

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Monday 20th January 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), and six members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

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

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 18th November 2013 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 The salt bags have been delivered but remain unused because there has been no snowfall.

5.1.2 The tree in Pilgrims Way uprooted during the recent storm has been cleared.

5.1.3 'Slow' road markings near Brabourne and Smeeth Schools, and '30mph' road markings near Smeeth School are still in need of refreshing. The request will again be sent KCC Highways.

5.1.4 The following will be reported to KCC Highways: a street lamp in Lees Road which is not working; a loose manhole cover in Church Road; although patching has been carried out, Lees Road is in need of resurfacing – agricultural vehicles are degrading the road edge and this is crumbling.

5.2 Registration of The Warren as a village green Consideration of the application should begin shortly, having been delayed because of workload at KCC.

5.3 Village handyman scheme The Borough Council is renegotiating contracts and therefore has not yet made costings available to the PC; these will be forthcoming after the new contracts have been agreed.

5.4 Local Needs Housing A meeting will be held with the Rural Housing Enabler, Rural Kent, on January 28th to discuss progress.

5.5 Dog bin at the village hall This has been installed, Cllr Joules was thanked for his help.

6. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston and PCSO Huckstepp's reports are attached.

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	£
S Wood (Fordreds Charity reimbursement)	168.00
HMRC (PAYE Q3)	133.80
S Wood (net salary Dec)	284.25
S Wood (net salary Jan)	284.25
D Ansley (salary) (27.5 hrs @ £6.31/hr)	173.53

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.42
Smeeth Parish Council (Good Councillor's Guide)	5.00

Allotment rental payments	1125.00
Fordreds Charity	168.00

Balance £ 22893.58 (cheque and deposit account)
£ 129.35 (No 2 account for CLP and EP group)

7.2 Draft Budget for 2014-2015

The Clerk presented the draft Budget. It was noted that the increase in the Precept for 2013-2014 had been in anticipation of the coming withdrawal of the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant, and the possibility of capping. The Precept covered all the PC's expenditure.

Resolved:

That the Precept is held at £13930.

7.3 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. It is not yet known where the radios would be stored, but would need to be kept charged. It was suggested that suitable radios could be purchased at a cost of £80-100 each. The Fete Committee was asked to provide further details of costings, and the matter will be discussed at the next PC meeting.

7.4 To consider installation of a bus shelter on The Warren

The Chairman reported that an earlier proposal to site a bus shelter had not been pursued, on the grounds of need, vandalism and cost. Grants of up to 50% of the cost are available from KCC, and ownership having been transferred to the PC planning permission would not be required. There was discussion as to the need for the shelter and possible vandalism. The Clerk was asked to bring information on styles and costs to the next meeting.

7.5 To consider installation of bollards on The Warren

Complaints have been received about deep ruts on The Warren, near the corner with Manse Field; it is thought this is caused by waste vehicles mounting the verge to avoid parked cars. A request was made to install bollards; it was noted that these may be regarded by Biffa as dangerous or unsuitable because they may prevent the waste vehicles from negotiating the corner. The bins would not therefore be emptied. The Clerk is to raise this with Biffa, and it may be necessary to ask residents to move their cars on the day of the waste collection (Wednesday). It was noted that some of the properties concerned have access to the rear and can therefore park elsewhere.

8. Planning Committee report

8.1 Planning applications received

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on 14 planning applications.

The retrospective application for the 2 storey garden room/extension at The Alders has been refused; to date no appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate.

Chapel Farm, Canterbury Road: replacement dwelling. Supported by the PC and approved by ABC.

20 Mountbatten Way: front porch extension. No objections from the PC and approved by ABC.

Hope Farm, Bulltown Lane: internal alterations and new front porch. Supported by the PC and LBC given.

Orpins Stores, Lees Road: Demolition of extension and erection of 2 bed house. Supported by the PC but refused by ABC.

38 Knatchbull Way: 2 storey side extension. No objections from the PC and approved by ABC.

Tree Tops, Lees Road: Rear first floor balcony. Objection from the PC but approved by ABC.

Court Lodge, The Street: Internal alterations and replacement conservation rooflight. No objections from the PC, a decision is awaited from ABC.

1 The Warren: 2 storey side extension. No objections from the PC and approved by ABC.

12 Prospect Way: Lawful Development Certificate application for rear single storey extension and pitched roof to existing extension. PCs are not consulted on these Certificates, which was given by ABC.

30 Mountbatten Way: Conversion of integral garage to study/gym. No objections from the PC, a decision is awaited from ABC.

1 The Russetts: Erection of a first floor extension and alterations. No objections from the PC, a decision is awaited from ABC.

8.2 Parish Council comments on planning applications

The Chairman reported that Mr Terry Mortimer (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services, ABC) has reminded PCs of the need for transparency in decision making, and unless there are exceptional circumstances decisions should be made at a meeting open to the public. The PC meets every 2 months and the consultations on planning applications may close before the meeting, an extension to the consultation period can be sought but may not extend to the next meeting. It was felt that if decisions are made by the PC it negates the work of the Planning Committee. Examples from other PCs were given: the Planning Committee makes recommendations on planning applications at a meeting of the PC and the decision to accept or not is taken. It was noted that contentious decisions are referred to the Planning Committee of ABC for determination, therefore this applies to non-contentious decisions delegated to a Planning Officer. The PC is permitted to submit comments after the close of consultation but ABC does not have a duty to consider them when reaching a decision. The Clerk is to write to Mr Mortimer requesting that no decisions on planning applications are made by the Officer until the PC's comments have been submitted.

8.3 Ashford sites submissions

The Chairman reported that the Borough's Local Plan is being revised, and the new Plan will run to 2030. ABC wrote to landowners, developers and agents asking them to put forward sites for possible development, and consideration for inclusion in the Plan. All sites will be assessed for suitability. No sites were submitted in Brabourne, but there are 3 in Smeeth:

Opposite the playing field in Church Road (8 houses)

Old Builders Yard, Plain Road (20 houses)

Land to the west of Station Road opposite Evegate Business Park (commercial and retail).

It was noted that the Old Builders Yard had been a site previously considered for Local Needs Housing. The sites submitted are all for market housing, but the Chairman stated that these are only proposals and may not be adopted.

It was thought that the Evegate site is too remote both from Evegate and the site in Bower Road; there were comments on the relative density on the 2 remaining sites, the larger site being put forward for 8 properties and the smaller for 20.

Comments on the proposals should be sent to ABC by Easter. The proposals will be further discussed at the next meeting.

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. The next meeting is on 26th March.

10 Allotments project

The Clerk reported that most of the tenants had paid their rental for the coming year, a reminder had been sent to those outstanding. The fallen tree had been cleared by Shepherd Neame, but had damaged the fence – this will be reported to the brewery. A report was received of a possible dead or dying tree close to the gate, this is to be reported to Shepherd Neame.

11 Correspondence

11.1 Invitation to the Lord Lieutenant's annual Civic Service. The Chairman is unable to attend.

11.2 A request for information on burials in the churchyard from Mr David Cail who is researching his family tree; the Chairman reported that this had come via the website from Australia.

12 Open Session

12.1 Mr Willis reported lifted kerbstones at The Warren, these will be reported to KCC Highways.

12.2 Crumbling steps at 16 The Warren will be reported to ABC Housing for repair.

12.3 The PC was asked if it would be marking the outbreak of World War 1. The Royal British Legion is planning a possible drumhead service on The Warren and a football match to commemorate the Christmas truce. It was noted that the National Heritage Lottery Fund is making grants available to repair war memorials; it was recognised that although this is in Smeeth the PC would support any application. It was suggested that Cllr Mrs Bewick be contacted for advice on restoring the area surrounding the memorial, because she had put in the Millennium Garden at Brabourne School.

13 Any Other Business

13.1 Complaints have been received about removal of the bin outside Orpins Store, leading to fears of increased littering. There is no obligation on a shopowner to provide a bin other than in specific circumstances, but this is to be clarified with Environmental Services.

13.2 An item will be published in the February Parish News asking for a volunteer to be the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator. Mr Kingston advised that there is no longer an Ashford area coordinator, rather 1 for east Kent and 1 for west Kent. The Chairman (former coordinator) reported that he had received few alerts, Mr Kingston stated that NW is now a lower priority for the Police and that there is a similar initiative in place, Stowting Security Face; the Clerk will circulate the alerts.

13.3 A request has been received to reduce the crown on the 3 elm trees on The Warren. A quote for the works will be brought to the next meeting.

13.4 Trees on the green in Prospect Way have been affected by the recent high winds – this will be reported to the Tree Officer, ABC.

13.5 It was noted that 3 post vans are parked in the village overnight, near the junction with Prospect Way. Cllr Mrs Young advised that the post bicycles have been phased out, to be replaced by the vans or trolleys and will draw this to Ms Orgar's attention. It was suggested that the vans and staff cars park to the rear of the shop, but there is insufficient room.

13.6 Cllr Mayland advised that questionnaires on the Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan will be delivered to every household, and urged all residents to respond. The Chairman noted that 1 of the questions asked whether the 2 PCs should merge; Cllr Mayland stated that the Steering Group could not be persuaded to amend or omit the question.

14 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 15, namely discussion of the Citizenship Award.

15 Citizenship Award

Resolved:

That the Award be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting.

16 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 8.45pm.

Community Warden's Report

Firstly I would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year, I am aware that for a few residents who lost electricity over Christmas it was less than joyful.

Generally over the festive period and despite the inclement weather I believe things have been peaceful for most.

I am aware however that following the number of sheds/garages that were broken into at the rear of The Warren there have been further incidents of a theft of hedging plants in Lees Road and an attempted burglary in Bridge Road where a window was forced but no entry gained. There was also a vehicle burnt out following a road traffic collision. This is a concerning blot on what is usually a crime free area and I continue to talk to PCSO Huckstepp and share any information I get.

I have again liaised with ABC housing regarding a freezer which remains on the grassed area of Calland which the tenant has agreed to remove.

I was contacted by a resident who had found a stray dog and within the day the dog and owner were reunited.

Thefts of tools from a property in The Ridgeway and oil thefts from Penstock Hall Farm were reported.

Residents are asked to move their cars from The Warren on Wednesdays, to allow the waste vehicles easy access.

Graham Kingston

PCSO's Report

I would like to start by saying happy New Year to everyone and I hope it will be a good one for you all.

Over the last month it has been a very busy period for us with the bad weather and we have been receiving a lot of calls related to this. There have been a lot of trees down in the strong winds and we have been working very hard along with other authorities, most namely the Highways Agencies to keep the roads clear of any obstruction. I know that we have had some reports of trees down in the village during the bad weather and we have now cleared these. I would just like to say that during the bad weather we are experiencing please be careful on the roads and be aware that there are many trees going down in this weather.

Since the last Parish Council meeting there have been two reported crimes in Smeeth. The first was in relation to a theft from a motor vehicle on the A20. The owner had left their car at about 8pm in the evening and upon returning to the car the next day they realized that the fuel cap had been broken and appears as if some fuel had been syphoned from the tank. As there were no witnesses to the offence all lines of enquiry have been exhausted at this stage. The second was also a vehicle crime where number plates had been taken from a vehicle in The Ridgeway.

I would also like to mention that there were several reports of burglaries in Brabourne Lees at The Warren since the last meeting. I attended some of the addresses to take details for crime reports and at this time Kent Police are still investigating these incidents. It appears that the offender gained access from the rear of the properties and broke into several of the sheds in the back gardens. They didn't appear to take much however they also gained entry to a van and took some gardening equipment. Kent Police are still investigating these incidents. With this in mind please be careful to ensure that everything is secure when left unattended.

I will be holding a surgery at the local store on the 29th January at 1pm so if you have any queries or concerns please come and see me or contact me via e-mail and I will endeavour to help in any way I can. My e-mail address is andrew.huckstepp@kent.pnn.police.uk. If you wish to report any crimes then you can use 999 for emergency calls and crimes in progress, for non-emergency calls and other enquiries please call 101.

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551
