

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010**  
**At Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

Cllr Austen (Chairman), Cllrs Missing (Vice-chairman), Herrick, Lilley, Plowright, Thorpe, Turner and Mrs S Wood (Clerk).

The Community Warden and nine members of the public were in attendance.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Honey and Wood (borough councillors).

**3. Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of interest have been received.

**4. Minutes**

Cllr Wood had asked that the following clarifications be made: The borough council would like the Waterbrook site to be expanded, and not closed as stated in Cllr Wickham's report. Further, that the identity of alternative sites is known but not yet in the public domain.

Subject to these:

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> November be approved and confirmed as a true record.**

**5. Matters Arising**

- **Flood Plan**

The questionnaires, sent to residents in properties thought vulnerable in the event of a flood, have been returned.

- **Church Road Footpath**

In hand with KCC.

- **Provision for young people**

The Community Warden advised that the Youth Van visited on 13<sup>th</sup> January, but without adequate notice, so that the visit was not advertised. The van was due to return on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The Chairman expressed concern that the van's visits may fail because of a lack of response.

Cllr Turner asked about funding available for youth shelters, although Cllr Lilley stated that a site had not yet been identified. The Clerk is to obtain grant application forms and the Community Warden advised that guidance on shelters is available on the Thames Valley Police website.

- **Footpaths and Highways**

- a) No date has yet been given for the resurfacing and white lining on Church Road. These may be delayed because of repairs necessary after the bad weather.

- b) The disputed footpath at Lodge House is in hand with the PROW officer.

- c) Complaints re parking on pavements continue to be received, although it was noted that on narrow roads this is unavoidable to allow access for emergency vehicles.

- d) Overhanging vegetation in Church Lane, Aldington had been cleared but the work stopped at the parish boundary. The Clerk was advised that the works had been carried out by the property owner and stopping at the parish boundary was a coincidence
- e) A review of traffic calming at Smeeth School will not be carried out until a review of speed limits is carried out later in the year.
- f) Kent Highways Services is introducing a Permit scheme for companies wishing to dig up the highway. This is to be introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> January, and should expedite road works.
- g) A new policy has been introduced for residents who wish to apply for white lines to prevent obstructive parking across their access. A fee will payable on application and a further fee charged for maintenance.
- h) Speed checks have been extended to Smeeth.
- i) Repairs carried out to an unacceptable standard on the A20 are being redone, following a site visit by the Vice-chairman, Cllr Wickham (county councillor) and a representative from Highways.
- j) Highways is to be asked to cut back overhanging vegetation on Hythe Road between Water Farm and Pigeon House.
- k) The Chairman reported that Cllr Wickham and Cllr Butcher (Chairman, Ashford Area Committee KALC) had visited the parish to look at the problem of speeding outside Smeeth School. Cllr Lilley stated that pressure should continue to be brought to bear to avoid a fatality. The Chairman said that it was important that people knew that the playing field and school were in the vicinity, and there was also the problem of children coming in from other areas. Any measures would have to be funded, and this could not be raised locally.
- **Proposed closure of Ashford Police Station Custody Suite**  
The Parish Council has been notified that the Suite will close in April. The Vice-chairman noted that it was felt that the reasons for the closure were financial. Cllr Lilley expressed surprise at the low level of policing in Ashford, but the Vice-chairman stated that some CID personnel were to return to Uniform Division on the beat. Cllr Plowright noted that closure would enable the staff to be deployed in the villages.
- **Speeding in Smeeth**  
Speed checks are being carried out in the parish.
- **Recycling facilities**  
The Chairman stated that the request for an extension of the blue box scheme to Smeeth had been declined. The Clerk reported that the Borough Council can provide recycling banks for rural areas, which then benefit from the revenue raised. Aldington Village Hall operates a recycling scheme, raising approx £500 per year. Cllr Turner suggested that the Playing Field Association be approached. Cllr Plowright felt that if other recycling facilities were available, the parish would benefit from the revenue and more would be recycled. Existing and potential facilities were discussed, and it was agreed that Cllr Lilley approach Mr P Dawson to ascertain whether the Association would be willing to participate. It was also agreed that the Scouts and Guides should continue with paper recycling.

## 6. Report from Community Warden

The Community Warden said that Brabourne Parish Council has agreed to join Smeeth for the Community Day. Ideas would be sought via the Parish News, contacts to be the Clerk and Community Warden. Untaxed cars are to be targeted in late January/early February – untaxed cars will be removed and crushed if not claimed and the tax paid within 24-48 hours. Lead thefts are up because of increasing demand from China. The Warden will be taking part in a KCC/ABC emergency planning exercise re flooding on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. He reported that an elderly resident had the car locks superglued during the Christmas holidays. Posters re littering are available for the Playing Field Association to use in the car park, if so wished. In answer to a comment from Mr Robinson, the Warden advised that the landlord of the Woolpack would not be closing 1 entrance to the pub car park to prevent its use as a short cut.

## 7. Financial Report

### Resolved:

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

#### Payments

| Details                    | £     |
|----------------------------|-------|
| S Wood (ink and paper)     | 11.88 |
| SLCC (annual subscription) | 28.10 |
| Staples (ink and paper)    | 12.35 |

#### Receipts

| Details          | £    |
|------------------|------|
| NatWest interest | 1.23 |

Balance: £9807.81

### **To consider a donation to the Village Hall Committee for kitchen refurbishment.**

The Chairman informed the Parish Council that the Village Hall Association is applying for a grant for the project. The funding body will award grants of up to 75%, and the Parish Council has been asked for a letter of support and for financial support in addition to the £700 it gives annually to the Association. The Clerk stated that there were sufficient funds in the Budget for 2010/11 to allow for an increase.

Cllr Thorpe noted that the Association had not received funding from the last 2 fetes, 'Brabourne's Got Talent' or the pantomime. He strongly supported the proposal. The Vice-chairman and Cllr Turner agreed, saying that the project was of benefit to the community.

The Clerk stated that project costs were approx £20000, and would comprise kitchen improvements and provision of a small meetings room. Cllr Thorpe said that the kitchen was last refurbished 30 years ago, and confirmed that the Association had charitable status.

### Resolved:

**That a letter of support be sent to the Village Hall Association in its bid for the grant.**

### Further resolved:

**That an additional £300 be pledged to the Village Hall Association.**

## 8. To receive the report of the Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that 1 Decision notice had been received, for outline permission at Builders Yard, but with reserved matters. A decision was still awaited on an application at Mersham-le-Hatch.

The Chairman stated that the Kentish Express had made a Freedom of Information request to KCC for the list of alternative sites for the lorry park.

Cllr Thorpe left the meeting at this point, for a prior engagement.

## 9. Report from KALC representative

Cllr Herrick reported that Mrs Ann Barnes (Chairman, Kent Police Authority), the Chief Constable and 2 senior officers were present at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The proposed closure of the Ashford

Custody Suite was discussed and the police representatives all said that closure was not a cost-cutting exercise. Minutes of the meeting are being circulated. The next meeting is on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

**10. Litter collection on the playing field**

The Chairman stated that Mrs Barbara Podd had been asked if she would be willing to include the playing field in her round, but had refused because of time constraints. The Community Warden felt that education re littering would be helpful. The Vice-chairman asked if the Scouts and Guides would litter pick. The Chairman stated that bags and litter pickers would be provided by the Parish Council, and the Vice-chairman offered to donate rubber gloves. Cllr Plowright (Chairman, 1<sup>st</sup> Brabourne Scouts and Guides) is to discuss this with Mr J Rose (Group Scout Leader).

**11. Parish website**

The Chairman stated that the Brabourne website included news of events in Smeeth, and asked for views on a website for Smeeth. The Clerk reported that although KCC was willing to set up a joint website, as it had already paid for the Smeeth domain name a separate website was its preferred option. Links could be provided to the Brabourne website to avoid duplication.

After debate:

**Resolved:**

**That the Clerk set up the Smeeth Parish Council website.**

**12. Brabourne Post Office – Government consultation re banking at the PO**

The Chairman stated that the Government is seeking views on the future of banking services available at the Post Office. Cllr Turner was strongly supportive, noting that the Brabourne Post Office had won an award. All agreed that the village Post Office is very important for the community, and residents are to be urged to participate in the consultation, which is to be publicised in the Parish News. The Clerk is to submit the views of the Parish Council.

**13. Any Other Business**

- The Clerk reported that she had received copy of the KCC Annual Report. This was passed to Cllr Plowright.
- The Chairman noted that delays in the provision of a disabled parking space had led to a complaint by the Parish Council to Mr J Bunnett (Chief Executive of the Borough Council). A reply had been received although the bay has not yet been provided.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8.05pm and invited comment from the members of the public present. Speeding throughout the parish was reported but particularly in Church Road, Woolpack Hill and Plain Road - these will be passed to Kent Police. Concerns re inadequate parking provision in Sandy Place were raised. There are insufficient spaces for residents and no allowance for visitor parking; access to emergency vehicles is impeded. These will be raised with the borough council and Kent Highways.

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

The Annual Parish Meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church. The next meeting of the Parish Council will follow immediately after.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.