

|   | Action              |
|---|---------------------|
| <p><b>1. Present</b><br/>Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Morey (JM), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr Plowright (IP) and Mrs Wood (Clerk) (SW). Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard (ward members) and Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) attended. Four members of the public were present.</p> <p><b>2. Apologies</b><br/>Apologies were received from Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (indisposed) and Cllr MacPhee (prior commitment).</p> <p>In the absence of Cllr Herrick, Cllr Thorpe took the Chair.</p> <p><b>3. Declarations of Interest</b><br/>There were no Declarations of Interest.</p> <p><b>4. Minutes</b><br/><b>Resolved:</b><br/><b>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be approved and confirmed as a true record.</b></p> <p><b>5. Open Session</b><br/>The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public present to raise matters of concern with the Parish Council.</p> <p>A request for permission to put a picnic bench on the village green at The Warren was made by a member of the Community Led Plan (CLP) group, the bench would be funded by residents. It was noted that the proposal should be put to Brabourne Parish Council as owner of the green.</p> <p>Flooding in Ramstone Close: A resident reported that problems had been resolved after intervention from Cllr Miss Martin with Southern Water; a manhole was sealed and a one-way valve put in. He asked the Parish Council if this had led to problems upline; the Chairman replied that none had been reported. The resident advised that Southern Water is monitoring the situation and offered to make contact details for Southern Water available if needed. Cllr Miss Martin noted that she will be a member of a task group being set up in Ashford to look at flooding problems and coordinate responses, eg from KCC and Southern Water. This was welcomed by the Chairman, who noted that there are three areas in Smeeth prone to flooding.</p> <p>The meeting was reconvened.</p> <p><b>6. Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> Prescription delivery service: No residents have yet made use of the scheme.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Community governance review: Recommendations were discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December; no recommendations had been put forward for Smeeth by the Parish Council or the Borough Council Task Group.</p> <p><b>6.3</b> Dog waste bags: An order for 30,000 bags (six boxes) has been placed and will be delivered on confirmation of the delivery address. Cllr Mrs Pereboom offered to store them if Cllr Herrick's previous offer is no longer possible.</p> <p><b>6.4</b> War memorial refurbishment: The draft grant application for a grant from the Borough Council has been completed by the Clerk and sent to Richard Graham for comment and with a request for the two quotes required by the application. Cllr Hinchliffe noted that among the CLP's aims are restoration of the memorial and its relocation to a more central and safer location.</p> <p><b>6.5</b> Fordred's Charity: The Chairman reported that these had been delivered.</p> | <p>VP</p> <p>SW</p> |

### 17. Ashford Local Plan – Village Protection Strategy

Brought forward with the Chairman's permission.

Cllr Hinchliffe asked if the Parish Council would be willing to undertake the process which would generate a Village Protection Strategy (VPS), noting that the Parish Council has a duty to look after residents' interests and the environment. There was a risk that the resulting policy would not be accepted by the Borough Council; Cllr Hinchliffe recommended that this should not be used as justification for non-involvement, because the policy would complement the CLP and give some local control. He proposed that Smeeth Parish Council produces a VPS, subject to the participation of Brabourne Parish Council, and possibly Mersham and Brook (the other parishes in the Smeeth Village Caretaker cluster). Cllr Howard noted that representatives from Mersham had attended the presentation on the VPS given prior to the meeting, and likely would take this back to the Parish Council.

In answer to a question from Cllr Plowright, the process would cost £4500 (irrespective of community size), plus hire of equipment such as automatic traffic counters, and would be shared by participating parishes. Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked if the process would be slowed were 4 parishes to be involved.

Cllr Miss Martin advised that the Borough Council is more receptive to policies from smaller areas of similar character; such a policy would generate robust arguments against inappropriate developments such as that proposed by Gladman for hospital field. The Borough Council will counter accusations that it does not have a 5-year land supply. She further noted that Aldington has increased by more than 47% in 10 years; the development at Chilmington Green is different because although a large development it is not in a village setting. The govt is relaxing laws on building on greenfield sites.

Cllr Plowright asked if the involvement of Mersham would assist in its objections to the J10A proposals; Cllr Miss Martin replied that it would.

Cllr Miss Martin acknowledged concerns that time is short [post-meeting note: if accepted by the Borough Council the policy would support the Local Plan, the draft of which is to be published in April]. However, the consultants engaged to give advice and generate the report [likely Peter Brett Associates] would notify Simon Cole who would await the policy. Cllr Plowright stated that a large number of volunteers would be needed to undertake the traffic surveys because of the number of entrances and exits to the parishes; Cllr Miss Martin replied that the surveys would be carried out over a one-day period, Peter Brett Associates (PBA) would advise as to the optimum locations, time and day. Cllr Hinchliffe counselled that the policy would not stop the hospital field's development but would be a useful counter-argument. The CLP group comprises 50-60 volunteers who may help; Cllr Plowright noted that additional volunteers may be forthcoming, citing the Mountbatten Way group which has been formed in opposition to the hospital field's development.

Cllr Miss Martin stated that the policy had been raised in most of the parishes on Saxon Shore, including Mersham. It had originally been suggested that Mersham join the Aldington policy, but it was felt that Mersham is more similar in character to Brabourne and Smeeth.

Cllr Hinchliffe proposed that Smeeth Parish Council produces a Village Protection Strategy with PBA, subject to participation by at least one other parish. He recommended that if Brabourne Parish Council agreed to participate at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January, a representative from PBA be invited for a parish visit on 19<sup>th</sup> January, with a follow-up meeting. Cllr Miss Martin agreed, and suggested that Cllr Hinchliffe contact Angela Coull, Tim Allen's assistant at PBA.

#### **Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council produces a Village Protection Strategy with Peter Brett Associates, subject to participation by at least one other parish, the costs to be divided equally between participating parishes.**

The Clerk is to take this to Brabourne Parish Council.

Cllr Howard stated that he would raise this at the CLP coordinator's meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January, any Member Community Grant would be paid into the CLP account. Cllr Miss Martin recommended that Andrew Wickham (county councilor) be asked for a grant.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked if the support for the policy by ward members was because the policy is a 'first'. Cllr Miss Martin replied that it was because of the weight it would give, Cllr Howard agreed.

MH

SW

SW

## 7. Report from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported a low incidence of crime in the preceding 2 months: an attempted theft of a motor vehicle at a farm, theft of tiles to the value of approx £3000 worth in Brabourne. He had received complaints of damage to verges caused by tractors.

Mr Kingston suggested that the traffic monitoring for the VPS be carried out at a time of high tractor activity. Cllr Plowright asked that overweight tractor/trailer combinations be included.

Cllr Thorpe asked for information on vandalism at the Woolpack Inn, which did not reopen before Christmas as expected; the wooden shutters have been replaced by metal, with a note on the door that the pub will not be opening in the foreseeable future because of vandalism. Mr Kingston replied that he had no reports on this but would follow-up.

Mr Kingston stated that there had been a welcome response to his item in Parish News re DIY SOS, with offers of help having been received.

No report in the PCSO's absence.

## 8. Financial Report

### 8.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

**Resolved:**

**That the following payments be agreed in accordance with the Budget:**

#### Payments

| Details                    | £      |
|----------------------------|--------|
| S Wood (salary)            | 300.17 |
| S Wood (salary)            | 300.17 |
| B Podd (salary)            | 100.50 |
| SLCC (annual subscription) | 31.17  |
| PMC (dog bags)             | 237.60 |
| S Wood (salary)            | 300.17 |

#### Receipts

| Details                                 | £       |
|---|---------|
| NatWest interest                        | 2.72    |
| Smeeth Field rent                       | 175.00  |
| ABC – grant to village caretaker scheme | 1000.00 |

Balance £ 31885.48 (as at 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016)

### 8.2 Draft Budget for 2016-2017

The draft budget was circulated.

Cllr Thorpe proposed that the VPS be funded from Reserves and by an increase in the Precept. Cllr Hinchliffe proposed an increase in the Precept of 12.5% to cover the cost of the Village Caretaker scheme.

Cllr Plowright suggested that the cost of the VPS be met from an increase in the Precept and proposed an increase of 40% to cover these costs and that of the Caretaker scheme; this would give a Precept of £15526, an increase of £4436 (a Band D equivalent property would then pay £43.49 per year to the Precept, a rise of approx £12.43). Cllr Howard advised that the Parish Council should be prepared to justify the increase to residents.

The Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant would be claimed in addition.

**Resolved:**

**That the Precept for Smeeth Parish Council be raised to £15526, exclusive of the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant.**

### 8.3 Banking arrangements for the Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan groups

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the CLP has opened its own bank account with HSBC. He noted that money given to the CLP and EP had been for both and it is not possible to differentiate expenditure thus far. Cllr Hinchliffe proposed that 50% of the funds in the Brabourne Parish Council dedicated (No. 2) account be moved to the CLP account, the remainder being held for the EP, subject to agreement by Brabourne Parish Council.

SW

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| <p><b>Resolved:</b><br/> <b>That 50% of the funds in the Brabourne Parish Council No. 2 account be moved to the CLP account, the remainder being held for the EP, subject to agreement by Brabourne Parish Council.</b></p>   | <p><b>SW</b></p>                    |
| <p><b>8.4 Bank account for the Village Caretaker project</b><br/> Cllr Hinchliffe proposed that a bank account (the 'Smeeth Cluster Caretaker Scheme account') be opened for the Village Caretaker project, linked to the Parish Council's account. Cllr Plowright asked how other parishes in the cluster would pay, eg by direct debits or standing orders. The Clerk advised that because of the need for multiple authorisations for Parish Council expenditure, this would not be possible. Cllr Hinchliffe stated that Smeeth Parish Council will invoice other parishes in the cluster which would then issue cheques.</p>   |                                     |
| <p><b>Resolved:</b><br/> <b>That Smeeth Parish Council opens a bank account for the Village Caretaker scheme, linked to the Parish Council's account.</b></p>   | <p><b>DH/SW</b></p>                 |
| <p><b>9. Planning Committee report</b><br/> Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on the following planning matters:<br/> Ashbourne House: A planning application had been submitted in 2011 for alterations to the garage, this has been changed to living accommodation without planning permission. This is in hand with Joanne Alexander (Planning enforcement), who served an Enforcement Notice and is awaiting a reply from the occupier. It is thought that the occupier has a 60-day period in which to reply/appeal. Failure to do so would lead to action. Cllr Thorpe is to ascertain the date on which the Notice was served. Cllr Howard noted that an additional enforcement officer had been recruited because of significant delays in enforcement.<br/> Evegate: Change of use of units.<br/> Mersham Le Hatch: Conversion of pavilions to residential.<br/> St Anne's Cottage, Plain Road: Erection of front porch.<br/> Kimberley Farm: Erection of stables. The poor quality of the application was noted.<br/> There were no comments or objections to the applications.</p> <p>Cllr Howard advised that the application on hospital field for the keeping of horses [15/01501/AS] has been referred to the Planning Committee for determination, notwithstanding the Gladman proposals for the site.</p> | <p><b>GT</b></p>                    |
| <p><b>10. KALC representative report</b><br/> The Minutes of the meetings on 18<sup>th</sup> November and 9<sup>th</sup> December had been circulated by Cllr Herrick. The next meeting is on 13<sup>th</sup> January.</p>  |                                     |
| <p><b>11. Update on J10A Working Group</b><br/> Information on the Community Consultation had been circulated. Cllr Mrs Pereboom stated that the consultation is open and urged residents to respond. The lack of traffic monitoring data is a concern. Cllr Mrs Pereboom noted that the construction works will severely impact on Smeeth residents who would not benefit from J10A. Work is unlikely to start before 2017.</p>  |                                     |
| <p><b>12. Footpaths and Highways</b><br/> <b>12.1</b> Plain Road water leak: Cllr Thorpe reported that it is thought to be a spring, citing residents of longstanding. Cllr Plowright noted that the leak is damaging the road and should be diverted; as a drainage issue it is the responsibility of KCC Highways.<br/> <b>12.2</b> Parking in Sandy Place: The planning officer has not reported back from the site meeting in September despite requests from the Clerk. The request will be resent, copy to Cllr Howard. It was noted that no problems have been reported of late.<br/> <b>12.3</b> Parking on Woolpack Hill: No further problems have been reported.</p>  | <p><b>SW</b><br/><br/><b>SW</b></p> |
| <p><b>13. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan</b><br/> Emergency Plan: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the plan is in hand.<br/> Community Led Plan: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that a Finance Committee has been set up and a bank account opened. Money from Nikki Allen's fundraising efforts has been banked. Cllr Howard's offer of a £1000 member Community Grant will be discussed at the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup></p>   |                                     |

January. Cllr Thorpe congratulated the carol singers on the quality of their singing.

#### **14. Speedwatch**

Cllr Plowright advised that no sessions have been carried out since the autumn, because Speedwatch cannot be conducted in the dark; sessions will restart in February. Cllr Plowright noted that a new coordinator is being sought because he is stepping down due to work commitments.

#### **15. Local Needs Housing**

Nothing to report.

#### **16. Playing fields**

Nothing further to report. In answer to a question from Cllr Plowright, it was noted that the land is owned by Brabourne Estates and leased by the Playing Field Association on a 999-year lease.

#### **18. Election of a representative to KALC Area Committee**

Cllr Mrs Morey had expressed a wish to be a representative, however Parish Councils are only permitted 2 under the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Parish Council's current representatives are Cllr Herrick and Cllr MacPhee, who had indicated that he was willing to stand down. It was proposed that Cllr Mrs Morey be elected as a representative to the KALC Ashford Area Committee.

##### **Resolved:**

**That Cllr Mrs Morey be elected as a representative of Smeeth Parish Council to the KALC Ashford Area Committee.**

#### **19. To adopt a Safe Working Procedure policy**

Cllr Hinchliffe advised that an application for funding for purchase of capital equipment for the Village Caretaker scheme is to be submitted, but it is a requirement that there is a Safe Working Procedure policy in place.

A draft policy was circulated and it was proposed that it be adopted.

##### **Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council adopts the Safe Working Procedure policy.**

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that a meeting had been held in Wittersham Town Hall on 17<sup>th</sup> December re roll-out of the scheme. The post will be advertised on the community websites, Parish News, Kentish Express and in the village shops, with interviews on 8<sup>th</sup> February (date tbc). The post is for a 35-hour week (averaged over the year) at a rate of £9.10/hour. A Job Description is available and the target date for recruitment of the caretaker is 1<sup>st</sup> March.

A secure storage facility is being sought, the Allotment Society has offered to rent out space in its large shed, and a barn in Brook has been offered. The latter would ask for payment in kind, ie grass-cutting, however it had been agreed that the caretaker would not undertake private work, therefore this offer would likely be declined.

#### **20. To adopt a Health and Safety policy**

A draft policy was circulated and it was proposed that it be adopted.

Cllr Plowright noted that it is a requirement of the policy that risk assessments should be provided for all operations, he recommended the use of dynamic risk assessments which would be carried out by the caretaker; Cllr Plowright will make templates available.

##### **Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council adopts the Health and Safety policy.**

The Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed after the Village Caretaker scheme is in operation.

#### **21. Correspondence**

**21.1** Invitation to the Lord Lieutenant's annual Civic Service on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

**21.2** Thank you letters have been received from recipients of the Fordred Charity distribution.

**21.3** Creation of new access associated to logging works within the wood on land between Whin Croft and a PROW in Plain Road (CO/14/00067). After investigation it was concluded that no breach had occurred.

SW

IP

**22. Any other business**

**22.1** Smeeth crossroads: This is being reviewed in light of the meeting with the Highways Steward, in particular the hatched layby. Cllr Plowright reported that the police had recently moved on 2 lorries parked at the crossroads.

**22.2** Canterbury Road junction: The request for white lines was refused. The occupier of the affected property had declined the offer of bollards, therefore no further action will be taken.

**22.3** A20 hedge at Apple Barn: It is unknown if this has been cut back.

**22.4** Footpath at John Childs Garage: This has been cut back.

**23. Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting, which begins at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 10.05pm.