

SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Joint Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 20th March 2019 at 7.00pm at Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Welcome

Cllr Hickmott welcomed all present to the second joint Annual Parish Meeting, which followed the success of the joint meeting in 2018.

2. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman Brabourne Parish Council), Cllr Herrick (Chairman Smeeth Parish Council), Cllr Mrs Alford, Cllr Mrs Morey, Cllr Mrs Pereboom, Cllrs Thorpe and Macphee (Smeeth Parish Council); Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllr Mayland (Brabourne Parish Council), and Mrs S Wood (Clerk). Cllr Mrs Bell (county councillor) and Cllr Howard (borough councillor) were also present. Nine members of the public attended.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Bewick and Cllr Mrs Young (Brabourne Parish Council).

4. Minutes of the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting were agreed.

5. Smeeth Parish Council Chairman's Report

As in previous years I should like to thank all the Councillors who have served on the Parish Council over the past 12 months.

Special thanks must go to our Parish Clerk, Mrs Sue Wood, in what has again been a busy 12 months. Sue continues to work tirelessly ensuring that Councillors are informed and up to date with all the current developments and also manages the Parish Council website and responds to various day to day enquiries on our behalf.

Thanks must also go to our Police Community Support Officer, together with our Ashford Borough Council Ward Member, Councillor William Howard, and Councillor Mrs Clair Bell, our Kent County Council Councillor.

A number of key issues for the Parish as a whole have received attention during the course of the year including –

- Ashford Borough Council's draft Local Plan to 2030, which has now been formally adopted by the Council.
- The Village Caretaker Scheme, which has been in place now for 3 years, and continues to be a great success.
- The Community Led Plan, which continues to be implemented under the seemingly tireless enthusiasm and guidance of Mr. Michael Hinchliffe.
- SpeedWatch, which has continued to monitor and record speeding vehicles in the village.
- The refurbishment of the War Memorial.
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Other areas that have received attention during the year include –

- Highways and footpath problems
- Horse and Rider Safety
- Parking issues
- Individual planning and development proposals
- Junction 10A works
- Various consultations

Everything the Parish Council does is intended for the benefit of local residents. For those who have not yet made it to any Parish Council meetings, they are held bi-monthly at Brabourne Baptist Church, on Wednesday evenings (usually the first or second of the month) at 7.00pm – dates are detailed on the Parish Council notice-board on The Warren and on the Parish Council website.

And finally, there will be at least one, and possibly two, vacancies on the Council as of May, so if you would like to join the decision-makers, please speak to either Sue or myself for further details.

Cllr Herrick announced he had the pleasure of presenting a Kent Association of Local Councils' award, which is supported by the High Sheriff of Kent, the Chairman of KCC and the Mayor of Medway. The award is made to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution over the preceding 12 months. Cllr Herrick presented the award to George Taylor; the citation read that 'George was the inspiration and driver of the project to restore the Smeeth War Memorial, engaging the community and raising the funds. It was completed in time to commemorate the centenary of the end of WW1'.

George Taylor thanked Cllr Herrick for the award, noting that the project will have been completed when two wrought iron safety barriers are installed – these have been commissioned locally and will be in place in April. George Taylor thanked St Mary's Church for its efforts replanting the area.

6. Brabourne Parish Council Chairman's Report

Firstly I would like to thank my fellow councillors and William Howard our borough councillor for all their support in the past year.

I said last year and the year before that the biggest single issue affecting the parish this year would be Gladman Developments Ltd proposal for up to 125 dwellings on about 23 acres of Hospital Field between Lees Road and Canterbury Road. That was still the case this year.

Following a new and accepted method of calculating the 5 year land supply in another recent planning inquiry, ABC could be considered as having a 5 year housing land supply. BPC going it alone, made very strong representations to the Inspector that the inquiry should be re-opened. He agreed and a date was fixed but Gladman withdrew their objection before the new opening date.

In view of the late withdrawal of Gladman's objection we, along with ABC and CPRE, claimed for coats to be awarded against Gladman. We have recently learned that we have been unsuccessful but at least we tried.

We had already lodged a Village Green application on Hospital Field which was considered by KCC last year and resulted in a further enquiry early this year. Our thanks go to our witnesses, who once again produced very good evidence that Hospital Field, or part of it nearest Lees Road, had been used for recreational purposes over many years in the past. This is also very relevant to the Gladman planning application because it means that if any part of Hospital Field is registered as a Village Green it will never be able to be built upon. The result of the enquiry is awaited.

Briefly, on other matters, we will continue to make representations to ABC Planning Dept on all applications received in the parish to try and protect out village and rural areas from unwanted development. The sale of the Plough Inn to a developer has created much discussion and conjecture within the village but this, as expected, resulted in a planning application for demolition and the erection of 4 houses. BPC have lodged an application to have the pub listed as a building of historic or architectural interest and also as an Asset of Community Value. The outcome of these 2 applications is still awaited but in the meantime nothing can happen to the Plough and we have objected to the planning application as it is not in keeping with the village and does not conform with the Village Planning Policy adopted by Brabourne and Smeeth PCs.

The Brabourne website continues to remain a popular source of information and events in the village; and also a means of communicating with the PC. The closed Hospital Field Facebook page was a fantastic medium of communication for the planning application, Village Green application, the appeals and the enquiries.

The allotments continue to be popular and there are still a few plots available. Following the sale of the Plough Inn, Shepherd Neame gifted the allotment field to the PC last year. The land to the rear of the pub now has full planning consent and work has started on the access road and services.

My thanks yet again to our Clerk, Sue Wood. Sue has put in more huge amounts of time because of the Gladman planning application, appeal, enquiry and also the Village Green application and enquiry, Thank you once again Sue for your knowledge, advice, hard work and humour – you are a credit to the profession of a Parish Clerk, to our Parish Council and we would be lost without you!

Finally, let's hope the next financial year brings a lot less work and hassle than the last 3! Thank you.

7. Financial Report

The draft statement of accounts have been circulated and will be attached to the Minutes of this meeting.

Smeeth Parish Council:

Smeeth continues to be the lead parish in the village caretaker cluster and is therefore responsible for the scheme's finances. Funding for this is the main part of the money paid to the Parish Council, and is made up of contributions from the other parishes in the cluster, and payments from ABC and KCC. It covers the caretaker's salary, employer pension and NI contributions, scheme running costs and an allowance for depreciation of equipment.

The reserves are healthy and have allowed the Parish Council to agree to meet the costs of an additional parking space in Sandy Place to alleviate the parking problems there. It is hoped that other spaces will be put in here, and in Lees Close where there are similar problems of insufficient parking provision.

The Parish Council has built up reserves over a number of years to allow it to fund projects such as these, because other revenue sources are closed to Parish Councils. If anyone has any suggestions for future projects they are asked to contact the Parish Council.

The Parish Council continues to support local organisations by making annual donations, eg to the Hall and Playing Field Associations.

Brabourne Parish Council:

The major financial commitment this year for the Parish Council has been its application to register Hospital Field as a village green, to protect it from speculative planning applications such as that from Gladman. Costs for this were met by a loan agreed from ABC, at a nominal rate of interest, and will be repaid over the next 2 years. One of the conditions of the loan was that the Precept be increased to meet the repayments. When the loan has been repaid the Parish Council will consider reducing the Precept, which for a band d property this year is £66.44.

The allotments continue to run well, and the rent paid enables the Parish Council to meet capital costs of the scheme – it should be revenue neutral. Shepherd Neame transferred ownership of the allotments site to the Parish Council at no cost, and the Parish Council is now registered as the owner of the site with the Land Registry.

Brabourne is a member of the caretaker cluster and the contributions paid by each Parish Council into the scheme is based on the number of residents and the work carried out in each parish by the caretaker.

Grounds maintenance was formerly undertaken by an external contractor, but that money is now paid into the scheme for, eg mowing the Warren.

The Parish Council continues to support local organisations, in common with Smeeth.

8. Reports from local organisations

8.1 Community Led Plan group (read by Villy Pereboom on behalf of Michael Hinchliffe)

Setting up the basketball hoop at the playing field was the CLP's headline project for the year 2018/19. It was officially opened and handed over to the playing field association at the village fete on the 24th June 2018 by Webbo from Ashford Radio. There was a fun basketball challenge at the same time to see who could get the most hoops in one minute. The challenge was split into two groups, those under 11 and those 11 to 16. The top scorer in each group won a basketball. The successful completion of the project was helped by sponsorship, either financial or in kind, by Jane Martin and William Howard, ABC councillors, Smeeth and Brabourne Parish Councils, Jewson Builder Merchants, R & M Plant and Construction, R. E. Tanner and Sons, Swift Surfacing, Brabourne and Smeeth Fete Committee, the Playing Field Association, members of the community who held fund raising events and finally the volunteers who gave up their time to help build the project.

Ladies from Smeeth WI, in conjunction with other volunteers and supported by the CLP planted out hundreds of bulbs at various locations throughout the village. All the bulbs were donated by members of the community, Farthing Common Plant Centre, Tesco Crooksfoot, Harringe Plants Sellindge and Thompsons Garden Centre Petham,

Members of the CLP 'Smarten up the Village' group met with a representative of Kent Stour Countryside Partnership at the pond in Church Road to see if it was suitable for newts and if so what development work would be required. It was decided by the Partnership that being bordered by the road on one side and a farm on the other that the pond wasn't a suitable location.

A group of volunteers met up at the pond in October to clear away some of the growth and remove the rubbish that had accumulated.

8.2 Gardeners' Society (Brian Sanders)

Although membership numbers were down from the previous year 2018 was another successful year for the Society with a full programme of events and activities including five shows, interesting, informative and entertaining presentations by guest speakers, a plant sale in May and a Question & Answer session with Steve Bradley, well-known gardening author and broadcaster, in September. Highlights included a second guided tour of Hothfield Heathlands and very well supported trips to Great Comp garden and the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Wisley. An innovation in 2018 was the introduction of 'Wine & Wander' evenings when two Society members kindly opened their gardens and provided the opportunity for a convivial gathering to enjoy a glass [or two!] of wine, some tasty nibbles and a tour of the gardens. Our year ended in November with a pre-Christmas dinner in the village hall attended by some sixty members who were entertained by Dave Loosley, a brilliant local magician.

To date we have seventy five members and our programme for 2019 includes a visit to Leonardslee Gardens in West Sussex in May and to Pashley Manor and Merriments in September. Again, we will be staging five shows, competitions and a plant sale plus seven presentations on various garden-related subjects and, this month, a light-hearted quiz. A copy of the Society's Year Book & Show Schedule,

giving more details of the visits, shows and presentations is attached to the electronic version of this report.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, no progress has been made in connection with the "Parishes in Bloom" project but it remains under consideration. The establishment of the Society's own website is a 'work in progress' and it is anticipated that it will be set up by the end of this month; the Society's meetings, events, etc., are posted on the Facebook Brabourne & Smeeth community website.

There have been a few changes to our committee – Bob Dryland has stepped down as President, after several years of sterling service, Ron Cooper has moved from Chairman to President, Brian Sanders has taken over as Chairman and Sheila Ash has joined the committee as Events Secretary. We are also pleased to welcome Jane Hilton and Val Thorpe as new committee members.

The Society meets on the last Friday of each month [except December] in the village hall at 7:15 for a 7:30 pm start. As noted above we have a varied and interesting programme for 2019, membership is only £8.00 per person per annum and all are welcome! Any enquiries for further information should be directed to our secretary Wendy Sanders on 01303 813 451 or email brabournewendy@gmail.com.

8.3 Brabourne Baptist Church (Geoff Thorpe)

We have a new minister, Paul Muir who joined us in October. At the moment he is a minister in training and as such works in the village for three days and is at college for three days per week. Paul and his wife Julie are enthusiastic about involvement in community life and the wide range of activities that take place.

During school term time, The Ark, a vibrant parent, baby and toddler club, meet every Friday morning. This is not a church venture but is led by a group of very keen young mums.

For the next age group (i.e. young families, mums, dads and children) we have Messy Church on the first Saturday of the month. The formula for this is a fun time, with craft and games, plus a Christian message and light meal. This is growing in popularity by young families in the village.

The older community are catered for: We have Café Wednesday, with free coffee, tea and biscuits every Wednesday morning. It includes, on the first Wednesday of the month, a clinic on behalf of Hi-Kent, to service and provide batteries for hearing aids. This is free of charge.

Then on the last Thursday of the month, at lunchtime, a simple meal is prepared for the elderly. This is called Meeting Point.

The church is a collection point for donations of non-perishable food for the Ashford Food Bank.

The CLP group meet monthly, if possible, in the cabin to the rear of the main church building to discuss physical improvements they would like to make within the parishes.

A community ladies sewing group usually meet every other week in the small hall.

There is much talent in the area with the Art club meeting on the 1st Tuesday morning of the month. There are some very gifted artists in Brabourne and Smeeth. People are amazed at their talent.

The Royal British Legion meet the same day in the evening. This is very popular amongst the more senior in the village.

The advisory body of Smeeth Parish Council meet in our side hall every two months and when the need arises, calls other meetings as well.

Not to forget our MP Damian Collins who uses the building monthly for his clinics. The 3rd Friday of the month in the afternoon.

Ashford Borough Council also has first call on the main hall for election purposes. We are having an election for Parish councillors in 2019.

The church celebrated its bicentenary in 2018, commemorated by an illustrated banner around the church.

The church has a prayer room. This is open for pray every morning Monday to Friday 9 to 9.30.

In conclusion, of course, we have normal Christian worship every Sunday morning. This caters for a diverse congregation.

From this extensive programme you can see that this building is a community amenity for all and an active centre for Christianity.

8.4 1st Brabourne and Smeeth Scout Group (Jon Rose)

I am pleased to report that the Scout Group is in good heart.

In the last year we have provided a wide range of activities for the members of our organisation. Membership is strong with 57 young people on our books as at the end of January. In addition the Explorers have about 14 members.

Our Beavers have maintained a good membership and until the end of last year were led by Ali Body who did a fantastic job with them. However, Ali had to resign due to pressure of work and at the moment I am

running Beavers with help. This situation cannot continue for long and we urgently need to find a new leader as otherwise I will be forced to close the section which will be a great disappointment. Membership is good and we have a waiting list of young people waiting to join as soon as they are old enough.

Cubs are full with 24 members and a waiting list that includes 7 who are already old enough to join. Katrina Devenport leads this section with a small team and is in need of additional leaders as others have moved on as their children have gone on to scouts.

I continue to lead Scouts (despite repeated intentions to retire!) We have a good strength Scout leadership team and 22 Young People. The highlight of our year was our trip to Switzerland where we camped with Swiss Scouts whom we had hosted at the previous year's Kent International Jamboree. 28 Scouts & Explorers from here and Wye enjoyed the trip.

Mountbatten Explorers (not part of the group but "honorary" members) have faced an ongoing challenge in trying to find a leader. James Sparshatt continues to make sure that things are ticking over and he has found 2 other assistant leaders to help him. James cannot be leader due to work and family commitments. I am continuing to see if we can find a new leader for the unit which is one of my 2 priorities.

A number of our Explorers have completed their Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards in the last year which is a great achievement for which we congratulate them.

Newspaper recycling

This will come to an end this summer with August likely to be the last collection. The value of newspaper has fallen to a very low level - £10 per tonne – and after transport costs there is no real return for the effort expended. We have benefitted for some time from the generosity of Keith Cornell and Tanners. We now need to think about alternative sources of fundraising. We will increase our subs quite a bit to make up for the loss of the paper recycling.

HQ renovations

It is now over 20 years since the HQ was opened and we have been looking at the fabric some of which needs to be replaced. This particularly applies to the kitchen where the (necessarily) cheap units are now hard to clean and maintain.

We are now looking for ways to raise funds to repair and renovate the kitchen in particular.

In summary, we are indebted to our volunteers and supporters without whom we could not offer Scouting in Brabourne & Smeeth.

Community involvement

We are open to ideas for more community involvement for our young people where helping others is a key part of their badge requirements.

8.5 Playing Field Association (read by Geoff Thorpe on behalf of Paul Dawson)

During the last year a significant amount of replacement and refurbishment has taken place. In the play area the large slide has been replaced by a new one and the tyre tower has had one of the large posts replaced. The swing frames have been repainted by volunteers from the Playing Fields committee, who also replaced the swing seats. The small wooden climbing complex has also seen a coat of paint and several wooden panels have been replaced.

A lorry load of road scalplings was spread on the car park to deal with the ever appearing pot-holes and the hedges have been trimmed. The field was given a "weed and feed" treatment.

The playpark is constantly in use by local youngsters, usually supervised by parents or grandparents. Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club make regular use of the field for football games and for practice sessions.

Two major events were organised at the site during the year by the expert local firm of Channer, Tanner and Channer. The Summer Fete, which this year featured live World Cup football on a screen near the beer tent and six goals for England; and the second Firework Display, slightly bigger and better than the successful one in 2017. The same firm was responsible for the village Christmas event – though not held on the playing field.

The Playing Field functions as a result of the hard work of about five people throughout the year and a whole raft of willing volunteers who come out of the woodwork on special occasions. Without all of these people the Playing Field would not be the popular success that it is. So to all of them, very many thanks.

8.6 Village Hall

No report received.

8.7 St Mary's Church, Smeeth

No report received.

8.8 Brabourne and Smeeth Guides and Brownies (read by Sylvia Tanner, on behalf of Julia Adams)

Brabourne and Smeeth are very fortunate to have a very successful Brownies, Guides and now also a New Rangers Group as well.

Brownies are full with 24 Brownies attending every Wednesday from 5.30 to 6.45pm.

This term we have been very busy in our meetings and I will attach a copy of the terms activities for you to share among attendees tonight. We are also taking the Brownies to Kingswood outdoor activity centre this Saturday and John Lawson's circus at Deal the following Saturday along with the first time for our Brownies to attend an arts camp where the Brownies will for the first time be sleeping in tents.

Guides are also very busy this term and again I attach our Guide newsletter so you can see what we are up to on Wednesday evenings. Emma Chapman one of our Leaders has been selected for an International trip with Girl Guiding to Venezuela this Summer and is busy raising the money she needs to go on this trip. Emma will be working in a school that has 350 children in a class with just one teacher !! They are going to be working at the school to make it a better place for the children attending and I am positive it will be a life changing experience for Emma as it was for Millie Smythe who went with Girl Guiding last year to Cambodia. Millie found herself mixing and laying concrete, painting the school as well as teaching the children. Again it was a life changing experience for Millie so much so that her Mum decided to open the Rangers unit here in the village. These are wonderful opportunities for our young people to attend as they go away from home for 3 weeks with no means of communication in these distant places with a group of other Girl Guides who were unknown to them before the experience. It is a fantastic opportunity and one that we at Brabourne and Smeeth support the young people with their fund raising in whatever ways we can.

Rangers are for girls aged 14 to 18 and we now have 10 girls in our Rangers unit which is run by Jodie Smythe. The Rangers have been doing a lot of sewing this term and for many it is their first experience of using a sewing machine, something that does not happen in schools these days unfortunately. The Rangers have been doing cooking and of course eating, chilling and chatting.

8.9 St Mary's Church, Brabourne (read by Jackie Morey, on behalf of Kathy Embleton-Smith)

With the establishment of the Parish of Stour Downs a year ago, a single PCC has been created for the parish with space for two churchwardens and a representative from each church. Brabourne has one churchwarden on the PCC. With the termination of PCCs for each church, Brabourne Church now has its own Management Team which meets approximately every six to eight weeks. There are eight members of the Team but meetings are always open and we are gratified that members of the wider community do attend and make valuable contributions to the proceedings.

Autumn saw the arrival of our new priest in charge of the Parish of Stour Downs, Rev Chris Denyer. We have welcomed Rev Chris's positive efforts to raise the profile of the church in our village communities, and his work to bring the six churches of the Parish closer together. At Brabourne we continue to have a service on almost every Sunday and feel that with this current pattern most needs are satisfied. While this may suggest things haven't changed, an increase in combined services and interaction between our six churches is giving a sense of reality to the new Parish of Stour Downs.

After a busy year's work last year when a great deal was done to the heating and lighting at Brabourne Church, this year has been fairly quiet with only minor maintenance work being carried out.

It costs about £1800 per month to keep Brabourne Church functioning and members of the church therefore have little option but to engage positively with fundraising. This can be extremely hard work but we are grateful for the very strong support we receive from members of the community. Events last year included the Ploughman's Lunch, a Farm Walk around Penstock and the new vineyard, a Church Produce stall at the Village Fête, the annual Harvest Supper, and finally, we had a showing of the film Hot Lips & Cold War which would have been enjoyed even more had the sound system been operating properly. In addition, Brabourne Church now has 'The Bookcase', a bookcase of modest size in the Church which a member of the congregation keeps well supplied with books for sale. This yields a steady trickle of funds. And though not a fundraising venture, our First Friday social hour is well supported and much enjoyed by over 30 people each month. We are grateful to the many people who host First Friday evenings.

While fundraising is crucial to ensure that Brabourne Church remains open for worship, what is equally important to Brabourne Church Management Team is that the church should be a resource accessible to all in the community, whether or not they are churchgoers. And through our efforts of trying to strengthen the position of the church in the wider community, the Team believes that we are in a better position to contribute positively to the Parish of Stour Downs.

8.10 Allotment Society (Colin MacPhee)

In last year's report I set out some of the history of the Allotment Society and the allotment site off Lees Road. For this report I will mainly focus on events over the past year. The consequences of the decision by Shepherd Neame to sell the Plough and give the allotment site to Brabourne Parish Council have unfolded slowly over the year. The Parish Council have been able to release funds to the Society for investment in projects on the site. This meant we were able to push ahead with all of our planned projects. Thanks are due to Brabourne Parish Council for their continued support of the Allotments Society. The developer of the site behind the Plough, Piper Homes also lent us his JCB to remove part of the bank round the car park to permit access along the south of the site.

However the presence of builders on the land adjoining the allotments and including the access to Lees road has caused some difficulties with access to the site and this is likely to continue until building work is complete. The Allotment Society must rely on Brabourne Parish Council to protect its right of access to the site.

This was a busy year for the Society. We built and managed a composting system for all the plots and we re-roofed the big shed. We installed dip tanks on site and organised an extension to the water supply and new taps and dip tanks on the south of the site. The dead Ash tree was removed from the middle of the site and access was opened up to the south side of the site where new plots were created and are now under cultivation. We have continued to use local suppliers and tradesmen wherever possible.

In addition to these projects and thanks to the generous contributions of time and expertise by Society members, the site was well maintained all year, the Society was represented at the village fete, equipment was repaired and maintained and we ran a successful barbecue in September and a Christmas get together at the Woolpack.

There is only one plot on site not currently under cultivation and given the interest in plots I expect that to be taken over before long.

We continue to receive free deliveries of donkey manure and bedding and of chipped wood and we are grateful to Joanne Paterson and to Indica forestry for their continued support. Thanks are also due to Graham Lillee for the magnificent banner he created for our stand at the village fete.

The Society ends the year in good financial health and with the site almost fully occupied and very productive.

8.11 Smeeth WI (Joy Taylor)

Every year is a Special Year for Smeeth W.I., however, this past year was an extra special time for us as we celebrated our Centenary. Smeeth W.I. began on 24th June 1918 only three years after the formation of the first branch in Anglesey in 1915 and one year before the East Kent Federation of W.I.'s was inaugurated and of course the same year as women gained the vote. We did feel truly humble that we could celebrate all that had been achieved by Smeeth W.I. Members over the previous 100 years.

As current Members we enjoyed a very varied programme with speakers who covered a wide range of subjects from "A Schoolgirl's War : The story of school life in Kent in World War Two". "A History of Dover Castle" and "Elizabeth Garrett Anderson – the first women Doctor" as related by a local author. We much enjoyed participating with the St. Clement's Clog Dancers, before the new Village Hall floor was laid, making chocolate liqueurs and trying our hand at First Aid with dummie, Annie and kind instruction by First Responder Ray Ashman.

The autumn 2017 planting of daffodil bulbs on the road island at the Ridgeway and other grass verges around the village led by Lucie Edmed and her band of planters came to fruition in the Spring and the flowers were beautiful not only last spring but this year too. Long may they naturalize and give the village such a wonderful golden glow each springtime.

Our summer outing was a tour of St. Augustine's Priory with a splendid afternoon tea served in the conservatory to follow. At our Christmas Party we enjoyed a delicious selection of goodies made from recipes from our recently produced Centenary Recipe Book, as well as learning about and listening to "The Music and Meaning of Christmas".

We had our regular luncheon club get together every other month where we enjoyed a good meal at various local hostelrys with much social chat and also there was a theatre trip to see Calendar Girls – the Musical, at the Marlowe in Canterbury which was great fun.

Nevertheless the highlights of the Centenary Year were undoubtedly a wonderful lunch at the Village Hall on the 23rd June where over 60 guests were invited to join us to celebrate. Our Committee had worked incredibly hard to ensure that this was successful. Our guests were from the East Kent Federation of W.I.s, other local W.I.s, village organisations, Ashford Borough Council, the two Parish Councils and the Members long-suffering husbands! The following day there was a Commemorative Service at St. Mary's Church, Smeeth conducted by Di. Dawson, and at which Members did readings and

poems to portray our W.I. during the past 100 years and of course, the gathered congregation all sang Jerusalem with heartfelt meaning and with great gusto!

8.12 Royal British Legion (George Taylor)

The Brabourne and Smeeth Branch of the Royal British Legion had, once again a varied and enjoyable year with our usual mix of talks, meals together, business and social meetings whilst not forgetting our primary purpose of offering a social service to our Members and those of the wider community.

Our speakers this year introduced us to the world of Eastern Europe as it has emerged from the yoke of the U.S.S.R., a most illuminating talk from a Product Manager at Tesco, Crookfoot and an amusing introduction to the life of a Retained Firefighter.

We have also enjoyed a whole range of meals together, Fish and Chips, a Curry Evening, and Bangers and Mash not forgetting our Christmas American Supper with our own brand of entertainment.

Again we had a successful Branch Dinner at the Black Horse, Monks Horton, where we were joined by Members of other local RBL Branches and a Branch outing to see the RAF Band in Concert at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury.

However, by far our most important event of the year was participating in the annual national Poppy Appeal where with the help of numerous volunteers and the co-operation of Tesco's both at Crookfoot and Park Farm our Branch raised almost £25,000 to help provide support for former servicemen and women and their dependents.

We also participated in the renovation of the Smeeth War Memorial and played a part in its Rededication in September.

8.13 Speedwatch

No report received.

8.14 Brabourne CEP School (read by James Mayland on behalf of Andrew Stapley, Headteacher)

This year we are building upon our successful Ofsted and SIAMS inspections in the summer and the academic success in our end of year Key Stage 2 examinations. The school development plan is focused this year on broadening our curriculum further, enriching the spiritual and wellbeing opportunities for pupils, maintaining the high academic standards and enriching the sporting opportunities for pupils.

We have taken part in numerous football, hockey and netball matches and tournaments this year, as well as 'adventurous trips' out such as trampolining and zip wiring. We have begun a redevelopment of our playground, creating an outdoor learning area, allowing access in winter to a muddy area of the woods and we are planning to install an outdoor gym and further playground equipment. We have begun redeveloping and restructuring our computer room, installing new laptops and ipads in each class using PTA funding. We have also revamped our Early Years area to make it more creative and engaging.

We have redeveloped our curriculum for this year, focusing on inquiry based learning and enriching opportunities such as termly theme weeks in Cooking, Art and PE. Our teachers are all leading a subject in the curriculum and have been proactive in supporting colleagues in other schools, particularly within the CARE Foundation Trust of which we are part. This is a collaboration of ten other schools within the local area.

We have been involved in collaborative projects such as a choir at the Ashford International hotel in aid of the NSPCC and we have formed an Eco Team of pupils who have attended the Ashford Mayor's chambers to discuss environmental issues.

We have strengthened ties with the Church with the arrival of our new vicar, Rev. Chris, who has joined our governing body. We have taken part in many services and village events, including Remembrance services for the centenary of WW1 and WW1 food tasting at Smeeth Church.

8.15 Smeeth CEP School (read by Sue Wood on behalf of Jennifer Payne, Headteacher)

Term 4 is racing on at Smeeth School and we have had some lovely weather – the children have been enjoying learning outside in it. They are taking extremely good care of all the new plants and flowers too! We are still hoping for our traditional day of tobogganing...!

Swattenden Residential

Every year, our Year Five and Year Six children are given the opportunity to attend the residential – this year we spent three days at Swattenden Adventure Centre. The children were exceptionally well-behaved and threw themselves (quite literally!) into the activities such as rafting, zip lining, crate-stacking and of course, toasting marshmallows over the campfire! Please see our website for pictures and video clips!

Valentine's Day Cake Sale

Mrs Chapman held another cake sale on the last day of term. This was in aid of Alzheimer's Research UK and Macmillan. In total, £52 was raised from this, so thank you for all of your support in helping this very worthy cause!

New Washrooms

Robins and Woodpeckers have now got beautiful new washrooms to use. The children have been exceptionally good, as usual, following safety rules and using different washrooms as the work progressed. Work has already begun in Eagles and Kingfishers and will be completed soon. We are so proud of our children who have taken it all in their stride!

Sports Day / Summer Fair

This year, we will be having our Summer Fair straight after Sports day, which will be on Thursday 20th June. There is also a Movie Night planned for the Thursday 23rd May.

Please do come along and visit our fair! We would be delighted to meet you!

Small Schools Football Tournament

This will be held at Smeeth this year on Saturday – we will be having a friendly match against Aldington on Thursday just to warm up!

Coming Soon!

The Easter Term at Smeeth is such an exciting one – we will be performing an Easter Concert, looking forward to our Easter Egg Hunt and secretly buying Mother's Day gifts in the remaining weeks.

Thank you

We would like to say a huge thank you to all the residents of Smeeth for their ongoing support, good wishes and lovely comments about various activities that have taken place throughout the year so far. It is so much appreciated.

9. County Councillor's report (Clair Bell)

Clr Mrs Bell stated that she was 'staggered' by the array of activities in the villages; a select committee in KCC is looking into social isolation and how the county council can mitigate the problem. Clr Mrs Bell felt that Brabourne and Smeeth are a good example of what could be done.

Clr Mrs Bell spoke on KCC finances: It has been a difficult year because of the reduction in money from central government, the revenue support grant is now almost zero. However, there is an increased demand for social services, in particular social care and children with special needs. The government allows councils to keep business rates to put into these areas. This income does, however, vary depending on the strength of the economy. The government is giving money to KCC to support vulnerable people on their discharge from hospital. Additional money from central government is also forthcoming for pothole repairs.

Savings have had to be made and council tax has been increased by 5% this year; 2% is ring-fenced for social care. Clr Mrs Bell reported that 80% of council tax money paid to ABC goes to KCC for services.

KCC has been cutting waste but there are a number of services which have to be provided by law, eg social care. Others, such as libraries, are discretionary. Library services are being cut back because library use is changing, however, no libraries will be closed although opening hours have been reduced resulting in a cost saving of approx £1,000,000 over 2 years.

The price of the Young Person's Travel Pass has been increased, but is still subsidised by £300/year. KCC is the only council in the country with a travel pass scheme, which can be paid for in instalments.

Member community and highway grants have been combined, and have been reduced from £20,000 to £15,000. Clr Mrs Bell invited applications, but advised that her Division comprises 11 parishes.

The government is conducting reviews into local government funding and it is hoped that it will be increased. Clr Mrs Bell noted that Kent is a large, rural county with a large road network, and unique problems arising from its geography. Paul Carter [Leader, KCC] is lobbying central government for more funding.

Brexit: Kent may be affected by Brexit because of its geography. KCC is working with the Kent Resilience Forum to plan for a no-deal Brexit, particularly management of traffic. If there are problems at Dover, lorries will be held at points around the county before being moved on. Social care, schools and waste disposal could be affected by the situation on the roads; KCC is prepared for any scenario.

Highways: the government has given KCC £28,000,000 for highway improvements. KCC has invested £89,000,000 in roads, its biggest investment to date, this will rise to £96,000,000 next year.

Clr Mrs Bell took questions from the floor.

Clr Mayland stated that East Brabourne has a school and church but there are no footways, other than on one side of The Street, or lights and the road is subject to the national speed limit. The Parish Council has sought a reduction on a number of occasions, but without success. Clr Mrs Bell stated that she would be willing to fund a traffic survey to identify speeds and the type of traffic.

Cllr Mayland reported that pull-ins on the back road to Wye cannot be used because of degradation of the road surface. Cllr Mrs Bell stated that she would arrange for a Highways officer to carry out an inspection.

10. Borough councillor's report (William Howard)

Chairman, the past year has been very busy with my main role trying to support residents with any enquiries they may have. Predominantly, this has been around planning either supporting or opposing. This year the majority of decisions I have been involved with have gone the way desired. Other requests for support have covered a number of areas including bin collections, business rates, noise complaints and explanations of what is going on in the Borough as a whole (in particular the Local Plan).

I have been fortunate enough to be able to support a number of projects with grant money. Two project in particular have been the War Memorial and the continued projects coming from the Community-Led Plan.

Representing the ward at the Borough has taken up more time this year than the average as I have been working on building on the success we as a community had against speculative developers. Primarily this has involved supporting the local plan process and ensuring that the ward was safeguarded as much as possible. This work now means Ashford does have an adopted local plan which should ensure Ashford is able to maintain control of its own development situation. This does not mean people will not try to do things but it should give us a better defence. To highlight the importance of the plan and the lessons learnt from last time I know that after the upcoming elections the Borough will start work on updating the plan so that it can remain in a robust position.

Being the final year of the election cycle means that much of the rest of the work at the Civic Centre has involved trying to ensure projects are completed. This has included the extension to the Designer Outlet, Ashford College and now its hopeful expansion, the new railway spurs for the new Eurostar trains, J10A, the new cinema and a number of other significant economic investments in the Borough. Also, working the councils budget and finances to mean that we are now government grant free and still able to offer the lowest council tax in Kent.

I have been honoured representing the Ward over these past four years and hope that the economic priorities the council has had means we have given Ashford a chance to finally achieve the ambitious potential I have always felt Ashford has.

Chairman just looking forward briefly I believe the priorities of the council will shift over the next four years from economic items to leisure and culture with commitments to developing a form of Theatre in the Borough being brought to the forefront.

Finally on an admin front just a final reminder that this May's election we will be in a new ward called Bircholt and residents will only be electing **ONE** councillor.

Thank you.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Brian Sanders referred to the Brabourne Parish Council's accounts and the application to list The Plough Inn – were any costs involved? Mike Hickmott and Sue Wood replied that there were none.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Smeeth Parish Council Statement of Accounts 2018-2019

Receipts to 20_March_2019

Precept	23047.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	580.00
Council Tax Support Grant	370.00
VAT refund	982.35
Fordred's Charity	180.00
Bank interest	73.53
Smeeth field rent	350.00
Grants	0.00
Caretaker cluster	32087.12
Repayment of loan to War Memorial	500.00

Subtotal	58170.00	
B/f	42162.35	
Projected income to 31_March		
Bank interest	12.00	
Total	100344.35	100344.35

Expenditure to 20_March_2109

Clerk's salary	3784.68	
Litter collector's salary	681.21	
Caretaker's salary	17140.77	
Caretaker's employer conts	4836.55	
Caretaker running costs	4735.10	
Insurance premium	1171.05	
Office expenses	403.38	
Subscriptions	458.24	
Training	72.00	
Audit	240.00	
Loan to War Memorial project	500.00	
Community Led Plan group	65.34	
Fordreds Charity	180.00	
Dog bags	396.00	
Donations	2550.00	
Subtotal	37214.32	

Projected expenditure to 30_March

Caretaker	1907.75	
Subscription	52.00	
Total	39174.07	39174.07

Projected balance C/f **61170.28**

Brabourne Parish Council Statement of Accounts 2018-2019

Receipts to 20_March_2019

Precept	35000.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	530.00
Council Tax Support Grant	390.00
VAT refund	2761.25
Fordred's Charity	180.00
Bank interest	1.64
Allotment rentals	1162.50
Wayleave agreement	40.54
Loan drawdown from ABC	20000.00
Sundry	366.00

Subtotal	60431.93	
B/f	10310.64	
Projected income to 30_March	0.00	
Total	70742.57	70742.57

Expenditure to 20_March_2109

Clerk's salary	6711.65	
Litter collector's salary	1389.84	
Fordred's Charity	180.00	
Audit fee	360.00	
Allotments (charges)	2569.79	
Insurance premium	493.97	
Office expenses	1034.79	
Subscriptions	716.31	
Grounds maintenance	0.00	
Tree surgery	930.92	
Village caretaker scheme	6298.61	
Community Led Plan group	0.00	
Village green application	24716.53	
Hospital field	2507.90	
Citizenship Award	100.00	
Memorial Prize	50.00	
Donations	4464.00	
Subtotal	52524.31	
Projected exp to 30_March	0.00	
Total	52524.31	52524.31
Projected balance C/f		18218.26
