

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

1. Present

Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllr Mrs Williams (MW), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr Plowright (IP), Cllr Turner (MT) and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW). Cllr Miss Martin (JM) (ward member), Cllr Wickham (AW) (county councillor) and Mr G Kingston (Community Warden) (GK) also attended.
Four members of the public was present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Howard (WH) (ward member) and PCSO Andrew Huckstepp.

In the absence of the Chairman Cllr Thorpe took the Chair.

The Chairman invited Cllr Wickham to give a report.

Cllr Wickham stated that KCC has saved £240,000,000 over the last 3 years, but must save a similar sum over the next 3 years due to a reduction in government funding. He noted the increasing pressures of an ageing population, inflation and rising costs in children's social care. Council tax has been frozen for the last 2 years but will rise by 1.99% in 2014-2015, to allow for a 1% pay rise for KCC employees, particularly the lowest paid. KCC services and their delivery are under review in the search for cost savings, and cited the trial streetlight switch off as an example.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked Cllr Wickham if he had any comments on a comment made by the Police at a recent seminar, that they were carrying out tasks that are not their responsibility. Cllr Wickham replied that if this meant dealing with antisocial behaviour this is being tackled by Community Wardens; noise nuisance should be reported to ABC, but if out of hours the complaint is then made to the Police.

KCC is introducing a programme of 'Transformation': working to find out what residents want and delivering it, rather than being prescriptive.

The Chairman welcomed the streetlight switch off and asked if it could be extended, Cllr Wickham noted that this cost-saving measure had been suggested by a member of the public. All lights in the county had been surveyed and those identified as being least needed were switched off, either completely or from midnight to 5am. These areas are being monitored for any effects on crime and antisocial behaviour. Cllr Plowright stated that there is an interactive map on the KCC website showing the lights involved.

Cllr Hinchliffe thanked Cllr Wickham for his grant to the Community Led Plan (CLP) and Emergency Plan (EP). Cllr Wickham advised that each county councillor has a Member Grant of £10,000 plus a Highways Grant, the latter was used to pay for the resurfacing of Church Road. Money is also being put aside and it is hoped to resurface The Ridgeway during the next financial year. He stated that Member Grants are for community benefit, and often act as a catalyst for other grants.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wickham for his report.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Plowright (OSI): Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan; Speedwatch.

Cllr Hinchliffe (OSI): Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan; Speedwatch; AED.

4. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 8th January 2014

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of 8th January be approved and signed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Sandpit site The Chairman stated that the Parish Council is maintaining contact with the Management Committee.

5.2 Local Needs Housing The Parish Council is still waiting for responses on viable sites.

6. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

PCSO Huckstepp's report is attached.

Mr Kingston reported complaints of fly-tipping at Calland and on adjoining private land.

It was possible to identify the perpetrator, and this information was passed to the Housing Manager at ABC. A home visit was made but there was no reply, therefore a letter has been sent. It was noted that it is not an offence to fly-tip on private land, the Chairman stated that the owner of the site was little interested in it.

The Chairman further noted that concerns have been expressed re a number of trees on the site; there is no public footpath but it is regularly used by those going to the school. The Community Warden stated that he has contacted the school about the hazard and warning children not to use the path. Cllr Plowright will seek advice from KALC as to any action the PC can take, eg accessing the site and making the trees safe, erecting a fence. The Headteacher is retiring at the end of the Spring Term.

Church Road has reopened following its closure due to flooding. Cllr Hinchliffe and the Clerk stated that the culvert has not been cleared despite repeated requests to Highways. The Community Warden suggested a community project to clear the pond, and will make enquiries about the culvert. Cllr Plowright advised that he has passed this to Cllr Ashby (Kenardington PC) who will raise it at the Joint Transportation Board.

The Community Warden stated that there have been a number of minor incidents of antisocial behaviour.

The Community Warden was thanked for his report.

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	£
I Plowright (Speedwatch)	700.00
M Hinchliffe (noticeboard)	105.60
M Hinchliffe (additional keys for noticeboard)	13.20
1 st Brabourne & Smeeth Scouts and Guides (HQ hire)	9.00
S Wood (net salary Feb)	218.55
S Wood (net salary March)	218.55
S Wood (expenses) *	117.55
HMRC Q4	163.80
Barbara Podd (salary)	56.79
ACRK (annual subscription)	35.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall Assoc (donation)	700.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Playing Field Assoc (donation)	600.00

Receipts

Details	£
NatWest (interest)	2.84

Balance: £ 18373.88 (at 12th March 2014)

7.2 Contribution to the Fete Committee for two-way radios

It was noted that the radios will also be for use by the Emergency Plan group, but costings of suitable equipment are not yet available.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council is minded to make a contribution of £200 towards the cost of two-way radios.

7.3 Changes to the bank mandate

Resolved:

That the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for all existing and future accounts of the Parish Council, be changed by addition of the named signatory, and the current mandate will continue as amended.

8. Planning Committee report

8.1 Cllr Thorpe (Planning Committee Chairman) reported on 1 recent application.

7 Ramstone Close – extension. This was supported by the PC and approved by ABC.

IP

GK

Cllr Thorpe is liaising with Cllr Howard on the following 2 applications:

Little Home Farm

Ashbourne House.

- 8.2** Cllr Plowright stated that he has contacted ABC regarding damage to verges caused by contractors' vehicles parking during building works, and parking so as to cause a safety hazard for other road users. He suggested that a condition be added such that a risk assessment is carried out by developers re parking. Cllr Martin noted that there is a condition attached to planning permission regarding parking, but it is not being enforced, ABC being of the view that it is a Highways or Police matter. Furthermore, if the Building Officer on site is not an ABC officer, then ABC is prohibited from going on site.

9. KALC

The Clerk reported that the last meeting was on 15th January, the main item for discussion was Finance. The Minutes have been circulated and the next meeting is on 26th March.

10. Footpaths and Highways

10.1 Smeeth crossroads Cllr Hinchliffe stated that he had raised this with the Kent and Medway Safety Partnership; he noted that there had been fewer accidents, but this was due to higher vehicle specifications. Cllr Miss Martin noted that a similar situation in Bilsington is being addressed and changes made to the junction layout. She will raise this with Cllr Wickham.

10.2 A 20 footpath There has been no progress, Cllr Miss Martin will raise this with Cllr Wickham. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that the A20 is the main route when Operation Stack is in place.

10.3 Pound Lane Subsidence has been reported to Highways. Cllr Miss Martin stated that there is a 14 day target for repairs, and if they are not carried out she asked that she and Cllrs Wickham and Howard be notified.

10.4 Bus stop on The Warren The Clerk advised that the request has been passed to Brabourne Parish Council, as owner of The Warren.

JM

JM

11. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that 1031 questionnaires were distributed, and 249 returned for the CLP and 240 for the EP. Of the CLP questionnaires, 27 were in the 11-18 year age group, and 114 in the 7-11 year age group (the latter were filled out in school). Grants of £250 (Cllr Miss Martin) and £400 (Cllr Wickham) have been received; Steering Group members have donated a total of £250; Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils have each given £100. Total income thus far: £1100. A decision on the application to the De Haan Charitable Trust is due later in March. Further grant applications will be made in the next financial year.

After expenditure, £688 remains, the Group is therefore on a sound financial footing. The next meeting is on 18th March, at which the next steps will be decided, in particular how the data will be analysed; a quote from ACRK for data analysis was ~£600. Cllr Plowright thanked Miss Orgar for her contribution to the prize draw.

12. Speedwatch

Cllr Plowright reported that new sessions are about to start, new volunteers would be welcome and should contact Cllr Plowright. Cllr Miss Martin advised that some Aldington residents wished to participate.

13. Playing fields

The Chairman stated that the playing fields are being refurbished this summer, and will therefore be out of use for 12 months. Access to the Scout HQ will be maintained. The Summer fete is to be held at Smeeth School.

14. Local needs housing

The Chairman reported that the search for sites is proving difficult; a letter has been sent to owners of the identified sites regarding the project and replies are awaited. The site at Caroland is ABC land, but ABC will revisit the proposal if no alternatives are forthcoming. Cllr Miss Martin asked if any of the sites submitted during the call for sites are for LNH. The Chairman replied that 2 of the sites put forward had been identified in the desktop search for LNH, but the owners had not wished to sell for LNH.

<p>15. Localism See item 4.3 in the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting.</p>	
<p>16. Village handyman See item 4.3 in the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting.</p>	
<p>17. Publication of DPIs on the parish website The Clerk advised publication of councillors' interests is a statutory requirement, and guidance has now come down from the Monitoring Officer, ABC. A template is available and was circulated. Resolved: That councillors' interests be published on the parish website.</p>	SW
<p>18. Correspondence All correspondence has been circulated. Cllr Plowright regretted that the recycling leaflet delivered with the Council Tax bills called for newspapers to be recycled in the green bin; he noted that it had been agreed that the Scouts and Guides would continue to collect newspapers in Smeeth and Brabourne. He asked if a second leaflet could be distributed. Cllr Miss Martin will pursue.</p>	JM
<p>19. Ashford Borough site submissions A joint public meeting with Brabourne Parish Council was held on 4th March and attended by approx 100 residents. Ian Grundy and Carly Pettit of ABC described the process and gave information on the sites in Smeeth. After a Q&A session residents were invited to use Post-it notes to put comments down on each site, the responses were collated by Carly Pettit and will be used as the basis for the Parish Council's response to the site submissions. Visits to all sites will be carried out by Planning Officers and assessed against a number of criteria. As a result of the assessments the sites will be accepted, rejected or accepted with modifications; a draft Local Plan will then be drawn up which will go out for consultation (Cllr Miss Martin noted that this is likely before the end of the year). After revision of the draft Plan it will be examined at a Public Inquiry. Cllr Miss Martin was asked if the Parish Council could veto any proposals in the Plan, but replied that this lay with the Inspector, and emphasised the importance of the Parish Council submitting a response. She noted that the Plan would be of use for determining housing targets, particularly given the Duty to Cooperate; under this a local authority has a duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities to deliver housing, such that an authority which cannot meet its target can bring pressure to bear on another authority to build additional homes to meet the housing need.</p>	
<p>20. Project management Cllr Hinchliffe asked who will draft the Parish Council's response to the site submissions, and suggested that named councillors be tasked with following up actions arising from Parish Council meetings. It was agreed that the site submissions response be drafted by Cllrs Thorpe and Hinchliffe, and the Clerk, using guidance from Cllr Miss Martin.</p>	GT/MH/ SW/JM
<p>21. Commemoration of WWI There is a project to plant 23,000 trees in commemoration in Kent. It was suggested that a tree be planted in Brabourne on The Warren or at the village hall, there being no suitable sites in Smeeth. The Parish Council would have to pay 20% of the cost of the tree and be responsible for its maintenance. Resolved: That Smeeth Parish Council would contribute to the cost of a commemorative tree. The Royal British Legion is organising a drumhead service on The Warren in August, to which the Parish Councils will be invited. It is hoped to restore the War Memorial at St Mary Smeeth, the local branch of the Royal British Legion will apply to the central RBL for funding for the project but additional funding may be needed. An event will be held in November in the village hall.</p>	
<p>22. AED Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the village defibrillator should be checked on a regular basis;</p>	

he further noted that the box is not weatherproof, being designed for indoor not outdoor use and consideration should be given to its replacement. He asked that a volunteer be sought to undertake the monitoring; Cllr Plowright to pursue.

Cllr Hinchliffe stated that some residents were unaware of the location of the equipment and recommended that a sign be put up; he offered to source a suitable sign.

IP

MH

23. Any Other Business

23.1 Prompt responses are being received to emails to ABC and KCC.

23.2 The parish noticeboard is in a poor state of repair, but it is unclear where a replacement could be sited given the possible additional works at the shop. Possible alternative sites are the verge near the Lees Road phone box or on the verge opposite The Plough. The Parish Council will liaise with Brabourne Parish Council.

23.3 The Park Farm solar project has been withdrawn.

23.4 Cllr Hinchliffe attended a Resilience and Reassurance training day organised by KALC; his report has been circulated.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to raise issues of concern.

The Parish Council was asked if it had made any representations on an application to vary a Vehicle Operator's Licence. He was advised that this was for a site in Brabourne and Brabourne Parish Council has lodged an objection. Furthermore, the business has been operating from the premises without planning permission and this is being investigated.

The meeting was reconvened.

24. Date and time of next meeting

14th May 2014, in Brabourne Baptist Church, the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

PCSO's report

There have been three recorded crimes in the village in the last two months. The first is in relation to a theft of farm machinery in the village. A farm vehicle was taken from a shed on the farm. There was no door on the shed however there was a parking post which the offenders removed before taking the vehicle. At present all lines of enquiry have been followed and the report has been filed pending any further information coming to light. The second was a report of burglary from a commercial premise on The Ridgeway. The building was locked up with padlocks and there was security lights at the premises however the offenders have disabled the lights and the padlocks had been cut off. It would appear that the offenders may have been disturbed as there was a large number of copper piping and power tools left at the scene. Kent Police Officers have fully investigated the crime at this stage. The third was a theft from a storage container at another property on The Ridgeway. The property is undergoing redevelopment at the moment and the contractors used the container to store their tools. Some high value power tools were taken from the container. There were no witnesses to the incident and no CCTV. All relevant lines of enquiry have been completed at this stage.

I am aware that there are still incidents of bad driving in the village and I can confirm that a vehicle has been seized recently because it was being driven by a person without a full driving licence or insurance. I have been making regular patrols of the area and have also been attending with our dedicated antisocial behaviour vehicle in the afternoons and early evenings to disrupt this behaviour where possible.

I have also been holding a surgery once a month at the Village Shop on Lees Road. This is an opportunity for local residents to come and see me to let me know of any issues or problems that they may have. I have listed my upcoming surgery dates below.

8th April 2014

6th May 2014

I will be at the Orpins Store, Brabourne Lees on the above dates between 3pm and 4pm.

Alternatively you can contact me via e-mail and I will endeavour to help in any way I can. My e-mail 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.