

Smeeth Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 4th March 2020 at 7.00pm
Brabourne Baptist Church

<p>1. Present Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Moo (YM), Cllr Mrs Morey (JM), and Mrs Wood (Clerk) (SW). Cllr Howard (ward member) attended and ten members of the public were present.</p> <p>2. Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Alford (HA) and Cllr Kimpton (RK) (prior commitments) and Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP) (indisposed).</p> <p>Upon opening the meeting the Chairman advised that this would be the last Smeeth Parish Council meeting with Mrs Sue Wood in attendance as Parish Clerk as Sue was retiring at the end of April. The Chairman proposed a formal vote of thanks to Sue for her 11 years of exemplary service to the Parish Council. This was reiterated by Councillor Howard and confirmed by all those present with a well deserved round of applause.</p> <p>3. Declarations of Interest There were no Declarations of Interest.</p> <p>4. Minutes Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 8th January 2020 be approved and confirmed as a true record.</p> <p>5. Borough councillor's report Cllr Howard reported that the Budget will be considered by the Council on 5th March. The Borough Council's element of the council tax for the year will increase by £5; this is greater than 2% but is allowed under government rules. The Borough Council still sets the lowest council tax in the county.</p> <p>Carbon-neutral strategy: The aim is to be carbon-neutral by 2030, and 80% by 2025. The Borough Council's Carbon-neutral Strategy will be released in April; the Borough Council itself has a small impact percentage-wise, but can have a large impact, eg with Planning. Ashford is moving towards a green economy, and is encouraging rather than punishing. Examples include tree planting: free saplings are being distributed in mid-March [see 7.1].</p> <p>Ashford College and West Kent College: Financial problems are associated with the West Kent sites and not Ashford, because of the number of students at Ashford. West Kent College has been taken over by East Kent College but its finances are still under discussion by the Department of Education and creditors. Students already enrolled are unaffected. The Borough Council made loans towards building Ashford College, which were converted to grants when the College was built. The foundations of Ashford College 2A have been laid, but the request that the loans be converted to grants before completion was refused – this gives the Borough Council a say in the future of the college.</p> <p>Town centre: Improvements are being planned. Macknade's in Elwick Place is now open and its opening hours will increase following the 'soft opening'. Afro-Caribbean restaurant Dansaki will be the next to open.</p> <p>The Plough: Although in Brabourne this is of interest to Smeeth residents and the planning application has been approved.</p> <p>6. Open Session The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public present to comment on items other than those on the agenda.</p> <p>War Memorial: The handrail down the steps has been installed; the project is now complete.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SW</p>
---	---------------------------------------

<p>The primroses and daffodils on the bank to the rear are in flower.</p> <p>The meeting was reconvened.</p> <p>7. Matters Arising</p> <p>7.1 Free saplings: Ten were offered to each parish in return for data on the number of trees on Parish Council-owned land. Smeeth Parish Council does not own any land but was permitted to donate its saplings to Brabourne, who will therefore have 20.</p> <p>7.2 Potholes in Plain Road near Washington Farm: These have been reported to KCC Highways and Stagecoach asked to support the request that the road be resurfaced.</p> <p>7.3 Flytipping: Two recent incidents have been reported to the Borough Council. Cllr Howard advised that the Borough Council now has a dedicated enforcement team and will prosecute flytippers, noting that the Borough Council's recent prosecution against an offender was successful. He stated that the source can also be prosecuted and stressed the need to use reputable agents who have the required licence. The Vice-chairman suggested that the newly introduced charges at the tip had resulted in flytipping. Cllr Howard replied that there is no evidence to show a link – there has been no direct increase in flytipping but he would pass on the comments. He noted that the tip is the responsibility of KCC, and the Borough Council collects household bulk waste for which it charges. Commercial waste is the bulk of the material flytipped but the Borough Council will soon offer a commercial waste disposal service, in competition with KCC, which may lead to a reduction in charges.</p> <p>7.4 Local Needs Housing: Replies to the Clerk's emails to Tessa O'Sullivan [Rural Housing Enabler (ACRK)] re land behind Fortescue Place had not been received due to a server classifying the replies as spam. This has now been resolved and a response from the landowner is awaited.</p> <p>7.5 Cross-over at Cherry Trees: No information has been forthcoming despite chasing, and a new Highways Steward is now in place.</p> <p>7.6 Parish Councils' communications: The March e-newsletter was circulated on 2nd March and emphasised the Annual Parish Meeting (APM). A reminder about the APM will be published a few days before the meeting. Open rates are 56.7% for the e-newsletter and 70% for a Newsflash. There are 232 subscribers, with six new and one who has unsubscribed. Items of interest would be welcome and should be sent to Cllr Mrs Pereboom, Cllr Hickmott (Brabourne Parish Council chairman) or via the e-newsletter.</p> <p>7.7 Parish Council website migration: Cllr Mrs Pereboom has been working to identify likely suitable website providers which will comply with the accessibility regulations, and has shortlisted three. The Chairman proposed that Cllr Mrs Pereboom be mandated to select the most appropriate website.</p> <p>Resolved: That Cllr Mrs Pereboom be mandated to select the most appropriate website for the Parish Council, which complies with the accessibility regulations.</p> <p>Further information will be brought to the May meeting for ratification.</p> <p>7.8 KALC Community Award: The Parish Council's nomination has been submitted and it is hoped to present it at the Annual Parish Meeting on 25th March.</p> <p>7.9 Brabourne Baptist Church: The Parish Council made a donation for works related to disabled access. Works to the front door have been completed and those to the exterior lighting are in hand. The Parish Council has received a thank you letter for its donation.</p> <p>7.10 Scouts and Guides newspaper collection: An update is awaited.</p> <p>7.11 Potential projects for the Parish Council: These include provision of bus shelters, better access to the sandpit, installation of village gates, The Chairman advised that bus shelters had been discussed with the Brabourne Parish Council chairman, who reported that a survey carried out approx five years ago indicated that provision of bus shelters would not be cost-effective given low passenger numbers, but this would be revisited as part of a management plan for the village green at The Warren.</p> <p>Disabled access to the sandpit: The Clerk to write to the Management Committee for its comments.</p> <p>Village gates: KCC approval will be required. The Clerk to contact KCC for a feasibility study for gates at the seven entrances to the village: The Ridgeway, Church Road, Plain Road, Lees Road, Canterbury Road, Pound Lane and Granary Court Road.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>VP</p> <p>SW</p> <p>SW</p>
--	--

7.12 Parish Council budgeted donation to the Scouts and Guides: This will be paid annually in November.

SW

8. Report from PCSO

The PCSO's report has been circulated and noted that there is little to report locally.

The PCSO has been concentrating on antisocial behaviour in the school holidays, knife crime, vehicle crime (in particular theft from vans) and safeguarding young people. Training sessions for the latter are on offer in March for parents and guardians.

9. Financial Report

9.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

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

Parish Council account

Payments

Details	£
S Wood (salary)	322.14
S Wood (salary)	322.14
S Wood (expenses)	115.92
B Podd (salary) (21 hrs @ £8.21/hr)	172.41
Brabourne & Smeeth PFA (donation)	1400.00
Brabourne & Smeeth Village Hall Association (donation)	1000.00
Village caretaker account (VAT refund)	238.56

Receipts

Details	£
NatWest interest	11.87
VAT refund	323.72

Balance £ 63952.77

Caretaker account

Payments

Details	£
Zurich Municipal (van insurance)	576.89
T Denne & Sons (storage)	108.00
P Rodway (salary January)	1249.95
P Rodway (expenses)	23.81
HMRC	279.06
KCC re Kent Pension Fund	402.53
Fuelgenie	61.97
P Rodway (salary February)	1249.95
HMRC	279.06
KCC re Kent Pension Fund	402.53
T Denne & Sons (storage)	108.00
Fuelgenie	85.56
Lister Wilder	13.97
T Denne & Sons (storage)	108.00

Receipts

Details	£
238.56 (SPC – VAT refund)	238.56

Balance: £ 11117.74

9.2 Contribution to the Scouts and Guides for repairs to Scout HQ

The Chairman reported that a request has been received for a contribution to repairs to Scout HQ costing £5118, but a breakdown of costings was not provided. It was noted that Scout HQ is 20 years old and Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils each recently gave a donation and have budgeted for an annual donation of £500. Cllr Howard noted that Scouts and Guides could apply for funding from the Borough Council for a ward member or community grant in the next financial year, applications now having closed for 2019-20. An application could also be made to the county councillor. Cllr Howard felt that the Scouts and Guides are an invaluable asset to the community and suggested that a meeting be arranged between the Chairmen of Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils and the Scouts and Guides, to discuss funding for all proposed projects over the short and long term rather than requests for piecemeal funding. This would assist in the Parish Councils' and Group budgeting. The Chairman agreed, and stated that a cost-projection for the next two years is needed.

DH/MH

9.3 Request for a contribution to the 75th anniversary celebrations of VE Day and VJ Day

George Taylor was invited to address the meeting, and advised that he was speaking on behalf of the Royal British Legion (RBL).

Mr Taylor reported that an application for a ward member grant will be submitted, which it is hoped will cover costs. The 75th anniversary of VE Day should be recognised but the end of the war will be celebrated in August on VJ Day.

The RBL will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2020 and this will be combined with the 75th anniversary of VE Day. A family fun day at The Black Horse is planned on 11th April, to include a buffet, stalls and games for both children and adults. A four-piece band will play 1940s music. There will be a charge for the buffet, likely to be £5, but there will be no charge for children. The event will be advertised village-wide, including in the Brabourne and Smeeth e-newsletter. The RBL is supporting The Woolpack's May street party but is not involved in the organisation.

VJ Day: After a short service at the Smeeth War Memorial there will be a formal service in St Mary Smeeth at which the Bishop of Dover [Rose Hudson-Wilkin] will officiate. This will be followed by a tea party at The Woolpack. Mr Taylor noted that costs will be incurred for printing copies of the Order of Service and advertising.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor and invited an application to the Parish Council for a contribution if there was a shortfall in funding.

9.4 Financial Regulations 2019

The draft Financial Regulations as amended were tabled.

Resolved:

That the draft Financial Regulations as amended be adopted.

9.5 Changes to the authorised signatories in the current banking mandate

Resolved:

That the Authorised Signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 1.3 [Account information], be changed in accordance with section Authorised Signatories

10. Planning

10.1 Planning Committee report

19/01775/AS Sunhill Cottage, Granary Court Road Approved by the Borough Council

20/00048/AS Copper Cottage, Pound Lane Approved by the Borough Council

19/01318/AS Tanners Yard, Granary Court Road No objection from the Parish Council

A Contravention Order was raised regarding a motor home at Granary Corner, but was resolved following removal of the motor home.

10.2 Joint Neighbourhood Plan [NP] with Brabourne Parish Council

A map outlining the area for inclusion in the joint NP is to be drawn up and submitted to the Borough Council.

DH/SW/MH

11. KALC representative report

<p>Cllr Mrs Morey reported that she attended the KALC AGM on November 30th 2019. Minutes of the last meeting of KALC on 15th January have been circulated to all Smeeth Parish Councillors. There was a presentation on the installation and monitoring of CCTV. The next meeting of KALC will be on March 11th 2020 when there will be a presentation on Highway Improvement Plans.</p> <p>Cllr Mrs Morey will attend the Parish Forum on 15th April at Civic Centre.</p>	JM
<p>12. Footpaths and Highways</p> <p>12.1 Overgrown hedges on The Ridgeway: These have been dealt with by the village caretaker.</p> <p>12.2 Road closures: Motorway and other road closures were posted on Facebook where possible, and it was suggested that like information could be sent round as a newsflash on the e-newsletter. The M20 J9-11 will be closed from 8pm-6am for two weeks from 2nd March to put up new signage.</p> <p>12.3 A20: Possible major repairs and resurfacing will likely involve closures or part closures. Details are awaited.</p> <p>12.4 Complaint re HGV parking in the layby on the A20 near the junction with The Ridgeway: The PCSO has attended and penalty notices issued. Signage re overnight parking is in place. A request has been made to the Joint Transportation Board that the overnight parking ban on the A20 [between Charing and Potters Corner] be extended to the A20 at Smeeth.</p> <p>12.5 Granary Court Road: Reports have been received that the road is blocked on occasions when low-loaders are delivering vehicles to Tanners Yard.</p> <p>13. Emergency Plan (EP) and Community Led Plan (CLP)</p> <p>EP: The Chairman reported that he is endeavouring to arrange a meeting with Steve Reeves, a potential EP coordinator.</p> <p>CLP: The Chairman reported that Michael Hinchliffe has not been able to progress the CLP because he has been unwell and may have to step down for other, family-related, reasons. The CLP committee has not met. Bulb planting continues.</p> <p>14. Village caretaker scheme</p> <p>Cllr Mrs Morey reported that the village Caretaker Scheme continues to be successful and a meeting of the Caretaker Committee has been arranged for March 18th for the caretaker's annual appraisal. The Committee agreed to fund his attendance at a course for a certification in pesticides which he needed to enable him to purchase and use pesticides. If anyone notices there is anything in the village that requires the attention of the caretaker the Clerk should be notified.</p> <p>15. Speedwatch</p> <p>The Chairman reported that no Speedwatch sessions have been scheduled due to illness, the bad weather and a lack of volunteers.</p> <p>16. Playing fields</p> <p>New committee members are being sought and to fill roles on the Management Committee; there has been no response to the article in the e-newsletter. No Committee meetings have been held.</p> <p>17. 75th Anniversary celebration of VE Day and VJ Day</p> <p>See 9.3.</p>	VP
<p>18. Correspondence</p> <p>All correspondence has been circulated.</p> <p>Fordreds Charity: Thank you letters have been received.</p> <p>Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance: Request for a donation. Agenda item for the next meeting.</p> <p>19. Retirement of Parish Clerk</p> <p>19.1 The Chairman reported that the post has been advertised widely, and interviews will be conducted on 10th March. It is hoped that the new Clerk will be appointed in April to allow for a phased hand-over.</p>	SW

19.2 The Chairman proposed that the new Clerk be provided with a laptop to be used exclusively for Parish Council work.

Resolved:

That the new Clerk be provided with a laptop to be used exclusively for Parish Council work..

20. Any other business

No other business was raised.

21. Date and time of next meetings

Wednesday 25th March 202 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church (Annual Parish Meeting)

Wednesday 13th May 2020 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

DRAFT