

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Monday 21st September 2015
At Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Bewick, Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllr Mrs Young, Cllrs Joules, Mayland and Spokes, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Cllr Howard (ward member) and Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) were present, four members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Jane Martin (ward member).

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mayland: OSI planning applications 15/01122/AS and 15/01123/AS.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20th July 2015 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Smeeth crossroads. Feedback is awaited from KCC Highways following a site visit.

5.1.2 A No Parking sign has been installed in the layby on Hythe Road near the entrance to The Ridgeway, but with little deterrent effect. Given that this is no longer a bus stop, a barrier was proposed.

5.1.3 The resurfacing request for Manor Pound Lane near the junction with Canterbury Road has been refused, the Clerk to put the request again given the likely deterioration of the surface during the winter.

5.1.4 The dislodged concrete slab in Bridge Road has been repositioned.

5.1.5 Footpath at Manse Field: there have been no further comments from the residents who made the complaint. The Clerk will ask Giles Holloway for an update.

5.1.6 The signpost at the Weekes Lane/Pilgrims Way junction has been knocked over, this was reported to KCC Highways but not yet repaired. The Clerk to follow-up.

5.1.7 Parsonage Farm: removal of the hedgerow and installation of a concrete driveway. This was reported to Planning and a planning contravention raised. It was thought that there had not been a planning breach. [Post-meeting note: As reported at the July meeting, a retrospective planning application had been invited, but does not yet appear to have been received.]

5.1.8 Works have been completed in Lees Road and Bulltown Lane.

5.2 Local Needs Housing (LNH) On hold pending the outcome of the Local Plan review.

5.3 Community Led Plan (CLP) and Emergency Plan The Emergency Plan is being redrafted in light of new guidance from the Borough Council. On completion it will be submitted to the Borough Council and KCC, and table-top exercises will be carried out. The Community Led Plan Champions are working to deliver their respective aims, including a footpath across the village green.

5.4 Parking problems at Brabourne School. There have been no further complaints, but it was acknowledged that the school has only recently reopened after the summer holidays.

6. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported that there had been no complaints of antisocial behaviour or children causing problems. There had been some damage to trees on the green – branches had been pulled down, but the offenders had been identified and spoken to. Mr Kingston advised that the Police have given him a list of residents being targeted by ‘scammers’, he has visited those concerned to alert them. The water company had been slow to respond to reports of a leak on Woolpack Hill, but this was resolved after Mr Kingston

interceded. There has been an anecdotal report of a break-in at the flat above the estate agents, but there has been no report from the Police of such an incident.

There was no PCSO's report in PCSO Hobbs' absence. Mr Kingston noted that he had notified PCSO Hobbs of the dates of Parish Council meetings.

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	£
Commercial Services (grounds maintenance village hall)	84.00
PKF Littlejohn (audit fee)	120.00
S Wood (gross salary August)	500.28
S Wood (gross salary September)	500.28
S Wood (expenses)	130.29
D Ansley (salary) (31 hrs @ £6.50hr)	201.50
Harmer and Sons (grounds maintenance)	333.00
Brabourne CEP School (John Moreton Memorial prize)	47.99

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.28

Balance £ 23116.56 (cheque and deposit account)
£ 668.00 (No. 2 account for CLP and EP group)

The Clerk reported that the Annual Return of the Parish Council's accounts has been approved by the external auditor. The balance of the Precept, Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant is due on 30th September. Contrary to earlier indications, the Concurrent Functions Grant (currently £710pa) will continue to be paid after 2017, however the Street Cleansing Grant has been withdrawn.

7.2 To consider provision of dog waste bags following withdrawal of the service by the Borough Council

Smeeth Parish Council has proposed that the Parish Councils together provide the bags, for distribution from John Childs Garage and Orpins Stores (the Borough Council had refused to supply the latter). CLR Spokes felt that if residents know that the cost is being met by the Parish Councils, this may make them more aware of the problem and the need to pick up the waste, and report those who do not. It was suggested that the bags carry the legend that they had been supplied by the Parish Councils, but the Clerk noted that this would add significantly to the cost. Smeeth Parish Council stated that 30,000 bags would cost £270.63 + VAT, ie £135.32 to each Parish Council.

It was proposed that Brabourne Parish Council agrees to fund provision of dog waste bags jointly with Smeeth Parish Council.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council will fund provision of dog waste bags jointly with Smeeth Parish Council.

Information re availability of the bags and that they are being paid for by the Parish Councils will be placed on the noticeboard, in Parish News and on the websites. Provision of the bags will be monitored.

8. Planning Committee report

Planning applications received

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that the application for prior approval of change of use for the barn at Beddlestone Farm, Hampton Lane had been refused by the Borough Council.

The following applications have been approved:

The Wheelwrights, Canterbury Road; St Cyriac, The Street; Little Foord, Bulltown Lane; 53 Prospect Way.

The following planning applications have been received:

15/01122/AS and 15/01123/AS The Five Bells. It was noted that this is similar to a previous application; but is inaccurate and carried the date of the previous. Cllr Mayland suggested that it may be a reapplication for one in which the consent is about to expire, work not having begun within the three-year time limit. Cllr Howard stated that he has asked that this application be determined by the Planning Committee rather than a delegated decision by an Officer. Cllr Spokes proposed that the Parish Council's comments on the earlier application should stand. The Chairman will circulate these comments.

15/01142/AS Clougy House, Canterbury Road It was proposed that the application be supported.

Resolved:

That the application be supported.

15/01182/AS Church Farmhouse, The Street. The Chairman reported that a previous application had been refused because of the resulting harm to the chestnut tree; this had now been addressed under application 15/00097/TP for which consent has been given. It was proposed that there be no objection to the application, subject to the approval of the Conservation Officer and Tree Officer.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council has no objections to the application, subject to the approval of the Conservation Officer and Tree Officer.

The Alders, Weekes Lane is with Planning Enforcement.

It was reported that a stand-alone car port has been erected in the garden of 1 (sic) Forstal Cottages, but planning permission has not been sought; Cllr Howard to follow-up.

9. Report from KALC representative

The Committee met on 16th September and discussed the following:

Local Warden Support Officer scheme: Only 2 applicants have come forward for the 12 Parish Councils in the pilot. The posts are being readvertised.

Clinical Commissioning Groups working with Parish Councils.

Motions for the Annual General Meeting.

Working group to look at affordable housing in the borough.

Correspondence re Nickley Wood.

The next meeting is on 18th November.

10. Allotments project

The annual inspection will be carried out in the Spring of 2016.

11. Village green at The Warren

11.1 Improvements See item 5.3.

11.2 Rules for use of the green There have been complaints that horses have again been ridden on the green, the Clerk recommended that restrictions be placed on activities that could be carried out on the green. By-laws could be introduced, which would carry a penalty but must be approved by the Secretary of State. The Clerk will bring draft restrictions to the next meeting.

12. Village caretaker scheme

A meeting was held with the Borough Council and KCC on 15th September to discuss funding. KCC will give £8000, ie £2000 per parish per annum; it was noted that Mersham and Sevington are two parishes [noted that they are 'grouped', being two parishes but with one Parish Council], therefore the contribution from KCC should be £10,000 [the latter figure has yet to be confirmed]. The Borough Council will give £5000, this being the current spend in the cluster. Funding is for running costs only, not capital expenditure or start-up costs. Cllr Joules suggested that equipment be hired, rather than bought, and expenditure could therefore be claimed as running costs. The funding from the Borough Council and KCC would leave a significant shortfall, which would have to be met by the Parish Councils in the cluster. Given that the Parish Council's next scheduled meeting is on 16th November, it may be necessary to call a Parish Council meeting to decide whether or not to pursue the scheme when final figures are known.

13. Correspondence

Community Governance Review: draft recommendations. Proposed boundary changes put forward by the Parish Council were not included in the draft recommendations. The letter to Smeeth Parish Council regarding the recommendations stated that the proposal to merge the two parishes had come from both Parish Councils, it was noted that this is incorrect. Cllr Howard stated that he had raised this and it had been corrected.

The draft recommendation regarding the merger is as follows:

“The Borough Council is supportive of the ambition to form one Parish Council, particularly in light of the location of the two villages. However, the Borough Council is recommending that the two parishes are grouped rather than merged. A Grouping Order under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972 can be applied for by the Parish Councils at any time and does not have to form part of a Community Governance Review.

As a result, the Borough Council is recommending that it works with the Parish Councils to pursue a grouping order if desired in due course and outside of this Review.”

Cllr Howard advised that the Parish Councils will be asked if they wish to apply for grouping, but both Parish Councils would have to agree for it to go ahead. Cllr Mayland asked what advantages would accrue from grouping, Cllr Howard replied that one benefit would be economy of scale. In answer to Cllr Spokes’ comment that this would reduce two Parish Councils’ voices to one, Cllr Howard noted that it could be argued that it would be one strong voice against two weaker. He further noted that the Borough Council has no stated position on the merger. It was agreed that a merger would only be considered if there were advantages and both Parish Councils agreed to the merger.

14. Open Session

The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public present to raise matters of concern with the Council.

Feedback on a possible planning breach at The Meadows, Scots Lane was sought (temporary removal of hedge, building in the garden and enclosure of the verge by stakes). [Post-meeting note: investigation by the Planning Dept of the Borough Council showed that no breach had occurred.]

Pothole in Brabourne Coomb: Mr Wilkes stated that he had reported a large pothole to KCC Highways 18 months ago, but Highways stated that it is on a bridleway and therefore the responsibility of the Public Rights of Way Office. The PROW Office agreed that the pothole should be repaired but disputed responsibility, it was noted that the lane had been tarmacked by Highways. The Clerk to contact the PROW office, copy to Cllr Howard and Cllr Wickham.

Mr Willis stated that flooding on the village green should be addressed, and asked that Bridge Road be kerbed to divert water run-off. The Warren should be resurfaced, given damage arising from the building works at Manse Field.

Mr Marsh stated that Canterbury Road was closed for several days in August while a water leak was repaired, but the diversion was via single track roads; he questioned the need for the closure. Cllr Howard advised that a licence is needed to carry out the works and conditions are attached. He recommended that Highways be contacted in the event of a recurrence to ensure compliance with the conditions, and reopening of the road without delay.

Mr Willis asked if there are any restrictions as to the number of trailers which can be towed by a tractor, and was advised that the restriction applies to weight.

The meeting was reconvened.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 Cllr Mrs Bewick reported that a culvert is collapsing outside 76 Mountbatten Way, leading to flooding in the garden. This will be reported to the water company.

15.2 Cllr Mrs Bewick reported obstruction by cars parking on the footway at The Five Bells. The Community Warden will be asked to contact the licensee.

15.3 Reports had been received of surveying on hospital field, but no information was available.

15.4 Cllr Spokes advised that the playing field improvements are underway, but have been delayed by rain. The playing field will not be back in use until after the grass has been established.

15.5 Cllr Howard stated that Member Community Grants are available to community groups and invited applications, eg from the Allotment Society, the Football Club (eg to pay for the hire of Pitchside while the playing field is out of use). Cllr Howard welcomed the completion of the village hall kitchen refurbishment, part-funded by a Member Community Grant.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 16th November 2015 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.
