

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Monday 24th November 2014
At Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Bewick, Cllr Mrs Young, Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllrs Spokes and Mayland, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard (ward members), Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) and six members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from and Cllr Joules (prior commitment) and PCSO Huckstepp.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Spokes (OSI) Item 8.3 (Payment of grant to the Playing Field Association, Committee Member)

Cllr Spokes (OSI) Item 8.4 (Budget item: Chairman, Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club)

4. Minutes

Item 5.1.1: the reference should be to Bockham Lane and not Quarrington Lane.

Subject to this amendment:

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd September be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Smeeth crossroads. The Chairman reported that KCC has not provided costings for a reduced speed limit and noted that this is unlikely to be introduced; he suggested that interactive 'Slow Down' signs be installed. Smeeth Parish Council has indicated support for such signs and had suggested that Cllr Wickham (county councillor) be approached re funding. Cllr Howard stated that KCC Highways will implement the agreed scheme but is unlikely to consider further improvements until results of the current scheme are known. Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard have informed KCC Highways that they consider the measures insufficient and have asked that they be reviewed in 6-12 months' time. It was agreed that Brabourne Parish Council will support Smeeth Parish Council in its efforts to obtain additional safety measures.

5.1.2 Potholes in Plain Road (opposite Calland) will be reported..

5.2 Village caretaker scheme An updated list of possible tasks has been circulated. Cllr Hinchliffe (Smeeth) and Cllr Fletcher (Mersham) had a meeting with Ashford Borough Council to discuss the scheme for the cluster. Cllr Howard advised that Cabinet members Cllr Mrs Bell and Cllr Mrs Blanford have been asked to include the scheme in discussions. Borough Council contracts are due for renewal in April 2015 which may impact on funding.

5.3 Local Needs Housing (LNH) A shortlist of possible sites suitable for development has been issued after an assessment of all sites put forward under the ongoing review of the Borough Plan. Site SS29 has been included on the shortlist and proposes 50% of the housing units as affordable. Sites on the shortlist will be subject to further assessment. The Chairman stated that sites not included in the new Borough Plan may be made available for LNH; Cllr Howard agreed, noting that the Sandpit Preservation Society may then be involved because it has proposed help for LNH if the sandpit scheme goes ahead.

5.4 Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan The draft Community Led Plan is to be circulated to the Parish Council for comments.

5.5 Parish Council noticeboard This has been well received, and following comments from residents paving is to be installed. Mr Mark Young was thanked for his help.

5.6 Grounds maintenance at the village hall Smeeth Parish Council has agreed to pay 50% of the costs.

5.7 Radio licence and hand-held radios Smeeth Parish Council has contributed 50% of the costs.

5.8 Paving outside Stable Lodge, Lees Road Concerns re the style of paving and installation of a dropped kerb were raised with KCC Highways, which confirmed that permission had been sought and given.

6. Adoption of new model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

New model Standing Orders from NALC had been amended by the Clerk and a draft circulated. The Chairman recommended a 'light touch' approach and proposed that these be further amended to include only mandatory Standing Orders.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council adopts the new model Standing Orders, as further amended.

New Financial Regulations from NALC had been amended by the Clerk and a draft circulated; the Clerk advised that it is a requirement that the Parish Council has Financial Regulations in place and that the Council's practice is in accordance with the Regulations.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council adopts the new Financial Regulations, as amended.

7. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported that there have been no further reports of balls being kicked against the village hall wall, but this may be due to the darker evenings and colder weather. Halloween and Fireworks' Night passed off without incident. Complaints have been received about nuisance behaviour by a small group of young people, including littering, knocking on doors, petty pilfering in the shop, minor damage to the porch at Caroline's Hair Salon and riding bicycles without lights. Mr Kingston stated that he will be contacting the parents of those involved, and the PCSO is monitoring the situation.

Mr Kingston reported the following: theft of a lawnmower from a property in Plain Road, a burglary in West Brabourne, suspicious activity in East Brabourne and doorstep sellers. Mr Kingston warned residents to be vigilant.

Damage to the village green at The Warren was reported, arising from contractors' vehicles at Manse Field. Cllr Miss Martin noted that this had been raised at her surgery on 21st November, and will be discussed with the Borough Council officer dealing with the construction of the 2 new houses in Manse Field by Cllr Howard.

Cllr Howard noted that Brabourne and Smeeth had previously been designated as deprived areas with respect to provision of facilities for young people. He suggested that Hang10 be involved, which interacts with young people to reduce nuisance behaviour; this project could also bring in funding to provide facilities such as hire of the hall. Cllr Howard will raise this with Borough Council officers.

Mr Kingston was thanked for his report.

The Chairman asked if litter bins were needed in other sites in the parish; the Clerk advised that a review of provision is to be carried out in 2015; if the Parish Council installed a bin beforehand it would have to take responsibility for emptying because Biffa will not add additional bins to its schedule at present.

PCSO Huckstepp's report is attached.

8. Financial Report

8.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

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

Payments

Details	£
WDS Signs Ltd	1890.00
S Wood (gross salary October)	489.49
S Wood (gross salary November)	489.49
Shepherd Neame (allotment rental)	400.00
M Hickmott (travel expenses)	40.05
South East Water (allotments)	77.15
Harmer and Sons	324.00
Parish Online (subscription)	33.60
D Ansley (salary) (9 hrs @ £6.31/hr and 24.5 hrs @ £6.50/hr)	216.04
S Wood (Fordred's Charity)	168.00
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club	300.00
St Mary Brabourne PCC	250.00

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.20
Smeeth Parish Council (reimbursement – 2 way radios)	148.50
Precept	6965.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	445.00
Council Tax Support Grant	245.00
Fordred's Charity	168.00
HMRC (VAT refund)	628.87

Balance £ 25149.03 (cheque and deposit account)
£ 668.00 (No. 2 account for CLP and EP group)

8.2 To consider a contribution towards the village hall kitchen refurbishment

The Chairman read a letter from Mr John Coupe regarding the project to refurbish the hall kitchen. This gave a breakdown of the works which will cost £21,676 incl VAT. The Hall Association has £9000 in funds and a grant of £500 from Cllr Howard. Mr Coupe sought the support of the Parish Council for the project and a possible financial contribution. A letter of support has been sent from the Parish Council and it was noted that an application for a capital grant of £10,000 has been submitted to KCC. The Clerk reported that Smeeth Parish Council has pledged £500 and will consider a further contribution if there is a shortfall. The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council pledges £500 and will consider an additional contribution in the event of a funding shortfall.

Resolved:

That the Brabourne Parish Council pledges £500 towards the hall kitchen refurbishment and will consider an additional contribution when any funding shortfall is known.

Cllr Miss Martin asked if the Hall Committee had applied for a KCC Member grant or from the Community Hall fund; this is unknown but it is thought that the application is not for a Member grant.

8.3 To consider payment of the Playing Field Association grant

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow Mr Brian Sanders (Secretary, Playing Field Association [PFA]) to address the Council.

Mr Sanders stated that it is hoped to improve the field by putting in drainage, reseeding and installing rabbit-proof fencing, tenders have been invited and likely costs are ~£98,000 (incl VAT). An initial grant application had been refused despite early assurances to the contrary. The rabbit-proof fencing will be put in prior to the other works, at a cost of £9100. The PFA has £7500 and Mr Sanders asked that the Parish Council brings forward payment of its donation (usually paid in March); he noted that Smeeth Parish Council had agreed early payment and had increased its contribution to £1000 from £600. Mr Sanders stated that while the project is football-led the long-term aim is to provide comprehensive sporting facilities including tennis, hockey and netball.

The meeting was reconvened.

The Chairman stated that the hall and playing field are 2 major facilities in the village, noting that the former has received significantly more funding from the Parish Council than the latter. The Chairman proposed an increase in the donation to the PFA to £1500 from £1100 (to match the donation to the Hall Committee). Cllr Spokes noted that the playing field had originally been a just play park and investment had not been needed, whereas extensive works had been carried out at the hall. He stated that the Football Club is taking the lead and is actively fundraising; village-based sports clubs will have priority for use of the facilities. The Chairman advised that if either of the 2 facilities were to fail responsibility would likely devolve to the Parish Councils.

The Chairman proposed that the donation to the PFA be brought forward from March 2015, and that it be increased to £1500.

Resolved:

That Brabourne Parish Council grant to the Playing Field Association be increased to £1500 and that it be paid in November 2014.

8.4 To consider the draft Budget for 2014-2015

The draft Budget had been circulated by the Clerk.

The meeting was suspended to allow Mr Peter Clayton to address the Council. He stated that he had raised the hall's financial difficulties at the previous 2 meetings of Smeeth Parish Council, which had agreed to increase its grant from £700 to £1000 which would address the current funding shortfall. It was noted that the grant paid by both Parish Councils had not been increased for several years.

The meeting was reconvened.

Cllr Mayland advised that the donation to the Hall Committee in the draft Budget took no account of inflation and proposed that this be increased to £1750. The Chairman noted that this would necessitate an increase in the Precept. The Clerk advised that capping remains a possibility, and that while the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant will be paid in 2015-2016 (£257 and £710 respectively) it is uncertain thereafter. The Clerk further advised that the Precept be increased to cover the withdrawal of these grants. Cllr Mrs Young proposed that the donations to the Hall Committee and PFA both be raised to £1750. The Chairman proposed that the Precept be increased to £14,500 to take account of the increased contributions, and that the Grants be claimed in addition.

Resolved:

That the Precept for Brabourne Parish Council be increased to £14,500 exclusive of the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant.

8.5 Review of allotment rents

The Chairman reported that remedial works are needed to trees beside the allotment access, ownership is unclear. The Tree Surgeon had estimated the cost of the works at £495, and the Allotment Society had indicated that plot holders were unwilling to bear the cost. The owners of Pemsey Farm are to carry out works to those trees which are overhanging their power lines, following which the need for further works will be reviewed. It was noted that start-up costs have now been recouped, and the Society has no plans for additional capital expenditure but a Contingency Fund should be set up. The Chairman proposed that the rental per plot be reduced from £45 to £40 for 2015, the surplus to be put into a Contingency Fund, ringfenced for the allotments.

Resolved:

That allotment rentals for 2015 be reduced to £40 per plot.

9. Planning Committee report

Planning applications received

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman, Planning Committee) reported on one planning application, with the recommendation that no objections be made to the application.

21 Knatchbull Way: Erection of single storey side and rear extension

Resolved:

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

Four planning applications were brought to the meeting for discussion.

6 Bircholt Forstal: Erection of a two storey side and rear extension (amended plans).

The Parish Council had objected to the initial application on the grounds of massing, impact on neighbouring properties and the proposal was out of keeping with the area. It was felt that these concerns had not been addressed. Cllr Howard advised that he has requested that this application is determined by the Borough Council Planning Committee in the interests of the community if the officer is minded to permit.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council objects to the application, its concerns regarding massing and impact on neighbouring properties not having been sufficiently addressed.

Bircholt Court, Bircholt Lane: Extension to agricultural building.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council has no objections to the application.

Church Farmhouse, The Street: Replacement conservatory, side extension and rear extensions, new windows to front elevation.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council has no objections to the application.

Land south east of Canterbury Road: Change of use for the keeping of donkeys and proposed stables, tack room and hardstanding.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council has no objections to the application.

Of older applications, the following applications were permitted:

Court Lodge, The Street; Byways, Hampton Lane; PHR Farms, Bircholt Lane; Riverside, Pound Lane.

An application for a Lawful Development Certificate for Hillside, Weekes Lane was resubmitted and granted after reducing the size of the stable block.

The Alders, Weekes Lane: Cllr Howard advised that the officers have encountered difficulties in contacting the owner, but this should not preclude enforcement.

Five Bells: assurances have been given that all conditions will be met. Cllr Mayland noted that the marquee has not yet been removed.

Little Foord, Bulltown Lane: an appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate and the Parish Council's comments will be taken into account.

10. Report from KALC representative

The Committee met on 19th November and the Minutes have been circulated. Representatives have been asked if they still require hard copy of the Minutes, this will be discussed at the January meeting.

11. Allotments project

See 8.5.

12. Flooding in Plain Road

The Chairman reported that recent surface water flooding had affected properties at Manse Field. Concerns were expressed regarding drainage but Southern Water had stated that the pumping station has adequate capacity and pipes damaged by tree roots have been repaired. Cllr Howard advised that the ditch is the responsibility of ABC Housing, and clearance is being arranged; he further noted that the pumping station capacity may have to be reviewed if new properties are built. Cllr Mrs Young reported flooding during July and August in Plain Road. Cllr Miss Martin reported that a public meeting chaired by Damian Collins MP is to be held to discuss similar problems in Ruckinge; she noted that these have been ongoing for 20 years and executives from Southern Water have indicated that they will attend. Cllr Miss Martin asked to be notified of problems which she will raise with Southern Water.

13. Access road to Brabourne School

The meeting was suspended to allow Mr Ian Goldsmith, Chairman of the Brabourne School Governors to address the Council.

Mr Ian Goldsmith stated that School Lane is not an adopted road and the surface is deteriorating, having not been resurfaced since 2002. He expressed concerns that the road will degrade further during the Winter; the School cannot fund the works and Mr Goldsmith asked the Council for advice and assistance. It is not known why School Lane has not been adopted, and liability in the event of an accident is unclear. Cllr Howard stated that this is a Highways safety issue and the ward members urged parents and carers to log faults on the KCC fault-reporting Portal. Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard stated that they will raise this with KCC Highways and with Cllr Wickham (county councillor).

14. Prescription service and delivery of medicines

Sellindge Surgery has indicated its willingness to offer this service if volunteers are forthcoming; the need was questioned given that only 4 residents in Wye make use of the service. It was noted that not all residents are registered with the practice in Sellindge. Cllr Howard advised that a scheme in Mersham uses volunteer drivers for a number of services and suggested that the scope of the scheme be widened, this would be of help to vulnerable residents.

15. Correspondence

15.1 Hall Association. The Parish Council was thanked by Mrs Jacqui Fortescue for meeting the costs of grounds maintenance.

15.2 Mr Ian Ruck asked the Council to consider installing a footway on the village green adjacent to the Bridge Road hedge. Provision of a bus shelter has again been requested for the bus stop on the green.

The Chairman reported that he had ascertained that the costs of providing the footway would be in excess of £5000 and stated that there have also been complaints about the lack of pavements in Plain Road and beyond (these have been passed to Smeeth Parish Council). It was noted that an alternative route is via the pavement in The Warren and Manse Field. The costs of the footway could not, therefore, be justified. KCC Highways is to be asked to repair the crumbling carriageway edges in Bridge Road, put in a kerb and address the adverse camber to prevent problems of water run-off to properties in Manse Field. Cllr Miss Martin stated that KCC does not have information on the location of all drains and grips in the county; she suggested that parishes identify these and send the information to KCC.

16. Open Session

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

16.1 Mr Willis asked if the village defibrillator is heated. The Clerk replied that it is, and that an external cabinet is to be provided.

16.2 Mr Willis reported that hardstanding and a dropped kerb were not installed at the bus stop on the green when similar works were carried out elsewhere; this will be reported.

16.3 Cllr Miss Martin advised that the borough councillor's surgery preceding that of the MP will be repeated on a regular basis (although not monthly).

16.4 Cllr Miss Martin welcomed the draft Community Led Plan.

16.5 Mr Clayton reported incidents of flooding in Knatchbull Way and regretted Southern Water's response. Cllr Miss Martin urged residents to be persistent.

The meeting was reconvened.

17. Any Other Business

17.1 Cllr Mrs Tanner reported that following requests from parents she had raised the selection criteria for Wye Free School with the school. She noted that the school had been built for the rural community, and regretted that Smeeth is outside the catchment area as are parts of Brabourne, the main catchment areas include Willesborough and Kennington. Cllr Mayland agreed, noting that children from outside the catchment area have been accepted, and suggested that this be raised with Cllr Wickham.

17.2 Cllr Mrs Tanner reported that overhanging vegetation is cut to accommodate cars but not HGVs or buses, she noted that the latter cannot reverse without a banksman. Cllr Wickham has been alerted to the problem but Cllr Mrs Tanner stated that she has not yet received a reply. Cllr Miss Martin suggested that this be resent and that Cllr Howard be copied in.

17.3 Cllr Mrs Bewick reported that a digger has been parked in Canterbury Road but may be a safety hazard; the Community Warden is to be notified.

17.4 The Chairman advised that elections to the Parish Council will be held in May 2015 and urged councillors to consider putting themselves forward for re-election.

18. 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 19, namely Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

19. Fordred's Charity Payments

Resolved:

That Cllr Mrs Bewick distributes the payments as agreed.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 19th January 2015 at 7.00pm, in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

PCSO's Report

This is the police report for Brabourne Parish Council's November meeting.

There have been three recorded crimes in the village in the last two months.

The first was in relation to a burglary in The Street in East Brabourne. The occupants were out of the country at the time so it is unclear when the offence took place. The offenders have gained entry by forcing open a small wooden-framed window at the rear of the property. When inside the offenders have completed a search of the property and have taken jewellery items.

The second was in relation to a burglary in Weekes Lane. Again the occupant was away from the address overnight. The offenders gained entry by forcing the conservatory doors at the rear of the property. When inside they have conducted an untidy search of the property and have taken electrical items from within.

The third was in relation to a theft from a business in the village.

I would just like to take this opportunity to make everyone aware that at this time of year we often see a rise in burglaries due to it getting dark earlier and also due to the fact that Christmas is just around the corner and criminals are often more active this time of year. This is because people will be buying many expensive gifts for and family friends and so they will see this as a good opportunity to get some expensive items. There are some very simple steps you can take to prevent your house from being targeted. Firstly ensure that all doors and windows are securely locked and that any valuables are locked away safely when you are out. If you have alarms ensure that they are set properly. And when you have been out shopping don't leave any packaging for any high value items outside the front of your homes as this will advertise to any criminals what you may have.

I will again be holding a surgery at the Orpins store in the village. So if there are any questions or concerns that anyone wishes to discuss with me they are more than welcome to come and see me and I will endeavour to help.

I will be there next on 19th December between 3 and 3.30pm

Alternatively you can email me on 58551@kent.pnn.police.uk

PCSO Andrew Huckstepp 58551