

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2014
at Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr MacPhee (CM) Cllr Plowright (IP), Cllr Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW). Mr Kingston (Community Warden) (GK) attended. Four members of the public were present.

2. Apologies

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

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Plowright: OSI (planning application 14/00808/AS (agenda item 8)).

4. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 9th July.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of 9th July be approved and signed as a true record.

5. Open Session

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to raise matters of concern with their Council.

Mr Clayton stated that although a co-opted member of the Village Hall Committee he was speaking in a personal capacity and was asking the Parish Council to consider increasing its contribution to the village hall. He acknowledged both Parish Councils' support, including grants made for capital projects, but noted that the hall is running at a loss of £300 pa. Hire charges have been increased, but if raised further the number of bookings may decrease, and hire fees should remain at a realistic level.

Brabourne Parish Council gives £1500 pa and Smeeth Parish Council £700 pa, but given that Smeeth is 2/3 of the size of Brabourne Mr Clayton asked the Parish Council to consider increasing its donation in line with this, ie by £300. If the hall were to default Mr Clayton thought it likely that the Parish Councils would have to take over.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked how this financial situation had arisen, and Mr Clayton replied that it was due to increasing costs of utilities and maintenance. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that if a larger contribution were agreed it would be hoped that a similar situation would not arise. Mr Clayton agreed but stated that he did not know how costs would increase in the coming year.

Cllr Thorpe stated that he had previously been Secretary of the Hall Committee and asked if the Committee had any plans to raise funds other than by increasing hire charges. Mr Clayton replied that the Treasurer (Mr Coupe) is looking for grants for capital projects, eg refurbishment of the kitchen, but not for revenue funding. Cllr MacPhee said that a viable and well-used hall is essential for the community, and cited the example of a hall in Surrey which had installed solar panels – income from the panels had turned a deficit to a surplus of several thousands. Mr Clayton thanked Cllr MacPhee for the suggestion, which he would take to the Hall Committee, and asked for likely installation costs. These were unknown, but the Chairman advised that a domestic installation was approx £7000. However income from selling surplus power to the National Grid has been reduced, but Cllr MacPhee noted that the rate paid is tax free and index linked for 20 years. Mr Clayton welcomed the suggestion, subject to affordability and the ability of the roof to take the weight; and in answer to Cllr MacPhee noted that it would be possible to feed back into the National Grid.

The Chairman asked how hiring fees compare to other, similar halls, but Mr Clayton did not know. The Chairman asked Mr Clayton to forward details of hire charges for similar halls. The Clerk noted that the hall will also have to bear the costs of grass-cutting, this having been done in error by Landscape Services in previous years because it was wrongly assumed that it was ABC land. The Chairman asked that the Village Hall Committee put its request for additional funding in writing.

Mr Mugridge expressed concerns that the development at Manor Leaze was originally 'open plan' but a fence was erected on a property, later reduced to a height of 1m after intervention by ABC Planning Officers. A hedge is now growing, is in excess of 1m in

height and is reducing the visibility splay. Cllr Plowright asked if there were any conditions in the planning consent, Mr Mugridge replied that it was 'desirable' that it be open plan. The Clerk will raise this with the Planning dept.

SW

The Community Warden offered to liaise with the resident when the conditions are known.

Mr Glenister reported problems regarding the installation of fencing and stiles on a number of footpaths in the parish. The Vice-chairman replied that the PROW office is investigating the complaints, and has determined that the stiles are illegal and must be removed: new stiles may only be installed where they had been historically, and there was no record of stiles on the paths in question. Mr Glenister asked if there is a minimum required width for a footpath; Cllr Plowright stated that the minimum width depends on the path's location, eg across a field it is 1m, around the edge it is 1.5m. The Clerk will ask the PROW office to check the widths. Mr Glenister reported that a footpath off Lees Road is obstructed by brambles; the Clerk advised that this is being investigated by the PROW office.

SW

Cllr Plowright asked that similar concerns be passed to the Clerk and the Vice-chairman.

The meeting was reconvened.

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Provision of external cabinet for the village defibrillator: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that a suitable box would cost ~£650, although Mr Richard Graham had obtained sponsorship. a similar box could be imported from the US for ~£250. The First Responder has temporarily covered the cabinet with a bag. The width of an external cabinet may also cause difficulties given the defibrillator's location.

6.2 New model Standing Orders: will be circulated before the next meeting by the Clerk.

SW

6.3 Milestone Society: The Vice-chairman reported that he had not found any milestones in addition to the stone identified by the Society. He noted that the stone is in a poor state of repair, and the Society has asked that KCC be asked to repair it. The Clerk to pursue.

SW

6.4 Prescription service and delivery of medicines: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that a similar service is offered by the surgeries at Wye and Ham Street. The former can arrange delivery to named patients, depending on their circumstance, the latter was set up when the surgery closed. Cllr Hinchliffe stated that Sellindge surgery is willing to make arrangements with patients if the PC can identify volunteers willing to collect and deliver prescriptions at no cost. The Chairman asked if there was any indication of the extent of the need, Cllr Hinchliffe noted that this was unknown. The Community Warden noted that one of the questions in the Emergency Plan questionnaire was 'Do you require medicines to be delivered?' Cllr Hinchliffe advised that the number who said 'Yes' was negligible; the Vice-chairman noted that the returns showed a large number willing to collect. Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked if checks would be needed on the volunteers. Cllr MacPhee stated that for a service to operate safely and reliably the dispensary would need a Standard Operating Procedure to cover the whole process, including handling of prescription drugs. In addition, how would prescriptions that need to be paid for be handled and who would be accountable for the cash; would it be for repeat prescriptions only and it must have a full audit trail. The service must operate five days per week with cover for holidays/sickness. The service would need to be 5 days each week. The Clerk asked how Controlled Drugs would be handled. It was noted that electronic prescriptions allow dispensing at any nominated pharmacy, and that Lloyds Chemist at Willesborough offers a delivery service. (It is unclear if it delivers to Smeeth and Brabourne.) Cllr Hinchliffe is to contact Wye surgery for more information.

MH

6.5 Member grants: The Chairman stated that these are available, those interested should contact Cllr Howard.

6.6 Promotion of the parish: The Chairman stated that the idea is to provide a village directory of businesses, clubs etc. Cllr Hinchliffe reported a positive response from local businesses approached thus far. Cllr Plowright noted that this information may come out of the Emergency Plan; the Chairman agreed and cautioned against a duplication of effort.

7. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

No report in PCSO Huckstepp's absence.

The Community Warden reported that he will be back full-time on 15th September after a long period of sick leave. Minor damage had been reported at the school, Cllr Turner

noted that work is being carried out to the fence to prevent unauthorised access. Rubbish was reported on The Warren and accumulating in Calland, including a trampoline. The Warden stated that he had been in touch with the Housing Dept of ABC and the trampoline was removed; a visit with the Community Safety Unit is planned. A problem caused by overgrown shrubs obstructing Lees Road was resolved after a visit from the Warden. He is hoping to resolve a similar situation caused by brambles. The Warden reported that Tesco at Crookfoot has opened a new community room available free of charge to local groups and charities 0900-2100, with free tea and coffee available.

The Chairman asked for an update on 'youth provision' in the PCSO's July report. The Warden replied that he and PCSO Huckstepp had spoken to local young people about what facilities they wishes for, and suggested visits from the Youth Bus and transport to the Skate Park. Little interest was expressed. The Chairman and Vice-chairman noted that the Youth Bus had elicited little interest before.

In answer to a question from Cllr Turner, the Warden stated that there had been no complaints about farm vehicles. Cllr Plowright asked for enforcement on drivers of agricultural vehicles re mobile phone use, driving on the footpath, and age restrictions. Cllr Turner also reported encroachment on verges caused by the width of farm vehicles. The Warden and PCSO were asked to gather information and pass to the Police.

8. Financial Report

8.1 Payments in accordance with the Budget.

Resolved:

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

Payments

Details	£
S Wood (gross salary August)	272.95
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S Wood (expenses) *	132.36
PKF Littlejohn (audit fee)	120.00

Receipts

Details	£
Member community grant (noticeboard)	250.00

Balance

£22959.29 as at 10th September 2014

The Clerk reported that the Annual Return has been approved by the external auditor, and the balance of the Precept, Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant is due for payment at the end of September.

8.2 Contribution to Brabourne Parish Council for the parish noticeboard on The Warren

The Clerk reported that the new noticeboard had been ordered by Brabourne Parish Council from WDS signs, costing ~£1700, and would be installed in late September. The new noticeboard would carry the header 'Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils'. A bespoke noticeboard had been ruled out on cost grounds. The Clerk reported that Cllr Howard had given a Member Community Grant to Smeeth Parish Council of £250 towards the cost of the noticeboard.

The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council contribute £600 to Brabourne Parish Council for the noticeboard, exclusive of the Member Community Grant.

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council gives a contribution of £600 to Brabourne Parish Council for the new noticeboard.

The Clerk advised that the noticeboard would be locked, noticeboards from other suppliers that were only part lockable being significantly more expensive. The Vice-chairman agreed to be a keyholder to facilitate posting of community notices.

9. Planning Committee report

Cllr Thorpe (Committee chairman) reported on five planning applications:

Orchard House (single storey extension)

St Cleer (single storey extension)

Park Cottage (replacement windows; render brickwork)
National Grid Co Ltd (extension and associated works)
Evegate Business Park (microbrewery)
There were no objections to the applications.
Little Home Farm was disposed of as 'undetermined' and Cllr Howard is to be asked to progress the application for Ashbourne House.

10. KALC

The Chairman reported that the last meeting was on 16th July, at which a presentation on Resilience Training and Emergency Planning was given. The training offered was not thought to be relevant to Parish Councils at this time. The Minutes have been circulated electronically. The next meeting is on 24th September and Damian Green MP will speak on 'Localism'.

11. Footpaths and Highways

11.1 Smeeth crossroads The Chairman stated that the planned improvements are welcome but it is thought more are needed. Comments have been forwarded to KCC, concerning a lower speed limit and relocating the telegraph pole. Cllr MacPhee agreed that speed of traffic on the A20 is the primary factor in accidents at the crossroads, and a lower limit plus enforcement are needed. He also reported problems of HGV parking in the layby on Hythe Road near the junction with The Ridgeway. The Clerk stated that a previous request to close the layby had been refused because it is used by school buses. The Clerk reported that the proposed lorry park at Aldington will not be going ahead, but there are proposals for a lorry park with a capacity of 468 lorries at junction 11 near Stop 24. When the park is in place there will be enforcement of no overnight parking in laybys.

11.2 Sandy Place Cllr Plowright and the Clerk are seeking a meeting with the planning officer, who has indicated that permission to remove the sycamore would be refused because it is an amenity.

SW/IP

11.3 Water leak in Plain Road This was initially reported to South East Water, but it was not their supply and was therefore passed on to Folkestone Water. It was noted that the road is subsiding. The Clerk to pursue.

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11.4 Dislodged kerbstone The repair has been completed.

11.5 Salt bin The request for a bin will be considered by KCC Highways in 2015, the allocation for 2014 having been made. The Clerk is to obtain costings of a bin and refills.

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11.6 Footpaths The Vice-chairman reported that it is a condition of a grant from the European Community that Rights of Way should be maintained; failure to do so is a breach of the conditions.

12. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the two working groups are progressing the Plans. The next meeting of the Steering Group is 23rd September at which the date for delivery of the report will be discussed. The Chairman suggested that there be youth involvement; Cllr Plowright replied that when actions are identified in the Community Led Plan there may be some that suit young people's involvement.

13. Speedwatch

Cllr Plowright reported that a number of sessions had been held in the previous three weeks. Nine warning letters had been issued by Kent Police. Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked if there were evidence that driver behaviour had changed. Cllr Plowright stated that it is the Police view that it does impact on behaviour. He reported that a joint session with the Sellindge Speedwatch group had been held in Plain Road simultaneously with one on Stone Hill. The group still has the loan of equipment from the Police and therefore can monitor traffic in two directions. Aldington is hoping to set up a Speedwatch group, with Cllr Plowright's assistance.

14. Local Needs Housing

The Clerk is to contact Miss Tessa O'Sullivan for an update on progress. Cllr Hinchliffe suggested an approach to landowners; the Clerk stated that letters had been sent but would ask Miss O'Sullivan if a more direct approach could be made. The Clerk reported that the shortlist of sites submitted during the ongoing review of the Local Plan will be published at Christmas; these sites will be out for consultation. The owners of any sites not included may be open to an approach for LNH, given that omission would prevent the

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sites being used for market housing.

15. Playing fields

The Chairman reported that the hoped-for funding had not been forthcoming, and the Steering group is looking at local fundraising, eg quiz nights, boot fairs, horse-racing nights. The first target is £11,000 for rabbit-proof fencing . The Clerk suggested that funding be sought from Biffa.

16. Village handyman scheme

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that Mr John Rivers' presentation on the scheme to Mersham had been well received. Mersham Parish Council meets on 15th September at which it will decide if it wishes to be involved. Funding from ABC will be determined when the new contracts have been negotiated. Mr Rivers has offered to help following the success of the scheme in Wittersham. The importance of the right recruit was stressed. Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright will liaise with ABC.

MH/IP

17. Correspondence

All correspondence has been circulated.

17.1 Invitation to join the J10A Community Working Group The Chairman stated that the full junction 10A is to go ahead, with funding coming from the Highways Agency, it is therefore now a central govt project. Cllr Mrs Pereboom agreed to be the Parish Council's representative. The Clerk was asked to recirculate the map of the proposals and contact Cllr Howard for information on the outcome of the Ebbsfleet meeting.

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18. Dates for future meetings

14th January 2015, 11th March, 13th May, 8th July, 9th September, 11th November.

19. Any Other Business

19.1 Fordred's Charity is to be discussed at the next meeting, councillors were asked to bring suggestions.

19.2 The Chairman will represent the Parish Council and lay the wreath at the Remembrance Day Service on 9th November.

20. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 12th November 2014, at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.
