

# BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

[www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk)

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

To All Members of the Council.

4<sup>th</sup> April, 2012

There will be a meeting of the **Estates Committee** on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2012** 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 14th February, 2012.**  
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 2346/10 Boxley War Memorial – The middle drum has been ordered and is currently being manufactured and including the wording of the fallen. A request has been made to Stonewest for a date for installation so that the church and ESO can be notified.
  - 4.2 Minute 2383/8.1 Burial Ground, Repairs to the West Corner of North Wall – To ratify a decision made out of meeting by the Assistant Clerk after consulting with the Chair and Vice Chair. The cost of the repairs was £317.00 and the works commenced w/c 26/3/2012.
  - 4.3 Minute 2382/4.5 Extractor Hood/Fan for kitchen see Assistant Clerk's report on page 3 & 4.
  - 4.4 Minute 2382/5 Allotments - Contact has been made by the office to local landowners but as yet no response has been received. A draft policy has been compiled see page 4 & 5.

## **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 February/March (Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

Casual	£2,281.09	2010/2011 (£2,569.31)
Regular	<u>£3,532.62</u>	<u>(£4,216.96)</u>
Total	£5,813.71	(£6,786.27)
Cumulative figures for	2011/12	2010/11
Casual	£12,188.22	(£12,452.49)
Regular	<u>£18,844.34</u>	<u>(£16,448.46)</u>
Total	£31,032.56	(£28,936.95)

## 6.2 Marketing Plan - To receive an update.

Action	Note	Completion date	Office review Date
Leaflets	New leaflets have been designed and will be distributed with Downs Mail.	February	6 monthly
Beechen Hall information	Amended April to reflect changes in conditions of hire		Annually- April
Website	Work in progress for new website.	Expected end April/May	Quarterly
Targeting other hall users	Leaflet has been mailed to local businesses	w/e 10 <sup>th</sup> February	6 monthly
Advertising External Noticeboard	New poster on local boards Advertising availability at the Hall.	w/e 10 <sup>th</sup> February	Quarterly
Planning Change Extended Hours	To be reviewed as time allows. It is considered that other work takes priority.		Bring back to agenda with report October 2012.
Review of Hire Fees	A 2% increase was agreed at December 2011 meeting	To take effect 1 April 2012	Annually- December

6.3 **New and future hirers** – Confirmed bookings for the Committee Room for ad-hoc training seminars have been received. We have also gained a new Baby Massage Class run by Sure Start on a Wednesday Morning in this room. They have paid for the year up front.

The office is monitoring the effectiveness of the leaflet drop by asking all new enquiries how they had heard of the hall. So far, one booking has been confirmed through the leaflet. Interestingly most people booking have previously been to the hall after being invited to a friend's wedding or their child has attended a birthday party.

## 7. **Review of Policies and Procedures.**

7.1 Hall Bookings cancellations and damage waiver deposits see pages 5 & 6.

7.2 Discount for Children's clubs. See page 6.

7.3 Bouncy Castle Public Liability Insurance. See Page 6.

8. **Parish Office and Hall Rates.** The Parish Office has received notification from Maidstone Borough Council that Beechen Hall rates will increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. The Parish Council is no longer eligible for small business rate relief on Beechen Hall. The result of the Parish Office query triggered a visit from the Valuation Office. The office is now awaiting confirmation from the valuation office whether the premises are eligible to be combined as one unit and to pay one set of rates. Depending on what rateable value the VO gives the premises, will determine what discount the Parish Council will be entitled to. It is hoped this information will be available in time for the meeting.

9. **Performing Rights Society.** The parish office has received a response and has compiled a report on the implications of the new charges please see page 6 .

10. **Grounds Maintenance** – Impton Lane Open space. Cllr Geoff Smith provided the following report e-mail 15/03. Inspected the Space, the grass is short, and looks fine. the

surrounding trees and shrubs need some attention, especially near the houses where house owners may have attempted to repair some holes. It may need some new netting, there needs more shrub planting. The roadside wooden fence is in bad shape especially near the houses end, many of the spares' are broken and again the shrubs have not grown to really stop entrance. This roadside fence needs attention as soon as possible before the summer use of this attractive little space. **GEOFF The Parish Office will investigate and organise whatever necessary works need to be carried out.**

11. **Renewal of Utilities Contracts.**

10.1 Telecommunications - The Parish Office currently uses BT for its entire telecommunications, as part of a cost cutting exercise the Assistant Clerk has produced a report on page 7 & 8.

10.2 Electricity - This contract is not up for renewal until November. In September the Assistant Clerk will use the same process that was used for the gas contract.

12. **Matters for Information**

13. **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Clerk to the Council

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

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**Item 4.3. Industrial Extractor Hood for the kitchen-** Purpose of the report is for information.

The following guidance has been taken from the HSE website and is provided to give establishments with commercial kitchens on the correct type of extraction and ventilation. Kitchen ventilation is required to create a safe and comfortable working environment. Catering and cooking can produce significant quantities of fumes and vapours as well as large amounts of heat. Ventilation is necessary to remove these and discharge them to a safe external location. This is usually achieved by mechanical extraction via a canopy hood installed over the cooking appliances. The ventilation system should also provide general ventilation throughout the kitchen.

It is particularly important to provide adequate makeup air for gas fired appliances. The lack of an adequate supply of air, and/or incorrect flueing arrangements can lead to incomplete combustion and the accumulation of combustion products such as carbon monoxide.

**Adequate ventilation**

The objectives of an adequate ventilation system are to:

- remove cooking fumes at the source, ie at the appliance;
- remove excess hot air and introduce incoming cool clean air so that a comfortable working environment is achieved. Inadequate ventilation can cause stress, contributing to unsafe systems of work and high staff turnover;
- ensure that the air movement in the kitchen does not cause discomfort, e.g. from strong draughts;
- provide sufficient air for complete combustion at fired appliances, and prevent the risk of carbon monoxide accumulating;

- be easy to clean, avoiding the build-up of fat residues and blocked air inlets which lead to loss of efficiency and increase risk of fire;
- be quiet and vibration free.

The ventilation system needs to be designed to take account of:

- cooking load;
- amount of cooking equipment used;
- layout and shape of the kitchen;
- numbers of staff;
- the need for easy cleaning and maintenance.

*Assistant Clerk's Comment:*

*The following issues will need to be investigated before a decision can be made.*

- *Gas Pipe ceiling to floor will this need relocating (the canopy will have to cover the whole cooker).*
- *Boxed in pipes (believed to be water pipes from emersion tank in loft may have to be relocated)*
- *Canopy may block light from overhead light fitting (unit will have to have built in lights)*
- *Power from adjacent sockets and circuit board appears to have reasonable capacity but this will be checked*  
*Health and Safety of unit due to its location in the Kitchen rounded edges etc will need to be satisfied as unit will be between the washing up area and kitchen exit door and may be protruding.*
- *External exhaust of canopy needs further investigation for positioning will it compromise soffits and guttering and existing lighting.*  
*Planning permission – do we need it?*

**Item 4.4 Allotments – Draft Policy** - Purpose of item to amend if necessary and to make a recommendation to the Parish Council.

### **Boxley Parish Council Allotments Policy**

The Parish Council considers that the supply of allotments would be a positive development for the residents of the parish.

Identified benefits include: improvements to health; fitness; companionship educational for children; low food miles; opportunity for all to benefit from fresh produce at a low cost.

The Parish Council will actively seek land or react to any opportunity to purchase land to supply allotments anywhere in the parish or just outside the parish boundary. If the only opportunity to provide allotments is through the leasing of land then the Parish Council will consider this but the preferred option is to purchase land.

Priority will be given to supplying allotments within the North of the parish as residents in the South have better access to allotments. However the Parish Council would look to provide allotments in the South if the only available land is there.

If allotments are provided they will only be available for rent to residents of Boxley Parish.

When attempting to locate or assess potential sites the following should be taken into consideration:

- A site would be very close to a residential area; preferably within one mile.
- The site will have a minimum size of 1 – 1.5 acres.
- On site car parking will be provided. A decision about size or surface to be investigated once the site has been identified.

- It must be possible to supply water to a site and investigation of cost etc. will be undertaken once a potential site has been identified.
- The need for fencing will depend on the location of a site. If a fence is to be provided then then it should be rabbit proof.
- No toilet facilities or electricity will be provided on site.

Initial discussions have identified the following conditions for any allotments:

- The Council will allow a small shed, small greenhouse (plastic not glass panes).
- The Council will not allow polytunnels, livestock<sup>1</sup> or bee hives.
- No wind turbines or solar panels will be allowed. Electricity generators to be investigated.

1. The allotment Act actually allows for hens and rabbits on a site and whilst many Councils have regulations stating that they will not be allowed this can be challenged because of the Act.

**Item 7.1 Hall Cancellations and damage waiver deposit.** *Purpose of item to consider the current policy and to see if it is still fit for purpose.*

The Current policy is set out below:

### **Cancellation Policy and Charges**

Cancellation may result in hire fees being retained. Appeals may be made in cases of hardship in writing and any decision will be at the discretion of the council. In all such cases an administration fee will be charged.

#### **NOTICE OF CANCELLATION**

Less than one month

Between 1 and 6 months

More than 6 months

#### **PAYMENT RETAINED**

Booking deposit and balance of Hire fee.

Booking Deposit

Administration Fee of £10.00

Beechen Hall reserves the right to cancel this hiring by written notice to the Hirer in the event of:

- a) the premises being required for use as a Polling Station for a Parliamentary or Local Government election or bye-election.
- b) the Beechen hall management committee reasonably considering that (i) such hiring leading to a breach of licensing conditions or other legal or statutory requirement, or (ii) unlawful or unsuitable activities will take place at the premises as a result of this hiring.
- c) the premises and/ or car park becoming unfit for the use intended by the Hirer. .In any such case the Hirer shall be entitled to a refund of any deposit already paid, but Beechen Hall shall not be liable to the Hirer for any resulting direct or indirect loss or damages whatsoever.

**Assistant Clerk's Comments:** In the last twelve months there have been three cancellations where the deposit was paid but despite numerous attempts to contact the hirer via telephone, e-mail and in writing the bookings were never confirmed. In each case the office chased up to two weeks before the hire was due to take place. This has led to a vacancy in the diary, making it impossible to re-sell and essentially loss of revenue to the hall.

Members are asked to consider the following options which would effectively tighten up the cancellation policy and prevent this from happening in future.

- Final balance reminders are sent out 6 weeks prior to event explaining that if payment is not received by the deadline of four weeks prior to event the booking will taken out of the diary and the deposit retained, this will enable the office to re-sell the date.
- Increase the deposit to either a) 33% eg a third or b) 50% of total hire fee.
- It is recommended that the cancellation fee is increased to either a) £20.00 or b) 25.00

**Item 7.2 Discount for Childrens Clubs** – *purpose of item is to consider the content and see if it is still fit for purpose.*

The current policy for regular hirers for children's groups is 25% discount on the hall hire. The Assistant Clerk's recommendation is to keep this discount.

**Item 7.3 Bouncy Castle Public Liability Insurance** – *purpose of item: information.*

The office has been informed that bouncy castles are no longer suitable for the Hall's public liability insurance (currently purchased by hirers for £1.50). This was checked as it was bought up in a recent training session. Members made a policy that bouncy castles can be used in the hall on production of a public liability insurance certificate from the bouncy castle company or on the purchase of hall public liability. In view of the change explained above this policy needs to be revisited.

Legally the Parish Council is not responsible for the guests of the hirer, the person who books the hall is responsible, thus the Parish Council could not be held responsible for accidents or any injuries caused by equipment bought in by the hirer.

**Assistant Clerk's recommendation:**

To ensure there is no loss of revenue to the hall, it is suggested that the conditions of hire are amended to read:

**Bouncy Castle/Soft Play Equipment**

Bouncy castles/ soft play equipment may be used at hirers' own risk. Any damage to the Hall or injury to persons using the bouncy castle/soft play equipment will be the responsibility of the hirer. The hirer is responsible for ensuring that no damage is made to the floor, particularly by heat or scratches.

It is also recommended that members agree to this becoming a housekeeping issue to allow the office to amend as necessary in line with changing markets and to agree that it is only brought back to the agenda for notification when there is a change in the law.

**Item 10 Performing Rights Licence** – *purpose of item: information. Members were previously notified of a change in legislation that would affect the hall.*

Notification has now been received on how the change to the legislation will affect the Council.

The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 states that playing music in public requires the permission of the copyright owner.

Music playing in public (also referred to as public performance) has a wide legal meaning covering the playing of music outside domestic life. It therefore includes the use of music in community buildings, and PRS for Music has licensed such buildings for many years.

PPL has similarly licensed the public performance of recorded music for many years (with this licence covering the use of the recording itself), having been established in 1934. However, in the 1988 Act previously contained which meant that, if certain conditions were met, a PPL licence was not required where recorded music was played in public as part of the activities of

charities and certain other not-for-profit organisations. Therefore, in the past PPL has not licensed community buildings.

These exceptions have been revoked following a government consultation, with effect from 1 January 2011. From that date community buildings playing recorded music are no longer exempt from requiring a PPL licence in addition to a PRS for Music licence. However PPL is operating a 'grace period' throughout 2011, so community buildings will only require a PPL Licence from 1 January 2012.

**Assistant Clerk's comments:** Until now the Parish Council has paid 1% of Beechen Hall's annual income to PRS. The annual costs have ranged between, £280.00 - £310.00 over the years; this has been absorbed in the overhead costs of the hall.

The Parish Council has been informed that private events, such as Birthday Parties, Weddings and Christenings mainly booked by casual hirers are exempt from PRS fees. One off events where a company has hired the hall for a Christmas party either for its staff or clients a fee of £13.35 is applicable. It has been identified that there are a couple of Christmas parties which are booked on behalf of companies/societies which would require a fee.

Research from 2011 indicates regular hirers that will be affected by the new charging process:

**NB: All figures are subject to further clarification from PRS and also from the groups as the material they use may already be covered by copyright laws.**

Teenie Boppers	32 sessions @ £2.31	£73.92
Caterpillar Music	36 sessions @ £2.31	£83.16
Tumble Tots	37 sessions @ £2.31	£85.47
Enhance Dance	160 sessions @ £1.71	£273.60
Zumba	94 sessions @ £1.71	<u>£160.74</u>
		<b>£676.89</b>

Members have to consider how to react to these additional costs and the following appear to be some options for discussion.

- Do nothing and absorb the costs.
- Pass on the costs to the client, clearly identifying that these are not set by The Parish Council and are from PRS and that it is collecting on their behalf.
- Members could consider absorbing the costs for one year and when deciding hall hire rate increases in future years build these necessary costs into the increase.
- Investigate the Hall becoming a Charitable Trust with The Parish Council as a sole trustee. The only reason we are on the GP tariff is because we are deemed a local authority.
- It is recommended that future Casual Hirers currently about 3 per year have the PRS charge added.

**Item 11. Renewal of Utility contracts Telecommunications** – *purpose of item to notify members of the situation and ask members to give delegates powers to the parish office to manage the situation.*

At present Boxley Parish Council receives three quarterly invoices from BT

Two are for Internet Services which consist of business broadband, Internet trader pack, help desk support, anti virus software. The other is for line rental and call charges.

These average out as the following costs:

Broadband, Internet Security and Trader pack	£215.92
Line rental, and call charges	£143.95
Help desk support and anti-virus software	£ 36.00

Grand Total per quarter **£395.87**

The Parish Office has been advised that it can make a huge saving by entering a 2 year contract with the following benefits

**Broadband** – Office Unlimited **which** provides just broadband £45.00 per quarter or £15.00 per month

**Line Rental and Phone Calls** – One Plan which is a discounted package and includes Line Rental with caller display £49.50 per quarter or £16.50 per month.

Phone calls – 500 free minutes to 01,02,03,0870 & 0845 numbers per month. Once this allocation has been used calls will be charged at flat rate of £0.05p per call to landlines and £0.20p per call to mobiles.

A new quarterly charge of **£97.50 + call charges**.

This will take place once the new website is up and running.