

**Smeeth Parish Council**  
**Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7.00pm**  
**Brabourne Baptist Church**

<p><b>1. Present</b>  Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT), Cllr Mrs Morey (JM), Cllr Hinchliffe (MH), Cllr MacPhee (CM) and Mrs Wood (Clerk) (SW). Cllr Miss Martin and Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) attended.</p> <p><b>2. Apologies</b>  Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP) and Cllr Plowright (IP) (prior commitments), and Cllr Howard (ward member).</p> <p><b>3. Declarations of Interest</b>  Cllr MacPhee: voluntary declaration agenda item 20 as a member of the Royal British Legion.</p> <p><b>4. Minutes</b>  Agenda item 18: Cllr Hinchliffe noted that the Standing Order regarding tenure had fallen when new Standing Orders were adopted. The Chairman had, however, indicated that he would honour the original date, therefore his time as Chairman would run from 2013.  Subject to this amendment:  <b>Resolved:</b>  <b>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 be approved and confirmed as a true record.</b></p> <p><b>5. Open Session</b>  No members of the public were present.</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p>
<p><b>6. Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> Gate post in Pound Lane: In hand with Cllr Mrs Pereboom.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Parking on Woolpack Hill: The Community Warden has monitored and no problems reported</p> <p><b>6.3</b> HGV parking at Smeeth crossroads: Two emails expressing concerns were sent to the Chairman; a recent accident was reported. Approaches to KCC Highways have been unsuccessful, but Highways have indicated that this may be reviewed if the Parish Council funds the works – further information is awaited. The Highways Steward has offered to meet the Parish Council to discuss highways’ issues – Smeeth crossroads will be among issues raised.</p> <p><b>6.4</b> Plain Road water leak: This has not yet been repaired.</p> <p><b>6.5</b> Prescription delivery service: This is now operational but has not yet been called on.</p> <p><b>6.6</b> Community governance review: The Parish Council’s comments were put forward. All submissions will be published on 25<sup>th</sup> November, but individuals who commented will not be named.</p> <p><b>6.7</b> Village green: There are no byelaws in place, this is in hand with Brabourne Parish Council.</p> <p><b>6.8</b> Dog waste bags: See item 9.2. Cllr Martin noted that some stock is still available and will verify, the service is being withdrawn because of the cost of distribution.</p>	<p><b>VP</b></p> <p><b>SW</b></p> <p><b>IP</b></p>
<p><b>7. Report from Community Warden and PCSO</b>  Mr Kingston reported that there were no incidents on Halloween or Bonfire Night. A Landrover has been stolen from Woolpack Hill and has not yet been recovered. Another theft was reported. Complaints have been received re noise nuisance on the green late at night and at weekends; Mr Kingston will monitor when possible. A dog being walked on the lead pulled the lead out of the walker’s hand and attacked and killed a cat; the owner has agreed to muzzle the dog when out. Mr Kingston reported that he had visited the IT company operating out of the old Rake Store, and spoken to the workmen refurbishing the Woolpack Inn. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council had written to Enterprise (owner of the pub) regarding the closure and requesting that the garden and car park be included in any refurbishment. The Chairman read the reply from Enterprise which stated that it is hoped the inn will reopen before Christmas and the garden will be part of any outside works. Rubbish had been flytipped in Station Road. An incident at the</p>	

Plough was reported in which ball-bearings were catapulted at the landlord, this was reported to the Police. The assailants bought food in Orpins and were on its CCTV, they drove a white Fiat 500 with red and white chequers on the side. Cllr MacPhee reported shotgun pellets landing in his garden, but no report from a weapon was heard; it was noted that these can be fired from up to 100yards away.  
The PCSO's report is attached.

#### **8. Village caretaker scheme**

Cllr Hinchliffe stated that decisions should be made on whether to adopt the scheme; the pay scale for the caretaker; funding for the scheme. A 3-year projection of costings for the scheme was circulated, based on an hourly rate for the caretaker of £9.10/hr (the rate paid to the Wittersham caretaker). ABC will give £5000 per year to the scheme, based on its current expenditure in the parishes, however an additional £5000 will be given in the first year for start-up costs; KCC will give £2000 per parish. This funding is guaranteed for 3 years and is irrespective of who delivers the services, Cllr Miss Martin having advised that ABC is taking services back in-house. If adopted the scheme will start on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

It was proposed that the scheme be adopted.

#### **Resolved:**

**That Smeeth Parish Council adopts the village caretaker scheme.**

It was proposed that the caretaker be paid £9.10/hr, in order to attract a better candidate.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the caretaker be paid at a rate of £9.10 per hour.**

Cllr Miss Martin asked how equipment would be funded, Cllr Hinchliffe advised that ABC is giving a one-off grant of £10,000; Cllr Wickham is supportive and may give a grant. The likely shortfall would be met by the parishes. Cllr Miss Martin stated that she would be willing to give a contribution from her Member Community Grant towards the shortfall. She further noted that ABC has a fund of £1,600,000 for capital expenditure on equipment when it takes back services, devolving services to the parishes will enable it to concentrate on the urban area. Cllr Miss Martin advised that Mersham has a different county councillor (Cllr Angell) who could be approached.

Funding the shortfall: It was proposed that this be by increasing the Precept for Smeeth by either £1369 or £1540, depending on how it is shared between the parishes. The effect on the increase paid by each household would be insignificant for Smeeth. Cllr Hinchliffe proposed that the precept be increased by £1540, the Chairman asked if it should be taken from Reserves, however this would have the effect of the Reserves reducing year-on-year. It was proposed that the shortfall be funded by an increase in the Precept.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the Precept be raised to fund the shortfall in funding for the caretaker scheme.**

#### **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:**

#### **Payments**

<b>Details</b>	<b>£</b>
Get Mapping plc (subscription)	33.60
B Podd (salary)	99.30
S Wood (gross salary October)	300.17
S Wood (gross salary November)	300.17
S Wood (expenses)	10.79
S Wood (Fordred's Charity)	175.00
Westwell Parish Council (Clerk's training)	15.62
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club (donation)	150.00

**Receipts**

Details	£
NatWest interest	2.29
Precept	5545.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	245.00
Council Tax Support Grant	205.00
Fordred's Charity	175.00

**9.2 Provision of dog waste bags**

Cllr Hinchliffe circulated samples of bags, of varying thickness. 30,000 bags are given out each year by John Childs Garage, a year's supply of the thicker bags would cost £304.50 + VAT, the thinner would cost £267.90 + VAT.

Orpins will hold a stock of bags and give 2 packs to those who ask for them.

It was proposed that the thinner (economy) bags be supplied.

**Resolved:**

**That an order be placed for 30,000 economy bags.**

The bags will be stored in the caretaker's lock-up; the Chairman offered to store them temporarily.

**9.3 Clerk's computer allowance**

The Clerk advised that she was now on superfast broadband and asked the Council to consider a pro rata increase in the computer allowance paid to reflect the additional cost. Cllr Miss Martin advised that the Parish Council is a small business, and there is a government scheme to subsidise superfast broadband provision to small businesses. Cllr Miss Martin will send the information to the Clerk.

**9.4 Draft Budget for 2016-2017**

The draft budget was circulated, the Clerk advised that the Concurrent Functions Grant will continue to be paid, contrary to earlier indications. The amount of this grant and the Council Tax Support Grant will be known in December. A decision on the Budget will be made at the January meeting when this information is known.

**10. Planning Committee report**

Cllr Thorpe (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on the following planning matters:

The Rake Shed, Church Road: External lighting had been left on all night, without planning permission. This has been resolved and the lights turned off.

Brabourne Baptist Church: The cabin to the rear had temporary planning permission because it was sited over graves, permanent permission has now been granted.

Scotts Hall, Hythe Road: No objections to the application.

Evesgate Business Park: Is out for consultation.

The Manse: The Chairman asked if a decision had yet been made on the application, Cllr Thorpe replied that it had not, the Committee had expressed concerns re the access. [Post-meeting note: this has been approved but with no conditions as to the access and visibility splay.]

Parish Forum: Richard Alderton gave a presentation on addressing anomalies re planning applications. Cllr Thorpe advised that he had contacted Mr Alderton with regard to Ashbourne House, in which a garage had been converted to residential accommodation without permission, Mr Alderton had indicated that he would follow this up. Cllr Hinchliffe stated that he had attended the Forum, which should be an opportunity for parishes to discuss issues, however he perceived it to be Borough-led with parishes having little input into the agenda. Cllr Miss Martin suggested that the proposed agenda items may not have been sufficiently specific and recommended that Cllr Hinchliffe raise this with John Rivers (Forum Vice-chairman).

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the following information was given during the presentation on planning enforcement: Enforcement has limited powers. There were 450 complaints last year, of these no breach was found in 150. If an offence is found, an attempt is made to negotiate a settlement, ie by a retrospective planning application. The next course is an Enforcement Notice followed by a Court Order. The latter risks incurring significant costs by ABC, because if it goes to appeal the applicant can appeal for costs against ABC. Cllr Hinchliffe reported that ABC

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<p>acknowledged that it had been poor at communicating, but another enforcement officer has been recruited.</p> <p><b>11. KALC representative report</b> The Chairman reported that the last KALC meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> September and the Minutes have been circulated; the meeting included discussion on Motions for the AGM. The next meeting is on 18<sup>th</sup> November and a presentation will be given on J10A. Cllr Mrs Pereboom will be asked to attend.</p> <p><b>12. Update on J10A Working Group</b> Information on the Community Consultation had been circulated.</p> <p><b>13. Footpaths and Highways</b>  <b>13.1</b> Parking in Sandy Place. A site meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> September, attended by Cllr Plowright and the Clerk with the Planning Officer (Laura Payne). The meeting was constructive and a number of proposals put forward by Mrs Payne which were to be assessed by ABC. The Clerk to follow-up.  <b>13.2</b> Hedge overgrowing the footway on the A20 near Apple Barn and cracked footway. These have been reported to Highways.  <b>13.3</b> Footpath adjacent to John Childs Garage. This has been reported to Highways.  <b>13.4</b> Parking at Smeeth School. The Chairman reported that he spoken to the Head Teacher, who is formulating a Travel Plan as recommended by KCC. It is thought that the situation has eased – no further complaints have been received. This will be raised with the Highways Steward (see 6.3).  <b>13.5</b> Junction of Canterbury Road and Plain Road – letter to Highways. In hand with Cllr Plowright and the Clerk.  <b>13.6</b> Footpaths coordinator: The Vice-chairman advised that the coordinator has been appointed by KCC and lives in Canterbury Road, the Vice-chairman to follow-up.</p> <p><b>14. Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan</b>  Emergency Plan: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that the plan will be updated, with the agreement of the working group, it will then be forwarded to ABC to be uploaded on to the new template.  Community Led Plan: Cllr Hinchliffe reported that a new bank account will be opened, the signatories have been agreed. The next meeting of the coordinators is 24<sup>th</sup> November.  Progress to date:  Enhanced Facilities for the Young: The group is fundraising and working with the Improved Sporting Facilities group. A Halloween party raised £150, the target is £2000. Finances will be discussed at the meeting. To achieve all aims of the Plan £70,000 will have to be raised.  Tidy up the Village: Tesco has funded cleaning equipment; the Gardening Society has offered to help with planting.  Footpaths: The group is working on Ian Ruck's proposal of a footpath on the village green (to run parallel with Bridge Road). This will include hardstanding in front of the noticeboard and at the bus stop. The existing footpath on the green is not a PROW. The new footpath will be adopted by the PROW office if agreed by Brabourne Parish Council; adoption carries responsibility for maintenance. The specification for the footpath is that for KCC footpaths.  Local Needs Housing: Cllr MacPhee reported that the group has had a meeting with Tessa O'Sullivan (Rural Housing Enabler, ACRK) and the current proposals were discussed. He noted that landowners are waiting to hear the govt proposals on exemptions for rural housing with regard to the 'Right to Buy' before releasing land. The Chairman reported that he had raised the 'Right to Buy' with Damian Collins MP at the monthly surgery, this was followed-up by a letter from the Parish Council. The MP's reply was read to the meeting, which directed the Parish Council to the govt's briefing on its plans and the restrictions on Right to Buy. [Post-meeting note: A letter has been received from the English Rural Housing Association advising that a voluntary agreement has been reached between the govt and National Housing Federation (the housing associations' trade body) and the existing statutory exclusion from the Right to Buy of English Rural's properties will continue.] It was acknowledged that there is a need to raise awareness among residents on how to apply for Local Needs Housing.  Cllr Miss Martin reported that all ward members will have been consulted by Christmas on site submissions, before publication of the draft Local Plan.</p>	<p><b>SW/VP</b></p> <p><b>SW</b></p> <p><b>IP/SW</b></p> <p><b>GT</b></p>
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Cllr Mrs Morey attended the Community Land Trust seminar, a Parish Council guide to Affordable Local Housing was circulated.

#### **15. Speedwatch**

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that he had passed the registration number of a speeding vehicle to the PCSO, who had forward it to the Antisocial Behaviour Unit – the unit will write to the vehicle owner. Sessions continue to be carried out but more volunteers are needed.

#### **16. Local Needs Housing**

See item 14.

#### **17. Playing fields**

The Chairman reported that the grass is growing and the basic works have been completed; the working group has not met recently.

#### **18. Ashford Local Plan – Village Protection Strategy**

Cllr Hinchliffe reported that villages are getting together to draw up a policy to prevent unwanted development; Peter Brett Associates (PBA) are involved in the required surveys to support this policy. Cllr Miss Martin advised that PBA are infrastructure specialists and work with ABC. She stated that a number of issues had been raised at the May elections, including speeding, HGV parking poor signage and damage to hedgerows. Aldington Parish Council had stated that it did not want any more development citing a lack of infrastructure; PBA has been engaged at a cost of approx £5500 by Aldington Parish Council to advise as to data needed in support of this position, any surveys would be carried out by residents and the report drawn up by PBA. The cost is being met by a grant of £500 from Cllr Miss Martin, £1000 from Cllr Wickham, and the balance from Aldington Parish Council funds. Cllr Miss Martin noted that issues such as Smeeth crossroads could be included in a similar exercise for Smeeth and suggested that PBA be contacted for an exploratory meeting. Cllr Hinchliffe offered to meet PBA, noting that this would complement the Community Led Plan.

#### **19. Correspondence**

See items 7 and 14.

#### **20. Any Other Business**

**20.1** The Chairman reported that the Royal British Legion has written to the Parish Council with regard to repairs needed to the Smeeth War Memorial, it is estimated that these will cost £1600. Cllr Miss Martin advised that grants of up to £700 are available from ABC for this purpose, the Clerk to contact Michelle Byrne. Cllr Miss Martin noted that the Parish Council could also apply to the ward members for a Member Community Grant. This will also be taken to Brabourne Parish Council.

**20.2** KALC Community Awards scheme. Nominations are invited.

#### **21. Resolution to exclude the public**

It was proposed that, under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be dealt with, the public and press leave the meeting during discussion of item 22, namely distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

**Resolved:**

**That the press and public leave the meeting during discussion of Fordred's Charity payments**

#### **22. Fordred's Charity**

The payments will be distributed by the Vice-chairman and Cllr Hinchliffe as agreed.

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

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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**PCSO's report 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

PCSO Hobbs reported the following:

1 theft of a trailer and 2 thefts of motor vehicles from the same address

1 incident criminal damage

There have been reports of aggressive dogs in the area, the Dog Warden is dealing with this, and the owner will be spoken to.

Residents are asked to ring 101 with any suspicious persons/vehicles seen in the area, there have been a few burglaries in Brabourne Lees of late.