

**Smeeth Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm at Brabourne Baptist Church.**

Cllr Herrick welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially to Cllr Grant who has joined as a new Councillor.

**1. To note those present.**

Cllr Herrick, Mrs Alford (HA), Cllr Roger Baker, Cllr Rev Denyer (CD), Cllr Grant (SG) and Cllr Mrs Morey (JM).

4 members of the public and Mrs Block (Clerk) (TB).

**2. To receive and approve apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mrs Pereboom.

**3. 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 to be made.

**4. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

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

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

The Young Person's Award working group has been formed, there have been several discussions via email but as yet no meeting has been held.

The Community Grant Scheme has been circulated, there have been a few amendments but the scheme is now up and running.

An invitation to visit the Caldecott Community had been extended to the Parish Council last month, this has not yet been taken up. CD suggested that he would be happy to attend this.

The noticeboard has been received and is to be installed imminently.

RB reported that the paths have been cut on the A20.

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

A member of the public asked whether the brambles on the path on The Ridgeway near Joe Farm could be cut back as they are a trip hazard. The Clerk will report this.

*Note: reported under reference: 664978*

**7. To receive report from the Borough Councillor**

There was no Borough Councillor Report.

**8. To receive an update on Footpaths and Highways (to include the Highways Improvement Plan)**

Works are due to start on the footpath on Church Road on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November.

Lorry movements on Plain Road have been reported again, the Clerk is chasing the Planning Enforcement department. The Clerk is to find out if the no lorry signs are enforceable.

The lady pursuing the suggested footpath to Brabourne School has received a communication that one of the landowners is not keen. The lady is looking to carry out a consultation on her proposal.

The HIP group will need to consider the new footpath to Evegate and return to KCC about the Smeeth Crossroads.

**9. To receive an update on the Newsletter**

There had been no Newsletter since the last meeting.

## **10. To receive the KALC Representative Report**

The Ashford Area Committee of KALC met on 5th October at the Civic Centre Ashford and, as it was the first meeting since the death of Queen Elizabeth II, it began with two minutes silence. The meeting that had been scheduled for 8th September was cancelled once news broke of the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Simon Cole and Tracey Butler attended on 5th October and dealt with questions raised by the parishes about various problems encountered arising from the new planning portal. A training session about the new planning portal was arranged to take place in the evening of 18th October to enable clerks and councillors to meet ABC officers to explain implementation of new ABC Planning portal. However, this meeting did not proceed as the officer due to conduct the training on 18th was unwell. New dates for a training session are anticipated - hopefully w/c 31st October. In the meantime, Ben Robinson has sent out a questionnaire to all parishes to ask Councillors for feedback on their experience with the new portal. (This has been circulated to all councillors).

Vanessa Foster introduced herself as the new Chief Inspector and interim Borough Commander and explained that the review of neighbourhood policing is complete and a new neighbourhood policing structure is being planned. Currently unfortunately Aldington has no PCSO. Over the summer the Police had targeted violent crime and anti-social behaviour in Ashford town centre. A "no drinking zone" had been requested for the town centre by the police but had been rejected by ABC. Work on violence against women and girls was going well and "walk and talk" events encouraged engagement.

Streetlights were again on the agenda but P. Bartlett (Sevington with Finberry) stated that as ABC Councillors are not currently in favour of the project it was felt that no further discussions were needed at this time. Jeremy Smith (Chairman Ashford KALC) stated that he understood the cost of some of the lamps that ABC wish to offload onto Parishes come out of an ABC "general fund" and others from the ABC housing budget.

Date of next meeting Thursday 10th November at Civic Centre

## **11. 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.**

### **11.1 To receive the report of the Planning committee**

There was no Planning Report.

### **11.2 To agree a response on any outstanding Planning Applications**

The Clerk is to submit the comments on the recent application at Maid Morton.

There is no further update regarding the S.106 monies for the Church Road development. The monies are held in abeyance because the development cannot progress until the issue at Stodmarsh has been resolved. A member of the public asked the Council to explain the issues related to Stodmarsh.

DH explained that there are 2 applications for solar farms, the EDF application and the Evolution Power site. The Evolution Power site is an application for a Development Consent Order which will be decided by the Secretary of State rather than by the local authority.

There had been no further news from Cllr Howard regarding the Quinn Estates interest in the land behind Ramstone Close. SG explained that the landowners have not yet decided what to do with the land.

## **12. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to discuss.

**13. To receive an update on Smeeth Sandpit**

The Woodland Trust has once again kindly supplied a pack of 400 hedge saplings to Smeeth Sandpit Preservation Ltd, who are organising a community planting day at Smeeth Sandpit, Granary Court Road, Smeeth on Saturday 12th November, running from 10.30 AM until about 2.00 PM.

They will be planting a range of native species that have been selected for benefits to wildlife, with beneficial flowers, fruits, nuts and foliage. This will benefit the ground flora and fauna, insect, bird and mammal populations in the area.

They will be planting to reinstate the hedgerow along Granary Court Rd and to provide shelter for small animals & reptiles at the pond

Anyone from the local area is invited, regardless of age to come along to either help with the planting, or simply support the planters. Many hands make light work!

There won't be anywhere to park at the Sandpit on the day and if that is a problem, please let them know at [info@smeethsandpit.co.uk](mailto:info@smeethsandpit.co.uk) and they will see what alternative arrangements can be made.

**You will need:**

- Suitable clothing and footwear
- If you have a spade, please bring it!
- Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult

**14. To receive an update from the Playing Field Association**

RB had attended the AGM of the PFA and the minutes had been circulated.

The meeting was positive and funding is going to be sought. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of November.

**15. To receive an update regarding the Village Caretaker Scheme**

JM reported that the scheme continues well and if anyone has noticed anything that requires the attention of the caretaker, please contact the Parish Clerk.

A meeting of the caretaker committee took place on 18th October via zoom when all parishes in the cluster were represented, to discuss the best way to establish the proportion of the Caretaker budget for each of the parishes for 2023/2024.

In May 2023 the parish boundaries of Mersham will be redefined. New houses in Finberry, currently in parish of Mersham will transfer to Sevington, which inevitably will have an impact on Mersham's precept income.

Originally the caretaker budget was aligned with the number of households in each Parish, but it was now clear it would be fairer to have regard to Paul's workload split between each Parish in the cluster. Paul's timesheets showed that not each Parish benefits to the same extent from his work and a fairer system would be to have regard to work actually done by Paul in each Parish and time spent by him in each Parish.

It was the view of the Caretaker cluster that to have regard to Paul's workload split would be fair for each Parish in the cluster.

Under this system it would mean that the revised contribution from Smeeth for 2023/2024 would be £2,308 which is in fact £1152 less than was budgeted under the previous system. Accordingly, I recommend this proposal to the Parish council for their consideration.

**Resolved:** JM proposed, HA seconded and all were in favour to accept the proposal.

The Clerk was asked if the Caretaker could attend to the War Memorial ahead of the

memorial Service. The Clerk agreed to contact the Caretaker accordingly.

**16. To receive an update regarding Speed Watch**

The following had been received from Graham Snazelle:

I will be endeavouring to organise more sessions towards the last half of November, providing I can get enough support from our volunteers and that the weather is dry for the days organised.

**17. To receive an update regarding the Community Led Plan**

The Michael Hinchliffe's memorial bench is to be installed imminently.

**18. To receive an update from Royal British Legion**

Mr Taylor reported that this is an important week for the country. The Smeeth branch have been selling poppies at Tesco Crooksfoot and Park Farm in Ashford as well as in the village. The Smeeth RBL Group held it's AGM last week, Jenny Cooper has taken over as Chairman.

The Remembrance Service on 11<sup>th</sup> November will be held at 10.45 at the War Memorial to recognise those lost and those serving now providing the Country with ongoing protection. Tea/Coffee in the Oak Room will follow the service. The members of the RBL have been invited to attend a 1940's lunch at the Ashford College. There will also be a Sunday Service at Brabourne Church, a parade will start from the Five Bells and the service starts at 10.45am.

**19. Report from the Village Hall Representative**

RB reported that the hall usage had increased with many groups making bookings including table tennis, karate, yoga, Pilates and more.

The Parish Council had offered assistance with purchasing the defibrillator as part of the KALC reduction offer.

**20. Financial matters:**

**a) To note the Parish Council's financial position as at 31/10/2022**

The current financial position of the Parish Council was noted. The Parish Council has a balance of £103,196.23 as of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**b) To authorise any payments**

Paul Rodway	£1699.17
HMRC	£ 543.46
T Denne and Son	£ 118.80
Lister Wilder	£ 28.56
Kent Pension Fund	£ 693.64
T Block (expenses)	£ 65.54
Kent Pension Fund	£ 693.64
HMRC	£ 477.53
Kent Pension Fund	£ 668.00
P Rodway	£1637.70
T Denne and Sons	£ 118.80
Lister Wilder	£ 32.20
HMRC	£ 145.60
Parish online	£ 45.00
Mrs. Podd – litter picking	£ 228.00
T Block	£ 380.90
T Block	£ 291.90
Caretaker Account	£1700.00
PMC Polythene	£ 240.00

Fordred's	£ 200.00
T Block expenses	£ 138.63

**c) To agree the draft budget for 2023-24 and the precept amount for 2023-24**

The budget was circulated. JM proposed and HA seconded that the draft budget be accepted, all were in favour.

The precept is to remain the same, JM proposed and HA seconded that the Parish Council precept for £23,738.00, all were in favour.

**21. Any Other Business (for information purposes only):**

A 1 tonne bag of salt is to be delivered to the Brabourne Baptist Chapel car park for use of the residents of Smeeth. The Parish Council is grateful to the Baptist Chapel deacons for agreeing to this.

A member of the public has volunteered to take on the editorship of the Parish Magazine.

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

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**23. Resolution to exclude the public**

Resolved: 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 24 Fordred's Charity.

**24. Fordred's Charity**

The Parish Council agreed how to circulate the Fordred's Charity money.

**The meeting closed at 8.10pm.**