

Smeeth Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7.00pm at Brabourne Baptist Church.

Cllr Herrick welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. To note those present.

Cllr Herrick (Chairman) (DH), Cllr Mrs Morey (JM), Cllr Roger Baker (RB), Rev. Chris Denyer (CD).
 4 members of the public and Mrs Block (Clerk) (TB).

2. Election of the Chairman and any Vice-Chairman for the Council year 2022-23.

JM proposed that DH be elected as Chairman for the Council year 2022-23, RB seconded this, all were in favour and DH took the chair.

DH proposed that HA be elected as Vice-Chairman for the Council year 2022-23, CD seconded this, all were in favour, and HA was elected as Vice-Chair for the year 2022-23.

3. Completion of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form by the Chairman.

The Chairman completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form

4. To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs Alford (HA), Mrs Pereboom (VP), and Cllr William Howard.

5. To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.

There were no declarations of interest received.

6. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 9th March 2022

The Parish Council approved the minutes as a true record and the Chairman signed these.

7. To discuss matters arising from previous minutes that are not covered by the agenda

The Land Mapping Commission consultation had been completed, approved, and submitted. There has been no further news on this.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – due to there being a lack of interest in having a major event, there are several small events due to take place: East Brabourne residents are holding a street (field) party, the Sand Pit Association is holding a picnic, the Allotments Society is holding a BBQ, and the Royal British Legion is holding an Afternoon Tea Party. The bunting suggested is no longer required.

The Ashford Borough Council solar panel initiative has proved very popular such that it is now fully subscribed. A second tranche may be forthcoming in the future.

The Paint for Victory event was a success. The event was advertised in the Newsletter, in the Parish Magazine, and on Facebook.

There is a traffic monitor at Washington Farm. There is no local knowledge as to why. The Clerk was asked to find out from Kent Highways as to who instigated this.

8. Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item

The members of the public raised the following:

The piece of land at the back of Ramstone Close, to the rear of Fortescue Place, has apparently

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been acquired by Quinn Estates. The Parish Council is unaware of any plans for this piece of land. The Clerk was asked to enquire about this.

A resident had expressed concerns about potential plans for development on Pound Lane. The Parish Council is unaware of any plans for this piece of land.

A resident had had some trouble registering for the Newsletter – it would appear that there might not be an issue as no newsletter had been circulated recently.

A resident expressed concern regarding the proposals for the use of The Stables at Granary Court. There are conditions attached to this planning approval and should the resident believe that the conditions are not being adhered to, they should raise this with the Planning Department.

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9. To confirm the representative to the following posts:

Planning co-ordinator - VP

Playing Field Association representative - DH

Village Hall Association representative - RB

Village caretaker committee representative - JM

KALC representative - JM

Community Led Plan representative - DH

10. To receive report from the Borough Councillor

The Borough Councillor had reported to the Parish Council at the APM and had nothing further to add.

11. To receive an update on the Newsletter

“Since our last SPC meeting a few issues have been distributed, but no actual ‘Newsletter’. There was just not much content and then there was also some delay in getting the regular updates for various reasons, which then meant that the ‘news’ would have been somewhat old. Hopefully, following the SPC meeting on Wednesday, and then the BPC meeting later on, there will again be plenty of reasons to issue a full blown version.

The issues that were sent since the last SPC meeting were:

Paint for Victory – reminder regarding the exhibition in the Scout Hut

Date sent: 27 March 22

Number of recipients: 369

Open rate: 256 (69.4%)

Clicks: 12 (3.3%)

Parish Council Vacancies

Date sent: 05 May 22

Number of recipients: 371

Open rate: 272 (73.3%)

Clicks: 14 (3.8%) – clicks on Facebook, Smeeth PC website and Brabourne PC website

Joint Annual Parish Meeting

Date sent: 09 May 22

Number of recipients: 371

Open rate: 270 (72.8%)

Clicks: 11 (3%) – clicks on Facebook, Smeeth PC website and Brabourne PC website

As I will not be attending the meeting on Wednesday, I hope to read in the minutes whether any of the 3 issues above were considered to improve the success of what they were advertising. i.e.

did anyone apply for the Councillor posts? Was the Joint Parish Meeting as success?" (VP)

There have been several people interested in joining the Parish Council and the APM was well attended.

It was suggested that there could be articles for the Newsletter re: the Jubilee Celebrations, animals being fed by walkers, and it was suggested that Peter New was asked for an article re: Neighbourhood Watch.

12. KALC Representative Report

The Planning Training presentation took place on 14th March via Microsoft Teams and notes from the presentation have been sent out to all Councillors, as well as Tracey's own notes from the meeting which are very helpful - especially the details of what constitutes a material consideration in planning applications - together with the website reference.

The Local Council Forum was held on 13th April via zoom and dealt with the topic of anti-social behaviour. Officers from ABC Ashford Community Safety Unit at Kent Police and Public Protection Service at KCC gave a presentation on the definition of Anti-Social Behaviour and its various aspects. They also dealt with how to report Anti-Social behaviour, and the Powers and Enforcement options in dealing with antisocial behaviour and provided case studies.

Ashford Area Committee of KALC met on 12th May at the Civic Centre Ashford and discussed the following topics.

Update on discussions with Southern Water on trialling a campaign in Wittersham to reduce the problems of "unflushables".

In an update from CI Sparkes Ashford Police it was explained there is to be a review of neighbourhood policing and emphasised the importance of encouraging all to sign up to free app "My Community Voice".

Simon Cole gave a presentation on Planning and answered questions on data issues regarding planning application material, the publication of pre application advice on the planning portal, and the delivery of the new planning portal. It was suggested that 3 Parish Councils could assist ABC in testing the new software during the two weeks commencing 6th June and it was proposed that the Parish Council of Wye, Tenterden, Swan or Great Chart could be selected, depending on the availability of their councillors. The ongoing problem of Stodmarsh was discussed at length. Until Stodmarsh has been resolved it is clearly difficult for ABC to start the Local Plan process. ABC is using technical experts in nutrient mitigation to give advice regarding the absorption of phosphates and nitrates using wetlands. Simon Cole explained that the Planning Department is to have a "clearance" week to deal with the backlog of planning applications that has built up intending to clear 150 applications during that time. The relevance and value of the Land Mapping Commission was discussed in the light of the fact that planning "Zones" have now been dropped.

The next KALC meeting is to take place on Wednesday 6 July at the Civic Centre.

13. Footpaths and Highways

The Parish Council asked the Clerk to ask Kent Highways to clear the tree debris on the A20. TB

The Clerk was asked to contact Kent Highways regarding the Highways Improvement Plan. TB

The kerbing of the triangle at the Ridgeway will go ahead in due course.

The Clerk was asked to follow up the parking issue on Woolpack Hill. TB

CD had not had any further communication regarding the footpath proposal.

There have been a number of further accidents at Smeeth Crossroads.

14. Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.

13.1 To receive the report of the Planning committee

The Planning report had been circulated and was approved.

The Planning Training notes had been circulated as well as the Powerpoint.

The EDF Solar application has not yet been received in full by Ashford Borough Council.

The Stonestreet Green Solar Application has been received and a Scoping consultation has been responded to.

It was agreed that the following applications would be responded to:

22/00603 – the Parish Council supports this application.

22/00751 – the Parish Council raises no objections to this application.

It was noted that the Parish Council had not submitted a response to the Cherry Trees application – this seems to have slipped through.

The Borough Council are to have a clearance week from 23/05 to try and clear a back log of applications.

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15. To appoint the internal Auditor for 2022/23

The Parish Council received a recommendation from the Clerk.

That council agreed to appoint Mrs S Lister as Internal Auditor for the new financial year 2022/23

16. To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Controls: Councillors are asked to consider the Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement

The Parish Council reviewed the effectiveness of the system of Internal Controls. Councillors considered and approved the Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement.

17. To approve the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register and Risk Assessment and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.

The Parish Council approved the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Asset Register, and Risk Assessment, and confirmed arrangements are in place for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.

18. Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies ie KALC/CPRE

The Parish Council reviewed and approved its subscriptions to other bodies i.e. KALC/CPRE

19. Financial matters:

a) To approve the following financial documents:

i. To receive the end of year accounts

The Parish Council received the end of year accounts

ii. To receive the report from the Internal Auditor

The Parish Council received the report from the Internal Auditor

iii. To approve the Governance Statement 2021/22, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022

The Parish Council approved the Governance Statement 2021/22, section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022

iv. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2021/22, section 2 of the

AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2022, the explanation of significant variance. To ensure that the Accounting Statements 2021/22 are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

The Parish Council considered and approved the Accounting Statements 2021/22, section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2022 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2022, and the explanation of significant variance. The Accounting Statements 2021/22 were signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

b) To note the Parish Council's financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year.

The Parish Council noted the financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year.

c) To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
000222	T Denne and Sons	£ 108.00
000223	Caretaker's wages	£ 1660.76
000224	HMRC	£ 538.24
000225	KCC re Kent Pension Fund	£ 693.64
000226	Lister Wilder	£ 10.76
000227	Kent Plant Services	£ 54.19
000228	P Rodway expenses	£ 16.89
001134	HMRC	£ 135.20
001135	Litterpicker	£ 228.00
001136	Brabourne Baptist Church	£ 84.00
001137	Internal Audit	£ 60.00
001138	KALC	£ 389.26
001139	Clerk's salary (April)	£ 270.73
001140	Clerk's salary (May)	£ 270.73
001141	Village Caretaker's Account	£ 1660.00

It was agreed that there was no need to reduce the grant to the Village Hall as their expenses are increasing.

20. Correspondence

The Clerk reported that she had received an email regarding parking space allocation on the roadside to allow for EV charging. This is an Ashford Borough Council matter and the Clerk had contacted them for further detail.

21. Playing Field Association

The Playing Field Association had not supplied a report and had no meetings planned.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would suspend funding due to the lack of communication. The Clerk is to request that they send a representative to the next meeting to provide detail as to their activities.

22. Village Caretaker Scheme

The Caretaker Committee representing the cluster of Smeeth, Brabourne, Mersham, and Brook

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met on 6 April to review the year ending 31st March 2022, consider the financial plan for the next 3 years, and assess the individual Contributions from each Parish Council in the cluster for the year to March 2023.

The Village Caretaker service remains very successful and the increase in the Parish Council contributions remain as proposed in last year's review.

The salary costs were £483.54 over budget for the year to March 2022 due to mandated step increase in pay scale. The committee discussed a scale point review and it was agreed to increase Paul's scale point to SCP 15. Maintenance, Operating, and fuel costs were under budget which reflects the lower maintenance costs of new assets purchased in 2020-2021.

Paul has been unable to locate any suitable chipper for his use and it was agreed that T Gardener Ltd would be asked to chip with an agreed budget of £400.

The committee agreed to make a one-off increase in the fuel budget for 2022-2023 by 20%, and that the Parish contributions would increase by 3% for the next 3 years to ensure a surplus pot over the next 3 years as provision for equipment replacement (e.g. van)

The proposed contribution therefore from Smeeth PC for the year 2022 to 2023 will be £3360 (which will be payable in two payments of £1660 on 31 May 2022, and £1700 due on 30 October) and accordingly I formally submit this proposal to Smeeth PC for consideration at the PC meeting.

This increased (by £100) contribution was approved.

23. Speed Watch

The Speed Watch Co-ordinator had reported to the Parish Council at the APM and had nothing further to add.

24. Community Led Plan

The Chairman of the Community Led Plan had reported to the Parish Council at the APM and had nothing further to add.

DH explained that the Parish Council had been asked to contribute to the proposed Michael Hinchliffe Memorial Bench. It was agreed that, with the help of Cllr Howard, any shortfall in funds (after local fundraising) arising from the purchase of the bench would be supported by Smeeth Parish Council and Cllr Howard. It was hoped that Brabourne Parish Council would also contribute.

25. Any Other Business (for information purposes only):

Cllr Herrick reminded the meeting that there is to be a Royal British Legion Afternoon Tea to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.

The Sandpit Association report can be read in the minutes of the APM.

The counsellor vacancy newsflash had generated some interest and it is hoped that Smeeth Parish Council can co-opt at the next meeting.

26. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Wednesday 13th July 2022

Wednesday 14th September 2022

Wednesday 9th November 2022

Wednesday 11th January 2023

Wednesday 8th March 2023

Wednesday 10th May 2023

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.