

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Monday 17th March 2014
At Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllrs Mrs Young and Mrs Tanner, Cllrs Joules, Mayland and Spokes, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden), PCSO Huckstepp, PCSO Carr were present, and nine members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Bewick (prior commitment), Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard (ward members).

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20th January be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Complaints have been received about 43 leylandii trees planted along the edge of the footpath running between Canterbury Road and Prospect Way. The trees were planted by the occupier of the property adjacent to the footpath, and it is unclear if the planting is within the curtilage of the property. This has been raised with the Planning department of ABC and the Public Rights of Way Office (PROW); other investigations have also been carried out. A site meeting is to be held with the PROW officer. It was noted that the main concern is encroachment of the trees on to the footpath, but the resident has made a commitment to keep them cut back.

5.1.2 Flooding in Church Road. This has now receded, but the failure to clear the culvert despite repeated requests will be raised with the Joint Transportation Board.

5.1.3 Closure of The Street, East Brabourne. Diversion signs are in place but it is unlikely to reopen for several months, due to the significant damage caused. Noted that Pilgrims Way is unsuitable for large vehicles, in places the passing places have been degraded and bollards are missing. Residents were encouraged to report problems via the KCC portal.

5.1.4 The following will be reported to KCC Highways: degradation in Green Lane (from Weekes Lane to Bulltown Farm Lane), and Plumpton Road near the junction with Quarrington Lane.

5.2 Registration of The Warren as a village green There have been no objections to the application, which will shortly go before the Regulation Committee Member Panel for its decision.

5.3 Village handyman scheme The PC has registered an interest and costings of services likely to be devolved are awaited. The scheme is designed to operate in cluster of 4 parishes, but only Brabourne, Smeeth and Brook have registered in the area; Cllr Miss Martin is taking advice as to whether this would be viable.

5.4 Local Needs Housing (LNH) A letter has been sent to landowners of sites identified in the desktop survey but no responses have yet been received. Cllr Mrs Tanner asked if LNH takes priority over market housing, but was advised that the Housing Association seeks to buy sites at below market value which may not be attractive to the owners.

5.5 Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan ~1000 questionnaires were sent out, and a response rate of approx 30% reported. The next meeting of the Steering Group is 18th March, at which methods of analysing the data will be discussed.

6. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported that he has spoken to KC Highways about the situation in The Street, and they have confirmed that there will be a significant delay before the repairs are carried out. Works are also being carried out in Pound Lane, for cabling works and road repairs. A number of minor incidents involving a small number of youths were reported, this is being monitored.

PCSO Huckstepp's report is attached.

The Chairman asked the Community Warden and PCSO to monitor The Plough until it reopens.

7. Financial Report

7.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

That the following payments be agreed in accordance with the Budget.

Payments

Details	£
Big Lottery Fund (repayment of unspent grant)	563.84
Hire of Scout HQ	9.00
S Wood (net salary Feb)	284.25
S Wood (net salary March)	284.25
S Wood (expenses) *	149.56
HMRC Q4	133.80
D Ansley (salary) (21 hrs @ £6.31/hr)	132.51
ACRK (joint subscription renewal)	32.50
ABC (dog bin)	246.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall Association (donation)	1500.00
Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall Association (donation)	1100.00
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club (ABC grant)	250.00
Citizenship award	100.00

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.44
Allotment rental payments	405.00
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club (ABC grant)	250.00

Balance £ 18767.31 (cheque and deposit account)

£ 668.00 (No 2 account for CLP and EP group)

7.2 To consider a contribution to the Fete Committee towards the cost of two-way radios.

It was noted that these could be made available for use by the Emergency Planning Group. No decision has been taken as to which units would be purchased; trials will be conducted to ensure parish-wide coverage. It is likely that the units will have to be licensed rather than smaller, lower cost unlicensed radios.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council contributes £200 towards the cost of two-way radios.

7.3 To consider installation of a bus shelter on The Warren

The Clerk reported that costs are dependent on the style of shelter chosen, but would be approx £3500 – 4000; grants of 50% of the cost are available from KCC. The Chairman asked if the expenditure could be justified by the need, given the few users of the stop. Concerns were expressed that the shelter may attract antisocial behaviour. A decision was deferred pending the results of the Community Led Plan.

7.4 To consider tree works to the elm trees on The Warren

A quote to reduce the crown of the 3 elm trees and hence the nuisance caused by leaf fall, was sought. The tree surgeon recommended crown thinning by 30% rather than reduction, to preserve the trees' appearance, at a cost of £495 + VAT.

Resolved:

That the quote from Keith Tait for £495 + VAT for crown thinning of the elm trees on The Warren be accepted.

Mr Tait will also be asked to quote for the quinquennial inspection of trees on The Warren, due in 2014.

8. Planning Committee report

8.1 Planning applications received

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on 6 planning applications, with the following recommendations.

Court Lodge, The Street: underground oil tank. No comment

Court Lodge, the Street: internal alterations and replacement conservation rooflight. No objections

Hill Side, Weekes Lane: revisions to approved planning application. No comments submitted given support for the permitted application.

1 The Russets, The Lees Close: first floor extension, replacement dormer and partial garage conversion. No objection.

30 Mountbatten Way: conversion of garage to living accommodation. No objection.

Byways, Hampton Lane: erection of car barn in front garden. Support

Resolved:

That the Parish Council accepts the recommendations of the Planning Committee.

3 tree applications had also been submitted, but these were not our for consultation.

8.2 Ashford sites submissions

The Chairman reported that a public meeting on the sites had been held on 4th March, chaired by Cllr Hickmott and attended by approx 100 people. A presentation was given by Ian Grundy and Carly Pettit of the ABC Planning dept. Some confusion was evident, in that a number of those attending thought that the sites were planning applications.

The Local Plan is currently being reviewed to take it to 2030, and it is a govt directive that as part of the review all landowners, agents and developers are contacted and asked if they have any sites that may be suitable for inclusion in the Local Plan. No such sites were put forward in Brabourne, but a number in Smeeth. The sites will be assessed for their suitability, a shortlist incorporated into the draft Plan which will then go out for consultation. After further revision the Plan will be examined at a Public Inquiry. Any sites included would have to apply for planning permission in the usual way, another opportunity for consultation.

At the public meeting residents were invited to put up comments on Post-it notes on each site. These were collated by Carly Pettit and results will be used by the PCs as the basis for their comments on the sites.

It was noted that any development in Smeeth will affect Brabourne because of the impact on infrastructure. It was thought that some, limited, development would be welcomed.

The Clerk will draw up general comments on the sites, stating that further development is unavoidable and probably necessary, but the emphasis should be on Local Needs Housing because of the identified need in the parishes. Account should also be taken of the affect on local infrastructure; it was noted that the GPs' surgeries in Brabourne and Aldington have closed, leading to more pressure on the Sellindge surgery.

The draft comments will be circulated for comment before submission. Further, more detailed, comments will be submitted when the draft Plan is out for consultation.

8.3 Application for Goods vehicle operator's licence

The PC's attention had been drawn to a public notice, inviting comments on an application to increase the number of vehicles operating from a property in Fiddling Lane. There were concerns as to the potential increase in traffic in rural lanes; these were sent to the Traffic Commissioner who had replied stating that PCs cannot comment on such applications. It had, however, come to light that the business was operating without the benefit of planning permission, a possible case of non-compliance will be raised by Planning.

8.4 Other planning matters

Cllr Mayland asked if there has been any progress on the enforcement notice at The Alders, the Clerk to pursue. [Post meeting note: the PC has determined that the applicant has 6 months from the Planning refusal to consider the matter. On expiry of this period enforcement action will be taken.]

9 Report from KALC representative

At the meeting on 15th January a possible new format for the Parish Forum was discussed; it was thought that the current format is weighted too heavily in favour of ABC, with PCs having little input into the agenda and therefore items of interest to parishes were not always included. Suggestions were made including a PC representative chairing the Forum, but this was rejected by ABC. The next meeting is on 26th March.

10 Allotments project

Concerns re trees adjacent to the access have been raised and passed to Shepherd Neame and the occupiers of Pemsey Farm. The latter commissioned a report from a tree surgeon who noted that some of the trees are subject to a TPO. The occupiers of Pemsey Farm have offered to cut back the trees, subject to the necessary permissions. A site meeting will be arranged with the Tree Officer (ABC), and representatives from Shepherd Neame and the Allotment Society. It was noted that 6 new plots are available, and will be advertised.

11 Correspondence

11.1 Planting trees to commemorate the outbreak of WWI. Parishes would be asked to contribute 20% of the cost of the trees and be responsible for their maintenance. It was agreed that the only suitable site is The Warren which already has sufficient tree cover.

12 Publication of DPs on the parish website

The Clerk advised that publication of councillors' interests on the website is a statutory requirement, unless the Monitoring Officer agrees that the councillor has a sensitive interest. The Clerk reported that a template is now available, this was circulated.

Resolved:

That councillors' interests be published on the website, unless the interest is sensitive.

13 Parish Council noticeboard

The existing Council noticeboard is in need of replacement, and Cllr Howard has given a grant towards the cost. The new noticeboard may need to be moved away from Orpins Stores, depending on the next stage in refurbishment of the shop. Cllr Mrs Young will liaise with Ms Orgar. Costs of suitable replacements will be brought to the next meeting.

14 Open Session

14.1 Mr Willis asked what arrangements would be in place for contractors' vehicles when working on Manse Field, and what would be their hours of work. Cllr Spokes stated that it is a requirement of the planning permission that provision is made for parking, and that hours worked would be given in the contract. The Clerk to contact ABC.

14.2 Crumbling steps at 16 The Warren have been repaired.

14.3 There have been no incidents of late of bin lorries driving over The Warren kerb, monitoring continues.

14.4 Mr Clayton queried the 59% equity demanded for the available property at Fortescue Place; it is also unclear what an incoming occupier would be required to pay had the outgoing owned the maximum share in the property (thought to be 85%). This will be taken up with ERHA.

14.5 A new tenant has been found for The Plough, it was noted that it is no longer being advertised in the vacancies' section of the Shepherd Neame website.

14.6 Mr Clayton reported that the Summer fete will be at Smeeth School, and asked if permission had been sought from the PC to run additional attractions, eg a dog show, on The Warren. The Chairman noted that no such permission had been sought and expressed concerns re dog fouling. Cllr Spokes stated that although there are moves to ban dogs from playing fields, The Warren is not a playing field and dogs are regularly walked there; it was thought that those at a dog show would act responsibly and clear up after their dogs.

14.7 One of the sites put forward (see 8.2) is the Old Builders Yard, and on the site there is a large, mature tree. It was recommended that a TPO be placed on it; this will be passed to Smeeth PC.

14.8 Listing of The Plough to preserve it as an amenity for the parish was mooted. The Chairman stated that an application can be submitted by anyone, and goes to the owner for comment. It was noted that a previous application had been refused, on the grounds that the building is not of sufficient historic or architectural interest. The Chairman further noted that part of the building, eg the façade, could be listed. Cllr Howard had also advised that ABC has the power to ensure that it remains as a pub.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 Cllr Mrs Young reported complaints about overnight HGV parking in layby at The Ridgeway, it was noted that this is a safety hazard as sightlines are impeded. 'No overnight parking' signs have been put up at Tutt Hill and Hothfield and have been successful in stopping the parking.

15.2 St George's Day parade. No information has yet been received, the Clerk will contact Mr Richard Graham. Cllr Mrs Tanner will represent the PC.

15.3 A suggestion has been received from Smeeth PC that signs be put up drawing attention to the village defibrillator. It was noted that these would need the permission of Ms Orgar and Brabourne PC.

15.4 Cllr Spokes stated that it is hoped to refurbish the playing field over the summer, necessitating the fete's move to the school. He regretted any inconvenience, but access to the play park and Scout HQ will be maintained. The schedule of works will be circulated and it is hoped that the works will be completed by September.

16 Motion to exclude the public

Resolved:

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 16, namely review of Clerk's spinal column point.

17 Review of Clerk's spinal column point

Resolved:

That the Clerk's scp be raised to 25, and hours worked be increased to 10 per week.

18 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 17th March 2014 after the Annual Parish Meeting, which begins at 7.00pm, in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

PCSO's Report

There has been one recorded crime in the village for the last two months. There was an attempted Burglary on the Canterbury Road which occurred between 10am and 1130am on the 14th of this month. A neighbour was notified when an intruder alarm sounded at the premises. It appears that the offenders had thrown a brick through a rear bedroom window and the handle had been lifted on the inside of the window which would indicate that someone has attempted to gain access to the premises. It would appear that this triggered the intruder alarm which has scared off the offenders. When the neighbour went to investigate no one was seen at the premises. At this present time all lines of enquiry have been exhausted.

There was also a report of a suspicious person in the village. Kent police officers attended at the time of the report and spoke to the male. Details were taken from the male and checks were completed. All was in order with the male who appeared to be lost.

I have been holding a surgery at the village store over the last couple of months. Nothing of note has arisen from these engagements. It is an opportunity for residents in the village to come and visit me and ask me about any queries or concerns they may have. It is also an opportunity for residents to make me aware of any ongoing issues in the village that they feel they may need to tell me about. I will be organising some more surgeries in the near future. The dates and times can be found on the Kent police website and I also advertise them on the board by the village shop. Please feel free to come and visit me when I am there.

Police Contact Points for March

Aldington Village Hall on Wednesday 26th March from 2pm to 3pm

Co-op layby, Wye High Street on Friday 28th March from 2pm to 3pm.

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551
