



BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

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To All Members of the Council, public and press.

11th June 2012

There will be a meeting of the **Estates Committee** on **Tuesday 19th June, 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 17th April, 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 2398/4.1 Boxley War Memorial – Work was carried out 30 May and completed 1 June, 2012. The whole memorial and surrounding area including seating has been cleaned and the middle drum replaced. The box trees have been removed and the roots need to be 'grubbed' out and new trees will be placed in containers either side of the seating area. The Parish office has now asked for a quote for the repainting of names to the lower drum (this was not included in original quote for replacement middle drum) and it is anticipated that this will be received in time for the meeting for members to consider.
 - 4.2 Minute 2398/4.3 Extractor Hood/Fan - Further quotes are being sought and will be available for consideration at the next Meeting in August.
 - 4.3 Minute 2382/5 Allotments – To give an update and discuss current situation. Information will be available at meeting.

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 April/May (Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

		2011/2012
Casual	£2,714.75	(£1,429.17)
Regular	<u>£3,458.55</u>	<u>(£2,556.33)</u>
Total	£6,173.30	(£3,985.50)
Cumulative figures for		
Casual	£ 2,714.75	(£1,429.17)
Regular	<u>£ 3,458.55</u>	<u>(£2,556.33)</u>
Total	£ 6,173.30	(£3,985.50)

- 5.2 Marketing Plan – Due to recent events taking precedence in the Parish Office the Marketing plan has been put on hold. An update will be given at the August meeting.

The website went live on 31st May, 2012 in time for the Royal visit. Further updating is required by the office. A more informed update on the progress of the website will be available for the August meeting.

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.	Went live 31 st May	August
Targeting other hall users	Leaflet has been mailed to local businesses	w/e 10 th February	6 monthly
Advertising External Noticeboard	New poster on local boards Advertising availability at the Hall.	w/e 10 th 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. **Regular New Hirer** – The Parish Office has been approached by a potential regular hirer to fill the vacant slot on a Wednesday evening see report on page 3.
7. **Review of Policies and Procedures.**
 - 7.1 Late departure of casual hirers see page 3.
 - 7.2 Late arrivals of casual hirers. See page 3.
 - 7.3 Early opening of hall. See Page 3.
 - 7.4 Staff pay rise and any need to amend hours – See report on page 4.
 - 7.5 Village Hall Grant Policy – See pages 4 – 5.
 - 7.6 Review of previous year H&S/accident reports. Two accidents have been reported in the last 12 months. Details will be brought to the meeting.
8. **Parish Office and Hall Rates.** This item was reported to Finance Committee and members were notified that a favourable re-rating by the national Valuation Office had taken place but that MBC was now asking, due to its back dating, that a wrongly allocated Business Rates Relief of £1202.54 be paid back to MBC. Members were of the view that as this had been a mistake by MBC that the Council should appeal against this request. The Parish Office has since established that this amount has been taken by direct debit, it is now in discussions with MBC. An update will be provided at the meeting.
9. **PRS License.** The hall has been assessed and the payment made, the payment is lower than originally feared. This item was reported to the finance committee.
10. **Grounds Maintenance** – Impton Lane Open space. The Parish Office will re-inspect this area and bring findings to the meeting, as the first inspection found the area in a fairly good state of repair.

11. **Matters for Information**

11.1 Sandling Village Noticeboard – The Parish office has been advised that Sandling Village Noticeboard has become detached from the two legs, there appears to be no physical damage. It is being stored at KWT headquarters. The parish office will inspect and arrange for it to be repaired if necessary and replaced.

12. **Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard** – Community Orchard future maintenance and security see report on pages 5 & 6.

13. **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 14th August, 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 6. Regular New Hirer – *Purpose of item, to consider the Hirer’s request and make a decision.*

The hirer is a short matt bowls club and is very keen to use Beechen Hall. As there is no storage space within the Hall or adjoining rooms for their equipment they have requested permission to erect a shed on the hard standing near to the WWG shed and to the rear of the hall to store their equipment. The equipment consists of matts on rollers x 2 and fenders. They are looking at a 8ft x 5ft or 9ft x 6ft in size. They have confirmed that they will provide the shed, erect it, secure it, and insure it. Potentially this hirer will fill a slot (Wednesday Evening) that has in the past, been hard to fill and one that has been vacant for some time. They have also confirmed that they will require some Sunday’s too.

If members are minded to agree this request the Assistant Clerk is asking for delegated powers along with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree the siting of the shed out of meeting as this committee only meets every other month.

Item 7.1/2/3 Late departures and late arrivals of casual hirers and early opening of hall - Purpose of the report is to consider current policies and to decide if they are still fit for purpose.

- (a) Late departures of casual hirers – Hirers that depart the hall late will be charged double rate for every half hour. Assistant Clerk recommends No change.
- (b) Late arrival of casual hirers – The duty caretaker will only wait for 15 minutes after the commencement of the hire unless otherwise agreed in advance. Contact details will be displayed at the hall and the Hirer will be charged (amount to be agreed) if the caretaker is called out again to open the hall. Suggested wording
- (c) Early opening of hall – If the duty caretaker agrees then the hall will be opened from 8.00am. An extra hour’s hire fee plus one hour’s enhanced pay for the Duty Caretaker to be charged. Assistant Clerk recommends no change.

Item 7.4 Staff pay rise and any need to amend hours. *Purpose of item is to consider the current policy and to see if it is still fit for purpose.*

Currently the Caretaking staff pay increase reflects the increase of the office staff. The office staff has not been awarded an increase for at least two years. Salary scales and any recommended increases are enclosed and will be taken in confidence.

Item 7.5 Village Hall Grant Policy – *Purpose of item: to consider the current policy and to see if its is still fit for purpose.*

Estates Committee Village/Community Hall Grants Procedure/Policy

In order to work prudently, obtain 'best value' and to be a responsible grant provider Boxley Parish Council's Estates Committee is setting a standard for considering and awarding grants to Village/Community Halls. Whilst the Parish Council wishes to continue to actively support the Village/Community Halls within the Parish it feels that it is essential to require applicants to meet a minimum standard covering project planning and supply of information. By undertaking this work the Parish Council can plan with Village/Community Halls adequate funding in advance of the project being committed too.

Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organisation for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be "in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it" and "the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure." Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

Boxley Parish Council policy is that

- Grants for maintenance will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as it considers that the day to day maintenance of the hall should be covered by the hire fees or fund raising.
- Village/Community Hall Management Committees will be required to show, for large scale projects costing over £3,000 that it is applying for funding from other sources; has undertaken fund raising events or has been 'saving towards the project. The Parish Council will be happy to assist the Committee to identify other funding sources.
- The Parish Council will only award up to 80% of the cost for essential repairs or renewals (e.g. windows, fire doors etc).
- For projects costing £3,000 - £10,000 the Parish Council would require the Management Committee to obtain 3 written quotations and for projects costing over £10,000, 5 written quotations should be obtained. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process.
- VH Management Committees will be required to liaise closely with the Parish Office so where possible the Parish Council can order the work and gift it to the Village Hall which will enable VAT to be reclaimed. This will increase the value of the grant given to the hall by the rate of VAT.
- Unless a schedule of payments has been agreed in advance by the Parish Council funds will only be released on completion of the work
- Capital projects to expand the business by major capital work will not normally be considered by the Parish Council.
- It would be advantageous to notify the Council if you have undertaken any other projects in the recent past.

The Parish Council recognises that most halls are run by volunteers and will be happy to assist/advise VHMCs on how to meet these standards.

At The Estates Committee meeting in October or December the Committee will consider individual grant requests from Village/Community Hall Management Committees for specific projects in the following financial year so that provision can be made in the budget recommendation to the Parish Council.

An additional budget will also be identified from which other grant requests will be allocated in the current financial year. A maximum award of £500 for such unplanned applications will only be considered. Once the additional budget is exhausted only emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations that the Parish Council has Custodial Trustee status, will be considered.

All organisations requesting assistance will be required to complete an application form which will include notification of the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Village/Community Hall Management Committees will have to sign that it agrees with the policy or submit details of their own policy. Management Committees should also agree to representatives of the Council being given the right to inspect the work on completion.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance will be requested to submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts.
- Copy of current hire fees with an explanation of any unusual agreements where a group pays less than normal.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can hire the hall.

A grant request, once received in writing, will be considered at the next meeting of the Estates Committee and the Estates Committee reserve the right to inspect the required work before a grant is agreed.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund raising activities.

Successful Applications

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment had been received from Boxley Parish Council.

Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the parish council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user.

GrantVH01. Amended 14/6/2011

Item 12 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard <i>Purpose of item is to agree a maintenance schedule and other work.</i>
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The Parish Council will shortly become responsible for all of the site and so must agree a checking and maintenance policy.

Health and safety. The Parish Council must have a system of regularly checking the play equipment and seats etc. When checked there must be a written note that the check has taken place and there are no problems. A local councillor is asked to volunteer to undertake the

regular check, if there is no volunteer then the parish office will take on responsibility but this will entail time and mileage costs.

The Clerk can produce a briefing note and also arrange a site visit to discuss the issues. The Councillor can then either keep a log of visits or notify the parish office who can keep the log. It is suggested that there is, at least, a weekly visual check of equipment and a more in-depth check every 2 – 3 weeks.

Annual Safety check. To meet insurance requirements there has to be an annual RoSPA inspection and the parish office can arrange this.

Grass maintenance. The suggested grass cutting areas are enclosed for committee members to see. Maintenance will be added to the current contract.

Litter. There has to be a regular litter pick at the site and the litter bin will have to be emptied. A volunteer may be found to do this (and proper equipment will be provided, a risk assessment undertaken etc.). Members may decide to either pay for someone local to do this or go with a volunteer. It is requested that until this is sorted out a local councillor volunteers to undertake the work. If someone is going to be paid to do it then this would have to be recommended to the Finance Committee. Currently the hall caretaker undertakes litter picks at Impton Lane and the Burial Ground and mileage is also paid. It is likely that the frequency of the litter picks needed would make it unfeasible for her to take this site on.

Tree maintenance. A schedule would have to be produced.