

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 14th January 2015
at Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllrs Hinchliffe (MH), MacPhee (CM) and Plowright (IP), and Mrs S Wood (Clerk) (SW). The Community Warden, Mr Kingston (GK), and 21 members of the public were present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Turner (prior commitment), Cllr Jane Martin and Cllr Howard (ward members) and PCSO Huckstepp.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Hinchliffe, MacPhee and Plowright (voluntary declaration, members of the Community Led Plan Steering Group): agenda item 7

Cllr Plowright (DPI applicant for planning application 14/01548/AS, The Retreat, The Plain): agenda item 11

4. Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 12th November 2014.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of 12th November 2014 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.

The Parish Council was asked if land to the rear of Fortescue Place (designated site SS29) had been shortlisted for inclusion in the new Local Plan being developed by Ashford Borough Council. The Chairman replied that it had been: as part of the process, all landowners in the Borough Council area had been contacted by the Borough Council (a statutory requirement) and asked if they had any sites that they thought may be suitable for development for possible inclusion in the new Local Plan. All sites put forward had been assessed by the Borough Council and those shortlisted to date would subject to a further assessment. If included in the new Local Plan any development would, however, require the benefit of a formal planning approval.

The Chairman stated that a survey of Smeeth and Brabourne residents carried out in 2013 had identified that more Local Needs Housing (LNH) is needed in the parish (45 homes). The Local Plan review and call for sites came after the Parish Council had undertaken a desk-top survey to identify possible suitable sites for LNH: 10 were identified, including the site in question (SS29). Cllr Plowright stated that landowners of all these sites had been contacted and asked if they would consider selling the land for LNH; the owners of the land behind Fortescue Place expressed an interest. Originally this had been for LNH only, but after the call for sites a proposal for a mixture of market and LNH was put forward to make the site economically viable for the owner.

Concerns were expressed by residents about the impact of the development on Ramstone Close, which would likely become the way into the site. Problems re drainage were raised. Residents asked why the Parish Council supported the proposal, given that it would mean the demolition of one bungalow and the Close would become a through road. The Chairman replied that residents' concerns would be taken into account by the Parish Council, by Highways and by the Planning Dept. throughout the process, but the Parish Council must also consider the needs of other residents waiting for LNH. Such housing would be for those with a local connection who could not afford market housing.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council would submit comments on the draft Local Plan when it is published. Cllr Hinchliffe suggested that residents prepare comments for submission and were asked to copy in the Parish Council.

Residents acknowledged the need for growth but the number of dwellings proposed for the site (50) was thought to be too high. Cllr Hinchliffe replied that it was his understanding that this figure had subsequently been substantially reduced.

It was noted that infrastructure would be taken into account, eg drainage and lack of pavements, during the next assessment stage. The Chairman stressed that a final decision had not yet been made by any of the organisations involved, and the Borough Council might conclude that the site is not suitable for any development. If, however, it is

included in the Local Plan, the developer would still have to apply for planning permission, thereby giving residents another opportunity to object.

In answer to a resident's question, the Chairman advised that this development was not linked to the development at Calland. The Parish Council was told that not all residents had been able to answer the questionnaire relating to the Calland development, because the survey had been carried out during working hours. Concerns were expressed that the Calland development would result in the loss of open space, and the significant problems re parking in the area would be aggravated by the development. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council had been made aware of the consultation and had already expressed concerns regarding the misleading photo used, drainage, and parking issues. He noted that this was not a planning application, but if deemed viable would have to go through the planning process, and residents could object. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council could only object to any development on planning grounds, but residents' comments could influence any proposals as happened at Manse Field.

Smeeth crossroads: The Parish Council was asked why the bus stop had been removed – this has resulted in the lay-by being used as a parking area for HGVs, rendering egress from Church Road dangerous. The Chairman replied that the bus shelter had been demolished after a collision, and it had been the bus company's decision to remove the stop; the lay-by is not a designated parking area. Mr Kingston stated that the hatched lines had been put in by Highways; he had spoken to the Community Safety Unit about this area and similar lorry parking problems at The Ridgeway exit onto the A20. The Police are aware and a unit is being tasked to enforce safe parking. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that recent improvements at the Smeeth crossroads had, in fact, exacerbated the situation. It was suggested that the layby be removed ; this request will be passed to Highways. Mr Kingston was asked to monitor police activity, and residents asked to log incidents and take photos, if it is possible to do so safely. Cllr MacPhee noted that this problem was acknowledged in the PCSO's report. The Chairman stated that there are plans to create a series of lorry parks, the first being at Stop 24; once these are in place additional enforcement powers will be introduced to prevent casual parking.

SW
GK

Mr Kingston was asked to move the roadworks sign at the junction of Church Road and Hythe Road, which is obstructing traffic exiting Church Road.

GK

The Parish Council was asked to extend the litter picking to Calland.

SW

The meeting was reconvened.

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Provision of external cabinet for the village defibrillator The cabinet (sponsored by a Kent company) has been obtained by Mr Graham and will be installed shortly.

6.2 Prescription service and delivery of medicines Brabourne Parish Council supports the initiative but queried the need. The Community Warden noted that Boots offers a delivery service, collecting prescriptions from the Surgery, dispensing and then delivering to the patient. Cllr Hinchliffe will contact the Surgery to ascertain need.

MH

6.3 Highways seminar Attended by Cllr Hinchliffe and notes have been circulated. Further cuts to Highways' funding from central government are expected.

6.4 Water leak in Plain Road Repairs have not yet been effected, the Clerk to chase.

SW

6.5 Salt bin The Clerk provided a quote from the KCC-approved supplier: a 400k bin in red or green (yellow is restricted to Highways' bins) would be £119 (+ VAT). It was proposed that a green bin be ordered, for Bridge Road.

Resolved:

That a green 400k salt bin be ordered from Grit-Bins, at a cost of £119 + VAT, for Bridge Road.

SW

6.6 Flooding on Plain Road Works have been carried out by Southern Water, which is monitoring the situation.

6.7 Fordred's Charity Distributed by the Vice-chairman and Cllr Hinchliffe, who were thanked by the Chairman. One of the recipients had asked that thanks be passed to the Parish Council.

7. Presentation of Community Led Plan to the Parish Council

Mr Graham, chairman of the Steering Group, briefed the Parish Council on production and aims of the Plan. The Clerk will arrange a meeting with Brabourne Parish Council to discuss

the Plan if required. Cllr Hinchliffe advised that the next meeting of the Steering Group is on 27th January. Adoption of the Plan by the Parish Council will be discussed at the March meeting of the Parish Council.

SW

8. Community Warden and PCSO's reports

Mr Kingston's report is attached. The Chairman noted that representations had been received from a resident re finishing the works at the pond, Mr Kingston was asked to contact the resident.

GK

Mr Kingston reported that he had attended a meeting to discuss parking problems at Smeeth School, at which the Chairman, Headteacher, PCSO Huckstepp and a Police representative were present. Cllr Wickham has offered support. The Chairman reported that the Police will patrol and issue tickets to offenders.

Cllr Plowright asked that the Police attend when the paper skip is delivered, following recent incidents of vandalism. Groups of youths had been congregating, to no apparent purpose, in the village.

It was agreed that if low level antisocial behaviour is not tolerated, escalation to worse behaviour is prevented.

Cllr Thorpe reported possible incidents of drug-dealing and asked that these be investigated.

The PCSO's report is attached.

9. Adoption of Financial Regulations

The Clerk advised that it is a requirement that the Parish Council has Financial Regulations; new Regulations had been issued by NALC. These had been amended for use by Smeeth Parish Council and draft Regulations circulated. It was proposed that the draft Regulations, as amended, be adopted.

Resolved:

That the Financial Regulations, as amended, be adopted by Smeeth Parish Council.

10. Financial Report

10.1 Payments in accordance with the Budget.

The Chairman reported that new salary scales have been issued by NALC effective from 1st January, together with a non-consolidated 'one off' payment of £100, paid pro-rata.

Resolved:

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

Payments

Details	£
B Podd (salary)	117.00
S Wood (expenses [stationery and black sacks])	39.07
SLCC (subscription)	31.18
S Wood (gross salary December)	272.95
S Wood (gross salary January)	300.17
S Wood (one-off non-consolidated payment)	16.67

Receipts

Details	£
NatWest interest	1.07
Smeeth Field Rent	175.00
VAT refund	76.16

Balance

£ 25432.21 as at 14th January 2015

10.2 Draft Budget for 2015-2016

The Clerk circulated the draft Budget, updated to include recent expenditure and income. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council at its November meeting had been minded to increase the Precept by 2%.

Cllr MacPhee sought clarification of the Contingency Fund and allowance for Capital Expenditure; the Chairman stated that the latter was for projects such as a parking scheme in Sandy Place, but this would be subject to justification of possible costs.

The Chairman advised that KALC recommended that reserves of at least 50% of the Precept be kept plus £6000 to allow for the possible costs of a by-election or Code of Conduct investigation.

The Vice-chairman proposed that the Precept be raised by 4% to £11090 to allow for increased contributions to village organisations, and that the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant be claimed in addition.

Resolved:

That Smeeth Parish Council increases the Precept to £11090, exclusive of the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant.

10.3 Request for a donation by the Ashford Counselling Service

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council had previously given donations only where they may benefit residents, eg Kent Air Ambulance. Cllr Mrs Pereboom suggested that a policy with regard to donations be drawn up. It was noted that counselling and similar services are available on the NHS. It was agreed that the request be refused.

11 Planning Committee report

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

St Annes Cottage, Plain Road Erection of a two storey front extension.

The Retreat, Plain Road Creation of new access and driveway.

There were no objections to the applications.

Cllr Thorpe is awaiting a reply from Cllr Howard re the suggestion that a surcharge be levied on retrospective applications.

12 KALC

The Chairman reported that the last meeting was on 19th November at which a presentation was given by CI Fox, Station Commander Ashford Police. The Minutes have been circulated and the next meeting is on January 21st; the agenda includes Parish Councils as consultees on planning applications, and Community Resilience and Emergency Planning.

13 Update on J10A Working Group

Cllr Mrs Pereboom reported that findings of on the impact on the village and Minutes of the meeting had been circulated. Public consultation on the scheme will take place later in 2015, details of the consultation process will be given at the next meeting in late February. It is thought that the proposals may be on display at Hobbs Parker. Cllr Mrs Pereboom stated that she had proposed that Brabourne and Sellindge Parish Councils be asked to join the Group, a response is awaited from the Borough Council.

14 Footpaths and Highways

14.1 Parking at Smeeth School See item 8.

14.2 A20 footpath Repairs are to be carried out.

14.3 A20 speed limits Cllr Hinchliffe suggested that a meeting be arranged with Mr Darling (Highways) re the procedure for getting a reduction in the speed limit.

14.4 Stiles The Vice-chairman reported that all stiles on the footpath opposite the school are compliant – stiles are only where they had been sited historically, others have been replaced by gates. However, the stiles impair the lesser-abled and dogwalkers, contrary to KCC policy. This will be taken up with the PROW office. A stile on Joe Farm is non-compliant with height requirements for the drop from the tread to the ground because the ground slopes – this will be reported to the PROW office. Possible contamination on the footpath at Joe Farm by slurry run-off will be reported.

14.5 Lees Road footpath This was reported as overgrown in the summer but Cllr Plowright advised that it is now passable. The Vice-chairman to check.

14.6 Hoskins Pond The lack of grilles on the drainage pipes to prevent debris being washed into the pipes will be reported.

14.7 HGVs Cllr Plowright will write to the Chief Constable asking for action to be taken to prevent antisocial activity by drivers, eg soiling in the grounds of Caldecott Foundation.

15 Emergency Plan

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that meetings had been held with the Community Resilience Forum (Ashford Borough Council) and the draft Plan is nearing completion; the continued availability of named contacts is to be checked. The draft Plan will then be subjected to a

SW

SW

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GT

SW

IP

desktop exercise by the Borough Council following which it will be publicised. In answer to a question from the Chairman, Cllrs Hinchliffe and Plowright stated that the Plan does not go before the Parish Council for endorsement, but becomes part of the Borough's Emergency Plan. Cllrs Plowright and Hinchliffe suggested that two people be nominated as being in overall charge plus deputy. The Scout Hut has been identified as the main centre.

16 Speedwatch

Cllr Plowright reported that 16 vehicles had been logged exceeding 35mph at a session held on 23rd December on The Plain. The next sessions will be in February. Other sites are to be assessed by the Police.

17 Local Needs Housing

See item 5. The outcome of the Local Plan review is awaited.

18 Playing fields

The Chairman reported that work to install the rabbit-proof fencing will begin on 19th January. Funding for the fencing has been secured, including the Parish Councils' additional contributions and a grant of £10,000 from Ashford Borough Council. Other grant applications are to be submitted. The Vice-chairman reported that Mr Sanders had hoped to be present to give a progress report, but had another commitment. Cllr Plowright advised that the installation of the fence would prevent dogwalkers taking a short cut through a hole in the hedge; to avoid damage to the fence an entrance will be put in.

19 Village caretaker scheme

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that meetings had been held with the Borough Council; figures on current spending and parish maps had been passed to the Borough Council. The next meeting will be held at the end of January and attended by Cllr Hinchliffe and the Chairman of Mersham and Sevington Parish Council. At the next Parish Forum information will be given regarding the formation of the new cluster.

20 Correspondence

All correspondence has been circulated. An invitation to the Lord Lieutenant's Annual Civic Service was passed to the Chairman.

21 Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

22 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 11th March 2015 (after the Annual Parish meeting which begins at 7.00pm) in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Community Warden's Report

Firstly I would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

I have been made aware by the Police of a burglary at a house in Lees Road, Brabourne Lees and have been and offered support and crime prevention advice. I was also informed of a number of thefts at Orpins about which I have liaised with the Police.

There has also been some damage caused at the Scout Hall site, some historic to the Hall which appears to be caused by air gun pellets, but some recently to the paper recycling skip which is parked in the car park on a weekly basis.

I was asked to look at a tractor parked in Canterbury Road, Brabourne as to the possible dangerous parking issue, however since the request the tractor causing concern has not parked there and the small tractor which is there is off the road and parked in the proper direction.

KCC Highways have been quite busy around the area working on the A20 footpath and clearing Smeeth Pond and culvert Church Road, Smeeth with a view to preventing last year's road flooding problems. They have also put in some wooden post to stop large vehicles mounting the pavement. I would like to gather people's opinions on what can be done to clear rubbish and improve the look of the area.

I, like others, have noticed that HGVs are parking regularly on what was the bus stop A20 Smeeth Crossing overnight, which can only make the safety worse.

Just before Christmas I reported to ABC Street Sense a dumped settee on Station Road Smeeth which was swiftly removed.

I have been to visit some residents at Sandy Place, Smeeth regarding ongoing parking, and antisocial behaviour issues, these all appear to be previously reported issues except some concerns over antisocial behaviour and I have advised residents to report these issues to the police as and when they occur.

I have also had meetings with the Heads of both Brabourne and Smeeth Primary Schools and have arranged a meeting with a representative of the Caldecott Foundation regarding the Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan in order to keep them abreast of the current situation and to find out if we could assist them with any resilience planning.

Graham Kingston

PCSO Report

This is the police report for Smeeth Parish Council's January meeting.

There has been one recorded crime in Smeeth in the last two months however there have been five recorded in Brabourne Lees.

Three of these were in relation to reports of shoplifting where some high value bottles of alcohol have been taken.

There were two reports of Criminal Damage in the last two months. The first was damage caused to the bench on the Warren and the second was damage to the Paper Skip in the car park by the playing field.

The final report was in relation to a Break-in at a property in Lees Road. It occurred overnight while the house was empty as the occupants were away. At this time all that appears to be missing is a games console, however it is unclear whether the offenders may have taken more. Entry was gained by forcing open a wooden-framed window to the side of the property

There has also been a problem with HGV parking in the old bus stop on the A20 as I am sure you are all aware. It would appear that now the bus stop has gone lorry drivers have been using the recess to park their lorries and have also been seen going into the hedge to urinate and defaecate. I have asked some advice on this and unfortunately there is no offence for defaecating or urinating outside unless this is witnessed by someone and then it could be indecent exposure, but only if it causes offence to the witness/victim. In regards to the Lorries parking in the layby there are no restrictions preventing them from parking here therefore we cannot move them on. With all this in mind I will be paying close attention to the area, however perhaps a discussion on some longer term solutions may be a good idea. In the last two months we have received five calls regarding Lorries parking there, on each occasion patrols have attended however they have had no grounds in which to move the Lorries on.

I have been spending a lot of time in the village in the last two months patrolling the area and visiting victims. I have also carried out some home visits to some of the youths in the village whose names have been coming to my attention regarding the ongoing ASB and those I haven't visited will be receiving letters about their behaviour in recent months. Hopefully this will go some way to preventing further issues. I have also arranged for a mobile youth bus to attend the village to give the youths somewhere to gather without hopefully causing problems to other residents. This is still in the very early stages as they only completed a risk assessment in the last few days however I am hopeful this will become a regular fixture in the village.

If you need to contact me please feel free to e-mail me and I will get back to you as soon as I can. My e-mail address is 58551@kent.pnn.police.uk

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551.