

BRABOURNE PARISH MEETING
Minutes of the Parish Meeting
Held on Wednesday 20th August 2025 at 7:00pm in the Village Hall

Those Present

Parish Councillors: Cllr Harbottle (Chairman), Cllr Spokes (Vice-Chairman), Cllrs Atkins, Edmed, Smith and Thornby.

Parish Electors: 109.

In attendance: Mrs Block (Clerk).

Also present: Approximately 40 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from one elector.

2. Planning

a) PA/2025/1331 - Land East of Forty Acre Wood and South of Daffodil Cottage, The Street, Brabourne

The Chairman provided a brief outline of the application. The discussion was then opened for comments from those present and the following points were raised:

Access

- Access to the site would be via East Brabourne and the traffic route is stated as being via Church Road, Plain Road, Canterbury Road, The Street, past Brabourne Church and into the field entrance on the right.
- There is a sign indicating that the roads are unsuitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles at the junction of Canterbury Road and Plain Road.
- The fire/emergency service access alternative route is via Stowting along Whiteways and concern was raised that this would not be wide enough for emergency vehicles to travel.
- If a lorry were to miss a turning, there would be no turning area and they will end up stuck on very narrow roads.
- St Mary's Church, Brabourne is on a very difficult bend.
- The vehicles carrying these batteries are passing 2 schools, 2 x 90° bends and a listed Church and concern was expressed that this was a safety issue.
- Concern was expressed that the impact on roads would be far reaching, not just the immediate roads, but through Smeeth, Stowting etc.

Fire Risk and Environmental Safety

- It was reported that there was a fire on this site in July 2022 and that the fire service had to break fences to access the site.
- Water runoff from any fire at the BESS site was highlighted as a serious concern.
- A discussion was stated to have been held at Central Government level about BESS, as part of which concerns had apparently been raised about fire, road networks, thermal run-off, danger of explosion, toxic gas, with a vapour cloud a very real danger along with water pollutants.
- The streams that run near the site run into the Stour.
- The nearest fire stations are listed as Wye and Aldington. These are unmanned fire stations and it was suggested that they should not be counted, with the nearest manned stations being Ashford and Folkestone.
- The proposed water tank would only last for 30 minutes and was considered to be insufficient.
- The South Kent Fire Safety Office is no longer in Folkestone despite that being the address listed on the Borough Council website for that consultee.
- There is a high-pressure gas line that runs through the site, which is not mentioned in the application.

- Batteries are hazardous waste and would be taken through the villages. It was suggested that the weight of vehicles carrying these would be hazardous to property.

Landscape and Visual impact

- Concern was expressed regarding harm to the character of the area and the Kent Downs National Landscape.
- The site would be highly visible from the National Landscape.
- The public right of way passing through the site would be affected.

Site Safety

- There is no statutory safety regulation in place for BESS.
- Concern was expressed that the site could constitute a terrorism risk.
- There was concern about theft on site of copper/metal.

Noise Impact

- The noise impact was highlighted as a concern, with the effectiveness of the proposed acoustic fence being queried.

Agricultural concerns

- Livestock on fields surrounding the area would not be able to use water should there be any land contamination. All those around with livestock, of which there are several, would be at risk.

Other Matters

- The Parish Council is a consultee to the application.
- The MP is aware of the application but has no formal input into the planning process.
- Concern was expressed that the comments deadline was too short – this is a matter for the Borough Council.
- The red line on the plan is the application site.
- The Officer in charge is on holiday so questions are not being answered. The ward member should be contacted as he can take this forward.
- Two KCC Councillors spoke, one about Fire Safety and one about Environmental Impact, they are to return to the Officers and ask for comments to be submitted.
- The decision by the Borough Council that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required can only be challenged by Judicial Review.
- The question of whether other Parishes, such as Smeeth, Monks Horton and Sellindge, call meetings is entirely a matter for those Parishes.

Resolved: that the Parish Meeting objects to the application.

(Voting – For: 109; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0)

3. To discuss future uses of the telephone box in East Brabourne

Improvements to the telephone kiosk have begun. A discussion about possible future uses, as an alternative to the current use as a bookswap, ensued.

Resolved: that the Parish Meeting would be content with the telephone box being used to promote tourism in the immediate area as an alternative to the current use as a book swap.

4. Any other business

The Chairman was thanked for calling the meeting.