

It has not been possible to include all some reports as a PDF on this website page. A copy can be obtained by contacting the parish office, The Parish Council apologies for the inconvenience caused and is attempting to find a solution. BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

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5th September 2012

There will be a meeting of the **Finance Committee** on **Tuesday 11th September 2012** at Parish Office, Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

1. Apologies and non-attendance.

To receive apologies from members unable to attend.

2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

To all members of the Council, public and press

Members are required to declare any interests or lobbying on items in this agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 10th July 2012.

To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (previously circulated).

4. Matters Arising.

- 4.1 Minute 2411/10 Penhurst Close lease. MBC's legal section has accepted all of the Council's requests for change to the draft lease. The request to have the clause regarding the dog waste bin removed has been referred to another department and a response is awaited.
- 4.2 Minute 2428 Outstanding TOIL. If members wish to discuss this issue then the Chairman will pass a resolution to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the discussion (staff pay and conditions of service).

To adjourn to enable members of the public to address the meeting.

5. Financial report.

- 5.1 Income/Expenditure report of 3rd September 2012 (pages 13-15) Members are asked to allow some contingency budget to be vired across to increase the budget of the following codes.
 - i) Code 12 £100. Increased expenditure was incurred due to the Royal Visit.
 - ii) Code 77 £1,300.
 - An amendment will be made to code 103 as this is a wrong entry
- 5.2 Reconciliation of accounts report of 3rd September 2012 (pages 16).
- 5.3 Reconciliation of August 2012 bank accounts with actual statements will be submitted to the meeting on the night.
- 5.4 Doubtful Debt. To notify members that as the agreed £50 payments had ceased the warrant was reactivated.

6. Policy and procedures reviews and adoption.

- 6.1 Health and Safety Policy see report (pages 3-8).
- 6.2 Review Audit controls and agree a draft Annual Governance Statement which will also be considered by the Financial Scrutiny Committee. See report (page 8-11)
- 6.3 Supporting notes to Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2012 (enclosed). This document will be placed on the website.

7. Investments

- 7.1 To ratify the decision, after consultation with committee members) to invest $\pounds 68,000$ into a 6 month Cooperative Investment Bond.
- 7.2 To decide on further long term investments see report (page 11).

8. Internal Audit.

To receive and consider the internal audit undertaken by Cllr Bob Hinder on 30th August 2012 see report (page 17-20).

9. Payment of staff salaries by Standing Orders.

To request that members consider allowing staff salaries to be paid directly into their bank accounts see attached report (page 11-12).

10. Grant Request.

None received.

11. Matters for Information.

11.1 Kent Wildlife Trust Thank you for the recent grant see attached report (page 12)

12. Date of Next Meeting.

Tuesday 13th November 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Clerk to the Council.

Issues to be returned to agenda as they develop. None.

Item 6. Policy and procedures reviews and adoption. *Purpose of report; to decide whether documents, policies and procedures are still fit for purpose. Do members wish to have their H&S statement placed on the website?*

6.1 Health and safety policy.

Clerk's Statement of competency: As Proper Officer of the Council I am the Health and Safety Officer and responsible for ensuring the Parish Council meets its statutory duties. I last completed H&S training in 2008 however I have kept up to date with changes to the legislation and recommended code of practice by visiting the Health and Safety Executive website (www.hse.gov.uk) which apart from containing excellent publications also has on-site tools to produce a H&S statement and I have used this to check that the Council's policy covers all the relevant issues. The Parish Council is also signed up to various email alert systems, and is a member of KALC so would receive advance warning of any change in legislation that might affect the Parish Council.

Clerk's comment: Two changes to the 2011 statement have been made;

- 2.1(f) added. The Council needs to formally recognise it has a responsibility to manage stress in the work place.
- Part IV(1) added a statement that the Clerk is a First Aider.

The following document is given to all members of staff and attached to it is the HSE manual handling document/advice. The office is currently awaiting for some local manual handling training to become available for staff. After members agree this document all staff will have a refresher course in H&S run by the Clerk.

Boxley Parish Council. Health and Safety Policy Statement.

Part 1 – Introduction.

This document has been complied to provide information and guidance to all employees on the Council's Health and Safety Policy and organisational arrangements for implementation of the Policy. The parish council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees.

Part 11 – Statement of Safety Policy.

- 1.1 It is the policy of the Council to provide and monitor safe and healthy working conditions, plant equipment and systems of work for all employees and to provide such information, training and supervision as may be required for this purpose. The Council accepts its responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by its activities.
- 1.2 The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements necessary to implement the policy are set out below.

Part 111 – The Organisation and Responsibilities.

1. Overall Responsibility.

- The Clerk has overall responsibility for ensuring
- (a) the provisions and implementation of the Health and Safety Policy: and
- (b) its annual review.
- 2. Delegated Responsibility.
- 2.1 In particular the Clerk is responsible for:-
- (a) Establishing safe systems of work and procedures for carrying out the Health and Safety Policy of the Council, incorporating any regulations, approved codes of practice and other relevant legislation.
- (b) Ensuring that safe working procedures and safe systems of work are implemented by staff and that a safe working environment is provided for them.
- (c) Ensuring that all employees receive adequate training information and supervision to maintain safe standards.

- (d) Ensuring all safety rules are observed and that protective clothing and equipment is worn or used where required.
- (e) Ensuring that all machinery and equipment is properly maintained and safe to use and that guards are in position.
- (f) Ensuring that the mental welfare of all employees is protected and that the Council recognises its responsibility to manage stress in the work place.

2.2. All employees have the responsibility to co-operate with their Supervisor and Line Manager to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

2.3. All employees are required to:

- (a) Make themselves familiar with and conform to the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- (b) Observe safety rules at all times.
- (c) Where required, wear protective clothing and use appropriate safety devices provided.
- (d) Report to the immediate Supervisor all accidents, injuries to persons and damage to vehicles, plant and equipment.
- (e) Know the location of first aid facilities.
- (f) Report all safety hazards as a matter of urgency to their immediate supervisor.
- (g) Know what to do in the case of fire or other emergency and the location of fire fighting equipment.
- (h) Maintain good housekeeping at all times.
- (i) Observe safe standards of behaviour and dress.
- (j) Not to enter into any kind of horseplay or practical joking.
- 2.4 It is the policy of this Council that all employees shall receive training in all safety aspects of their occupation and courses, where necessary, shall be held for this purpose.
- 2.5 It shall be the duty of all staff to carry out a visual safety inspection of plant and equipment prior to using such machinery.
- 2.6 It shall be the duty of the Clerk to investigate all accidents and to submit a full report to the Chairman of the relevant committee. The Clerk will issue instructions to ensure such accidents are not repeated and where appropriate make recommendation on accident prevention.
- 2.7 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk to monitor the maintenance of all equipment and to submit an annual report for consideration by the relevant committee on obsolete machinery.

Part IV – General Arrangements.

1. First Aid

The First Aid Box is located in the kitchen at Beechen Hall. The Caretaker and Clerk are responsible for carrying out periodical checks to ensure the contents are adequately maintained.

The Clerk is a trained First Aider.

- 2. Accident, Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences.
- 2.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk/staff to record all incidences in the Accident Book and where necessary the Clerk to report these injuries, diseases and other dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive, normally by telephoning RIDDOR. The Clerk is responsible for a periodic review of the accident book.
- 2.2 The accident book is located in the parish office at Beechen Hall.
- 3. Fire Safety.

It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk or other named person to see the escape route and passageways are kept clear at all times.

4. Fire Extinguishers.

It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk to organise annual inspections of all fire extinguishers on premises administrated by the Council.

5. Fire Alarms.

- 5.1 All employees are responsible for ensuring that they are conversant with the Council's evacuation procedures.
- 5.2 The Clerk or other named person will test the fire alarm every 2 weeks.
- 5.3 Fire drills will be carried out periodically to test the adequacy of these precautions and evacuation procedures.

6. <u>Records</u>.

It shall be the responsibility of the Caretaker or other named person to log all fire alarm tests and drills in a record book which shall be provided for this purpose.

7. Training.

- 7.1. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to issue to all newly appointed staff a copy of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and such supplements as are applicable to that person's duties and responsibilities.
- 7.2. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to ensure that all new staff receive adequate training in all safety aspects of their occupation.
- 8. Contractors and Visitors.
- 8.1 Where contractors and sub-contractors are engaged by the Council, they must maintain effective control of themselves and those working under them so as to ensure that they comply with the responsibilities and duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any subsequent legislation. (See appendix)
- 8.2 The Parish Council shall ensure that those not in the employment of the Council, including the general public, are not exposed to risk to their safety or health when on the Council's premises.
- 8.3 Contractors should ensure that any electrical appliances brought onto Council premises shall be safe, in good working order and used in a safe manner.
- 8.4 General advice for safe working see appendix.

Appendix A.

OFFICES

- 1. HEATING, LIGHTING AND VENTILATION
- a) Temperature should reach a minimum of 60.8 degrees F after the first hour of working time and be maintained between 60.8 degrees F and 68 degrees F throughout the working day.
- b) Free standing heaters must not be used unless specifically authorised. When these are so authorised, they must comply fully with Fire Regulations and the area around them must be kept clear of any paper or other flammable materials, and be sited away from desks and chairs.
- c) Office lighting. Desks should be placed to gain the maximum amount of light. Freestanding desk lights should be avoided or placed so as to minimise the danger of trailing electrical leads.
- 2. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
- a) All potable electrical equipment shall be regularly checked as part of the hall's periodic electrical safety check.

- b) Mains must not be overloaded. It is important that the correct socket outlet and plug top face (where these are available) is used for each item of electrical equipment.
- c) Only electrical equipment provided by the Council should be used and electric points must not be overloaded by means of multi-adaptors. Where possible all mains should be switched off when not in use.
- d) Leads from points for various desk uses should not present a hazard by trailing across areas of access. Extension leads are for temporary use only.
- e) Defective equipment must never be used. Staff should not attempt to effect repairs to electrical equipment, unless competent to do so.
- 3. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT
- a) All heavy equipment and storage units should preferably be placed against the wall.
- b) Heavy equipment and furniture must not be moved by individuals.
- c) Office equipment whether manually or electrically operated, must not be used by unauthorised, untrained personnel.
- d) Filing cabinets should always have sufficient weight in the bottom drawer to prevent the cabinet from tipping when a full top drawer is opened. Filing cabinet and desk drawers must always be closed immediately after use. Damaged or defective cabinets must not be used.
- e) High shelves should only be reached through the use of steps provided for that purpose. It is dangerous to stand on desks and chairs, particularly those fitted with castors and this should be avoided at all times.
- f) Work stations for office staff using computers etc. should conform to the guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) concerning position, seating and work practices.

CARETAKING AND CLEANING

- 1. It is essential that care is exercised to follow all labelled instructions on containers and packages. Products should be stored away from extreme low temperatures, heat sources and naked lights, particularly those products containing hydrocarbon and other flammable solvents. Additional can be found sources at HSE under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- 2. Appropriate protective clothing, such as gloves and overalls must be worn when handling corrosive substances.
- 3. Care must be taken to avoid ingestion, inhalation and skin contact of all chemical substances. Spillage must be cleaned up immediately while observing all precautions.
- 4. Consideration must be given to the possibility of hazardous by-products that may arise from reaction between various products, or from products exposed to heat or fire. Particularly in the case of bleach which will produce chlorine gas if mixed with acidic cleansers (e.g. Harpic) or other acidic substances.
- 5. Step-ladders which are used to gain access to heights must be in good condition and free from defects.
- 6. All electrical cleaning equipment must have been wired up by a competent person.

Any deterioration in electrical connections or wiring should be reported immediately.

7. Floors must be treated only with approved non-slip products. The method of application and quantities to be applied should be that recommended by the manufacturer.

8. YOU SHOULD REPORT:

- a) Structural faults which appear dangerous.
- b) Floor coverings, etc. which cause a tripping hazard.
- c) Faulty equipment.
- d) All accidents, however small, should be reported.

YOU SHOULD NOT:

- e) Attempt to repair equipment, unless competent to do so.
- f) Attempt to move obviously heavy furniture alone.

YOU SHOULD:

- g) In the event of your having to stand on something to reach windows, etc. do ensure the object on which you will stand is solid and reliable.
- h) Dispose of aerosol cans in the recommended way.
- i) Dispose of soiled materials in sealed bags.
- j) Lift any boxes or heavy loads in accordance with Manual Lifting Guidelines (supplied with this document).

GENERAL ADVICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES

1. TIDINESS

Keep floors, passages etc. clear of stores, packages and litter.

Put waste paper in the bin. Do not throw broken glass, razor blades or other dangerous items loose in the waste bin. Dispose of these with care and ask for advice from your Supervisor if in doubt.

2. FALLS AND COLLISIONS

Walk, do not run. Look where you are going.

Use care in opening doors outward.

Take care on stairs and use the handrail.

Mop up spills of liquid; do not leave it to someone else.

Do not climb on chairs, desks, window sills to reach shelves or to open windows.

Use a step-ladder and window poles etc.

3. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

READ AND UNDERSTAND FIRE PRECAUTION NOTICES

Ensure that you know the lay-out of the fire exits and emergency routes. Report or remove where possible any obstruction of fire exits and passages. Keep cloths and towels away from heaters and convectors etc.

4. HORSEPLAY

Avoid horseplay, sky larking, practical jokes, it can be dangerous.

Appendix B.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

To comply with Health and Safety Legislation, all outside contractors employed to do work on Council Premises are to be made aware of the expected requirements related to health and safety. A contractor accepting a contract from the Council shall be deemed to have agreed to comply with the following requirements:-

- 1. As a contractor, you will supply and ensure that your employees wear and use protective equipment or anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare of any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- 2. You and your employees will ensure that all equipment, plant machinery and apparatus brought onto or used on the Council premises are safe and without risk to health, and are maintained to a standard that will not constitute an offence under the Act or any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- 3. You and your employees will conform, in all respects, to your legal duties and responsibilities as laid down by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and relevant statutory provisions.
- 4. The Council will retain the right to stop any operation, plant or equipment, or the action of any of your employees if it is considered that there is a hazard to the safety and health of employees or others. The Council will not accept any responsibility for any increased costs arising out of such action.
- 5. In the event of the Council taking this action, your site representative will be notified verbally and will have confirmation in writing by the Council's representative to order such a stoppage.
- 6. The Council will be indemnified by you or your insurers in respect of any claims, costs or expenses arising out of any incidents on Council premises involving you or your employees.
- 7. The Council may notify an inspector, appointed under the Authority of the Act, of any breach of the Regulations.

Item 6.2 Annual Governance Statement

Clerk's comment: Parish Councils are required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 reg.4(4) to hold an annual review (not at year end) and produce an annual governance statement. This statement must accompany rather than be part of the End of Year accounting statements. The agreed statement will be placed on the website and made available to any person wishing for a copy of the audited accounts.

Members are reminded that the office has a copy (for members to consult) of NALC Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales; A practitioners' Guide.

Boxley Parish Council Annual Governance Statement for the Year ending 31st March 2013.

The system of internal control and audit has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2013 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts accords with proper practice.

1. SCOPE OF INTERNAL AUDIT.

The Boxley Parish Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively¹.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reported to the Council on the adequacy of it's:

- Records
- procedures
- systems
- internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit system is reviewed annually.

External Audit:

The Council's External Auditors (with effect from 01.04.2012 LittleJohn LPP) submit an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Council.

The Council:

The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January meeting. At this same meeting the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council has appointed a Finance Committee of Members which meets 6 times each year and monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters. The minutes of the

¹ The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

meetings of the Finance Committee are received by the Council where an opportunity to comment on them is available.

The Council has appointed a Financial Scrutiny Committee (see section dealing with independence). The minutes of the meetings of the Committee are received by the Council where an opportunity to comment on them is available.

The full Council meets a minimum of 10 times and Committees meet 6 or 12 times each year. The full Council and Committees monitor progress against the aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Finance Committee and the Parish Clerk.

Individual committees are also responsible for monitoring their specific projects and budgets.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls (2 x Councillor audits), systems and procedures supported by a Financial Scrutiny Committee reporting to the Finance Committee.

The Council achieved Quality Status on 27th September 2004 and was reaccredited on 15th December 2008. It is applying for reaccreditation in December 2012.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and polices are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Members of the Council must authorise each cheque, Direct Debit or Standing Order after checking the relevant invoice.

2. INDEPENDENCE.

The Council's Financial Scrutiny Committee is independent of the RFO and contains councillors who are not necessarily members of the Finance Committee. It receives the Independent Internal Audit report, the 2 x Parish Councillor audit reports and the External Auditors response to the End of Year Accounts. Reports and recommendations are submitted to the full Parish Council.

Parish Councillor audits are undertaken by different councillors, nominated at a full Council meeting and includes non-members of the Finance and Financial Scrutiny Committees.

The Independent Auditor is independent of the Council, its financial decision making, management and control².

3. COMPETENCE.

The Clerk/RFO is qualified to Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy. The Internal Auditor is a Fellow Member of the Association of Accounting Technicians.

The Council has a training strategy and a training budget and encourages all members to take advantage of training opportunities.

² The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

The Finance Committee and Financial Scrutiny Committee are required (via delegated powers) to undertake monitoring of the Council's income/expenditure and policy and procedures relating to financial issues.

4. RELATIONSHIPS.

The Council works to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in all financial matters. It has systems and procedures to deal with tenders and issuing of work/contracts. All Council and committee agendas have an item for members to declare interest and lobbying and members are regularly reminded (April, September and December) that they must keep their Register of Interests up to date.

The Code of Conduct legislation is followed by the Council.

Audit checks by the Independent Auditor and Parish Councillors ensure that these standards are maintained/adhered too.

Item 7.2 Future Long Term Investments. *Purpose of report; to make a decision.*

Members have to decide on the amounts that are going to be invested into longer term bonds. At its last meeting members agreed that, after further investigation and advice on financial commitments, up to £200,000 could be invested in long term bonds (12 - 24 months periods). In out of meeting e-mails exchanges members agreed that (to spread risks) the investments could go into Santander (18mths) and NatWest (12 months). Up to date interest rates will be bought to the meeting but in August the rates were Santander 3.4% and NatWest 3%, both these interest rates were given for investments of £100,000.

Members are reminded that the 3 month Clydesdale Bond (£78,314) was taken as cash to pay for the land £33,500. The 3^{rd} party has already paid the PC for their portion of the land.

With £231,300 (interest included) being released from 2 maturing bonds minus the £68,000 this leaves £163,300 of the reserves to be invested. The Council is currently cash heavy in its general account but is expecting KCC bills totalling £35,000 in the very near future and is also committed to a further 7 month salary/allowance bill of in excess of £42,861. In addition to this expenditure is the other day to day expenditure of the Council.

Members are reminded that the 6 month bond will mature in February 2012 so additional money becomes available at that date. Also amounts can be withdrawn but there will be stiff penalties.

Members' attention is directed to the paperwork at item 6.3 which contains End of Year reports and information that might be helpful.

Item 9 Payment of staff salaries by Standing Orders. *Purpose of report; to make a decision.*

At this stage members may just wish to decide in principle whether it would allow this and indicate what additional information/investigation is needed for them to make a decision.

Members are asked to consider allowing staff salaries to be paid directly into their bank accounts by Standing Order. Members have agreed that this could happen for Parish Councillor allowances' and this has been much more convenient not only for the individual councillors but also the office and cheques signers. This has occurred for approximately 12 months without any apparent problems.

All direct debits and standing orders are signed off monthly by 2 councillors as these are included in the SCRIBE accounts for payments report. If members allow staff to be paid directly into their accounts the usual paperwork (as currently accompanies the cheques)

will be submitted with the SCRIBE report. There may be a need to have an additional audit check/trail produced which is directly linked to statement reconciliations but this would be a minor inconvenience compared to the gains of salaries being paid directly into an individual's accounts. Auditing often relies on spotting anomalies in a system, the different dates for paying out staff salaries means that there is no standard system/date for staff salary payment which might be a weakness in the current system.

Clerk's comments: currently salary cheques are signed at the last meeting of the month but sometimes due to work load this deadline is missed and councillors are asked to come in and sign the cheques. If cheques are late in being signed, especially around Christmas and Easter, then staff are often late in getting their cheques cleared by the bank A payment into an account on the 22nd of the month (which would mirror the Parish Councillor Allowances) is considered a fair method of salary payment (close to but not at the end of the month).

Item 12 Kent Wildlife Trust. Purpose of report; information and to allow discussion.

(E-mail 02.08.12)

People use Tyland Barn as a meeting place and starting and finishing point for local walks where they can explore the surrounding area as well as our Nature Park and Visitor Centre.

We would therefore like to spend the $\pounds 2,000$ on updating a local walks leaflet which provides visitors to the site with information on local walks which start and finish at Tyland Barn. We would also hope to install an information board at the entrance to the Tyland Barn site, welcoming people and directing them around the site and the wider area of Boxley Parish.

Thank you very much for your help and for your on-going support of the Trust.