a fixed term for a Chairman; having asked other parishes there is no common practice. The Clerk noted that the Chairman is elected annually, thus affording an opportunity to elect a new Chairman. Cllr Howard stated that some Parish Councils elect a different Chairman each year. Cllr Turner felt that this would encourage more than one nomination, leading to a vote. The Chairman observed that most Chairmen stay in the Chair because of a reluctance by other councillors to stand; the current procedure allows for change on an annual basis and this, he felt, favoured the current situation.

Cllr Mrs Williams proposed that the maximum term for a councillor to hold the Chair be 4 years. Cllr Thorpe noted that this would complement the time between elections.

A vote was taken, and by 4 votes to 1, with 1 abstention:

Resolved:

That a councillor elected to the Chair of Smeeth Parish Council may hold the Chair for no more than four consecutive years, if re-elected at each Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Resolved:

That there is no limit to the number of four year terms during which a given councillor holds the Chair.

The Clerk will draft the necessary Standing Orders for adoption at the July meeting.

SW

21. Correspondence

Letter from KCC outlining residents' responsibilities for overhanging vegetation (see 13.1.11).

22. Any other business

22.1 Cllr Turner has been selected to join a fact-finding trip to Sweden in June, looking at green issues and recycling. The trip is being funded by the EU, and the Swedish party will visit the UK in October.

22.2 The village fete will be opened by Cllr Howard, who will then run the coconut shy. Both ward members will be at the Parish Council stall.

- 22.3** The Parish Council will be represented at the fete: the banner and a gazebo will be needed. The following leaflets will be available: flyers re the 2nd July meeting, Code of Conduct, Dogs in the Countryside. Volunteers from both Parish Councils will be sought.
- 22.4** The Chairman advised that the new PCSO is Amy Edwards.
- 22.5** Cllr Howard reported that the Member Community Grant has been increased to £4000 from £2500.

23. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, July 10th at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

Cllr Miss Martin's report

Dear Parish Council members and residents

It is a both an honour and a pleasure to have been elected as one of your councillors for the beautiful Saxon Shore Ward.

I am sorry that I cannot with you tonight- I will however attend your meetings as regularly as possible in the future.

I do believe that a good working relationship and regular communication between Borough Councillors and Parish Councillors is important for the good of the Parish and I will do all I can to ensure I am as available and helpful as possible.

As of June I and your other Councillor, William Howard, will be delivering our quarterly newsletter to all homes in the Ward – if there are any key issues that you wish us to raise – please give me a ring on 07583 642202

During my campaign the issue of a local Handyman in Aldington was raised as may Aldington villagers were sad that this service is no longer available. Additionally, many of the other villages in Saxon Shore expressed an interest in being part of this service. To that end, I had a meeting with John Bunnnett, Ashford Borough Council Chief executive, last Thursday. It could be possible to provide a joint service with other villages so that the financial commitment is spread over all participating villages- without affecting the service. The offer would be 50 % subsidy from ABC with the other 50% coming from the villages.

If this is of interest to Smeeth, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss how we may do this. Speeding was also a big concern in other villages – as you have the speed gun I wondered if it would be ok to offer other villages the chance to be trained by yourselves in the use – prior to purchasing one themselves ?

There are other issues, not mentioned here and my mandate as a councillor will be to take up all of these and any others that arise and are in your interest.

Many thanks for your time

Jane Martin

Cllr Jane Martin
Saxon Shore Ward
13.05.13