

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk

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To Parish Councillors, members of the public and press.

16th January, 2012

Members are hereby summonsed and notice is given that a **Meeting of the Parish Council** is to be held at **Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade**, (ME5 9RU) on **Monday 23rd January 2012** commencing at 7.30 p.m. when it is proposed to transact the following business:

- | | Time guide |
|---|------------|
| 1. Apologies and absences. | (7.30) |
| To receive and accept apologies for absence. Members are reminded that they need to formally submit apologies prior to their absence and it would be helpful if this was not done at meetings. | |
| 2. Declaration of Interests or Lobbying. | (7.32) |
| Members are required to declare any interests or lobbying on items in this agenda. | |
| 3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 5th December 2011. | (7.34) |
| To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (pages 3-4). | |
| 4. Matters Arising From Minutes. | (7.38) |
| 4.1 Minute 2357/4.1 concurrent functions. To receive up to date information on any developments see report (page 5). | |
| 4.2 Parking, Grove Green see report (page 5-6). | |
| 5. Report from the PCSO and Police Issues. | (7.40) |
| Crime statistics were not available at the time of sending the agenda out and will be included on the supplementary agenda. | |
| To adjourn to enable members of the public to address the meeting. | (7.50) |
| In view of the confidential nature (financially sensitive) 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. | |
| 5. Round Wood. | (8.00) |
| To consider information enclosed under confidential cover for members. | |
| 6. Draft Minutes of Meetings since Previous Parish Council Meetings. | (8.20) |
| For the parish council to receive the minutes members are allowed to ask questions of the Committee Chairmen. | |
| 6.1 Environment meeting 5 th December 2011 (page 6). | |
| 6.2 Environment Committee 12 th December 2011 (pages 6 - 10). | |
| 6.3 Estates Committee 13 th December 2011 (pages 10 - 12). | |
| 6.4 Environment Committee 9 th January 2012 (pages 12 - 15). | |
| 6.5 Finance Committee 10 th January 2012 (pages 15 - 17). | |
| 6.6 Financial Scrutiny Committee 11 th January 2012 (pages 17 - 18). | |
| 7. Finance. | (8.30) |
| 8.1 To note payments made out of meeting 06.12.11 – 16.01.12 (page 28 - 29). | |
| 8.2 To note receipts for the period 26.11.11 – 16.01.12 (page 30). | |
| 8.3 Account balances as at 16.01.12 (page 31). To consider a short term investment. | |
| 8.4 To authorise payments of accounts (list supplied at meeting). Cllrs Spain and Springate. | |

- 8 **2012/13 Budget and Precept. Business plan?** (8.36)
- 9.1 To consider the recommendation from the Finance Committee (minute 2371/6 page 16 of this agenda) and to consider the resolution "**The 2012/13 budget is agreed and a precept of £81,916 be set**". Amended budget enclosed for members.
- 9.2 Vision and Business plan to consider a draft document (pages 18 - 21).
- 9.3 £10,000 Community Project. To consider the draft paper on the 'community project' scheme proposal see report (page 21 - 22).
- 9.4 Precept referendum to update members on the Governments response to the consultation see report (page 22).
- 9 **Matters for Decision.** (8.50)
- 10.1 2012 Annual Parish Meeting. Members to decide whether any special arrangements will be made for the annual meeting of the parish and to agree a date (to be held between 1st March – 1st June).
- 10.2 Crossing point Provender Way. To consider an opening ceremony see report (page 22).
- 10.3 Energy - request from Cllr Smith see report (page 22 - 23).
- 10.4 Localism Act, Code of Conduct to consider the letter from MBC Head of Legal Services (enclosed for members) see report (page 23).
- 11 **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.** (9.00)
- To allow the councillors to report and discuss matters affecting the parish.
Report from County Councillor Carter (page 23 - 24).
- 12 **Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Project.** (9.10)
- To consider the official name of this project s.
- 13 **Policies and Procedures Review.** (9.18)
- 13.1 Review of the Policies and Procedure Review list see report (page 24 - 25).
- 13.2 Members numbers for committees see report (page 26).
- 14 **Reports from councillors/office.** (9.22)
- The representatives who attended any meeting as representatives of the parish council are invited to give a brief summary.
- 15 **Matters for Information.** (9.26)
- 15.1 Report and thank you from Vinters Valley Park Trust (page 26).
- 15.2 Consultation –Business Rates retention (page 26).
- 15.3 Maidstone KALC reply to Borough Councillor John Wilson concerning the Corporate Services & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review of Concurrent Functions (e-mail 21/12/11).
- 15.4 CPRE Planning e-learning course now available, details from parish office.
- 15.5 KWT report (page 27) and Wild Kent Winter 2011/12.
- 15.6 Thank you letter from Samaritans for the PC grant.
- 16 **Next Meeting.** (9.30)
- Monday 23rd January 2012 2011 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close (ME5 9RU) at 7:30 p.m.

Clerk to the Council.

For information – items to be returned/placed to agenda on further developments.

In agreement with policy the committee meeting is due to stop at 9.30 p.m. The Chairman has discretionary powers to extend by half an hour to 10.00 p.m.

Item 3 Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at St Johns School, Provender Way, Grove Green on Monday 5th December 2011, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Councillors present – Mr M Pepper (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies (arrived with apologies during item 2), Mr V Davies, Mr T Harwood, Mr B Hinder, Mrs K Macklin (arrived with apologies during item 3), Mr K Perry, Mr G Smith, Mr A Springate, Mr P Sullivan, Mr W Stead and Mrs M Waller together with the Assistant Clerk, PCSO Hawthorn, 2 member of the press.

1. Apologies and absences.

Mrs W Hinder (convalescing), Mrs A Spain (convalescing), County Cllr Paul Carter (KCC commitment).

2. Declaration of Interests or Lobbying.

All Councillors present declared an interest in Item 10 and Mr W Stead Item 4.1 he reminded members that he was Vice Chair on KALC Maidstone Area Committee.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 7th November 2011.

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.

4. Matters Arising From Minutes.

4.1 Minute 2348/4.1 concurrent functions. Members **noted** Cllr Pepper's update on the situation stating that there was further work to do and that further meetings were planned with the next one on Thursday 8th December. Cllr Pepper will continue to update members as the situation progresses. **Action** – Cllr Pepper

4.2 Minute 2348/4.2 controlled crossing point. Members **noted** the installation date of 13th – 17th February (half term). It was suggested that the Parish Council holds an official opening ceremony with invitees from KCC, St John's school and the Parish Council. Cllr Pepper requested for this to be placed on January 2012 agenda. **Action** – Parish Office

5.2 Minute 2348/4.3 Roundwood. Members **noted** that comments on the S106 document have been supplied to KCC. The Assistant Clerk confirmed that an interim response had been received from KCC, however there had been no further communication. The Clerk will arrange for a further Chairman's escalation. **Action** – Parish office.

5.3 Minute 2348/10.2 Olympic torch. Members **noted** that this item will be returned to the agenda as the situation develops.

5.4 Minute 2348/6 off road bikes. The Assistant Clerk confirmed that maps had been completed and will be sent to off road biking associations to notify them of the legal routes that bikers can use once PCSO Hawthorn confirms names and addresses. **Action PCSO/Parish Office.**

5 Draft Minutes of Meetings since Previous Parish Council Meetings.

Received and **noted** the draft minutes of

5.1 Environment meeting 7th November 2011.

5.2 Environment Committee 14th November 2011. Members asked for clarification on three items, these were addressed at the meeting and amended copies will be supplied at the next environment meeting for signing.

5.3 Finance Committee 15th November 2011. Members sought clarification on item 12.1. It was **agreed** to check with the Clerk and to respond to members via e-mail. Any corrected minutes will be signed off at the next Finance Committee meeting.

6 Report from the PCSO and Police Issues.

Noted and **received** the crime statistics. PCSO Hawthorn gave apologies for his new Sergeant Nick Hatcher who was unable to make this Parish Council meeting but will endeavour to attend the January meeting. He also gave a report on recent issues he had been dealing with and it was **noted**; the area identified for drug taking has seen a significant fall since regular checks have been made. No further flytipping had occurred in an identified area due to regular checks. He confirmed that he would pass on information received from the Parish Office with regards to speeding along the A229 at the point it has been restricted to 50mph. PCSO Hawthorn also confirmed that his team were looking into

the parking issues at Maidstone Studios recently but were waiting from information from the Parish Office who has contacted the studios direct.

7 **Finance.**

- 7.1 **Noted** payments made out of meeting 08.11.11 – 25.11.11 Appendix A.
- 7.2 **Noted** receipts for the period 01.11.11 – 25.11.11 Appendix B.
- 7.3 **Noted** account balances as at 25.11.11. Appendix C.
- 7.4 **Authorised** payments of accounts. Appendix D.
- 7.5 Members were reminded that: they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters; they need to check invoices against cheques when signing; cheques stubs need to be initialled by both signatures. Members are also responsible for keeping their register of interest details updated.

8. **Matters for Decision.**

- 8.1 Members **noted** the 2012/2013 (provisional) meeting dates. Members were asked to consider whether any special arrangements should be made for the annual meeting of the parish (to be held between 1st March – 1st June) Cllr Pepper asked for this to be returned to the January agenda.
- 8.2 Members **noted** The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Annual Civic Service – Tuesday 6th March 2012, Rochester Cathedral at 11.00am. Cllr Pepper asked for names to be forwarded to the parish office.
- 8.3 Allotments 2013/14. Cllr Bob Hinder gave members a brief overview of the benefits of having allotments within the Parish and put forward ideas on how this could be achieved if land could be identified or become available. Members **agreed** that this was a good idea and for Cllr Bob Hinder to do a presentation and briefing note at the Estates Meeting in February. **Action** – Cllr Bob Hinder.

9. **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.**

There was nothing to report.

10. **Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Project.**

Members unanimously **agreed** the resolution "**Boxley Parish Council agrees the signing of the Tenancy at Will relating to open space land at Penhurst Close Grove Green Maidstone**". It was also agreed that the Orchard Working Group would **agree** the official name for this project. **Action** – Orchard Working Group.

11 **Policies and Procedures Review.**

None scheduled for review.

12. **Reports from councillors/office.**

- 12.1 Parish Council Allowances – Overview and Scrutiny Committee **received** Cllr Peppers' report.
- 12.2 CPRE AGM **received** Cllr Pat Brooks' report.

13. **Matters for Information.**

- 13.1 MBC Review of Polling stations consultation did not identify any changes to the current arrangements.
- 13.2 MBC Cabinet Bulletin Nov.
- 13.3 Localism Act has been passed.
- 13.4 Allowances for Parish Councils – Report of the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 13.5 Mid Kent Downs Steering Group - next scheduled meeting 1 March 2012.
- 13.6 Boxley Warren display at Beechen Hall on Friday 9th December (11.00 – 4.00) and Sat 10th December (1000 – 1.00).
- 13.7 Policing Kent – Medway District edition.

14. **Next Meeting.**

Monday 23rd January 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close (ME5 9RU) at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

Item 4.1 Concurrent Functions. *Purpose of item: information*

A front page article in the Downs Mail included reference to Boxley Parish Council and also comments from Maidstone Councillor Beerling. In view of the comments made the Chairman responded with a letter to Cllr Beerling (reproduced below), a letter to the Downs Mail and placed a response on the Parish Councils website.

Dear Councillor Beerling

Downs Mail article – Funding parishes the ‘Robin Hood’ way.

The January 2012 edition of Downs Mail has on its front page remarks contributed to yourself about the level of reserves held by Parish Councils. Obviously this may be an incorrect quote but as this Parish Council was specifically identified by the Downs Mail as one of the parish councils with large reserves I thought it might be helpful to clarify the issue of why parishes have large reserves and why they cannot be redistributed to poorer parishes.

The reserves of a parish are generally built up over a number of years from the parish precept – this being the tax paid by the parish residents to their parish. A Parish Council can only act within the law and so is restricted on how it spends its money, there are severe restrictions on borrowing money and thus a Parish Council must be prudent to ensure it meets all its legal requirements. Boxley Parish Council also uses income from its reserves to keep its Precept demands on its residents low. Boxley’s precept is regularly one of the lowest precepts in the Maidstone area because of this.

Boxley Parish Council works in an open and accountable way and has passed its Annual Audits with no qualifications. As Cllr Brown explained the Audit requires justification of any reserves. The Council advertises its audit period, places its budget and End of Year Accounts on its website and has clear policies and procedures on reserves, investments etc. all of which are available to its residents and any other interested party. In the context of openness the Council publishes its audited accounts along with the chairman's address, made at the annual meeting of the Parish Council, in the pages of the Downs Mail so this financial data and operating strategy is available for inspection and interrogation by any readers of the Downs Mail.

Boxley Parish Council also has a wish list for future projects and this is influenced by residents and community needs. This is also made available and if you read the Boxley Parish Mail newsletter (page 30) you will see that residents are being encouraged to engage with this Council by offering ideas for the list. The Council’s earmarked reserves are kept to a certain level to try to improve the parish; they also contain legally required reserves and other funds that you might not be aware of. For instance the sum quoted in the article contained £55,000 of a grant from The Lottery and Interreg (European funding) for Boxley Warren, this Council is currently working in partnership with The Mid Kent Downs Countryside to improve this SSSI which is just North of Maidstone on Pilgrims Way.

A Parish Council’s money belongs to its residents and it would be immoral and in most instances illegal for this Council to dispose of its reserves in the way that is suggested in the article. If you wish to fully understand why this Council has such reserves I am more than happy to arrange a meeting at the parish office to give you a fuller picture.

As a matter of courtesy I wish to inform you that a similar letter is being sent to the Downs Mail and will be placed on this Council’s website so that residents can be informed of the situation.

Item 4.2 Parking at Grove Green. *Purpose of item: to receive response from Geoff Miles of Maidstone Studios.*

“The show in question finished before Christmas and was with us for a limited run. I did speak personally to the resident who contacted the police and indeed, as you would expect, spoke to police as well. The last thing we want to do is upset the neighbours, we work hard to support the community as you know.

With regard to onsite parking, we absolutely allow members of the public attending the recordings to park.

On the positive side, we have had a wonderful reaction from the public in general, hundreds of local residents have been able to take advantage of the free entertainment we were able to offer.

I am truly sorry to have upset any one at all and have made everyone concerned aware of your email, not, as you state, we actually have any control over the wayward motorists."

Clerk comment: Mr Miles contacted the parish office concerning a statement (in the Downs Mail) about the recent planning application to get the permission for 142 dwellings on the Maidstone Studio site extended. Concerns were raised about the loss of car parking spaces and Mr Miles asked that members be notified that additional car parking spaces would be supplied (at the rear of the studios) which would match or exceed the current car parking spaces.

Item 6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 5th December 2011 at St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green commencing at 8.33 p.m.

Councillors present – Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr M Pepper, Mr K Perry, Mrs A Spain, Mr A Springate, and Mrs M Waller together with the Assistant Clerk.

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

None declared.

2. Apologies and absences

Cllr W Hinder (convalescing) Cllr A Spain (convalescing)

Not adjourned as there were no members of the public present.

3. Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration

To consider planning applications. Members are reminded to consider possible section 106 requests or to suggest any conditions.

MA/11/1883 – Erection of a first floor side extension at 6 Erith Close, Maidstone.
As this application was not within the parish boundary no further action was taken.

4. Next Meeting.

Next Environment meeting 9th January 2012 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Item 6.2 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 12th December 2011 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.34 p.m.

Councillors present; Mrs W Hinder (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies, Mr M Pepper, Mr K Perry, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller, together with the Clerk.

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

Apart from Cllr Pepper all members declared that they had been lobbied on MA/11/2022. The Chairman declared that she had been lobbied on MA/11/2023.

2. Apologies and absences

Cllr Spain (convalescing) and Mr W Stead (holiday).

3. Minutes of the Meetings of 7th and 14th November 2011.

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed and signed** as a true and correct record.

4. Matters Arising From Minutes.

4.1 Minute 2352/4.1 Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road speed limit reduction. **Noted** a date for the commencement of work was awaited. The KCC response to the query

about placing roundels on the carriage way was that they could only be placed on unlit roads. Cllr Perry stated that he regularly drove over roundels in lit areas and members were unwilling to accept this response especially as they had offered to pay for the roundels. Clerk was requested to take the issue to the Area Manager. Members felt that because of the trees which blocked the lights this was in effect a non-lit road. **Action** – Clerk.

- 4.2 Minute 2352/4.2 inconsiderate parking Walderslade Village/Boxley Road. **Noted** the response from Cllr Chambers (Medway Council) that he was sure that this had been investigated fully. Members felt that the response was inadequate and it was **agreed** to wait to see if Cllr Brake's responded again. **Action** – review at January agenda.
- 4.3 Minute 2354/10.6 Flytipping letter Lordswood. Parish office will liaise with resident and PCSO concerning delivery of the letter.
- 4.4 Minute 2353 proposed base station installation on highways land adjacent to A249. **Noted** the company had responded that there will be no interference to the new hospital from the mast.

There were no members of the public present so the meeting was not adjourned.

5. **Consultation Neighbourhood Planning.**

Members **received** the briefing note and **agreed** a response.

6. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.**

6.1 MA/11/1968 application to extend the time limit for the implementation of planning permission MA/07/0458 for the demolition of existing buildings and structures, the erection of one hundred and forty two dwellings and associated landscaping, formation of new car park at Maidstone Studios, Vinters Park, New Cut Road, Maidstone.

Do not object however Boxley Parish Council has serious concerns. Since the original application (MA/07/0458) was granted local residents have experienced, when events are held at the studios, ever increasing on street car parking. If this extension is granted without this issue being addressed the Parish Council has concerns that the loss of further car parking facilities at the studios can only exacerbate the anti-social parking problem. Vehicles are being inconsiderately parked on junctions, on footways and in positions that restrict sight lines. This raises health and safety issues for emergency vehicles, other road users and pedestrians. The Police are currently monitoring the situation.

6.2 MA/11/1970 application for an erection of a first floor side extension over existing garage at 49 Lombardy Drive. *Do not wish to object.*

6.3 MA/11/1976 application for an erection of first floor rear extension at 15 Greensands, Walderslade. *Do not wish to object.*

6.4 MA/11/1992 advertisement consent for the erection of 1 no non-illuminated fascia sign at units 12 to 13 Lordswood Industrial Estates, Revenge Road, Lordswood. *Do not wish to object.*

6.5 MA/11/2000 advertisement consent for the installation of 4 internally illuminated fascia signs, 1 non-illuminated fascia sign, 3 flag pole signs and 3 internally illuminated free standing signs at Former Veglios Hotel Site, J6 M20, Forstal Road, Aylesford. *Do not wish to object however the Parish Council would like to this proposal scaled back as the current design is not sympathetic to the area and would be visual from the AONB. The Council would like to see the quantity and height of the signs reduced.*

6.6 MA/11/2022 – An application for the prior approval of the local planning authority for the installation of 15m high slim line street works column containing 3 antenna 2G/3G within glass reinforced plastic shroud with 2 equipment cabinets and ancillary development at Land South of J7 M20, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone. *Do not wish to object.*

6.7 MA/11/2023 Application for the erection of B8 storage and distribution (including self-storage) building, with access, parking and landscaping at Brooklyn Yard, Chatham Road, Sandling.

Wish to see refused for the following reasons:

- *It is an unsustainable location and contrary to MBC Local Plan policy T21 as there is no safe pedestrian access, no access to public transport, unsafe cycling conditions (due to the M20 feeder and exit roads). The Parish Council does not accept the validity of the Green Travel Plan produced and has no faith in car-sharing schemes.*
- *It is contrary to Local Plan Policy T13 and the adopted KMSP SPG4 parking standards for new developments. It is likely, due to the location of the site, that without the proposed large provision for car parking, presumably mainly for employees, this site is unsuitable for development.*
- *Although, compared with earlier proposals for use of this site, the access has been relocated, it is still on a single carriageway and the left turn into the site (just after the M20 bridge) appears inadequate for large vehicles to turn into without coming to a standstill on the carriageway. This road is the only link from the M20 to the northbound A229. The topography of the site suggests that the exit from the site would be on an upward slope and so vehicles (especially those with a heavy load) would be extremely slow on exiting again this is likely to cause problems on the road for other users. KCC has confirmed that when discussing the vision line (85m) for exiting vehicles they were not made aware that as part of the landscaping proposals trees would be planted on the south bund. The Council consider that this will reduce the sight line considerably.*

The Council also makes the following comments:

48 car parking spaces are identified for the site but there is no information on the number of employees that would be located there. 12 of these spaces, including 5 disabled spaces, are immediately adjacent to the docking bays for the HGVs. It is considered that this is an extremely unusual concept and is an unsafe arrangement. The bulk of the car parking area is to the side of the entrance so as not to interrupt the inbound or outbound flow of vehicles. By including parking at immediately adjacent to the docking bays this will cause such conflict.

It appears that the site would be dug out and the development would be within this bowl. Regardless of this the development will still be visible from the AONB and the Council would like to see the incorporation of a 'green roof' to mitigate the impact. The applicant acknowledges that there will be impact as it is proposing to have a green coloured roof to ensure it is unobtrusive.

If this development is permitted, it will mean that, with the new car showroom site, a second potentially dangerous access/egress will be introduced onto this road where there has been none for years. In the intervening period, the traffic volume appears, subjectively, to have substantially increased. Therefore, as the statement about it being a 'safe' road only reflects the present position, it should be considered irrelevant.

It is many years since this site was used and much has changed in that time thus there is no reason to consider that it must be developed for B8 commercial warehousing.

If the Planning Officer is minded to allow the application the Parish Council would like to see it referred to the Planning Committee.

6.8 MA/11/2083 introduction of vehicular cross over and area of hard surfacing for parking and installation of window to front elevation of garage at Amelanchier, Weaving Street.
Do not wish to object.

6.9 TA/0180/11 – Application for works to trees at rear of 9 Greensands, Walderslade.
Do not wish to object subject to the views of the Landscape Officer.

6.10 TA/0192/11 – Application to crown lift 1no Oak Tree up to 6m above ground level, thin canopy by 15% And remove deadwood at 4 The Covert, Walderslade.
Do not wish to object subject to the views of the Landscape Officer.

6.11 Planning appeal APP/U2235/A/11/2165169/NWF erection of a new dwelling at land off Beechen Bank, Boxley Road, Walderslade. **Agreed** a copy of the previous objection letter would be sent making reference to a subsequently produced ecological report which the Council found illogical and unacceptable. **Action** – Clerk.

7. **Planning applications taken to Planning Committee.**

Noted planning rota – Cllr Wendy Hinder 15th December 2011, Cllr William Stead 5th January 2012.

8. **Planning Applications and appeals decisions.**

MA/11/0322 GRANTED MA/11/1623 GRANTED
MA/11/1677 GRANTED MA/11/1701 GRANTED
TA/0142/11 GRANTED TA/0147/11 GRANTED
TA/0153/11 GRANTED

Erection of 4 no dwellings with associated parking at car park site, Yew Tree PH, Grange Lane, Sandling PLANNING APPEAL DISMISSED.

9. **Neighbourhood Development Plans.**

9.1 Sandling and Forstal NDP. Members considered the draft document and asked for expansion on:

- the area around the Yew Tree PH
- The Village Hotel
- Allington Lock
- Cobtree Country Park
- Forstal flood plain

9.2 Other areas. Members' **agreed** that to consider whether to produce something on the AONB and other countryside areas. **Action** – Clerk to return issue to agenda at another meeting.

9.3 Members **received and noted** the outline of the work still to be completed. Members **agreed** that:

- At the next drafting stage any Community Asset would be identified and the document was to include a 'prompt' to ensure that this was done.
- Conservation areas and other areas identified by members would have a design statement included in the document.
- An article would be placed in the Downs Mail asking residents to identify any issues that might be included on a Section 106 wish list.

10 **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group**

Cllr Springate reported that the groups' AGM was on 15th December. An update concerning availability of the land at Impton Lane was given to him.

11 **Highways and Byways.**

11.1 Walderslade Woods Road reduction in speed limit. Members **agreed** that trying to get KCC or Cllr Carter's devolved highway funds to complete the required work over a number of years was a good suggestion and should be followed up. Clerk was requested to find out what the actual cost of the required improvement to Walderslade Woods Road so that the Council could consider partnership working if necessary. **Action – Clerk.**

11.2 Stopping up Order Application - Chatham Road, Sandling rear of Pilgrims View. **Agreed** no objection.

11.3 KCC Highway Tracker Survey 2011. Cllr Ivor Davis volunteered to undertake the survey. **Action** – Cllr Ivor Davies.

11.4 Salt bins. **Noted** and **welcomed** Cllr Carter's use of his devolved budget to pay for 2 new salt bins (junction of Forestdale/Walderslade Woods Road and junction of Tyland Lane and Boarley Lane).

12 **Policy and procedures review.**

Members discussed the current Section 106 wish list and made some amendments. After discussion Cllr Pepper volunteered to produce a spread sheet to show what might be possible if funding was identified by the Parish Council, what was the responsibility of Kent County Council etc. **Action** – Cllr Pepper.

13 **Matters for information.**

13.1 Local Development Framework consultation members' **received** a briefing on a recent training day that had been attended.

13.2 Southern Water's Metering Programme **noted** a briefing on the progress had been received.

14 **Next Meeting.**

Next environment meetings 9th January 2012 (full) at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the confidential nature (personal details and data) on the Enforcement item a resolution to exclude the public and press was passed.

15. **Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.**

Members **received** and **noted** an update on outstanding issues.

Meeting closed 9.28 pm.

Item 6.3 Minutes of the Estates Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 13th December, 2011 at 7.30pm.

Councillors present – Mr V Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies, Mr M Pepper, Mr P Sullivan, Mr G Smith, Mr W Stead, together with the Assistant Clerk.

1. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

None.

2. **Apologies and absence.**

Mrs M Waller(absent)

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting 1th October, 2011.**

The minutes of the meetings were **agreed** and signed as a true record.

4. **Matters Arising From Previous Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2346/8.2 Review of Hire Fees, Beechen Hall - this item was taken at 5.1. After much consideration Members **agreed** to a 2% increase on hire fees across the board to be implemented from the 1st April, 2012. Cllr Smith proposed, Cllr I Davies seconded, with 4 in favour and 3 abstentions.

4.2 Minute 2346/10 Boxley War Memorial – Members **unanimously agreed** to proceed with Stonewest despite this company going into administration, subject to previous assurances on public liability insurances and to draw up a water tight contract. Action – parish office.

As there were no members of the public present the meeting was not adjourned.

5. **Asst Clerk's Report.**

5.1 **Noted** 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, update **received** and **noted**.

Action	Note
Leaflets	Work being undertaken. Noted.
Beechen Hall Information	Completed. Noted.
Website	Members agreed it would be sensible to keep the working group (Cllrs Ivor and Vic Davies) to review options and submit a report to the Finance committee. Action Cllrs Ivor and Vic Davies.
Targeting other hall users	Work in progress identifying groups. Noted.

Advertising External Noticeboard	Ongoing. Noted.
Planning Change Extended Hours	To be reviewed as time allows. It is considered that other work takes priority. Noted.

After discussion members requested that as the marketing plan is an on-going, organic document it is amended to include an additional column to show the completion date for the identified actions. Members also requested that new actions are added as the plan evolves.

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

6.1 Christmas closedown for 2012 – Members **agreed** the recommendation for the Christmas closedown as 24 Dec 2012 – 2 Jan 2013 to allow the caretaking staff to carry out major cleaning/general maintenance on Beechen Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at this point (7.55) for a comfort break. Meeting resumed (7.58).

6.2 Lost Property Procedure/Disposal of Lost Property – Members **agreed** that this policy was still fit for purpose.

7. **Burial Ground.**

- 7.1 Members unanimously **agreed** and **adopted** the following policy on burial fees.
- Children up to 5th birthday - No fee
 - Young people 5 years to 16th birthday - 50%* of the adult fee as prescribed in the current Parochial Fees Order.
 - 16 years and above – Adult fee.
- 7.2 West corner of North Wall – Members **agreed** for Goodsells to give an estimate for the remedial repair to this wall. It was also **agreed** that if the estimate is too expensive to look at other companies. The Assistant Clerk will arrange for an estimate to be agreed out of meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair.
- 7.3 Members **noted** that a recent site visit indicated some self-seeding saplings had started to establish themselves within the walls. The church maintenance group have been notified and have taken action to stop any damage to the wall.
- 7.4 Non-conforming graves. Members **noted** that a survey had been undertaken of the non-conforming graves and **agreed** for the Clerk to arrange the appropriate work to be carried out on the graves that have not been tended to. Members also **received** and **noted** the timeline for those graves that are checked but do not conform:

8. **Matters for Information**

None received.

9. **2012/13 Budget.**

Members looked at the budget for Beechen Hall and made the following decisions:

- 9.1 Extractor hood/fan in kitchen. Members **agreed** to allow Cllr Stead and the parish office to investigate the types of extraction needed for the kitchen and liaise with the parish office. A sum of £1,500.00 was agreed to be placed in the budget which includes an additional two way light switch for the kitchen.
- 9.2 Tree maintenance around the Hall and Office. Members **agreed** to place £1,000.00 in the budget. The clerk will compile a maintenance programme with Maidstone Borough Council's landscape officer, and apply for the necessary permission to carry out the work.
- 9.3 Sanding and re-varnishing Beechen Hall Floor – Members agreed that sanding was not required as the floor is in good order. Members have however, requested that a more robust maintenance schedule be carried out on the floor. Action – the parish office.
- 9.4 Members **received** and **agreed** the adjustment to the draft budget ref 3.16 Insurance.
- 9.5 This item was taken with item 11. Members **received** the adjustment to the draft budget ref 2.6 Grounds Maintenance Contract. Members **agreed** to an additional £400.00 to this budget to incorporate the maintenance of the QE Orchard area.

9.6 Members **agreed** the addition of the QE Orchard budget of £200 to the draft budget for Green Spaces ref 2.5.

9.7 Members **considered** the proposal from the Chair Cllr V Davies for a whiteboard in the committee room and **agreed** to place £1200.00 in the budget.

10. **Grounds Maintenance 2012.**

Of seven tenders sent out only one was returned for consideration. Members unanimously **agreed** to proceed with Kent County Council's tender of £5,627.00 for the main contract. They did not agree to the quotation for maintenance on Roundwood Roundabout of £864.00. Members sought clarification from the Clerk if the latter maintenance has been included in the general maintenance budget ref 2.5. **Action** – parish office.

11. **Sandling Village Sign –**

Members **received** the report of a large split in the post of the new Sandling Village Sign. It was **agreed** that the item is returned to the February agenda and to await comments from the company who supplied the post. **Action** – parish office.

12. **Chess Club at Beechen Hall.**

Members considered Cllr Smith's request for a chess club at Beechen Hall and **agreed** that the parish office could not be responsible for organising this or any other club. It was agreed that reference to this could be made in any advertising/marketing literature. **Action** – parish office.

13. **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 14th February 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Item 6.4 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 9th January 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.33 p.m.

Councillors present; Mrs W Hinder (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies, Mr M Pepper, Mr K Perry, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller, together with the Clerk.

1. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

Cllr Ivor Davies reminded members that he was the Secretary of Walderslade Woods Group and that he would not take part in discussions on item 8.

Cllr Pepper notified members that he was predetermined o TA/0209/11 and so would not be voting.

2. **Apologies and absences**

Cllr Spain (convalescing)

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 5th and 12th December 2011.**

The minutes of the meeting, with the addition of Cllr Stead in the attendance list of the 5th December meeting, were **agreed** and **signed** as a true and correct record.

4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2361/4.1 Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road speed limit reduction. Members received the 2 updates and **agreed** that the KCC decision that the work would only be programmed after all KCC work had been completed was not acceptable. Members asked that clarification be obtained as soon as possible on the questions raised and that Cllr Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member, be advised of the situation. **Action** – office.

4.2 Minute 2361/4.2 inconsiderate parking Walderslade Village/Boxley Road. **Noted** no further reply had been received from Cllr Brake. It was agreed that another letter, would be sent to the Leader of Medway with the Police also receiving a similar letter. **Action** - Cllr Pepper.

- 4.3 Minute 2361/4.3 Flytipping letter Lordswood. Parish office will liaise with resident and PCSO concerning delivery of the letter.
- 4.4 Minute 2364/11.1 Walderslade Woods road reduction in speed limit. **Noted** Clerk was investigating whether Cllr Carter might be interested in allocating some of his devolved highway budget to gradually get the work. Cllr Ivor Davies suggested that for clarity, the A2045 Walderslade Woods (road) should have its name amended to Walderslade Woods Road, **agreed**. Cllr Davies also requested that in future reports/agenda it is always referred to as Walderslade Woods Road A2045. **Action** – office.
- 4.5 KIMS development, Grove Green. **Noted the** website would be live when the work was about to commence.

The meeting was not adjourned as no members of the public were in attendance.

5. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.**

5.1 MA/11/1349 Ecological Report regarding the site. Erection of 1no replacement dwelling with detached garage and associated works at Glenside, Boxley Road, Walderslade. **Ratified** the Clerks decision to respond *report noted*.

5.2 MA/11/1965 erection of 7no dwellings comprising 3no 3 bedded dwellings and 4no 2 bed houses at Penhurst Close, Grove Green. **Ratified** the Clerks response, after consultation with Committee members, *Wish to see refused (and reported to the Planning Committee) due to the:*

- *Loss of designated open space,*
- *No identified housing need,*
- *This is a green field site which, contrary to the ecological report, does have reptiles living on it.*
- *The height of the proposed development would be detrimental to the street scene.*
- *Failure to supply adequate off street car parking (there is only one visitor car parking space for 7 dwellings would result in on street car parking which would be a safety issue for pedestrians.*

The provision of the small green area planted with crab apple trees would have no benefit to the community as the site is fenced in.

MBC has been notified that the Parish Council did not receive a formal consultation and a message was left for the planning officer.

5.3 MA/11/2106 Conversion of garage to a habitable room at 53 Harvesters Way, Maidstone. *Do not wish to object.*

5.4 MA/11/2110 Outline application for the erection of a building for B1, B2, B8 and or vehicular showroom use with access to be considered at this time and all other matters reserved for future consideration at Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd, Cobtree House, Forstal Road, Aylesford.

Do not wish to object but concerns regarding additional HGV traffic on Forstal Road.

5.5 MA/11/2111 Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide a new builders merchant trade counter (B1c,B2,B8) units along with vehicular storage, access, service road and parking at Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd, Cobtree House, Forstal Road, Aylesford.

Do not wish to object but has the following comments:

- *There is concern about the additional HGV traffic on Forstal Road.*
- *There is concern that waste from any work ending up in the River Medway so the Planning Officer is asked to ensure that there are adequate conditions to ensure this does not happen.*
- *Supports the inclusion of a green roof.*
- *Paperwork included with the application states that there is no towpath at the rear of the site however there is a concrete path (adjacent to the river) that is a PROW and it is vitally important that this remains. The plans show that it is not being fenced in but the Planning Officer is asked to satisfy themselves that this is protected.*

5.6 MA/11/2131 single storey front extension at 1 Elm Tree Cottage, Lidsing Road, Gillingham.
Do not wish to object.

5.7 MA/11/2140 temporary siting of 2 storage containers (for a 5 year period) 6m long by 2.5 m wide and 2.5 m high. Replacement of boundary fence and field gate at Kent Wildlife Trust, Tyland Barn, Sandling.

Do not wish to object, would like to see that the containers 'blended' into the landscape to mitigate their impact.

5.8 MA/11/2177 Erection of first floor side extension at 22 Restharrow Road, Maidstone.
Do not wish to object.

5.9 KCC/MA/0517/2011 1 additional floor to approved depot office comprising office rooms and WC facilities at KCC Highway Services, Doubleday House, St Michaels Close.
Do not wish to object.

5.10 TA/0205/11 TPO No1 of 1969, application for consent to fell 1 Hornbeam and 1 Field Maple at 14 Iris Close, Walderslade.

Do not wish to object subject to the views of the Landscape Officer.

5.11 TA/0209/11 Application for works to trees, to crown reduce G1 (Hornbeam) and G2 (Hornbeam x 2) by 30% at 10 Travertine Road, Walderslade.

Cllr Pepper having been pre-determined answered a question concerning location but made no further comment.

Do not wish to object subject to the views of the Landscape Officer.

5.12 TA/0211/11 – Application for works to trees subject to TPO No 2 of 2001 works being to carry out coppicing of all Sweet Chestnuts in Heath Wood as shown on plan received 19 December 2011.

Do not wish to object subject to the views of the Landscape Officer.

5.13 MA/11/2000 advertisement consent for the installation of 4 internally illuminated fascia signs, 1 non-illuminated fascia sign, 3 flag pole signs and 3 internally illuminated free standing signs at Former Veglios Hotel Site, J6 M20, Forstal Road, Aylesford. Members **agreed** they did not require this application to be reported to the MBC Planning Committee.

6. **Planning applications taken to Planning Committee.**

Noted planning rota, Cllr Stead 5th January 2012. Cllr Spain 26th January 2012, if not available then Cllrs Brooks would cover.

7. **Planning Applications and appeals decisions.**

MA/11/1572	GRANTED	MA/11/1428	GRANTED	MA/10/1028	REFUSED
MA/11/0203	REFUSED	MA/11/0149	GRANTED	MA/11/0227	GRANTED
MA/11/0242	GRANTED	MA/11/0342	GRANTED	MA/11/0755	GRANTED
MA/10/2065	GRANTED	MA/11/0759	GRANTED	MA/11/0779	REFUSED
MA/11/0953	GRANTED	MA/11/0954	GRANTED	MA/11/1105	GRANTED
MA/11/1759	GRANTED	MA/11/1195	GRANTED	MA/11/1310	GRANTED*
MA/11/0333	GRANTED	MA/11/1765	GRANTED	TA/0169/11	GRANTED

8. **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group**

Cllr Springate reported that the Group had not recently met but 5 members of the group would be attending, along with Vinters Valley Nature Reserve volunteers, a specifically designed first aid course covering their work needs.

After discussion on the restrictions on expenditure the Chairman proposed **“that the £30 per item ceiling be removed and the group would be allowed to work within their grant allocation. The issue to be returned to the committee if there are any concerns/problems”**. **Agreed** with one abstention (Cllr Davies).

9. **Highways and Byways.**

Double yellow lines Orbit Close junction with hospital entrance. **Noted** MBC would submit the proposal for funding. **Agreed** the office would monitor the situation and if funding was

not allocated the issue will be returned to the committee. Clerk to advise members of timetable for awarding funding.

10. **KCC Consultation - Household waste recycling centre service.**

The report was **received** and responses were **agreed**. It was acknowledged that north ward residents would have serious problems if access to Medway sites was removed and it was **agreed** that Cllr Paul Carter should be informed of the concerns. The need to notify residents of the consultation was identified and this would be taken up with the office.
Action – office.

11. **Policy and procedures review.**

Minute 2364/12 Boxley PC wish list 2012. Members asked for some minor amendments to the spread sheet but agreed in principle to the new format. **Action** Cllr Pepper to resubmit spread sheet to the committee.

12 **Review of 2011/12 Projects.**

Noted all original projects have been completed. An additional project, speed reduction Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road, had been added and this was still on going. **Agreed** if not completed in this financial year then the cost for the work would be carried over to 2012/13 financial year.

13 **Matters for information.**

13.1 Vinters Valley LNR Wardens' report **received and welcomed**. Members requested that a thank you letter be sent for all his and the volunteers hard work. He was also to be thanked for his report which members greatly enjoyed,

13.2 **Noted** CPRE Planning e-learning course now available, details from parish office.

14 **Next Meeting.**

Next environment meetings 6th February 2012 (full) at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

15 **Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.**

Noted no update was received.

Meeting closed 9.05 pm.

Item 6.5 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 10th January 2012 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present – Mr. M Pepper (Chairman), Mrs. P. Brooks, Mr. I Davies, Mr. V Davies, Mrs. W Hinder and Mr. G Smith together with the Clerk.

1. **Apologies and non-attendance.**

None as all members were present.

2. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

None.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 15th November 2011.**

Cllr Vic Davies was of the opinion that part of minute 12.1 was incorrect. Members received the information that the Clerk had checked her notes of the meeting which supported the minute. After lengthy discussion a named vote on the accuracy of minute 12.1 was taken and it was **agreed** that, as far as could be recalled, it was an accurate reflection of the discussion. Voting was: Accurate -Cllrs Ivor Davies, Cllr Hinder, the Chairman; Abstaining Cllrs Brooks and Smith; Inaccurate Cllr Vic Davies.

The minutes of the meeting were **signed and agreed** as a correct record.

In view of issues raised in the discussion it was **agreed** (Chairman and Cllr Vic Davies abstaining) that the Clerk would produce a report to clarify the way the grant was paid to allow a review of current procedure and policy. Draft report to be supplied to Cllr Vic Davies to allow a response for the agenda. **Action** – Clerk.

4. **Matters Arising.**

- 4.1 Minute 2355/5.1 Accounting software. Members to receive an introduction to the system.
- 4.2 Minute 2355/5.2 Bad Debt. Members received the information and it was **agreed** that there would be a 'watching brief'.
- 4.3 Minute 2356/11.2 Independent Internal Auditor. **Noted** Mr. Funnell had agreed to continue for the financial year 2012/13.

No members of the public were present so the meeting was not adjourned.

5. **Financial report.**

- 5.1 **Noted** and **accepted** Income/Expenditure report of 3rd January 2012.
- 5.2 Reconciliation of accounts report of 3rd January 2012. It was **noted** that the report did not reconcile by £28.72 but it contained an audit trail to the explanation on the Co-operative statement. Members checked the audit trail to and explanation on the statement and were satisfied that action had been taken to resolve the discrepancy which would result in reconciliation in the next bank statement.
The reconciliation of accounts were **received and signed off as being accurate.**
Noted the explanation that the expenditure in Code 29 was high as a payment (not marked as such) from 2010/11 year had been included.
- 5.3 **Noted** Clydesdale Bank 3 month investment bond expires 21st February 2012. After discussion it was **agreed** that the Clerk would advise members of interest rates nearer the expiry date but in principle, to mitigate risk, that the amount be reinvested. Should the investment rate have dropped dramatically then the issue of whether to stay with Clydesdale Bank would be considered at the next meeting.
- 5.4 Members **noted** that the next Independent Internal Audit was booked for 9th February 2012.

6. **2012/2013 budget.**

Members **received** the draft budget. Concern was raised over the amount of funds being withdrawn from reserves and an explanation was given. Members **agreed** the Chairman's narrative. Members raised a number of issues relating to the budget resulting in the following:

- 6.1 Environment Committee grants (ref. 3.2 - 3.5) to be moved to the Finance Committee budget. This was an administrative move that did not change the amounts paid. The Walderslade Woods Group report would still be placed before the Environment Committee.
- 6.2 Estates Committee - whiteboard. Cllr Vic Davies queried why this had not been included in the Estates Committee budget. The Clerk notified members that a report was being sent back to Estates as this project might not be feasible and rather than have an unachievable project included in the budget she was suggesting that if it can go ahead then the Finance Committee be approached for an allocation from the contingency budget.
- 6.3 Estates Committee padded chairs. The Clerk notified members that she had thought this had been included in the budget but could not locate it. Cllr Vic Davies confirmed that he had thought it had been included. **Noted** if this had been missed off then an application would be made to the Contingency Fund.

In view of the changes it was **noted** that the budget paperwork would need to be reissued and the narrative amended.

"The budget is recommended to the Parish Council and that a precept of £81,916 be set" was proposed by the Chairman and **unanimously agreed.**

7 **Setting up on line statement access with HSBC.**

Received the report and request to set up on-line access, with no ability to make any transactions. The Clerk confirmed that 2 signatories would be required to authorise the bank to set up access and that the restrictions on any transactions would be clearly shown or stated on the document that they would sign. **Agreed**, proposed Cllr Ivor Davies seconded Cllr Hinder, that this be progressed.

8 **Outstanding Time off in Lieu.**

Details were submitted and **noted.**

9 **Policy and procedures reviews and adoption.**

- 9.2 Review of Policy and Procedures timetable for reviews. It was **agreed** that the Grounds Maintenance review in September was now no longer required by the Finance Committee as the Estates Committee was responsible for the contract.
- 9.3 Committee review of Financial Regulations. Members considered the document and made some minor adjustments that improved clarity and presentation. Additions were made to various items to include reference to Direct Debits and Standing Orders. **Agreed** amended document to be provided to Parish Council meeting
- 9.4 Review of current banking arrangements report was **received**. **Agreed** no change to the current arrangements.

10 **Pensions.**

Received and noted a briefing report on the change to the law and the effect that this will have on the Parish Council. **Action** – budget reminder to be built into the budget so the required funds will be allocated when N.E.S.T starts.

11 **Website and Facebook.**

Received the Clerks report. Members **agreed** the issues that could be used on Facebook but decided not to have alerts on individual planning announcements but rather a generic statement along the lines of *the Environment Committee agenda, including planning applications received has now been posted on the website*. **Agreed** that Facebook could be signed up to, this to happen as the new website is completed, but it would be used as an alert system to the website rather than a debating site. Anyone wishing to make a comment or suggest a posting would be asked to contact the parish office. It was suggested that the use of Facebook be gradually built up as there was concern about the work this might cause the office.

12 **Grant Request.**

None received.

13 **2012/13 budget.**

Members considered examples of the PR materials that were available. After discussion it was **agreed** to purchase card holders and pens. Rather than have the Council's name printed on the items it was suggested that the website address be included.

14 **Matters for Information.**

Members **noted** the Environment Committees' decision to remove the approval condition on Walderslade Woods Group for the purchase of items over £30. The Finance Committee confirmed that it still required the Group to produce a budget to release the grant.

As it was 9.30 p.m. the Chairman used his delegated power to extend the meeting time until 10.00 p.m.

15 **Date of Next Meeting.**

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

Meeting closed at 9.37 pm.

Item 6.6 Minutes of the Financial Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 11th January 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present – Mr. P Sullivan (Chairman), Mr. M Pepper, Mr. K Perry and Mr. A Springate together with the Clerk and Mr. I Davies (visiting councillor).

1. **Apologies and non-attendance.**

All members were present.

2. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of Financial Sub Committee 21st July 2011.**

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed and signed** as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising.**
None.

As no member of the public was present the meeting was not adjourned.

5. **Income and Expenditure 31st March 2011.**

Received report on the +10% or -10% variations. Discussion took place on the figures and the Clerk's written explanation. It was **agreed** that this was a valuable document and that a similar review should be taken after each financial year.

6. **Independent Internal Audit.**

Received and **noted** the 13th October 2011 report.

7. **Parish Councillor Audit.**

Received Cllr Springates' internal audit of 16th September 2011. Members discussed the value of spot checks.

8. **Audit Regime**

Members **agreed** that it was a valuable exercise and should be undertaken annually by each committee.

9. **Matters for Information.**

None.

10. **Date of Next Meeting.**

To be arranged as required however **noted** it was likely that a meeting would be needed in April 2012.

Meeting closed at 8.12 p.m.

Item 9.2 Draft Vision and Business Plan author Clerk. *Purpose of item: to consider the document. Clerk's comment: At a training session I attended it was recommended that Parish Councils should produce a 'business plan' and Finance Committee agreed I should draft a document whilst undertaking the budget work.*

Boxley Parish Council Vision and Business Plan.

The Parish Council (referred to as The Council) is committed to working for and with its residents.

The Council will have a strong self-awareness of its role within its community and also its position within the local authorities and government systems etc.

To achieve this the Council will work to the following standards:

1. **RELEVANT** – by being parish centred the Council will focus on projects that are identified as being of tangible benefit to part or all of the parish. It will work for the long term welfare and improvement of the parish and its communities. The Council will produce and regularly review its policies and procedures to ensure that the Council's approach, work and policies are kept up to date.
2. **RESPONSIVE** – it will respond positively and promptly to all complaints and queries from residents¹ and other organisations. It will identify and respond to relevant consultation from Government and other bodies.
3. **INCLUSIVE** - the Council welcomes local input and will work to its Community Engagement Strategy and actively seek to involve its residents. It will work to offer a genuine working partnership with its residents, parish based Charitable Trusts/organisations and when appropriate with its business community. It will work not only to serve but to empower its

¹ Complaints Policy.

residents. It will work to attract to the Council people from diverse backgrounds and to achieve this will, where possible, make available a parish allowance and subsistence allowances so that no member is 'out of pocket'.²

4. SUPPORTIVE - The Council offers financial support, in the form of grants, to parish groups and organisations related to the well-being of the parish and its residents.²
5. ACCESSIBLE – The Council has a parish office³ which is open and accessible to the residents. The Council, Councillors and office staff contact details are advertised on noticeboards, in leaflets and on the Council's website.
6. EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT– The Council will ensure that it continues with a realistic pay policy for its staff and allows for sufficient hours to ensure that work and projects can be completed.² It will ensure that the office is provided with adequate and up to date equipment/facilities. It will attempt to operate with a minimum of paperwork to remain cost effective.
The Council has a commitment to training Councillors and staff as this leads to a stronger Council.²
All projects and work will have a reasonable deadline/timeline produced to enable progress to be monitored.
The Council will undertake constructive reviews of its work and projects so as to learn from its successes and failures.
The Council will willingly consider changes to the way it works if it will make it more effective, efficient or would allow its service to be improved.
Projects will be Parish Councillor led with support from the parish office with due deference to the role of the Responsible Financial Officer⁴.
7. INTERACTIVE – The Council offers all residents the opportunity to speak at its meetings⁵ and also offers support and guidance on how to do this. It actively canvasses and welcomes residents views via its website, agenda, consultations etc. and has produced a Community Engagement Strategy to encourage such interaction when projects are proposed.
8. DEMOCRATIC – The Council will listen to its residents and communities.
The Council should campaign to ensure contested parish elections so new members may be elected onto the Council and to give the electors the chance to vote for their own representatives. Casual vacancies will be widely advertised and CVs invited for consideration at a meeting open to residents in order to co-opt members of the public to become Parish Councillors.
9. PROACTIVE – The Council will always attempt to plan ahead and have the financial ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances⁶. It will keep and regularly review a 'wish list' of improvements that it wishes to see in the parish. These improvements are to be drawn up in an open and accountable way to allow residents to suggest/identify local needs⁷.
10. PARTNERSHIP WORKING – this will be considered where this meets identified needs/aims/local commitments. The Council will openly consider opportunities to work in partnership and will consider financial involvement if needed.
11. OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE - It will endeavour to take all its decisions in open session and to supply in advance adequate information to allow residents to be become involved in an informed way. It will publish a monthly newsletter, maintain an up to date website, publish the chairman's annual report including an End of Year Statement. It will have clear and understandable policies and procedures so residents can see how the Council makes decisions.

² Budget provisions are made. Budget document shows legislation under which payment is made etc..

³ Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close ME5 9RU

⁴ Financial Regulations.

⁵ Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960.

⁶ Budget provisions, Reserves Policy, forward planning etc.

⁷ Wish List policy

12. **ESTATES** – The Council will be a responsible manager of its property. It will have clear plans for maintenance, replacement and repair of all its buildings, open spaces and responsibilities.

13. **FINANCIAL** – The Council will maintain a healthy reserve in order that it can be proactive in its service to the parish.⁶ Strong financial checks and risk assessments will be undertaken and investments and reserves will be reviewed regularly.

An annual budget and precept will be agreed. The budget will include forecasts for 3- 4 years in the future. The budget will be supported by an information document that gives details of maintenance programmes, contract finish dates and other information relevant to forward planning.

Grant support for community organisations will be considered after certain conditions are met and such organisations will be encouraged, and supported, to apply for grants from other bodies.⁸

The Council will continue to meet its legal requirements relating to the audit of its accounts.⁹

14. **SWOT ANALYSIS**

Analysis of present day strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Council.

15. **Strengths**

- Proactive, qualified, experienced and attentive office personal.
- A strong leadership exercised by the Chairman.
- Positive image
- Excellent policies and systems
- Financial reserves

16. **Weaknesses**

- Lack of knowledge of Boxley Parish Council in the parish
- Lack of a single heart/centre to parish
- Age and demographic of current councillors
- Inability to attract input from residents

17. **Opportunities**

- Development of new web site, development of a facebook presence to compliment the website.
- Four year elections to potentially attract 'new blood'.

18. **Threats**

- Loss of key personnel
- Reduction in MBC grants
- Apathy of residents
- Failure to attract new councillors

19. **TARGETS**

- To increase knowledge of the Parish Council and its work in the parish, localism may facilitate this as communities are empowered.
- To continue to produce relevant documents and leaflets that explain the work and systems of the Parish Council
- Training (Working With Your Council) for the Assistant Clerk
- To produce a successful replacement website
- To have a presence on facebook

⁸ Budget and Grants Policy.

⁹ Accounts and Audit (England) Regulation 2011.

- To consult with the Finance department at three monthly intervals to review the retail price index and inflation with particular relevance to external charges to Customers.
- To continue to work to the various financial strategies to ensure a financially sound Parish Council

Item 9.3 Draft paper on the 'community project' scheme proposal author Cllr Pepper.
Purpose of item: to consider the proposal and agree a document that can be supplied to the public.

This paper has been written to add more flesh to the bones over the proposal to invite the community to 'bid' for Parish Council monies for funding a project.

A proposed budget of £10,000 has been identified for 2012/2013. This budget may be allocated to one or several projects although initially a maximum of 2 projects would be set to ensure sufficient time, support and focus is given by the Parish Council. This does not imply that all of the £10,000 would be allocated. Each project may be partly or fully funded.

The applicant seeking funding and support will find the following guidance and requirements helpful when considering the suitability of their community project idea.

Many of the 'guidelines' here have been lifted from the Awards For All scheme as a best practice. The Parish Council may at a second and final consideration seek further information in line with the Awards For All scheme. A copy of the guidance will be available for the applicant who should familiarise himself/herself with the contents

Proposed guidelines for applications under the scheme:

- Preference will be given to projects - that have the widest benefit to the community and it is expected that the scale and scope would be identified by the applicant
- The project must meet the requirements of the Parish Council's anti-discrimination policies.
- The project must not be created to substitute for works proper for another authority (KCC, MBC, Environment Agency etc.) to pay for.
- The project must have been adequately researched and shown to be sustainable
- Evidence of any public consultation undertaken should be provided
- The project should have a fairly detailed milestone plan
- An evaluation of the health and safety risks is required
- A fully costed proposal should support the application
- The applicant may consider 'match funding' to increase the contribution being made to the project or to defray the cost on the Parish Council
- The applicant may wish to join with another group for support and practical help. However there must be a 'lead' and an accountable applicant.
- A project may run over 2 years. The milestone plan would demonstrate timely project planning and determination to conclude the project in as short a time frame as is reasonably practicable
- The group or persons willing to undertake the project should be identified and be prepared to give an undertaking to complete the project.
- The benefits to the community (tangible and intangible) should be identified as part of the proposal
- The sponsor (Parish Council) will require progress reports
- The sponsor will hold all monies and pay any contractors
- The sponsor will expect to see the project owner comply with the sponsors tendering procedures for every element of the work (buying in labour or materials) valued at over 10% of the project's total value to a minimum of £100. This is to ensure small low value projects can progress without incurring high costs in tendering. The applicant will have to obtain agreement to spend any monies with the clerk of the Parish Council before it is spent and produce receipts. The clerk will also advise on how the Parish Council's Financial Regulations 'deal' with any tendering.
- Post-completion on going costs must be identified

The Parish Council will:

- Form an evaluation panel comprising 5 people. A minimum of 3 will be Parish Councillors
- Agree the money allocated to the project and approve all payments
- Review the progress against the project plan by meeting the project team and visiting the project periodically
- Publicise the project
- Provide advice and support whenever and wherever requested or required to safeguard the project and monies.

Item 9.4 Precept referendum. *Purpose of item: to update members on the Governments response to the consultation.*

The Government's Localism Bill has provisions for council tax referendums. If a % increase threshold is exceeded then the Council has to arrange a referendum seeking the support of the local electorate. For the financial year 2012/2013 local precepting authorities will not be required to hold a referendum however the Government will monitor increases in this sector (which includes parish councils) and "*does not rule out setting principles which apply to higher spending town and parish councils in 2013/14*".

Members will remember that BPC responded to the consultation that referendums for parish councils should not go ahead.

More information on how principle authorities will be affected can be supplied on application to the parish office.

Item 10.2. Controlled crossing Point.

Work is programmed to commence on Mon 13th February 2012 (half term) and members wish to consider an opening ceremony. PCSO Andy Hawthorn will be attending the school to do some safety training and perhaps this could be scheduled to coincide (or be repeated) as part of the official opening.

Members views are sought.

Item 10.3 Energy. *Purpose of item: To consider Cllr Smiths request.*

Geoff Smith. A proactive parish council.

Much is being done about finding alternative sources of power (solar, tidal, wind) and this is a developing technology that is being pushed by the Government. I feel that Parish Councils should also become involved. There is also the issue of the increasing cost of power and the effect that this is having on our parishioners.

I would ask that the Parish Council take a lead on this issue by:

1. Actively lobby the Government to ensure that they keep the need high on their agenda. The recent changes to grants for solar energy and the cost of purchase back of energy indicate this slipping. I realise that there are changes suggested in the Retention of Business Rates consultation recently undertaken by the Government but I do not feel that these go far enough. I would ask that members consider sending a letter to Hugh Robertson MP.
2. Open dialogue with MBC about the countryside outside of the AONB as a suitable place for alternative energy structures. I would ask that members consider this.
3. Encourage MBC to actively work with farmers/business producing alternative energy. I would ask that members consider this.
4. Put links on the PC website to the Carbon Trust and other relevant organisations to help conserve energy. Investigate a site that gives information on oil clubs (a group of residents getting together to purchase oil which reduces costs). I have discussed with the parish office as to the feasibility of this and they assure me that it is easily done. I would ask that you give permission for the office to initiate this.

Item 10.4 Localism Act, Code of Conduct. *Purpose of item: to decide on options.*

Members have received in their pack a copy of the letter and are asked

- a) Whether they have any objection, in principle, to adopting a MBC produced Code of Conduct.
- b) Do they wish to have Councillors contact details displayed on the MBC site?
- c) Do they wish to have a description of the Parish Council included (if yes then to identify whether they wish the Parish Council to agree the statement, whether it is delegated to the Chairman of the Parish Council etc.).

The new website will be able to display the Register of Interest for councillors, probably in PDF form. Advice is being sought from MBC on the issue of home addresses being identified.

Item 11 Report from Cllr Paul Carter.

Dear Martin and Pauline,

My attendance at meetings this year has not been good and I apologise for this. My New Years resolution every year is to try and attend as many parish council meetings as possible. Every year I fail as more and more responsibility seems to come my way – probably self inflicted! I thought it might be helpful if I covered some of the major issues I have been grappling with over the past 12 months.

One of our key priorities has been responding to the challenge of delivering services with less money. This has initiated a restructure of the whole organisation (a loss of 1500 staff) and a focus on the 4 big themes of:

- o Better procurement/contract management,
- o Innovating, modernising and improving the way services are delivered – challenging the orthodoxy.
- o Personalisation – putting the customer in control e.g. through social care packages.
- o Prevention and enablement – reducing demand for intensive intervention through better use of preventative funding.

We live in uncertain times. A year ago, we had a critical report of our Children's Services, since then we have had to focused are efforts on recovery and its been all hands on deck and we are delighted to have since received a very encouraging OFSTED report confirming real and significant improvement in transforming Children's Services, and most importantly, that there are now no outstanding areas for priority action. There is still much work to be done but this is excellent progress from our dedicated staff.

In February David Willetts, the minister for universities and science at BIS, rang me to say that Pfizer were withdrawing from Sandwich, with a loss of some 2,400 jobs and asked me to chair the recovery task force. Since then, progress has been extremely encouraging with some 700 jobs now secure and Enterprise Zone status confirmed, which allows for business rate exemption, planning freedoms through local development orders and financial assistance in assuring quality broadband connectivity.

I was also very pleased to be able to confirm the success of our ambitious proposal for a Regional Growth Fund in East Kent, which has secured a substantial £40 million to support and expand local businesses and help to create new jobs in the area (on top of the Enterprise Zone status and significant investment in flood relief) with a focus on supporting existing businesses to expand and new businesses to be created around life sciences and greentech industries, as well as more broadly supporting the whole of the East Kent economy.

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement last month has added further impetus to my ambition to build a new Lower Thames Crossing which will relieve the awful traffic

congestion and unlock the massive potential in the Thames Gateway for new business and jobs in the county. The Government's commitment to kickstart growth with this major infrastructure project is welcome and - whichever of the three options it decides upon - I remain convinced it can be built with minimal impact on the public purse.

I am acutely aware of the impact the economic situation has had on job opportunities for young people, and KCC soon plan to launch a new jobs and training package to try and tackle youth unemployment which has almost doubled in the last three years for this age group – more news on this in February.

We've also been looking at the potential of the Government's new health reforms in Kent. Through our Kent Health Commission, we've been working with local GPs to help reshape health and social care, making the most of the new national reforms to get the best possible outcomes for the people of Kent. Bringing together existing best practice with the expertise, experience and ideas of health professionals, patients and local people, the Kent Health Commission will be presenting its report to the Secretary of State later this year. Any views or comments you have would be gratefully received – just [log on to our website](#) and let us know what you think.

On more local issues, the Maidstone Borough Council Local Development Framework is out to consultation. This will need careful watching, particularly their proposals that I cannot support around Junction 8 at Hollingbourne. Please let me know if I can be of any help. I have generally been able to assist my Parish Council by 'remote control' from County Hall. If you have any other issues, concerns, or problems that you feel I can be of help with, please let my office know and I will do my best to help find solutions. I also have funding available left in my members community fund which must be used up by the end of March so do get in touch with any projects that require support which would fit the bill.

Wishing you a very happy, peaceful and restful Christmas, and a successful New Year.

Item 12. Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Project. *Purpose of item: To officially agree the name for the community orchard.*

The Orchard Working Group had previously suggested (19th January 2011) a name - Weaving Jubilee Orchard and someone else has suggested Diamond Jubilee Orchard. There has however been no official discussion or agreement by the Council. As yet no response has been received about whether a royal dignitary will be available, the local event diary is set in February managed by the Lord Lieutenant.

Item 13 Policies and Procedures review. *Purpose of report: to consider and agree action.*

13.1 Parish Council – List and review of policies and procedures 2012/13.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the parish council and its office meets its duties and manages its risk effectively and efficiently. It is a rough timescale and will be subject to change as needed. The annual review of this document reminds members and the public of the existence of the policies and procedures and also allows for members to make amendments.

Reports to the parish council will be done annually/periodically/ or only when required. Policies and procedures may also be reported to reinforce their existence even though no change/amendments may be necessary.

** review as required either due to need or change in guidance/law.

January Review of this document to allow adjustments.
Member numbers for committees (in time for change at May meeting)

(office note – Chair to do minimum standards check, find Councillor volunteer for an internal audit

Office note- 2011 start to review utility suppliers -gas supplier contract (SWALEC) ends 13th May 2012)

February No meeting

March Equal Opportunities Statement. – every 2 year (odd) or **
Replacement Procedure (for project not managed by parish office).
Terms of Reference for Committees **

(Office note - place Standing Orders on this agenda to remind members of the planned review in April).

April Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations.
(office note – Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated)
(office note – Chair to do minimum standards check)

May Race Equality Review – every 2 year (odd) or **
SBE complaints re Code of Conduct. BPC policy.

June Guidance notes for site visits and lobbying **
(office note – Hall electricity supply contract ends 30.11.12 start review in June 2012
Office note- start to review CCTV, alarm & sound system 12mth contract ends 22.09.12
Office note - Review 12 month Investment Bonds expire Sept & Oct 2012 July Finance agenda
office note – appliance service contract for boiler and oven expires July 2012)

July Parish Councillor Allowances.
Press Policy
(office note – Chair to do minimum standards check).

August No meeting

September Adopted Code of Conduct – complaints **
Land & building purchase policy.
Internal Complaints. **
Draft Minutes on website
Civic recognition recommendations (take in confidence if needed)
(office note – Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated. find Councillor volunteer for an internal audit.
Santandar Investment Bond expires Oct 2012)

October Protocol for attending p.c. and committee meetings–every 2 year (odd) or**
Community Engagement Strategy – every 2 years (even) or **.

November Freedom of Information **
Records Management Policy **
(office note – Chair to do minimum standards check)
(office note – remind members about 20 day deadline for F of I.)

December None
(office note – Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated.)

Item 13.2 Committee membership numbers. *Purpose of item – to allow members to suggest changes if they wish.*

Apart from the Financial Scrutiny Committee all committees must include the Chair and Vice Chair of Parish Council, as per Standing Orders.

Environment Committee, 10 members. Financial Scrutiny Committee 4 members.

Estates, generally 8 Members but up to 10

Finance – 8 Members including Chair and Vice Chair of Estates and Environment Committees.

Item 15 Matters for information. *Purpose of report: information.*

15.1 Report from Steve Songhurst, Warden VVPT.

I would like to formally thank Boxley Parish Council for your recent generosity in awarding the reserve a further £1000 to help us to improve our visitor facilities at the reserve. Increased numbers of visitors to the reserve in 2011, particularly first time visitors, means this has become a priority for us. We would like to ensure our many visitors gain a better appreciation of the local history & nature on their doorstep and so over the next 6 months we will be using your recent financial award on pathway improvements, signage and wildlife and historical interpretation boards.

I have attached my wardens report on 2011, which hopefully gives a full update on the activities of the reserve over the last 12 months. I hope this also shows that we have tried hard to become a valued resource within Boxley Parish.

I know we often quietly just get on with running the nature reserve, without creating too much fuss, but 2012 will be the Trusts 21st 'birthday' and we will be planning a celebration in early April. I will send you more details in the near future and if you, or council members, would be able to attend you would be most welcome.

Once again many thanks, it is not an exaggeration to say that without the continued support of Boxley Parish Council, Vinters Valley Nature Reserve would not be able to achieve so much to protect wildlife and improve local people's understanding of the importance of nature in their lives.

Wishing everyone connected with Boxley Parish Council best wishes for 2012.

Steve Songhurst, Warden, Vinters Valley Nature Reserve.

The report referred to can be obtained from the parish office but has also been included on the January Environment Committee. (e-mail 16/12/11).

15.2 Business Rates retention - Report on the results of the consultation.

The Government has completed the review and details are available on www.communities.gov.uk. The following documents are available: Local government resource review - Proposals for business rates retention consultation - Summary of responses; Local government resource review - Proposals for business rates retention consultation - Government response. There is also a plain English guide.

461 organisations responded, 39 were Parish and Town Councils and Maidstone had 6 parishes. The view that Parish Councils should get some of the business rates was included in the summary but did not make it into the response. The change to legislation to give the retention power to District Councils is expected in the summer of 2011 with implementation in 2013.

15.5 Brief report from Kent Wildlife Trust

2011 has been another busy and very successful year for Kent Wildlife Trust with significant improvements to many of our reserves for both our wildlife and visitors. As will always be the case, this could not be achieved without the generosity of our partners, the loyal support of our members and the hard work of our volunteers.

Here are just a few highlights:

A new all-access, sensory 'Wildart Trail' in West Blean and Thornden Woods reserve, with carved animal sculptures, woven willow creatures and artwork on coppiced stumps and posts made by local children. All of this to ensure the next generation will know and love their local woods.

100 acres of chalk downland at Old Park Hill in Dover leased from Dover Harbour Board - a new nature reserve in urgent need of restoration.

Government announced the proposed Marine Conservation Areas around the shores of Kent. This follows many years of campaigning by The Wildlife Trusts. In Kent many volunteer divers and coastal surveyors have made a great contribution to our understanding of the seas that surround us.

BBC Wildlife Fund and Environment Agency back our project to save the rare Shining Ram's-horn Snail. Trust staff work with owners of wetland pasture near Canterbury - one of its few remaining UK sites. Many other species will benefit.

Best-ever flowering year for the rare Deptford Pink with over 700 spikes recorded at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve. Natterjack toads and sand lizards continue to thrive in the dunes at this site.

Avocets at Oare Marshes had a superb year – with 13 fledglings seen by visitors from the causeway.

Green-winged orchids are colonising land that was very recently intensive arable at Queendown Warren.

Working with English Heritage, the Trust has re-introduced sheep grazing to the steep bastion slopes at Dover Castle, for the first time since World War Two - a unique opportunity to extend the valuable plant communities of the chalk.

Trust membership has risen to over 31,000 and more than 100 local 'green' businesses now actively support us, giving us a stronger voice and confidence for the future.