

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.30pm on Monday 18th January 2016
At Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllr Mrs Young, Cllrs Joules and Mayland, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Cllr Jane Martin and Cllr Howard (ward members) and Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) were present, forty nine members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Bewick (prior commitment), Cllr Spokes was unavoidably detained.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

15. Lees Road – proposals from Gladman

Brought forward by permission of the Chairman.

The Chairman advised that no planning application had been submitted, residents were being consulted on the proposals. He noted that the site had not been put forward in the call for sites – none had been submitted in Brabourne. No details had been given in the consultation other than the number of houses, of these under govt legislation 35% must be affordable, but the proposed 125 houses would represent an increase of approx 20% if houses in the parish. The Parish Council encouraged all residents to submit comments to Gladman, and would support residents' views. The Chairman reported that Gladman had requested a meeting with the Parish Council, this offer would be accepted.

The meeting was suspended to allow residents to raise matters with the Council.

A resident stated that she had delayed sending comments pending the Parish Council meeting; Cllr Miss Martin and Cllr Howard advised people to comment, noting that if no responses were received this could be misconstrued.

The Community Led Plan had identified a wish for up to 50 new homes in the village, but these should be smaller properties because there was not a shortage of 3-4 bedroom houses.

Use of birdscarers was reported, but there was disagreement as to the history of their use on the site.

The ward members were asked if comments to Gladman should also be sent to them; Cllr Howard recommended that these be sent to the planning officer when a planning application was out. Cllr Miss Martin acknowledged residents' concerns and agreed with Cllr Howard, but asked that ward members then be copied in. She stated that a Village Protection Policy (VPP) was a priority.

It was felt that the consultation was speculative, and support sought from the Parish and Borough Council; Cllr Miss Martin replied that residents would be consulted when a planning application was made, in order that the Councillors would have a mandate for a response.

It was noted that the site is agricultural, was not included in the Local Plan and is outside the village. Support for farmers was expressed.

It was noted that the land is not owned by Gladman, the company specialises in obtaining planning permission (residential and commercial) on greenfield land, on behalf of the landowner.

The ward members were asked if the current Local Plan was robust; Cllr Howard replied that it had been found sound by the Planning Inspectorate, Cllr Miss Martin agreed and stated that the new Plan would go through the same process. She added that the current planning application for the site is for the keeping of horses, but any issues arising from another application would be answered when they are known.

Cllr Miss Martin proposed a VPP as a strong addition to the Local Plan; Cllr Howard agreed noting that the Local Plan process had been subjected to a thorough examination by the Planning Inspectorate and been found to be sound, and cited problems in Maidstone borough which did not have a Local Plan in place.

It was reported that developers were looking at other sites in the borough, but mainly to the west of the borough.

It was recommended that residents comment on the Gladman proposals, to counter suggestions that there was no response to the consultation.

The meeting was reconvened.

In answer to a question from the Chairman the floor was unanimous in objecting to the proposals.

It was proposed that a small working group be set up comprising a representative from Brabourne and Smeeth parish councillors, the ward members and 2 residents, this would give a structure to disseminate information. The working group could be contacted through Facebook, the community website or via the Chairmen, ward members or Clerk.

The Chairman proposed that the Clerk be given the authority, after consultation with the Chairman, to take whatever action she deemed reasonable to protect the current status of the land.

Resolved:

That the Clerk be given the authority, after consultation with the Chairman, to take whatever action she deemed reasonable to protect the current status of the land.

8. Ashford Local Plan – Village Protection Policy

The Chairman advised that if a VPP were drawn up it would be submitted to the Borough Council and would support the Local Plan. The Clerk reported that Smeeth Parish Council had agreed to produce a VPP with Peter Brett Associates provided that at least one other Parish Council from the Village Caretaker cluster took part. [The cluster comprises Brabourne, Brook, Mersham with Sevington and Smeeth.] The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council produces a VPP with Peter Brett Associates, jointly with Smeeth Parish Council. The Chairman reported that the VPP was also to be discussed by Mersham with Sevington Parish Council, and if Mersham resolved to proceed would be included in the Brabourne and Smeeth Policy. The costs of £4500 would be shared by participating councils.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council produces a VPP with Peter Brett Associates, jointly with Smeeth Parish Council.

The Council was asked if it had the funds required to pay for the data that would be needed to generate the VPP, the Chairman replied that the work would be carried out by volunteers. Cllr Miss Martin offered help from volunteers in Aldington, noting that Aldington and nearby parishes had commissioned a VPP in 2015, the first in the UK.

The meeting was suspended for five minutes, to allow members of the public who wished to leave the meeting to do so. The meeting was then reconvened.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 16th November and 8th December 2015 be approved and confirmed as true records.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Smeeth crossroads. KCC Highways are reviewing the junction, with particular reference to the hatching in the layby on the southern side of the A20.

5.1.2 Manor Pound Lane near the junction with Canterbury Road has been resurfaced, however the white lines have not been refreshed. This will be reported.

5.1.3 The signpost at the Weekes Lane/Pilgrims Way junction has been repaired.

5.1.4 The signpost at the New Barn Hill/Pilgrims Way junction has been knocked down and will be reported.

5.1.5 Remaining potholes in Coomb Lane do not meet the criteria for repair.

5.1.6 Manhole outside 2 The Warren. This has been investigated but no further action taken by KCC Highways; flooding continues to be a problem. The Clerk to follow-up.

5.1.7 Plumpton Road and Green Lane. Repairs have failed, this will be reported.

5.1.8 Bulltown Lane. Ditches are blocked, this will be reported.

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

5.3 Community Led Plan and Emergency Plan Footpath on the village green.

The meeting was suspended to allow Mr Ian Ruck to address the Council.

Mr Ruck reported that he was in discussions with Stagecoach re the specification for hardstanding at the bus stop on the village green, this was the only stop not upgraded by KCC Highways on the

grounds that it was on private land. Mr Ruck noted that there had been no reply from KCC to his request for examples of bus stops on private land which had been funded by KCC.

A specification (compliant with KCC guidelines) for the footpath was nearing completion, a few minor amendments were needed to the specification previously circulated. The footpath opposite the shop would also be extended to marry-up with the proposed footpath, with dropped kerbs and tactile pavers.

Mr Ruck put forward proposals for the gaps in the hedgerow in Bridge Road, proposing that the existing central gap by the litter bin be retained, but other gaps filled with sympathetic planting. This was agreed.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Mr Ruck advised that costs would be approx £10,000 for the footpath and £2000 for the bus stop hardstanding. KCC and the PROW office had been approached for funding but none was forthcoming. Applications for grants would be made to the borough and county councillors.

Mr Ruck was thanked for his presentation.

The meeting was reconvened.

6. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported that tiles to the value of more than £3000 had been stolen from a property in West Brabourne. The rear window of a farm vehicle had been smashed. Complaints had been received before Christmas about damage to verges caused by tractors, but there had been no further reports. Mr Kingston advised that he had placed an appeal for assistance with DIY for a resident in Parish News, there had been a good response and offers of help.

No report in the PCSO's absence.

7. Village caretaker scheme

The Clerk reported that the post had been advertised on the community websites and would be published in the Kentish Express Recruitment section on January 21st. Interviews would be held on February 9th with an expected start date of March 14th. Grants for all start-up costs had been given by the Borough Council and the county councillor.

9. Financial report

9.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

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

Payments

Details	£
Harmer and Sons Ltd (hedge cutting)	267.00
Landscape Services (mowing)	28.00
Smeeth Parish Council (dog bags)	99.00
S Wood (salary)	500.28
S Wood (salary)	500.28
Society for Local Council Clerks (subscription)	51.94
D Ansley (salary)	180.90

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.31
Allotment renewals	920.00

Balance £ 26791.63 (cheque and deposit account)

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

9.2 Landscape Services quote for mowing at the village hall The Chairman advised that Landscape Services had been cutting all of the grassed area at the village hall under contract from the Borough Council, including hall land. When this had come to light the Parish Council had agreed to pay for grass cutting of the hall land. The Clerk presented the quote from Landscape Services, for mowing on 12 occasions at a total cost of £142.80. The work could not be carried out by the village caretaker because

a gang-mower would be needed; for the same reason the caretaker would not be cutting the grass on the village green. The Chairman proposed that the quote from Landscape Services be accepted.

Resolved:

That the quote from Landscape Services for mowing grass on hall land of £142.80 for the year be accepted.

9.3 Draft budget for 2016-2017

The draft Budget was circulated. It was proposed that provision of £2250 be made to fund the VPP, this being 50% of the cost quoted by Peter Brett Associates. Together with the costs of the village caretaker scheme, this would give forecast expenditure for the year 2016-2017 of £22780, as against the Precept for 2015-2016 of £14500. It was proposed that the Precept be increased to £22780, this would be equivalent to a rise of approx 57% in the Precept (an increase in the average charge levied to each household of approx £15 per year). The Precept may be reduced for the year 2017-2018 because provision would not have to be made for the VPP. Cllr Joules proposed that because costs of the VPP would be a one-off, the Precept be set at £18000, to spread additional costs over 2-3 years. This would be equivalent to an increase per household of less than £1/month. The Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant would be claimed in addition.

Resolved:

That the Precept be increased to £18000, exclusive of the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant.

9.4 Banking arrangements for the Community Led Plan group

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been acting as banker for the Community Led Plan (CLP) and Emergency Plan groups, holding these funds in its No. 2 account. The CLP group had opened its own bank account at HSBC and asked the Parish Council to transfer 50% of the available funds (which would be £334) to the account. This was agreed, the cheque will be raised when confirmation is received of the CLP account's name.

10. Planning Committee report

Planning applications received

The Planning Committee Chairman reported that the following applications had been approved:

Land north of Parsonage Farm, East Brabourne; Woodlands, Hampton Lane; Little Foord, Bulltown Lane; 8 Prospect Way; Chapel Farm Barn, Canterbury Road.

The Parish Council had objected to planning applications for Missingham Farm, Pilgrims Way and Land between Lees Road and Canterbury Road, decisions are awaited. The latter would be determined by the Borough Council Planning Committee.

The following application had been received: 15/01677/AS Hillside Lime Works, Pilgrims Way, East Brabourne (demolition of existing agricultural buildings and erection of new single storey dwelling with associated garden and parking),

The meeting was suspended to allow the applicant to answer questions on the application. Mr Wood stated that had he bought Hillside Lime Works to protect adjoining properties, including his own. In answer to the Chairman's query re use of the access by agricultural vehicles, given that the lime works is derelict, Mr Wood advised that there was a right of way across it for the farm to the rear.

The Chairman noted that there were concerns because the site was in the AONB and North Downs SLA, a previous application had been refused on appeal. Mr Wood replied that the existing application sought to overcome difficulties highlighted by the Planning Inspectorate. Cllr Joules noted that the proposal would match the existing footprint. Cllr Mayland felt that it was a good use of the existing footprint.

The application cited a successful appeal in Hastingleigh; the Chairman felt that the 2 applications were not similar, because the Hastingleigh barn is adjoining the road. It was agreed that the existing building was an eyesore; Cllr Mrs Tanner and Cllr Mrs Young stated that the application would improve the site.

The Chairman noted that the application Design and Access Statement proposed that if the development were permitted, a condition should be attached restricting the ability to extend the dwelling and removing the permitted development rights for garden buildings.

The meeting was reconvened.

The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council had no objections to the application, it being an improvement on the existing derelict building, and that a condition be attached restricting the ability to extend the dwelling and removing the permitted development rights for garden buildings.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council had no objections to the application, it being an improvement on the existing derelict building, and that a condition be attached restricting the ability to extend the dwelling and removing the permitted development rights for garden buildings.

The Alders, Weekes Lane: No progress to report.

10.1 Election of an additional representative to the Planning Committee It was agreed that this would not be pursued.

11. KALC report

Nothing to report.

12. Allotments project

The Clerk reported that not all renewal payments had yet been received, and two plots had been vacated. Another plot had been taken.

13. Village green at The Warren

13.1 Request from the CLP group for permission to replace and relocate the existing bench on the green The meeting was suspended to allow Nikki Allen and Julie Channer to address the Parish Council.

They explained that the intention was not to remove or replace a bench, but to put a picnic bench (donated by a member of the CLP group) under the trees on the centre of the green. The location would be away from homes but would be overlooked, and the trees would dampen noise. Cllr Mrs Young asked if a litter bin would be installed; the Clerk advised that any new bin would not be included in the waste contract and therefore not emptied. Nikki Allen noted a recent reduction in littering and there were existing bins on the green. Mr Ruck noted that a wooden bench would have to be maintained, and recommended a wood-effect bench of recycled plastic. Cllr Howard offered a grant to cover the costs of securing the bench, the application would be made by the CLP group.

The meeting was reconvened.

The offer was accepted, and the group asked to send details of the bench to the Clerk. Nikki Allen asked that the location of the bench be agreed with a Parish Council representative. Cllr Mrs Young would represent the Parish Council.

13.2 Rules for use of the green There are no bylaws in place, other regulations would be unenforceable and were bylaws to be introduced they would have to be approved by the Secretary of State.

13.3 Wayleave for the telegraph pole near the Parish Council noticeboard A wayleave agreement had been received from UK Power Networks, offering a 15-year termed wayleave for a one-off payment of £420.00 or £37.53 yearly. The Chairman proposed that the offer be accepted and the yearly payment taken.

Resolved:

That Brabourne Parish Council accepts the 15-year termed wayleave and the yearly payment of £37.53.

14. Request to remove the bench at Manse Field

It was noted that this was at The Warren, not Manse Field, and should be retained.

16. Proposed permanent M20 lorry area

The Chairman noted that the consultation would close before the next meeting. Cllr Howard advised that a site in Dover was being considered, but its capacity would be insufficient. He urged residents to take part in the consultation. The Chairman agreed, but the Parish Council would not be responding.

17. Correspondence

17.1 Thank you letter for the Fordred's donation.

17.2 Invitation to the Lord Lieutenant's Annual Civic Service.

18. Open session

The meeting was suspended to allow residents to raise matters of concern with the Council.

Mr Willis reported that a vehicle had been driven across the green on 17th January.

Numerous potholes in The Warren and Manse Field were reported.

Mr Ruck advised that he had reported potholes in Lees Road to KCC Highways via the Portal, the potholes were exacerbated by cars parked on the other side of the road, and asked the Parish Council to press for repairs.

The meeting was reconvened.

19. Any other business

No other Business was raised.

20. Resolution 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 20, namely discussion of the Citizenship Award.

21. Citizenship Award

Resolved:

That the Award be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting.

22. Clerk's salary review

This was deferred to the March meeting.

23. Date and time of next meeting: Monday 21st March 2016, immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting, which begins at 7.00pm in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.