

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Monday 29th March 2010 at 7.00pm
At Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Clayton (Chairman, Brabourne Parish Council), Cllr Ede (Vice-chairman), Cllrs Mrs Bewick, Mrs Whitehead, Mrs Young, Spokes and Mrs S Wood (Clerk). Cllr Honey (borough councillor) was also present.

Nine members of the public attended.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hickmott, Wood (borough councillor) and Mr R Sinden (Community Warden).

3. Presentation of Annual Citizenship Award

The Chairman gave a short history of the Award, which is given annually in memory of Cllr Goodall, who did a great deal for the parish. The Award marks the affection and respect with which he is regarded and is for someone who has worked for the parish and for the people. The recipient is chosen by the Parish Council from nominations submitted

To loud applause, the Chairman presented the Award and a cheque for £100 to Mr Alexander 'Jock' Anderson, who thanked the Chairman.

4. Minutes of the 2009 Meeting

The Minutes were read by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

- Traffic calming at Brabourne School. The Clerk advised that the grant application by Cllr Wickham (county councillor) has been approved, and will be used for red topping on the approaches to the school. KHS is to conduct a Speed Limit Review in late Spring/Summer with Parish Council involvement. The Chairman welcomed the support of the Ashford Area Committee of KALC.
- It was noted that Landscape Services have rectified damage on the green reported at the last Annual Parish Meeting. A Whitebeam was later felled in error. Cllr Mrs Whitehead (the Tree Warden) reported that replacements were planted on the green on 25th March, but without prior notification to the Parish Council which had hoped to organize a planting ceremony. Cllr Mrs Whitehead stated that the new plaque had not yet been erected.
- The Clerk advised that the parish website is now in use. Articles and photographs are invited.
- Mrs L Clayton asked what trees had been planted, and was informed by Cllr Mrs Whitehead that they are Sorbus aria 'Lutescens' (Swedish Whitebeam). The felled tree was too large to be replaced by one of like size, and therefore 3 were planted to create a small copse.
- Mr Hinchliffe asked what had been the outcome of negotiations to have the green declared a village green. The Chairman replied that it has been established that the area is owned by Ashford Borough Council and is part of its housing stock land bank. This means that it cannot be registered, and in theory could be developed. Both the Parish Council and Sellindge surgery tried to buy a small piece of the land (the latter for a small surgery) but the cost was prohibitive.

6. Financial Report

The draft accounts were circulated by the Clerk. These showed that £3350.43 had been brought forward from 2008/09 and £5770.17 would be carried forward. The increase in Reserves is to cover

the cost of a by-election or Code of Conduct investigation, should either be necessary – these costs had previously been borne by the Borough Council. The Precept remains unchanged.

7. Any Other Business

- The Chairman informed the Meeting that this is his last meeting in the Chair, and gave an overview of his time on the Parish Council, under 3 headings.

‘Things Fought Against’. The role of the Parish Council is principally to protect the good things about the parish, and to fight against anything that could damage it, while acknowledging the need for change. Projects in which the Parish Council brought pressure to bear include: the Converter Station, the silhouette of which was dramatically reduced, with associated landscaping and colour finish. Mountbatten Way, in which housing density was reduced. Refusal of permission for a caravan park and later a housing estate behind The Plough. Change to the proposed route of CTRL, which had been due to pass between The Plough and the Village Hall. An application to build townhouses on the site of the butcher’s shop was refused – although the Parish Council is not opposed to development of this site, townhouses are out of keeping with the village. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council and Borough Council are ever vigilant re overdevelopment.

‘Things Fought For (and Some Achieved)’. Street lighting schemes – a major safety issue and welcomed by the majority. Recycling – the Parish Council continues to press for these, eg the blue box scheme. Bus services – the bus company proposed to withdraw services from the village on cost grounds. This was challenged by the Parish Council which asked for a costings breakdown: this was not provided and the service maintained. More roads are being gritted and salt bins provided after pressure from the Parish Council. The Parish Council supported development on the redundant pig unit in Hampton Lane – initially refused by the Borough Council, a second application was refused but granted on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Maintenance of roads to an acceptable standard remains a problem due to a funding shortage. Efforts continue for a reduction in speed limits in the parish and road safety measures at Brabourne School. Affordable housing at Fortescue Place was built after a long search for suitable land, but there remains a need for at least another 2 similar sized sites. The Parish Council successfully applied for a Community Warden.

‘Things Supported’. The Chairman recognized that the Parish Council is responsible for spending parishioners’ money to good effect, eg the Village Hall - without this support hall rental fees would be higher which would be unaffordable for small organizations; the Playing Field; St Mary Brabourne, for churchyard maintenance; Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club, which aims to teach impressionable young people good citizenship.

The Chairman noted that the Council’s workload is increasing with ever more government legislation. This includes new ideas such as Quality Parish Status and the Power of Well Being, the latter giving the Council greater powers to spend money for the benefit of parishioners.

The Chairman concluded by paying tribute to the councillors and to Mr Peter Scotton, Clerk until his recent retirement, and had been ably supported by his wife, Monica.

- Mr Scotton reminded those present that the Council had also opposed development on the site of a former piggery in Canterbury Road, and permission had been refused.
- Mrs S Bartholomew thanked the Parish Council, and in particular the Chairman, for all that had been done over the years. This was endorsed by those present.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.