

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 9th November 2011
At Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Austen (CA) (Chairman), Cllr Herrick (DH) (Vice-chairman), Cllrs Hinchliffe (MH), Lilley (GL), Plowright (IP), Thorpe (GT) and Turner (MT), and Mrs Wood (SW)(Clerk). Cllr Howard (ward member), Mr Kingston (GK) (Community Warden) and Mrs K Bugden (Action with Communities in Rural Kent) (ACRK) also attended. There were no members of the public present.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

3. Declaration of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th September be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Presentation on Parish Plans

Mrs Bugden stated that Parish Plans are now more commonly known as Community Led Plans, are plans developed by and for the community, and give the Parish Council a community mandate.

There are 3 main components:

- A stock-take of the parish – what is already in place
- A vision for the future – what should be kept or improved over the next 10 years
- An Action Plan – giving time scales and funding sources (this element was missing from Parish Appraisals).

Points to note are:

- It takes about 18 months to produce a Plan
- It is a way of involving people in the parish and generates interest and a community spirit
- It is led by a Steering Group and is not a Parish Council project, but the Council should be represented on the Steering Group
- The Steering Group is usually composed of 8-10 volunteers
- The Steering Group can apply for funding from sources closed to Parish Councils
- Membership of the Group should be open to all and must involve everyone in the community, particularly those who do not respond to consultations
- Consultation can be via questionnaires delivered to each household or through meetings
- Community Wardens are invaluable in helping engagement
- The Steering Group should liaise with outside bodies that influence policy or would help implement the Action Plan, eg the Parish Council.

Mrs Bugden circulated copies of completed Parish Plans. Cllr Howard noted that Parish Plans complement localism and planning reforms.

Volunteers could be recruited via a special or existing event.

In answer to a question from Cllr Lilley, Mrs Bugden advised that the Steering Group would produce the printed Plan; funding is available from ABC (Community Grant Scheme), KCC, Awards for All, the Parish Council or local fundraising.

The Clerk advised that Brabourne Parish Council supports the Plan and wishes to help in producing a joint Plan.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked if his recent article on Neighbourhood Planning in Parish News would

impact on the Parish Plan, and was advised by the Chairman that this would generate interest.

Mrs Bugden noted that the first Parish Plans were produced 40 years ago, and approx 1/3 of parishes are working on or have completed a Plan.

Mrs Bugden was thanked for her presentation.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would support an initiative to produce a Parish Plan.

Cllrs Plowright and Hinchliffe's offer to be the Council's representatives was welcomed.

IP/
MH

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Footpaths and Highways

6.1.1 A meeting was held with local farmers to discuss issues on both sides. It was agreed to draw up a footpath guide, a Code of Conduct and an information leaflet. Open Days are being organized – these were welcomed, and may address a lack of knowledge of the economic status of farming and its impact on the area, and raise awareness. Appreciation was expressed of the support for the parish by the Brabourne family as landowners, but it was noted that some tenants had a different attitude. Another meeting will be arranged in the New Year.

SA/
SW

6.1.2 Cllr Thorpe advised that 1 of 2 bridges washed away has been replaced, and the other will be replaced shortly.

6.1.3 Cllr Hinchliffe noted that vegetation overhanging the footway along The Ridgeway has not yet been cleared. KCC (Highways) has contacted the tenant asking that this be carried out.

6.1.4 Cars are parking on the footway on The Ridgeway. Mr Kingston will ask that the vehicles be moved.

6.1.5 The dog warden has not yet visited the parish.

6.1.6 The Byways and Bridleways Trust has objected to the claimed footpath in Church Road, on the grounds of insufficient width. The PROW officer is liaising.

6.1.7 The offer of a visit by the Highways' Steward is to be taken up, jointly with Brabourne Parish Council.

SW

6.1.8 The salt bag has been delivered.

6.1.9 A complaint re an overhanging hedge in Lees Road has been investigated.

6.2 Speeding in Smeeth

6.2.1 Six volunteers have undergone Speedwatch training. The equipment will be loaned by Kent Police for periods of one week at a time. Cllr Plowright noted that the equipment is relatively straightforward to set up and use, and Cllr Hinchliffe offered to store it when it is not in use. PC Laker has a list of approved sites. In answer to a question from Cllr Turner, warning letters are sent by the Police to the owners of vehicles logged as having exceeded the limit (speed limit + 2mph).

6.2.2 Interactive speed sign in Church Road: the Parish Council's comments re location have been passed to Cllr Wickham. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllrs Wickham and Howard.

6.3 Parking in Sandy Place Cllr Howard advised that the letter recently sent to Sandy Place residents had been written by a new Area Manager, who was unaware of the site history, and had later apologized for the confusion. A site meeting is to be held to discuss the Parish Council's proposals. Sandy Place residents are to be asked not to park on the grass during the winter to avoid damage to the turf. Other residents are to be asked to refrain from parking in Sandy Place.

SW

7. Report from Community Warden

I would like to report that Halloween night was well observed by a number of young people in the village with no incidents to my knowledge of mischief.

Following my request for information about door to door seller(s) I was told by a couple of residents when they were in the area and was able to obtain names and addresses. I have passed on this information to trading standards, as doorstep sellers need a Pedlar's licence. The sellers immediately left the area.

There was a theft of a scaffold lorry from WBM scaffolding Home Farm Smeeth, and there have been a number of metal thefts, including lead from the Oak Room roof.

There have been enquiries about the legality of a caravan parking on the highway in Smeeth and my research indicates that it is not in itself illegal unless it is considered to be an obstruction. I have spoken to the owner who has indicated that he cannot afford to pay for off road parking and will not move it voluntarily.

Following the last parish council meeting I have made enquiries with Stagecoach as to whether they have any plans for the local bus when Plain Road is closed for the Electric cable work, to date I have had no response.

I have contacted KCC Action with communities regarding 'Funding Buddies' for a possible youth project to be run by the Baptist church in the area.

The Chairman thanked Mr Kingston for his report and noted that the youth project is called 'Hang 10'. A meeting is being facilitated by Rev Simpson (Brabourne Baptist Church pastor) for Mr Pelham (Ashford Baptist Church and ABC) with the chairmen of Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils, and the Community Warden.

8. Report from Borough Councillor

Cllr Howard stated that Hang 10 is a black and chrome pick-up truck which travels to where young people meet and then engages with them, and encourages their involvement in the community. It is currently operating in Wye and it is hoped that there will shortly be a second truck.

Cllr Howard aims to re-establish Youth Forums, these would meet for a short period before Parish Council meetings and then feed back information. The Chairman welcomed the proposal, stating that it should be recognized that young people have a voice which should be heard, and not just because they are the next generation of Parish Councillors. Cllr Howard encouraged Parish Councils to link with established young people's groups, such as the Scouts and Guides. Cllr Plowright suggested that young people should be involved in the Community Led Plan project.

The Olympic torch will come through Ashford en route from Hastings – Dover – Maidstone, passing through Ham Street, Ashford and Challock, on 18th and 19th July 2012. The actual route will not be published until 2-3 weeks before the event, and the torch will either be carried by a torch bearer or in a vehicle; the distance to be covered precludes runners only. Cllr Howard is to ask that the torch detours through the villages.

A planning application for a small Gypsy and Traveller site at Bilsington is to go to the Planning Committee on 16th November. A proposal to build 2 chalets on the Ruckinge holiday caravan park is opposed by residents, but as these are to replace chalets burned down approx 20 years ago, planning permission is not required.

Planning permission has been given for the John Lewis Home Store and the K College. He noted that other retailers may be coming to Ashford with the concomitant expansion of existing retailers. Cllr Howard agreed with Cllr Lilley that business rates should be lowered to attract new business, as well as other initiatives such as reduced parking fees.

Ashford School has acquired the flour mill on East Hill, which will become its new Performing Arts centre. The success of the refurbishment of St Mary, Ashford and its use as an Arts venue has highlighted the need for additional performance space in the town.

Details of a Member fund for Borough Councillors are being finalized..

Parish Councils are asked to assist the Borough Council's search for small sites for travellers. Cllr Howard was thanked for his report.

9. Financial report

9.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

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

Payments

| Details | £ |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Mrs B Podd (salary) | 91.20 |
| Mrs S Wood (salary Oct) | 215.39 |
| Mrs S Wood (salary Nov) | 215.39 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Cash (Fordred Charity payments) | 168.00 |
| Cash (Bedingfield Charity payments) | 15.00 |
| Smeeth & Brabourne Football Club | 150.00 |

Receipts

| Details | £ |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Nat West interest | 1.69 |
| Precept | 3795.00 |
| Concurrent Functions Grant | 445.50 |
| Fordred's Charity | 168.00 |
| Smeeth Field Rent | 175.00 |

Balance: £ 16389.26

9.2 To consider a request from Kent BTCV for a donation to the Tree Warden scheme

Resolved:

That the request be refused.

SW

9.3 To consider the draft Budget for the year 2012-2013

The Clerk presented the draft Budget.

After debate.

Resolved:

That the draft Budget for 2012-2013 be approved.

Further resolved:

That the Precept remains unchanged at £7590.

SW

10. Planning Committee report

Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported that a retrospective application for change of use of land for storage of scaffolding had been received. Although this was supported, he recommended that a higher fee be levied by ABC for retrospective applications as a disincentive.

11. KALC report

Cllr Herrick advised that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October had been circulated. The next meeting is on 30th November.

12. Broadband provision in Smeeth parish

Cllr Plowright reported that 240 completed survey forms had been returned from a total of 900 distributed. Information is awaited from KCC on the next tranche of broadband grants, due in November.

Most respondents wanted higher download speeds, and reported speeds of 1 – 1.5 Mbps., They would be willing to pay a 'one-off' installation cost of £30-40 but not pay a higher monthly fee.

13. To consider a proposal to set up a joint committee to produce a draft Emergency Plan for Smeeth and Brabourne parishes

Cllr Hinchliffe stated that both Parish Councils support the drafting of a joint Emergency Plan. It was suggested that the Committee comprises one Parish Councillor from each parish and parishioners with the necessary expertise.

It was suggested that the Emergency Plan be incorporated into the Parish Plan.

Resolved:

That Cllr Hinchliffe be the Smeeth Parish Council representative on the Emergency Plan committee.

MH

14. Diamond Jubilee Beacon and Village Fete

The Diamond Jubilee Beacon Guide was passed to Cllr Plowright.

The village fete will be held on 16th June, 2 weeks after the Jubilee. A new Chairman for the Fete Committee has come forward.

15. Community Infrastructure Levy: consultation on detailed proposals and regulations for reform

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a new levy that local authorities in England and Wales can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods. It applies to most new buildings and charges are based on the size and type of the new development. It is similar to section 106 agreements.

The Levy is out for consultation until 30th December: councillors' comments will be collated and submitted by the Clerk.

SW

16. Any Other Business

16.1 Cllrs Plowright and Lilley are to attend the Playing Field Association meeting on 11th November.

16.2 The Housing Needs Survey report has been received from ACRK and is being circulated to councillors.

17. Resolution to exclude the public

It was proposed that, 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 18, namely Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

Resolved:

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 18, namely Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

18. Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments

Resolved:

That Cllr Lilley distributes the payments as agreed.

GL

19. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 18th January, 2012, 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.44pm.