

# BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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**Clerk – Mrs Pauline Bowdery**  
**Assistant Clerk – Mrs Melanie Fooks**

**Parish Office**  
**Tel & Fax – 01634 861237**  
**E-mail – [Bowdery@boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:Bowdery@boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk)**

**Beechen Hall**  
**Wildfell Close**  
**Walderslade**  
**Chatham**  
**Kent**  
**ME5 9RU**

To All Members of the Council.

6th December 2011

There will be a meeting of the **Estates Committee** on **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011** at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

1. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**  
Members are requested to declare any interests or lobbying on items in the agenda.
2. **Apologies and absence.**  
To receive apologies for absence.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting 11th October, 2011.**  
To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (previously circulated).
4. **Matters Arising From Previous Minutes.**
  - 4.1 Minute 2346/8.2 Review of Hire Fees, Beechen Hall - this item was deferred to receive further information. See report on page 3-5 and enclosure
  - 4.2 Minute 2346/10 Boxley War Memorial – To provide an update on the points agreed by members at October's meeting and to allow members to decide what action to take. See report on page 5-6.

## **To adjourn the meeting to allow the public or press to comment**

5. **Asst Clerk's Report.**
  - 5.1 The following hire fees were received for October/November. (Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

Casual	£1,784.75	(£1,797.13)
Regular	<u>£2,907.75</u>	<u>(£3,294.74)</u>
Total	£4,692.50	(£5,091.87)

  

Cumulative figures for	2011/12	2010/11
Casual	£7,846.64	( £8,135.28)
Regular	<u>£12,275.89</u>	<u>(£10,795.54)</u>
Total	£20,122.53	(£18,472.01)
  - 5.2 Marketing Plan - To receive an update.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Note</b>
Leaflets	Work being undertaken.
Beechen Hall Information	Completed
Website	Current Website updated.
Targeting other hall users	Work in progress identifying groups
Advertising External Noticeboard	Ongoing
Planning Change Extended Hours	To be reviewed as time allows. It is considered that other work takes priority.

6. **Review of Policies and Procedures.**

- 6.1 Christmas closedown for 2012– The parish office recommends the following period 24 Dec – 2 Jan 2012 for closure to allow the caretaking staff to carry out major cleaning/general maintenance on Beechen Hall.
- 6.2 Lost Property Procedure/Disposal of Lost Property – See report on page 6.

7. **Burial Ground.**

- 7.1 Members enquired about the burial fees for children and asked for information. Currently there is no written policy for this Council and so the only previous burial (some years ago) of a child under the age of 16 was charged at 50% of the adult fee. Members indicated that they would wish to have a clear policy and the church volunteer who has been looking after the burial ground (and whose career was in a local authority dealing with burials/cremations) has suggested the following:  
Children up to 5 birthday - No fee  
Young people 5 years to 16th birthday - 50%\* of the adult fee as prescribed in the current Parochial Fees Order.  
\* MBC charge just a fraction under 50% however their internment fees are much higher. It suggested that a straight forward 50% is clear and understandable.
- 7.2 West corner of North Wall – The mortar within this wall has deteriorated and therefore remedial repairs are required. Goodsells have been employed in the past to repair this and the Lych Gate so if members are minded to agree the Assistant Clerk will arrange for a quote which can be agreed out of meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair.
- 7.3 A recent site visit indicated some self-seeding saplings starting to establish themselves within the walls and this was notified to the church’s maintenance group and they have taken on killing them to stop any damage to the wall.
- 7.4 Non-conforming graves. A survey has been undertaken of the non-conforming graves and the Clerk will be arranging that a couple of graves which have had planted in the past but appear now to be ‘abandoned’ will be reseeded and thus return naturally to a grassed state. This leaves some graves that are tended (and this can be re-checked over the Christmas period) but do not conform and the timeline for undertaking this project is as follows:

**Burial Ground – Graves conforming to burial regulations.  
Timeline**

October 2011	Build into budget cost of 2 adverts in KM to advertise work.
Feb 2012	Estates Committee – draft family letter, advert and PR strategy (in case of bad publicity) Discuss issue with Church
Mar 2012	Write to families of non-conforming graves.
Apr/May 2012	Meet with any families objecting to proposal.
June 2012	(end of) First KM advert
July 2012	(beginning of) Second KM Advert
August 2012	
Sept 2012	Work undertaken.

8. **Matters for Information**

None at the time the agenda was compiled.

9. **2012/13 Budget.**

Beechen Hall budget (enclosed for members). To identify any issues and discuss new projects etc. Projects already suggested are:

9.1 Extractor fan in kitchen. To consider the issue and if necessary to add to budget/future projects.

9.2 Tree maintenance around the Hall and Office. It has not been possible to complete a maintenance programme so members must decide whether they wish to make a budget (for example £1,000) to allow work to be progressed in 2012/13 or whether to delay making a budget until 2013/14. If the £1,000 budget is insufficient then the work could be done in stages.

9.3 Sanding and re-varnishing Beechen Hall Floor – Members must decide whether they think the floor requires sanding and re-varnishing. This floor was laid in 2006 and there has not been any further maintenance made to it since that date. Initial quotes received for carrying out this work were much higher than were budgeted for in this financial year and members agreed for no further action to be taken this year. If members agree that it should be sanded and re-varnished this will have to be built into next year's budget. I have been informed Faithdean RS, the company the parish council employed to carry out the refurbishment of the ceiling and lights at the hall also have a subsidiary company Kent Flooring Services which has expertise in this area. I may suggest a maintenance schedule.

9.4 Adjustment to draft budget ref 3.16 Insurance

2012/13	£1401.52	2013/14	£1471.60	2014/15	£1545.18
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2015/16	£1622.44	2016/17	£1703.56		
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There was an error in a format. Also the initial uplift should have read 3%, contract ends in 2013 hence the larger predicted increase after this point.

9.5 Adjustment to draft budget ref 2.6 Grounds Maintenance Contract.

An additional £250 will be placed within the budget (draft already with members) as the QE Orchard area had not been added.

9.6 Addition to draft budget Green Spaces ref 2.5.

The title QE Orchard will be added with a budget of £200 for any work that needs to be undertaken in spring 2013 e.g. pruning.

10. **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the confidential nature (tenders) on the item about to be transacted, a resolution for the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the duration of or for part of the item will be placed by the Chairman.

11. **Grounds Maintenance 2012.**

To consider the tenders, enclosed under confidential cover for members).

Clerk to the Council

For information – items to be returned to agenda Minute 2021/9.2 Tombs in closed churchyard.

<b>Item 4.2 Review of Hire Fees</b> – Purpose of report to decide and if necessary, agree a rate increase to both regular and casual hirers.
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Members agreed at the October meeting to review Hall hire fees in December each year with an implementation to be made on 1<sup>st</sup> April the following year. The parish office has

undertaken a survey using the same halls that were used to form part of the review in October 2010. The enclosed chart has been updated and shows how the hall compares on a cost per head basis. Some halls have increased their rates and others haven't. Members will see that Beechen Hall is still very competitive with its rates.

The parish office has also undertaken a year on year comparison on costs to the hall that affects hirers

### Hall informal RPI calculations

Utilities (yearly cost)	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
Gas	1,936.53	1,463.60	1,985.52	1,729.17	1,347.03
Electricity	2,157.88	2,053.69	2,036.04	2,134.90	1,972.35
Water	976.39	822.39	817.22	865.03	413.15
Refuse	1,214.43	1,175.03	688.90	857.70	1,026.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,285.23</b>	<b>5,514.71</b>	<b>5,527.68</b>	<b>5,586.80</b>	<b>4,759.47</b>
Approx +/- %	13.00%	-0.28%	-1%	17.25%	
£ diff	£770.52	-£12.97	-£59.12	£827.33	

Other markers. Per unit cost.	Jun-11	Jun-09	Jun-08	Jun-07	Jun-06
toilet paper	7.99	6.99	6.55	6.55	6.15
Hand towels	15.99	14.50	13.45	13.00	12.35
refuse sacks	9.99	10.49	9.50	8.95	8.45
lifeguard toilet	2.19	2.15	1.70	1.70	1.60
bleach	4.49	4.99	4.95	5.10	5.25
Hand soap	6.99	5.99	5.50	4.50	6.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.64</b>	<b>45.11</b>	<b>41.65</b>	<b>39.80</b>	<b>40.60</b>
Approx +/- %	5%	8%	3.50%	-1.30%	
£ diff	£2.53	£3.46	£3.46	£1.85	

The recession has not lessened and it is forecast that it will deepen into a double dip recession and this will have a direct effect on luxuries and this will have a potential impact on our regular hirers. The parish council is required to consider the following advise (source: Director of Price Waterhouse Coopers) that the economy will go into deflation as opposed to inflation therefore it is important that charges/costs are right now as it will be very difficult to increase them through this period.

Utilities have only increased by 2% this year as the Council is locked into contracts but utilities will increase in 2012-2013 as contracts are renewed.

In October 2010 a 2% increase was agreed for regular hirers.

In April 2011 a 4.5% increase was agreed on casual hirers on Saturdays and 20% increase on Sundays to bring in-line with Saturday.

Members were given the following options:

- Do nothing at the moment.
- Consider an increase.

Assistant Clerks comments:

- Do nothing option – I would suggest that if members do not wish to give an immediate rise that this is again reviewed in six months. This will allow the end of year accounts to be reviewed, it will give more time to see how the recession is affecting the regular hirers etc. We will also have an idea of whether we are hitting a double dip recession. Basically trading water for six months to see how the hall is affected for next year's bookings.
- Consider an increase option – The table below shows the difference the percentage rate will make on hourly rates.

To allow members to consider different options and other increases have been shown and this will enable members to allow an alternative increase if they see fit.

The amounts have been rounded up or down to the nearest 10p.

Pro – increase income for the hall.

Con – regular hirers could decrease their hours leaving gaps that will be hard to fill particularly during the evening.

**Marketing strategy** for the next 12-18 months is to continue to attract hirers for the unused time slots, to increase levels of hire during school holidays, to continue to refresh the marketing literature and the website and ensure the hall is kept to a high standard. To ensure the website is up and running. To compile a spreadsheet of all costs related to the hall, to investigate increases and to produce a unique " RPI" for future analysis.

	Current hire rate	1% increase	2% increase	2.5% increase	5% Increase
Time/Day	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri
9am- 6pm	£12.50	£12.70	£12.80	£12.90	£13.20
6pm- 10pm	£15.90	£16.10	£16.30	£16.40	£16.70
Time/Day	Sat-Sun	Sat-Sun	Sat-Sun	Sat-Sun	Sat-Sun
12 – 6pm	£22.00	£22.30	£22.40	£22.60	£23.20
6pm –11.30pm	£29.00	£29.30	£29.60	£29.80	£30.50

**Item 4.2. Boxley War Memorial** – To receive an update and for members to decide what action to take.

At October's meeting members were informed that Stonewest had gone into receivership and the office was awaiting letters and confirmation from Stonewest's receivers that although the company had been taken over by a subsidiary Rattee & Kett that it was still able to trade as Stonewest and honour the verbal contract. The company forwarded a novation agreement which, upon checking, is a standard contract. The parish office also received a copy of their insurance certificate. Requests have been received for the Council to sign the novation agreement so that the stone can be ordered and Stonewest could proceed with the job.

Members requested that further checks were made on Rattee & Kett these however did not highlight any more information than what had already been produced on the original search. Members agreed for the Assistant Clerk to contact Stonewest and inform them that as this project is no longer urgent ie meeting the 11/11/2011 deadline and with the winter weather about to kick in, it would seem sensible to delay the project until spring. They were also informed that members will decide whether to proceed with them or go back out to tender. The assistant Clerk has received details of two more companies that would be prepared to give the Parish Council a quote should this be the option members decide to agree on.

Assistant Clerks comment; Members are required to decide on one of the following options

**Option1:** To proceed with Stonewest (Rattee & Kent) and draw up a watertight contract.

**Option 2:** To revisit the tender process and contact the companies recommended to the Assistant Clerk.

**Item 6.2 Lost Property Procedure/Disposable of Lost Property.** The purpose of this item is for members to make a decision on whether the following policy is still fit for purpose. Last reviewed Dec 2009.

The Parish Council will endeavour to return property left at the hall by contacting the hirer. However should this not be successful the procedure, adopted by the Council, will be as follows.

All property will be placed in the parish office with a note attached identifying at what function it was found.

Property that is of financial value. If the property is from a regular hire then its existence will be notified to the organiser so that he/she can make enquiries at the next scheduled 'meeting'. If not claimed it will be reported to the Police and registered as found. A notice will be displayed in the foyer of the hall for 3 weeks. Property will be retained for 6 months and after agreement with the Police it will be disposed of by donation to a charity.

Property that is not of any financial value. If the property is from a regular hire then it will be returned to the organiser to display at the next scheduled 'meeting'. If not claimed it will be retained for 6 months after which it will be disposed of by either donation to a charity or thrown.