

Smeeth Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 7.00pm
By Zoom

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Mrs Morey (JM), Cllr Mrs Pereboom (VP), Cllr Mrs Alford (HA), Cllr Mrs Moo (YM) and Mrs Block (Clerk) (TB).

1 member of the public

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman) (GT) and Borough Cllr William Howard

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to be raised.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 18th November 2020 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Borough Councillor's Report

Cllr Howard had sent the following report ahead of the meeting:

"I hope this message finds you safe and well. During this time, my work has been a balance between supporting businesses and residents with issues now, while trying to plan and implement changes to help our community recovery, when some sort of normality one day returns to our communities. On the local front I have been providing advice to residents with planning applications (including application 20/1336 that is currently on hold as it was not valid), supporting applications for residents applying for disabled parking bays, as well as helping signposting local businesses in the right direction if they are entitled to support grants. Importantly I do still have some Ward Member Community Grant available so if anybody has any suggestions, they would be very welcome. An additional item that I had to deal with (as well as the Parish Clerk) was the Basketball Hoop at the Playing Field. Just a reminder to the Parish Council this is still an issue, but I would like to thank Michael Hinchcliffe, who stepped in on behalf of the CLP and responded on the issue. I hope it will be resolved shortly in 2021 and anything that can be done to help would be welcomed.

At a more Borough level I have been working with colleagues to support ideas such as the green barrier for Mersham, which should benefit our ward as well, as stopping development towards Mersham obviously helps stop development towards our patch. Also, I have been receiving regular briefings from authorities regarding the lorry disruptions at Christmas, Brexit preparation, and weather events such as Storm Bella. In regard to the lorry disruption, I was communicating with both MPs (D. Collins and D. Green) and would like to thank both of them for the efforts made to get Highways England to reopen the motorway junctions between Ashford and Folkestone ASAP after the bulk of the lorries had passed.

The pace of change to reduce the carbon footprint of the Borough has also been non-stop including further tree planting (e.g., 6,666 trees in South Ashford around Chilmingdon Green), establishing a measurable baseline across the county, and looking at how we can reduce the carbon footprint of our housing stock. An additional victory on this front came with a successful grant for nearly £1.5m to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the Stour Centre using solar panels and other more eco-friendly options. The additional benefit of this should be the financial savings the council will make with the building not requiring as much energy to run.

As ever I am always on hand to support where I can and look forward to seeing everybody

soon.”

6. Open Session

There were no issues raised.

7. Matters Arising

The Fordred's money has been distributed and additional names have been suggested for next year.

A name has been suggested for the Councillor vacancy. DH is to follow this up when restrictions allow.

Chris Denyer is to pursue the matter of ownership of/responsibility for the Smeeth War Memorial. He will also chase up the “faculty.” The PCC have met and have raised a number of questions including land ownership. DH was able to offer assurance, having undertaken a Land Registry search, that it is owned by the Church. The ecclesiastical insurers are to be approached. The PCC has asked what the PC's insurers are covering and has also asked about future maintenance. The Clerk is to respond regarding PC insurance. The Church will maintain trees and surrounding land. DH said that the Caretaker might be able to assist with maintenance. The PC may be able to help fund future maintenance, but nothing is yet decided. There was disquiet expressed by the PCC about the plastic streamers that bedecked the fencing recently and this will be taken up with the RBL. The situation is moving forward. The stonework and lettering are a specialist job and the costs of keeping the lettering and stonework in good condition must be taken into account. The Caretaker currently clears the leaves.

There has been no further update received from Ashford Borough Council regarding a Condolence book.

The Inland Border facilities are now both working – apparently satisfactorily.

VP had circulated the Newsletter update. The Newsletter is now a year old. Both Cllrs Howard (ABC) and Bell (KCC) have been approached and they are both to submit some content in future. It is difficult to keep finding interesting content. HA suggested promoting the need in the Parish News. VP wondered whether a less frequent newsletter might be a better idea. DH suggested that this should be kept under review. It was also suggested that community groups could be approached and asked for content. Jon Rose was asked about this. He would be happy to contribute.

Jon Rose suggested that group email lists he held could be used to circulate the newsletter information more widely and encourage subscribers.

VP reported that the Newsletter opening rates are very positive.

8. PCSO's report

The latest report from the PCSO had been circulated to all Councillors. PCSO Bloomfield has taken over PCSO Newell's role.

9. Discussion with Jon Rose regarding a donation to the Brabourne and Smeeth Scouts and Guides

The Chairman welcomed Jon Rose to the meeting.

Jon said that his Management Committee had had a meeting the previous Monday and that capital finances for the group were healthy at present and the organisation was able to make a claim for loss of money as they pay Council Tax on the building. The kitchen has been upgraded and the chairs have been replaced with wipeable chairs at a cost of £1500. In order to protect the equipment that is used a parent will be building a storage cupboard to help maintain cleanliness of the equipment. The Government grant will cover these expenses.

The big issue for the Scouts/Guides is that the income of £3,000 per annum from newspapers has definitely been lost consequently there is a need to increase the day to day income.

The group is trying to engage with the young people via Zoom, but a lot of children are not keen to engage in on-line groups. Most of the children wish to be out of the house or have spent all day working on-line at school and so a Zoom call is not what they want and this does

DH

TB

not build independence and teamwork.

There are circa 25 Scouts but only 15 are attending regularly at present. It is difficult to run a Zoom meeting for children. It is believed the majority will return but this will ultimately bring a drop of income. Subs cannot currently be collected but membership fees need to be paid and this needs a sensitive approach to the personal situations of families.

Rental costs of the headquarters (to outside users) have been increased but the interest in renting is not good at the moment. A construction company have used it for training but that is all. This is a challenging time.

Currently there is no urgent need for finances but when the group get back face to face, the loss of the newspaper recycling grant will be felt.

Cllr Herrick explained that the Parish Council agreed to make a contribution last year and had settled on £500. Cllr Howard (ABC) had felt the PC should make an enhanced contribution.

The PC is hoping to decide on the final figure for this year and will review again in 12 months.

JM asked whether Brabourne Parish Council had been approached and Jon Rose explained that the Scouts/Guides had made an approach following conversations with William Howard. JM asked whether any capital items were needed. Jon responded that only camping items, but at the moment he could not say anything was needed because of the restrictions on activities as a result of Covid.

Jon went on to explain that because the Village Fete Committee had disbanded the Scout group were talking amongst themselves regarding the idea of running a Village Fete to help their finances.

JM asked about previous work on the roof – Jon explained that the wind had stripped out the mortar from the gable end necessitating re-pointing.

JM asked whether meetings were only on-line – Jon explained that in September to October the groups could meet outside and that had meant that they needed to purchase site lights, however, in the current lockdown such meetings were not possible.

JM asked if they are hoping to pick up the numbers – Jon explained that there is additional interest in Beavers. Jon said his biggest challenge was in encouraging additional leaders.

DH explained that the Parish Council would be looking to Brabourne to make a commensurate contribution.

DH proposed that Smeeth PC make a donation of £1000 for 2021-22 and review again for 2022-23 as and when.

Jon expressed gratitude to the Parish Council. JM suggested that Jon reports back later in the year.

For capital expenditure William Howard could be approached for a Member's Grant.

10. Financial Report

10.1 To approve the Financial Statement

A copy of the Financial Statement and a current Budget over Expenditure had been circulated to all the Councillors ahead of the meeting for both the Parish Council Account and the Caretaker Account. There were no questions raised with regards to this.

The Financial Statement was approved.

10.2 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

The following payments had been approved prior to the meeting and the cheques signed accordingly:

Brabourne Parish Council (Newsletter hamper)	£15.00
Tracey Block (December Salary)	£239.74
HMRC	£120.00
Tracey Block (January salary)	£239.74
Kent Association for Local Councils (outstanding course)	£60.00
Mrs B Podd	£261.60

T Denne and Sons	£108.00
P Rodway (December salary)	£1390.34
KCC Pension Fund	£440.30
P Rodway (mobile expenses)	£25.00
Lister Wilder	£27.50
T Denne and Sons	£108.00
HMRC	£306.93
KCC Pension Fund	£631.60
Lister Wilder	£9.36
Green Flag breakdown cover	£115.00
DVLA (Vehicle Road Fund Licence)	£265.00
P Rodway (January salary)	£1359.86

11. Planning

11.1 Planning Report – to agree any outstanding responses to Planning Applications and to note responses sent between meetings.

A copy of the Planning Report had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting by Cllr Mrs Pereboom and a copy is kept on file in the Minute Book.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom reported that applications have been slow and there doesn't seem to be much happening. It was noted that the application regarding 2 new units at Mersham-le-Hatch had been sent to Smeeth PC only. All councillors had responded and there were no objections raised.

The application for Park Farm has had amended drawings added. The new drawings show access amendments – could everyone please re-visit this application and let VP have comments. There are objections to this application online.

All submissions that have been submitted were endorsed.

11.2 Application: 20/01336 - Smeeth Hill House

This application appears to be invalid at present. Should this application become valid, the Parish Council will review it. It was suggested that an extra-ordinary meeting could be called to discuss the matter once this happens. Councillors were reminded that any comments would need to be made on planning grounds. Access to the site from the A20 may be a matter of particular concern.

There was a discussion regarding how the PC will know when the application becomes valid. The Clerk will request that we are made aware by ABC Planning when/if this happens.

The matter of how applications generally are being dealt with was discussed. HA prefers the original way. It was resolved that the Parish Council will deal with applications by Councillors copying other Councillors in to the response they send to VP.

Gorsebank – The Clerk is to request clarification from the Planning Officer regarding the on-site container as it should have been removed by 4th December as a condition of the most recent Planning Approval.

12. KALC Representative report

The KALC AGM took place remotely via Zoom with a reminder to parishes that subscriptions are still necessary to renew membership.

The last Area Committee Meeting of KALC was on 6th January 2021 via Zoom when CI Sparkes from Ashford Police gave a presentation about policing during Covid, the road safety issue at Magpie Hall Road, and the problems of anti-social behaviour and crime in Charing. He introduced DI Simon Johnson who is now running the Community Safety Unit.

Richard Bartley from Wye Parish Council addressed the meeting regarding the Wye Public

TB

TB

<p>Inquiry, which is expected to last 6-7 days and is due to close on 5th February 2021. There will be a live feed available online for members of the public during the inquiry.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chairman of KALC will send an email to Damian Green MP urging him to support the second reading of the Inland Waters Bill currently going through the House of Commons.</p> <p>Leigh Poppy from the ONS gave a presentation about Census 2021 which is due to take place on Sunday 21 March 2021 and urged all parish councils to publicise the census via posters/newsletters etc. to encourage parishioners to complete the forms, and will update KALC at the next meeting. Letters will be sent out to every household at the end of February with a code to enable completion of the form online, with the option for everyone to complete the census by paper if preferred. Help is available to any parishioners who require assistance to complete the form.</p> <p>KALC Area Committee will be writing to Chairmen of Parish Councils regarding recruitment of a new Area Committee Secretary for KALC .</p> <p>The Chairman of KALC raised the problem experienced by Rolvenden Parish Council who have been trying without success to get their money back from their bank and their insurance company, Came & Co, and emphasised the need for Parish Councils to be aware of policies with clauses that cause such problems.</p> <p>Next KALC Area Committee Meeting is via Zoom on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to Damian Green MP and ask him to support the Inland Waters Bill. The Clerk is to send this.</p> <p>It was noted that Sue Wood is retiring and a replacement is being sought.</p>	TB
<p>13. Footpaths and Highways (including parking issues and bridleways)</p> <p>No response has yet been received from KCC Highways ref: road safety and the Church Road/The Ridgeway “grass triangle.” The white lines have been re-painted at this site. Some white lines still need repainting in other areas despite recent work.</p> <p>Bridge Road is having new kerbing installed this week.</p> <p>Pound Lane has had some works undertaken and is now very smooth.</p> <p>There have been a number of road closures for various works.</p> <p>Operation Brock/Stack etc. caused major problems over the Christmas period.</p> <p>The caravan at Treetops (Plain Road) has been problematic again (today) forcing a bus to mount the pavement to get round it. The previous problem was dealt with very swiftly.</p>	
<p>14. Village Caretaker Scheme</p> <p>The work of the Village Caretaker continues well with his winter-time schedule. Please let the Parish Clerk know if there’s anything specific that requires the Village Caretaker’s attention.</p> <p>The Clerk is to chase Paul regarding the purchase of the tree for The Warren.</p>	TB
<p>15. Playing Field Association</p> <p>DH has communicated with the new Chairman. There is no activity at present. There is no news on the bid for S.106 monies for the provision of changing facilities.</p>	
<p>16. Speedwatch</p> <p>Nothing is happening at present. There are currently only 4 active volunteers, so additional volunteers are required.</p>	
<p>17. Community Led Plan/Emergency Plan</p> <p>No progress has been made with the extra basketball fencing yet. A resident had wanted to attend tonight’s meeting as she is aggrieved about the balls coming into her garden. The new fencing will be erected when Covid restrictions allow, hopefully in the Spring. It is felt that the Parish Council cannot do more to resolve the situation. The Clerk will contact the resident concerned to explain that the matter was revisited and that we are waiting for the CLP volunteers to take action.</p>	

<p>18. Correspondence Nothing further to note.</p>	TB
<p>19. Any other business This year is Census year. It was suggested that this information can be put in the Newsletter.</p>	VP
<p>KALC Community Awards. We nominated John Jamieson last year. The award could be publicised in the Newsletter and nominations invited.</p>	VP
<p>The de-fibrillator at Orpins has had a new battery installed and is now fully operational.</p>	
<p>Royal British Legion. There is no activity currently but DH has been asked to draw attention to the fact that Ron Cooper has passed away. Ron has been a long-standing parishioner and member of the Royal British Legion. YM will disseminate any information she has concerning the funeral arrangements.</p>	YM
<p>The Parish Council has been asked to encourage people to take up the vaccination for Covid when offered. This is another suggestion for the Newsletter/Website.</p>	VP
<p>A message on behalf of Charing, Hamstreet, Tenterden and Woodchurch GP Surgeries. Those that have had first vaccine shot should attend the second appointment that they will have been given.</p>	
<p>DH was asked to drop off additional dog poo bags to Orpins.</p>	DH
<p>The trailer that was parked on land to the right of the scrap yard is back and is for sale.</p>	
<p>There was a discussion regarding disseminating the relevant links for Covid information. Circulation is to be via a newsflash rather than in a newsletter.</p>	
<p>20. Date and time of next meetings: March 10th, 2021 at 7.00pm likely to be by Zoom May 12th, 2021 at 7.00pm The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.</p>	