

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 8th January 2014
at Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllr Mrs Williams (MW), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr Plowright (IP), Cllr Thorpe (GT), Cllr Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW).

Mr G Kingston (Community Warden) (GK) also attended.
 One member of the public was present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Miss Martin (JM) and Cllr Howard (WH) (ward members), and PCSO Andrew Huckstepp.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 13th November 2013

Item 14: The date of the meeting was December 2nd.

Resolved:

Subject to this amendment, that the Minutes of the meeting be approved and signed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Financial report Cllr Plowright suggested that a date be given for the balance in hand.

5.2 Sandpit site No further information is available; a meeting of stakeholders is to be held on January 19th.

5.3 Postal problems No further problems have been reported following reorganisation of the rounds.

5.4 Replies to Parish Council emails All but one (which was sent during the Christmas break) have been answered promptly. Monitoring will continue.

5.5 List of tenants This information cannot be made available to the Parish Council.

5.6 Village defibrillator Checking of the equipment and the return to the Ambulance Service is in hand with Cllr Hinchliffe. Liability in the event of a death following use of the equipment was queried: the Ambulance Service has advised that there is no liability if the operator was acting in good faith.

MH

6. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

Reports from Mr Kingston and PCSO Huckstepp are attached.

Mr Kingston reported a theft of tools from a property in The Ridgeway and an increasing number of oil thefts – Kent Police are aware of the situation.

Cllr Plowright noted incidents of antisocial behaviour in Calland.

Cllr Hinchliffe advised that Stowting Security Face is similar to Neighbourhood Watch (NW) and circulates details of similar incidents. The Clerk is to ask that the Parish Council be added to the circulation list, and to contact PCSO Huckstepp regarding a possible relaunch of NW. Cllr Thorpe advised that a local coordinator will be needed, and there is a charge for NW signs. Cllr Turner suggested that an advertisement for a coordinator be placed in Parish News.

SW

SW

7. Financial Report

7.1 Payments in accordance with the Budget.

Resolved:

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

Payments

| Details | £ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Brabourne Parish Council (for the CLP and EP Steering Group) | 100.00 |
| S Wood (Fordred's Charity reimbursement) | 198.00 |
| S Wood (net salary Dec) | 218.55 |
| S Wood (net salary Jan) | 218.15 |
| HMRC (PAYE Q3) | 164.20 |
| KALC (Good Councillor's Guide) | 7.50 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Brabourne Parish Council (Good Councillor's Guide) | 5.00 |
| SLCC subscription renewal) | 38.35 |
| KALC – conference 8 th Feb | 72.00 |
| Barbara Podd (salary) | 75.72 |

Receipts

| Details | £ |
|-------------------|--------|
| Fordred's Charity | 168.00 |

Balance: £ 21406.58 (at 8th January 2014)

7.2 Draft Budget for 2014-2015

The Clerk presented the draft budget.

It was proposed that £5000 for expenditure on capital items, eg Sandy Place parking, be added. There was discussion as to whether substantial expenditure on a project that would only be of benefit to a small number of residents could be justified. It was felt that this argument could be applied to any project, and was justified if it solved the problem. Cllr Plowright recommended that a covenant be attached to properties in Sandy Place limiting car ownership, but it was doubtful that this could be applied to properties in private ownership, and enforcement would be difficult. It was recognised that parking is a parish-wide problem.

The Clerk is to ask Mr Beavers for a guide as to the costs of the scheme, after which it would be reviewed. It was suggested that the cost be spread over two years, and grants sought from KCC and ABC.

It was agreed that £2500 for capital expenditure be added to the draft Budget.

The Chairman recommended an additional increase in the Precept to build up reserves.

The Clerk advised that the Concurrent Functions Grant for the year would be £620 and a Council Tax Support Grant of £640 would be paid.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow a member of the public to ask what plans were being made to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War. The Chairman replied that this will be discussed at a later meeting, with any expenditure being met from reserves. This was welcomed by the resident, who noted that the local branch of the Royal British Legion is planning a programme of events and might approach the PC for a contribution.

The meeting was reconvened.

It was proposed that the Precept for 2014-2015 be increased to £10664, and that the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant be claimed in addition.

Resolved:

That the Precept for 2014-2015 be set at £10664, exclusive of the Concurrent Functions and Council Tax Support grants.

7.3 Contribution to the Fete Committee for two-way radios

It was suggested that as the Fete is an annual event, any radios could usefully be shared with the Emergency Plan (EP) group. Cllr Plowright reported that the Fete Committee had discussed buying radios with a 10km radius to cover the parish; it was also felt that these would be of benefit being independent of other technology. Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright are making a list of equipment needed by the EP group, and more information will be available at the next PC meeting.

The Clerk is to reply to the request suggesting that the Fete Committee liaises with the EP group with a view to buying equipment with a dual purpose. The request will be discussed at the March meeting.

7.4 Replacement of the parish noticeboard

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the noticeboard is failing and presented information on a possible replacement at a cost of £76 + VAT.

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council agrees to purchase a new noticeboard at a cost of £76 + VAT.

SW

SW

MH

8. Planning Committee report

- 8.1** Cllr Thorpe (Planning Committee Chairman) reported on 1 recent application. Harvest Cottage – extension. There were no objections from the PC and the application was approved by ABC. Concerns had been raised about a property in Brabourne regarding recent works. It was noted that all the necessary permissions had been sought and granted. Little Home Farm – the PC has requested that this is determined by the Planning Committee rather than a decision delegated to a planning officer. Ashbourne House – retrospective application – Cllr Thorpe is liaising with Cllr Howard.
- 8.2** The Chairman reported that Mr Mortimer (Monitoring Officer) had written to all PCs with a reminder that a PC decision on planning applications should be made at a public meeting. The Clerk noted that an extension to the consultation period would be sought if consultation closed before a PC meeting. However this would not be practical if an application were received shortly after a PC meeting. The Clerk is to ask Mr Mortimer for advice on how the PC can meet the requirement. SW
It was suggested that comments be submitted by the Planning Committee but subject to ratification at the PC meeting.

9. KALC

Cllr Herrick reported that the last meeting was on 4th December, the main item for discussion was Finance. The Minutes have been circulated and the next meeting is on 15th January. The Parish Forum met on 11th December and Finance was again the main agenda item. Cllr Hinchliffe hopes to attend the next Forum meeting on 22nd January.

10. Footpaths and Highways

- 10.1 A20 footpath** No progress to report.
- 10.2 Buses** Information on how to report problems with overhanging vegetation was passed to bus station managers by Cllr Plowright.
- 10.3 Hedge cutting in The Ridgeway** Noted that the resulting debris had not been cleared.
- 10.4 Footpaths** Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the footpath in Hospital Fields has been ploughed and not reinstated, as required. Cllr Mrs Williams noted that ploughing of the field opposite the school had, on occasion, come very close to the footpath. Cllr Thorpe advised that problems with footpaths should be reported via the KCC Rights of Way website, as this generates a rapid response.
- 10.5 Sandy Place parking** The Clerk has drawn up the planning application, but a fee of £97.50 is payable.
- Resolved:**
That the planning application be submitted with the required fee. SW
- 10.6 Salt bags** Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright were thanked for clearing the old salt bag.
- 10.7 White lines** Those in Pound Lane, Plain Road and Canterbury Road need refreshing – the Clerk to report to KCC Highways. SW

11. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the Steering Group met on 2nd January. The questionnaires are being finalised and envelopes will be distributed to every household containing questionnaires for adults on the CLP and EP and another for under 18s. A ballot box will be placed in Orpins Stores until the end of February for completed returns. All completed questionnaires will go into a draw for 2 luxury hampers, consideration is also being given to providing a prize for the under 18s. It is hoped that the primary schools will help with a questionnaire for the under 12s. 1200 questionnaires are being printed and will go out with an explanatory letter. Responses will be analysed and the data included in a report. This will be presented to the PCs. If the PCs accept the results, the report will be presented to residents at a public meeting in the village hall. Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked how the data will be analysed – this will be done by Cllr Hinchliffe. Emergency Plan: Cllr Hinchliffe is applying for grants which will be submitted when costs are known – advice is being sought from parishes which already have a plan in place. Cllr Plowright asked that all councillors promote return of the questionnaire. In answer to a question from the Chairman, Cllr Hinchliffe stated that a team of distributors is in place. A Facebook page has been set up for the plans: Brabourne and Smeeth Plans A dedicated email address has been set up: clpep@btinternet.com

12. Speedwatch

Cllr Plowright reported that his article on Speedwatch had been published in the January Parish News, it is hoped that this will generate more volunteers. Additional volunteers will enable more sessions to be carried out. The team participated in the county-wide Speedwatch day in November; 200 offenders were logged of whom 4 were logged for the 4th time – this generates a home visit from the Police.

The offer to share the equipment with Mersham, Sevington and Aldington has elicited no response as yet.

The suggestion that Speedwatch signs be put up has been explored but found to be impractical. Cllr Hinchliffe asked to be notified of any parishes where such signs are seen.

All

13. Localism

No further information.

14. Playing fields

The Chairman stated that the Steering Group has commissioned a survey of the existing pitch; the subsequent report will suggest an action plan and give costings. It is thought unlikely that the existing site can be expanded.

15. Village handyman

No further information.

16. Local Needs housing

A joint meeting will be held on 28th January with Brabourne PC and the ACRK Rural Housing Enabler (Tessa O'Sullivan). This will be preceded by a meeting with a representative of BNRG Renewables about the Park Farm solar park investigation.

17. Correspondence

The invitation to the Lord Lieutenant's Annual Civic Service was passed to the Chairman.

18. Ashford Borough site submissions

Three sites were put forward in Smeeth when ABC asked for landowners to submit potential development sites. Additional information is awaited from ABC. The deadline for the PC's response is Easter 2014. Cllr Hinchliffe is to put information on the proposed sites on the Brabourne and Smeeth Plans Facebook page.

The Chairman noted that guidance would be welcome as to the aspects the PC should consider, eg transport and schools. He further noted that any response should be justified, and this showed the value of the Community Led Plan as this is evidence of residents' views. A nil response would be taken as acceptance of the proposed sites.

19. Any Other Business

19.1 The Chairman reported that Member grants are still available and asked councillors to suggest possible projects.

19.2 Kent Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan consultation – the PC has no comments.

19.3 Public exhibition at Sellindge village hall on the Park Farm solar park – attended by Cllrs Hinchliffe, Plowright and Thorpe. Little information was made available, and there was no information on possible benefits to the parish. It was noted that there would be little visible impact on the proposal, which would be only visible from 1 property.

19.4 Suggestions for Mayoral visits to the parish have been put forward.

19.5 Cllr Hinchliffe will attend a conference on Resilience and Reassurance training on 8th February.

19.6 Cllr Hinchliffe had reported on the Visible Police Conference; it was felt unnecessary to submit comments on the Refresh of the Police and Crime Plan.

19.7 Cllr Thorpe asked that consideration be given to a contribution to replace the village noticeboard at Orpins, as it is dilapidated.

19.8 Cllr Plowright suggested that the Facebook page be used to promote awareness of the PC's activities.

19.9 The Community Warden was asked if he was in the parish during the evening, as there had been reports of children riding bicycles without lights. Mr Kingston will visit the schools and give out free bicycle lights.

19.10 A request has been made to the PC that a bus shelter be installed at the bus stop on The Warren. The Clerk advised that KCC will award a grant of 50% towards

costs. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

20. Date and time of next meeting

12th March 2014, in Brabourne Baptist Church, after the Annual Parish Meeting which begins at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Community Warden's report

Firstly I would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year, I am aware that for a few residents who lost electricity over Christmas it was less than joyful.

Generally over the festive period and despite the inclement weather I believe things have been peaceful for most.

I am aware however that following the number of sheds/garages that were broken into at the rear of The Warren there have been further incidents of a theft of hedging plants in Lees Road and an attempted burglary in Bridge Road where a window was forced but no entry gained. There was also a vehicle burnt out following a road traffic collision. This is a concerning blot on what is usually a crime free area and I continue to talk to PCSO Huckstepp and share any information I get.

I have again liaised with ABC housing regarding a freezer which remains on the grassed area of Calland which the tenant has agreed to remove.

I was contacted by a resident who had found a stray dog and within the day the dog and owner were reunited.

Graham Kingston

PCSO's report

I would like to start by saying Happy New Year to everyone and I hope it will be a good one for you all.

Over the last month it has been a very busy period for us with the bad weather and we have been receiving a lot of calls related to this. There have been a lot of trees down in the strong winds and we have been working very hard along with other authorities, most namely the Highways Agencies to keep the roads clear of any obstruction. I know that we have had some reports of trees down in the village during the bad weather and we have now cleared these. I would just like to say that during the bad weather we are experiencing please be careful on the roads and be aware that there are many trees going down in this weather. Since the last Parish Council meeting there have been two reported crimes in Smeeth. The first was in relation to a theft from a motor vehicle on the A20. The owner had left their car at about 8pm in the evening and upon returning to the car the next day they realized that the fuel cap had been broken and it appears that some fuel had been syphoned from the tank. As there were no witnesses to the offence all lines of enquiry have been exhausted at this stage. The second was also a vehicle crime where number plates had been taken from a vehicle in The Ridgeway.

I would also like to mention that there were several reports of burglaries in Brabourne Lees at The Warren since the last meeting. I attended some of the addresses to take details for crime reports and at this time Kent Police are still investigating these incidents. It appears that the offender gained access from the rear of the properties and broke into several of the sheds in the back gardens. They didn't appear to take much, however they also gained entry to a van and took some gardening equipment. Kent Police are still investigating these incidents. With this in mind please be careful to ensure that everything is secure when left unattended.

I will be holding a surgery at the local store on the 29th January at 1pm so if you have any queries or concerns please come and see me or contact me via e-mail and I will endeavour to help in any way I can. My email address is andrew.huckstepp@kent.pnn.police.uk. If you wish to report any crimes then you can use 999 for emergency calls and crimes in progress, for non-emergency calls and other enquiries please call 101.

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551.