

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.30pm on Monday 18th November 2019
at Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Young, Cllrs Harbottle, Joules and Spokes, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Cllr Howard (ward member) attended and three members of the public were present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Bewick and Cllr Mrs Tanner (prior commitments).

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 16th September and 29th October 2019 be approved and confirmed as true records.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Reduction in speed limit in The Street, East Brabourne: Cllr Clair Bell had agreed to fund the traffic speed survey subject to reasons for the request. These have been passed to Cllr Bell and a response is awaited, the Clerk to follow-up.

5.1.2 Manor Pound Lane: The road surface is cracked, this will be reported to Highways.

5.2 Village caretaker scheme The caretaker has reported that garden waste has been dumped in the storm drain in Knatchbull Way and has asked for a site meeting with Brabourne Parish Council. Cllr Spokes noted that this has led to flooding in the past and may be due to ignorance of the consequences. The Chairman and Clerk will meet the caretaker.

5.3 Community Led Plan Group (CLP) Mr Michael Hinchliffe (Group secretary) is seeking donations of bulbs for planting. The Emergency Plan is on hold and currently in hand with Smeeth Parish Council.

5.4 75th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day An update is awaited.

5.5 Sculpting of the beech log and stump on the village green Mr Les Langley, a Lenham-based chainsaw sculptor, has quoted £300 per day for the works; a rustic bench fashioned from the beech log will take 0.5 days. Councillors were asked for design ideas for the stump, which will become a totem pole with designs in keeping with the character of the area. Mr Langley will be asked for photos of similar works which he has undertaken.

Resolved:

That Mr Langley's quote for work to make a rustic bench from the beech log be accepted.

6. Borough councillor's report

Cllr Howard reported that he has been following up planning enforcement issues, following a number of concerns.

Borough Council carbon-neutral strategy: The Borough Council aims to be carbon-neutral by 2030, with an 80% reduction in emissions by 2025. A recent national survey placed the Borough Council in the top 10%. The strategy will go to Cabinet in late January/February and is one of its current 'Big 8 Projects'. A borough-wide tree survey is being carried out with the aim of putting a monetary value on trees; more trees will be planted to offset carbon emissions. Cllr Howard reported that he aims to give all ward members a target for tree-planting in their wards. To offset all carbon emissions 126,000 trees will need to be planted; Ashford is the largest borough in the county by area and there is, therefore, scope to plant more trees. Cllr Howard was asked if trees could be planted on fields that have been set aside. Cllr Joules advised that this would change the classification of the land which would then designated non-agricultural, but it would attract funding for wildlife encouragement; it is unclear if this funding will continue post-Brexit. Cllr Joules noted that there are areas that would benefit from such a scheme because they are poorly productive for agriculture, he cited a project in Haywards Heath that pioneered rewilding and now runs seminars, glamping and opportunities to see wildlife such as deer.

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.

Details	£
Katherine Barnes (Village green application)	1044.00
S Wood (underpayment of £10 in August)	546.90
S Wood	536.90
S Wood (Fordreds Charity)	180.00
D Ansley (litter picking)	238.09
Katherine Barnes (Village green application)	1044.00
Ashford Borough Council (printing – newsletter flyers)	73.51
James Noble (allotment sheds)	637.98
South East Water (allotments)	153.52
Ashford Borough Council (loan repayment)	20228.00
Brabourne CEP School (John Moreton prize)	50.00

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	0.42
Precept	20,000.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	265.00
Council Tax Support Grant	177.50
Fordreds Charity	180.00
Cheque write back (Katherine Barnes)	1044.00

Balance £ 20985.33 (cheque and deposit accounts)

Cllr Spokes thanked the Parish Council for its proposed donation to the Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club, but declined the donation. He advised that the Club is not-for-profit and is self-financing, having obtained grants from other funders. Cllr Spokes suggested that the donation be given to another local organisation.

The Chairman advised that Smeeth Parish Council will contribute 50% of the net cost of printing the newsletter flyers.

7.2 Donation of £100 to the Scouts and Guides

The Chairman advised that the Scouts and Guides have delivered most of the Parish Councils' newsletter flyer to all households and proposed that a donation be made in recognition of their help. A donation will also be made by Smeeth Parish Council. It was noted that the Scouts and Guides do not receive any other funding.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council contributes £100 to the Scouts and Guides for their help in distributing the Parish Councils' newsletter flyer.

7.3 Draft Budget for 2020-2021

The draft Budget for 2020-2021 was tabled. Further to 7.1 it was suggested that the donation to the Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club be deleted, and that a contribution be made to the Scouts and Guides.

Donation to St Mary's Church Brabourne Parochial Church Council: The Clerk advised that with the change to a single parish [the Parish of Stour Downs, comprising the former ecclesiastical parishes of Brabourne, Smeeth, Mersham, Monks Horton, Stowting, Sellindge], any money received by the Parochial Church Council could be used for the benefit of any churches in Stour Downs parish. Monies paid to the Friends of St Mary's would, however, be ring-fenced for use by St Mary's Church Brabourne; further information is awaited.

The Chairman stated that he has reviewed the Budget for the last four years. Before the Hospital Field planning application the Precept was £18,000 per year, which increased significantly to £40,000 per

year to meet costs for the Hospital Field planning and village green public inquiries. When these loans have been repaid the Parish Council's Budget will decrease to approx £26,175. If the Precept is held at £40,000 for 2020-2021 there will be a shortfall of approx £3000 which can be met from Reserves.

The Chairman advised that a reduction in the Precept in 2021-2022 to £30,000 may be possible, and would enable the Parish Council to rebuild its reserves to a level recommended by KALC for good governance. [50%-75% of the Precept.]

Church Road development: The Chairman advised that some of the S106 monies paid by the developer can be used for the purchase of the community shelter for the village green at The Warren, notwithstanding that the development is in Smeeth. The CLP has been advised of this because its assistance may be required. A working group comprising the Chairman, the Chairman of Smeeth Parish Council and the Chairman of the Playing Field Association will meet to discuss projects for S106 monies, eg a hard track for the allotments' access, changing rooms for the football pitches. The Chairman noted that expenditure is limited to set criteria including: sports provision, young people's play space, cemeteries (including open churchyards), informal/natural green spaces, allotments.

Smeeth Parish Council may be willing to contribute to the community shelter and the footpath across the village green at The Warren. Money from the Budget in 2021-2022 may be ring-fenced for these projects which may necessitate a smaller reduction in the Precept.

The Chairman proposed that the Precept be unchanged at £40,000 and that the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant be claimed in addition.

Resolved:

That the Precept be set at £40,000.

Resolved:

That the Council Tax Support Grant and Concurrent Functions Grant be claimed in addition.

8. Planning report

8.1 Planning Committee report

8.1.1 Planning applications

Approved by ABC:

19/01392/AS Little Foord, West Brabourne

Refused by ABC:

19/00819/AS Missingham Farm, East Brabourne

Decisions awaited:

18/01454/AS Andrews Garage, Plain Road The Parish Council objected to the application

Y19/0257/FH Otterpool Park The Parish Council objected to the application

19/01408/AS The Knoll, Lees Road The Parish Council commented on the application. Cllr Harbottle noted that the site is within 800m of the edge of the settlement and may therefore be regarded as sustainable.

Withdrawn:

19/01254/AS Rustlings, Woolpack Hill, Smeeth

Prior approval not required:

19/01436/AS Land at The Street and North of Court Lodge, East Brabourne

19/01418/AS Beddlestone Farm, Hampton, West Brabourne

Certificate of Lawful Development- Proposed - To convert an existing door and window to the side of the house to a single larger glazed door/french window

The Parish Council is not a Consultee on this application and no comments will be submitted.

19/01483/AS & 19/01570/AS Shabani Oast, Coomb Farm, Pilgrims Way, Brabourne

Removal of window and replacement with French doors; replacement of existing kitchen door with new door; new rooflight with widening of internal door at ground floor and removal of window

It was noted that this will make the building a more habitable dwelling. It was proposed that the application be supported, subject to the Conservation Officer's approval.

Resolved:

That the application be supported, subject to the Conservation Officer's approval.

19/01535/AS 5 The Malthouses, Canterbury Road, East Brabourne

Replacement of existing windows and cutting in new opening in brickwork to enlarge existing door for new glazed screen (in Kitchen)

The internal alterations will not affect the appearance of the building. It was proposed that the application be supported.

Resolved:

That the application be supported.

19/01540/AS Land rear of Minnis Moor Stables, Scots Lane, Brabourne

Demolition of existing agricultural barn and erection of a detached dwelling for agricultural worker with associated parking

The Chairman advised that a presentation on the application was given at the September Parish Council meeting. The Chairman stated that the application disregarded the Parish Council's comments that conversion would be preferable to demolition and rebuilding. He proposed that an agricultural tie be placed on the dwelling. Cllr Harbottle noted that the proposal is beyond the edge of the settlement and should be assessed under HOU5: this states that such accommodation will only be permitted if it is to cater for a rural worker, but there is no justification for this in the application other than a desire to live close to the livestock. Cllr Harbottle further noted that it is not known if the agricultural business is viable because there is no detail in the application. Cllr Joules noted that there would be a need to be on site if the stock were of high value, eg breeding racehorses. Cllr Spokes agreed that there is a lack of detail to justify the need to live permanently on the site. The Chairman noted that agricultural need is not included in the Design and Access Statement. Cllr Harbottle advised that the application should comply with the planning policy and be refused if the criteria are not met. Cllr Spokes stated that he could not support the application because there are no reasons given to justify the need.

It was proposed that the Parish Council objects to the application but if a genuine need for a rural worker is demonstrated there should be further consultation. It was further proposed that an agricultural tie be placed on the dwelling.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council objects to the application but if a genuine need for a rural worker is demonstrated there should be further consultation.

Resolved:

That if the application is permitted that an agricultural tie be placed on the dwelling.

19/01553/AS The Plough Inn, Lees Road, Brabourne

Proposed change of use from public house to residential dwelling house, with new extensions including garage and fencing

Cllr Howard advised that The Plough had been removed from the List of Assets of Community Value, following an appeal but due process was followed. The Chairman advised that the application retains the façade and addresses the concerns expressed on the previous application. The open aspect is maintained. It was proposed that the application be supported.

Resolved:

That the application be supported.

8.2 Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

The Chairman advised that the area in the NP should be defined, this will likely include the whole of the two parishes of Brabourne and Smeeth. A map of the area will be drawn up by the Chairmen and Clerk.

9. Local Needs Housing (LNH)

The Chairman reported that a short presentation on LNH was given at the Smeeth Parish Council meeting by Miss Tessa O'Sullivan [Rural Housing Enabler, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, based at Penstock Hall]. The criteria are largely unchanged since Fortescue Place was built but sites are becoming harder to find. Miss O'Sullivan noted outside the meeting that a site in Pound Lane may be suitable. The Clerk advised that information from Smeeth parish councillors is that the owner aims to develop the site as a dwelling for herself and is therefore unlikely to sell.

Cllr Harbottle asked if the need for LNH remains; it was noted that although the need may have reduced since the last survey in 2011 it is unlikely to have decreased to zero. Miss O'Sullivan had stated that there would be little point in repeating the survey if no sites could be identified.

Cllr Howard asked if the Sandpit Quarry had been considered as a potential site. The planners had indicated opposition to earlier suggestions re developing part of the site for market housing (with profits being put into LNH elsewhere), but if the houses were LNH they may reconsider. The Chairman to follow-up with Mr Roger Harmer and discuss with Smeeth Parish Council.

Cllr Howard acknowledged that Fortescue Place is for 11 units and recommended searching for a number of smaller sites. The need for LNH to be within walking distance of the village was noted; the Chairman replied that this is an example of the criteria that are changing.

A site in Lees Road was proposed but it was noted that this is part of Mersham Estates who would be unlikely to sell.

Cllr Howard suggested that the Caldecott site, withdrawn from the Local Plan, be investigated but acknowledged that this is also in Smeeth.

10. KALC representative report

The Police attendance at each meeting of the Committee is welcomed. The next meeting is on November 20th.

11. Allotments project

The new sheds have been purchased. The Clerk to follow-up extending the water main with Mr Colin MacPhee (Allotment Society Chairman). Two ploholders will not be renewing their tenancies but one will be taken up by a new tenant.

12. Registration of land at the village hall as a village green

The Borough Council has indicated that it has, at present, no plans to make over its land at the village hall to the Parish Council; Cllr Howard to follow-up. Cllr Howard advised that when land at The Warren was given to the Parish Council, legal costs were met from by Peter Wood (ward member at the time) from his ward member grant. There has been no feedback from the Hall Committee, the Clerk to pursue.

13. Communication: joint working group with Smeeth Parish Council

13.1 Community newsletter The Chairman advised he has worked with Cllr Mrs Pereboom (Smeeth Parish Council) on setting up a new Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils' Newsletter. It has been advertised on the back page of the November Parish News to encourage people to sign up to the newsletter. This can be done by email, through the Community Facebook page, Facebook, Next Door or a link from either of the parish websites. There have been 112 sign-ups to date.

The newsletter will be distributed electronically via MailChimp, which is a free to use email delivery service that complies with all GDPR regulations. The first newsletter will go out in early December and will be circulated regularly, most likely monthly but with additional editions when warranted.

All households in Brabourne and Smeeth have been or will be leafleted by the Scouts and Guides (see 7.2). Spare copies of the flyer will be at locations in the village, such as the village hall, churches, shop and hairdressers.

Copy for the newsletter should be sent to bandspcnews@gmail.com.

A copy of the first newsletter will be circulated to parish councillors by the end of November and councillors are asked to encourage others to sign up.

The newsletter will be edited by the Chairman and Cllr Mrs Pereboom and the Chairman advised that it will be limited in length to retain interest. Content will include the date of Parish Council meetings, contacts, details of planning applications and up to ten items of news.

13.2 Community websites The Chairman advised that the parish websites must be migrated to another host to comply with the 2018 accessibility regulations: the current KCC websites do not comply. This will afford an opportunity to update and refresh the websites. A suitable alternative template must be identified and someone to migrate the content. A list of templates has been circulated by KALC but no training will be offered.

14. Purchase of an outdoor, permanent, static table tennis table for The Warren

It was agreed not to pursue this project.

15. Adoption of the Parish Council's Risk Register

The Clerk advised that Smeeth Parish Council had been selected for an 'intermediate' level audit by the external auditor, which asked for details of the Parish Council's arrangements and discussions of financial risk. To this end Smeeth Parish Council has adopted a Financial Risk Register. A draft Risk Register for Brabourne Parish Council was tabled and it was proposed that it be adopted.

Resolved:

That the Risk Register for Brabourne Parish Council be adopted.

16. Correspondence

All correspondence has been circulated.

17. Open Session

No matters were raised.

18. Any other business

18.1 Playing Field Association: Paul Dawson (Chairman, Playing Field Association), the Association's Treasurer and its Secretary are to step down in a year's time. It is hoped that existing Committee members will fill these roles. A call for volunteers will go into the newsletter in due course.

18.2 Rural broadband: A survey of broadband speeds in the parish is being carried out following publication of information on the Government's 'Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme'. Other schemes are also coming forward.

19. Resolution to exclude the public

Resolved:

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

20. Fordred's Charity distribution

Resolved:

That the payments be distributed as agreed.

21. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 20th January at **7.30pm** in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed 9.25pm.