

**SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
**At Brabourne Baptist Church**

**1. Present**

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

Cllrs Honey and Wood (borough councillors) and three members of the public were in attendance.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lilley (prior commitment) and the Community Warden.

**3. Declaration of Interest**

Declarations of interest were received from the Chairman, Cllrs Thorpe, Turner and Herrick re Agenda item 10 (Personal, the Chairman, Cllrs Thorpe and Turner - members of Brabourne Baptist Church; Personal, Cllr Herrick – Mrs Herrick is a member of Brabourne Baptist Church).

**4. Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> January be approved and confirmed as a true record.**

**5. Matters Arising**

- **Church Road Footpath**

In hand with KCC.

- **Provision for young people**

The Chairman stated that the Warden has been proactive in getting the Community Youth Van to visit the Parish. The first visit is due this evening, and there will be 2 further visits if it is well supported. During the visits the Warden will be canvassing the young people regarding their wishes for a Youth Shelter etc.

- **Footpaths and Highways**

- a) No date has yet been given for the resurfacing and white lining on Church Road. Due to the need to give 6 weeks' notice because of the road closure and proximity to the school, it is unlikely to be carried out before the summer. Cllr Turner suggested that temporary repairs be carried out because of the hazard to cyclists and the possibility of damage to vehicles.
- b) The disputed footpath at Lodge House is in hand with the PROW officer.
- c) KCC has made an additional £1,000,000 available for pothole repairs. A new initiative ('Find and Fix') has been implemented. Teams move into an area and should repair every pothole found.
- d) A programme of bus stop improvements is to be carried out, including raised kerbs with platforms. Details are available on the Parish website. The Chairman welcomed the works and said that access for the disabled on the No. 10 route was poor.
- e) Cllr Thorpe stated that the roads in Kent are in a worse state of repair compared with roads in the rest of the Home Counties. Cllrs Plowright and Wood said that this was due to the severe winter weather. Cllr Wood stated that there had been a change in Portfolio holder for Highways and that funding remains a problem.

f) The Vice-chairman said that Cllr Wickham (county councillor) had indicated that money from his budget could be used for repairs to the footpath on the A20. The Vice-chairman is to pursue this.

- **Speeding in Smeeth**

Speed checks were carried out in the Parish on 1 occasion and are due to be repeated. Cllr Plowright said that at the Police Forum it had been stated that there were no speeding issues. The Vice-chairman felt that this was because of the chosen location and the high visibility of the Police. Cllr Turner reported that the Headteacher of Smeeth School has been asked to write to parents as it was thought that some were culpable. Cllr Lilley has been asked to join a North Weald Police Forum sub-committee dealing with Policing in the Parishes, and is meeting Chief Inspector Frayne on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

Cllr Plowright asked for an update on traffic calming at Brabourne School. The Clerk advised that this will be part of a Speed Limit Review to be carried out later in 2010. Problems had arisen with regard to the recommended 20mph limit near schools as given in the DfT circular: the wording is 'may' and not 'must'.

- **Recycling facilities**

Cllr Plowright reported that Mr P Dawson has agreed in principle to placing recycling facilities on the playing field, but has asked for more information, in particular with regard to the type of material to be recycled. Cllr Lilley and the Clerk are to liaise. The Vice-chairman said that controlling litter around the banks would be a problem and felt that this should be the responsibility of the organisation receiving any revenue forthcoming. Cllr Wood noted that there are no problems eg with broken bottles, at the Aldington recycling facility, and in answer to a question from the Vice-chairman said that extra insurance would not be needed, being covered by existing public liability insurance.

The Clerk is to pursue Cllr Wood's recommendation that ABC be contacted re grants for the concrete base. Materials to be recycled were discussed, and it was agreed that these should be: glass (separated into the 3 colours), aluminium cans and metal tins. Newspapers would continue to be collected by the Scouts and Guides. Cardboard would not be included because of problems experienced at other sites. The Chairman noted that Shepway recycles plastic, unlike ABC. Cllr Wood said that it is unclear whether the plastic is recycled, goes to landfill or is incinerated.

Cllr Plowright was informed that emptying is carried out by contractors on behalf of ABC.

It was agreed that a possible site is at the south end of the car park.

Cllr Herrick said that the initiative should be publicised, and it was suggested that this be via notices, Kentish Express, Parish News and the Parish website.

Cllr Turner read a letter from Mr P Jackson (Head of Environmental Services, ABC) to the Parish Council, in which he reiterated that budget constraints meant that the blue box scheme could not be extended to Smeeth.

- **Litter collection on the playing field**

The Scouts and Guides have indicated that they are unwilling to undertake the playing field litter collection because of the nature of some of the detritus. Cllr Plowright asked who owns the Playing Field and was advised by Cllr Thorpe that the Playing Field Association holds it on a 999 year lease from Brabourne Estates (cf. the Village Hall). A village community effort was mooted, but the Chairman noted that the problem of the offensive nature of some of the litter remains. Cllr Wood noted that the Playing Field in Aldington does not have a similar problem, and the Chairman felt that this is because of the open aspect of the field, unlike Smeeth's which is bounded by hedges. The Clerk is to contact Environmental Services, ABC, on Cllr Wood's recommendation. Cllr Plowright suggested that the Playing Field Association be asked for suggestions. He also recommended an approach to the Clean Kent Group, publicised at the Police Forum: this group investigates incidents of fly-tipping and may be willing to undertake an initial clean up.

- **Parish Website**

This is now running, and thanks were given to Mrs Thorpe for sending information on activities in Smeeth. There are links to the Brabourne website to avoid duplication of material.

## 6. **Report from Community Warden**

The Clerk read the Community Warden's report, in his absence.

Both Brett (support warden) and I have been highly visible in the Parish and in doing so were able to divert most of the school run around the flood in Church Road. However three cars did become victims of the water. We were able to contact KCC Highways and eventually they closed the road and brought in a water carrier to move the water elsewhere.

We have visited the coffee mornings at the Baptist Church on a Wednesday and have agreed to try to attend on the 1st Wednesday of the month as an informal surgery.

I have also written a letter of support towards funding for a new kitchen in the Baptist Church. I hope to be given keys for use as an alternate base as it is more central to the villages.

I have received a number of complaints about recent bonfires and have taken advice and obtained leaflets from the Borough Council. Contrary to popular belief there is no law that bonfires should only be lit between dusk and dawn. However the Borough Council encourages recycling whenever possible, and only burn suitable materials on a bonfire. No plastics, rubber, foamed filled furnishings or wet material. The Council will respond to calls to 01233 331111 (Environmental Services) if a bonfire is causing a nuisance to neighbours by smoke, burning particles or odour.

Finally we have the youth van coming for the next three weeks.

The Chairman commended the Warden for his enthusiasm, this was endorsed by Cllr Turner.

## 7. Financial Report

### Resolved:

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

#### Payments

Details	£
Mrs B Podd (salary to 5 <sup>th</sup> March)	139.20
Mrs S Wood (salary Oct – March)	1075.00
Mrs S Wood (expenses)	88.34
ACRK (annual subscription)	35.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall Association	700.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Footpaths Association	10.00
KALC (annual subscription)	304.59
Mrs B Podd (salary 8 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> March)	34.80

#### Receipts

Details	£
NatWest interest	0
ABC – Street Cleansing Grant	583.18

Balance: £7904.06

### To consider a donation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Brabourne and Smeeth Scouts and Guides

The Chairman advised that this was to have been in recognition of collecting litter on the Playing Field. (See Matters Arising.)

### To consider a donation to the Village Hall Association

The Chairman reported that the Association is improving facilities at the Hall. The Parish Council has already written in support and pledged £300. Cllr Thorpe stated that the kitchen was last refurbished in 1979, and the current project would improve the kitchen, changing rooms and a second meeting room would be provided. This would increase use of the Hall.

**Resolved:**

**That a further £200 be pledged to the Village Hall Association.**

**To consider purchase of Standing Orders for Local Councils (2010)**

**Resolved:**

**That a copy be purchased for use by the Chairman, and a second for the Clerk. The latter cost to be partly shared by Brabourne and Westwell Parish Councils if they are agreeable.**

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

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that a caravan had been placed in a garden for use by the householder while the house is renovated. The caravan has been removed, but if reinstated and used for the purpose described, planning permission will be needed.

2 planning applications have been received, of which 1 has been approved. 1 case of non-compliance has been reported to the Enforcement Officer.

The Planning Committee Chairman reported that the land used in the Church Road composting operation has not yet been reinstated, 1 year after withdrawal of the planning application. Cllr Wood is to ask for an update from Mr M Vink (ABC). The Vice-chairman further noted that the concrete base has not yet been taken up and the hedge has not been replanted. Cllr Honey stated that KCC would be the body responsible for action, as the application was for a waste operation.

**9. Report from KALC representative**

Cllr Herrick reported that he attended the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February with Cllr Plowright. Speeding problems were noted, together with problems arising from the snow, and M20 noise. The next meeting is on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

**10. To consider offering support to the project to refurbish the kitchen in Brabourne Baptist Church**

The Chairman said that the kitchen is in need of refurbishment and grants are being sought from funding organizations. In answer to a question from Cllr Honey, the Chairman stated that the facilities are available for public use: Mother and Toddler Groups; antenatal clinics; English Rural Housing Association events; Parish Council meetings; and Baby clinics are held. Cllr Thorpe noted that a Hustings meeting for the forthcoming General Election is to be held in the Church and Cllr Wood said that it is, therefore, available for secular use.

**Resolved:**

**That a letter of support for the project be sent to the Pastor.**

**11. Any Other Business**

- The Chairman said that on 2 recent occasions temporary traffic lights in Plain Road had not been cleared promptly.
- The Vice-chairman reported that The Plough will change hands on 6<sup>th</sup> April. The new landlord was seeking suggestions as to what the pub should offer the Parish.
- Cllr Plowright advised that the Converter Station is to undergo major refurbishment, involving over 100 contractors (who will be bussed in because of the numbers) for 6 - 8 weeks. He confirmed that there will be 24 hour working, but there would be few heavy vehicles involved.
- The Clerk reported that questionnaires have been sent to every household by ABC: 'Have Your Say, It's Your Borough'. These are to determine householders' views with regard to prioritising future expenditure by the Borough Council.
- ACRK is seeking nominations for the 'Retailer of the Year'. It was agreed to nominate Orpins Stores.

- The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's DPD is out for consultation. This was passed to Cllr Plowright.
- The Vice-chairman asked Cllr Honey if the alternative sites to the lorry park are in the public domain. Cllr Honey replied they were published in the Kentish Express recently. When the Vice-chairman asked why these had been ruled out, it was stated that it was because of proximity to areas of AONB. The Vice-chairman noted that there were indications that the Police budget would be insufficient to allow for policing of the park. Cllr Wood replied that the government could enforce policing. Cllr Honey said that funding is available for Operation Stack, although Cllr Wood is of the opinion that Operation Stack would still be necessary even were the park to be built. The Vice-chairman said that traffic problems would be aggravated by the proposed large housing development at Sellindge. Cllr Wood said that this is part of Shepway's Core Strategy. The Vice-chairman stated that uncertainty over the lorry park blights the area. Cllr Wood said that these concerns would be passed to KCC. Cllr Wood said that efforts are still being made to resolve the problem of overnight parking by HGVs - this will reduce the case for the park.

#### **12. Resolution to exclude the public**

**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 Clerk's Salary Review.**

The Resolution was passed and the Chairman suspended the public part of the meeting to enable item 13 to be debated. Cllrs Honey and Wood left the meeting, the Members of the Public having left during Matters Arising.

#### **13. Clerk's salary review**

After debate:

**Resolved:**

**That the Clerk's salary be raised to Spinal Point 18 (£2320).**

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

The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.