



BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

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To Parish Councillors, members of the public and press.

25th September 2012

Members are hereby summoned and notice is given that a **Meeting of the Parish Council** will be held at the at **St Johns School, Provender Way, Grove Green ME14 5TZ on Monday 1st October 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. | |
| 2. Declaration of Interests or Lobbying. | (7.31) |
| Members are required to declare any interests or lobbying on items in this agenda. | |
| 3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 3rd September and 27th September 2012. | (7.33) |
| To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (pages 3-6). Minutes for 27 th September will be e-mailed to members and available at the meeting. | |
| 4. Matters Arising From the Minutes. | (7.46) |
| 4.1 Minute 2422/9.2 Quality Council. While an NALC review of 2 sections of the criteria is currently underway, no submissions for Quality Status will be accepted. Councils seeking reaccreditation will have their Quality Status extended and once the review is completed (early 2013) will have a 3 month grace period in which to submission their portfolios. | |
| 4.2 Minute 2434/5.1 Round Wood. Awaiting answer on the voluntary village green application submission. | |
| 4.3 Minute 2434/5.2 Website: Report on the Working Group meeting (17.09.12) (page 6). | |
| 4.4 Minute 2434/5.3 Parish Tour. To confirm a date, see report (page 6). | |
| 4.5 Minute 2434/5.4 Code of Conduct advert is appearing in the October edition of the Downs Mail. | |
| 4.6 Minute 2434/5.5 Community Project Grant: the closing date for applications was set for 28th September and arrangements will be made for the judging group to consider the applications received. | |
| 4.7 Minute 2434/5.6 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. Another reminder has been sent to MBC that the lease agreement was still outstanding due to the item relating to emptying of the dog waste bin. | |
| 4.8 Minute 2436/16 Parish Services Scheme: This will be discussed at the KALC Maidstone area meeting on 26 th September and Parishes have been asked not to respond until after this meeting – An update will be provided at the meeting. | |
| 5 Report from the PCSO and Police Issues. | (7.56) |
| 5.1 Crime statistics and report (page 6). | |
| 5.2 PCSO Contract. A meeting with Inspector Jon Bumpus has been arranged for Monday 15 th October, 2012 at 11am Beechen Hall. | |

To adjourn to enable members of the public to address the meeting. (8.04)

- 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 Committee meeting 3rd September 2012 (page 7 - 8).
- 6.2 Environment Committee meeting 10th September 2012 (page 8 - 20).
- 6.3 Finance Committee meeting 11th September 2012 (pages 20 - 22).
- 7 **Finance.** (8.20)
- 7.1 To note payments made out of meeting 04.09.2012 – 25.09.12 (pages 28).
- 7.2 To note receipts for the period 29.08.2012 – 25.09.12 (page 29).
- 7.3 Account balances as at 25.09.12 (page 28).
- 7.4 To authorise payments of accounts (list supplied at meeting).
- 7.5 Members are requested to submit suggestions or issues to the parish office or relevant committee for inclusion in the 2013/14 draft budgets.
- 8 **Land at Sandy Lane, Boxley.** (8.25)
To receive a verbal update.
- 9 **Power of Competency.** (8.35)
To consider the following resolution **“Boxley Parish Council, having met the criteria (Localism Act 2010 s8) of having a qualified Clerk and two thirds of its 15 Councillors elected at the May 2012 elections, adopts The Parish Council’s (General Power of Competence)(Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.”** See briefing note (page 22).
- 10 **Policies and Procedures Review.** (8.40)
- 10.1 Community Strategy see report (page 22- 25).
- 10.2 Civic Recognition Recommendations (page 25).
- 10.3 Protocol for members of the public attending parish council and committee meetings (page 26-27).
- 11 **Matters for Decision.** (8.50)
- 11.1 Speedwatch: whether to re-activate the programme see report (page 27).
- 12 **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.** (8.55)
To allow the councillors to report and discuss matters affecting the parish.
- 13 **Reports from councillors/office.** (9.05)
Representatives who attended any meeting on behalf of the parish council are invited to give a brief summary.
- 14 **Matters for Information.** (9.10)
- 14.1 Medway Valley Countryside Partnership's 2012 Newsletter (e-mail 10/09/12)
- 14.2 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Countryside Day 2012 – Planning for the future of this fine landscape. Friday 12th October at Cobham Hall School, Cobham Nr Gravesend DA12 3BL. 12.30 – 4.30pm.
- 14.3 Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership newsletter (e-mail 04/09/12)
- 14.4 KCC Highways – Parish Seminar – Monday 8th October, 9am – 1pm, Thistle, Brands Hatch Road, Longfield DA3 8NG
- 15 **Next Meeting.** (9.15)
Monday 5th November at European School of Osteopathy, Boxley Village ME14 3DZ. Councillor requests for agenda items are to be submitted no later than 23rd October 2012.

Clerk to the Council.

Items to be returned to a future agenda. Power of Competence; Round Wood Village Green status; Quality Council application;
In accordance with policy the meeting should close no later than 9.30 pm but the Chairman has devolved powers to extend it by 30 minutes.

Item 3 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 3rd September 2012. *Purpose of item: to agree and sign.*

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at The European School of Osteopathy, Boxley village on Monday 3rd September 2012 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Councillors present – Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr V Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr Bob Hinder, Mrs Wendy Hinder, Mr D Holmes (after item 4), Mrs K Macklin, Mr K Perry, Mr A Springate, Mr P Sullivan and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk, Borough Councillor D Butler, PCSO Hawthorn, 2 members of the public and 2 members of the press.

1. **Apologies and absences.**

Cllrs Harwood (work), Smith (unwell) and Spain (holiday). County Councillor Paul Carter (KCC commitment).

2. **Declaration of Interests or Lobbying.**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 2nd July 2012.**

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

4. **Co-option to Parish Councillor Vacancy (South Ward.)**

Mr Dennis Holmes was invited to address the meeting and answer members' questions. He was then asked to leave the room and members voted on and **agreed his co-option to the position of Parish Councillor (South Ward)**. Lengthy discussion took place on the fact that, despite warding, the majority of Councillors now lived in the North Ward. Regrets were expressed that no residents of the South Ward had applied to join the Council although the elections and the vacancy had been extensively advertised.

Mr Holmes signed his Declaration of Office and was invited to join the meeting.

Item 6 and the adjournment for the public were taken at this point.

5. **Matters Arising From the Minutes.**

5.1 Minute 2421/4.1 Round Wood. **Noted** the request to withdraw the village green application was approved by KCC and signs, giving the public the right to comment, had been erected concerning the voluntary registration application.

5.2 Minute 2421/4.4 Website. **Noted** the working group would be meeting shortly to decide on what further work, if any, was required. Members were asked to pass on their views or comments to the parish office.

5.3 Minute 2422/9.1 Parish Tour. Members approved the itinerary and asked for a walk through Vinters Valley NR to be arranged. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would propose a date to members for the tour.

5.4 Minute 2422/10 Code of Conduct **Noted** advert had not yet been placed due to a complication caused by KALC Maidstone area committee.

5.5 Community Project Grant. **Noted** closing date for applications has been set for 28th September and this will then be progressed with the judging group.

5.6 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. **Noted** The lease agreement was still outstanding due to the item relating to emptying of the dog waste bin; a reminder had been sent to MBC. The Chairman informed members that he had received a letter from the Queen's Lady in Waiting thanking the Council for their gift of the CD and accompanying message of congratulations, a copy of which would be placed on the website. Cllr Vic Davies then informed members that a total of £200 had been raised through the sale of the CD and had been donated to Maidstone Mencap. The Chairman thanked Cllr Davies for his work on designing and producing the CD. The Clerk notified members that the Lottery Fund had accepted the end of project report and had signed it off.

6 Report from the PCSO and Police Issues.

- 6.1 **Received and noted** crime statistics and report.
- 6.2 PCSO contract. **Noted** the police are taking legal advice and the Chairman had been invited to a meeting to discuss the situation with Chief Inspector Bumpus.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.21 pm to allow a member of the public to address the Council about a planning application for shops at Penhurst Close. His comments were noted by members without comment. As it was recognised that the permitted 3 minutes for the public to speak had not been sufficient for him to list all his objections and concerns, he was encouraged to send a letter for circulation to members of the Environment Committee. The meeting reconvened at 8.27 pm.

7 Draft Minutes of Meetings since Previous Parish Council Meetings.

Noted and Received:

- 7.1 Environment Committee meeting 2nd July 2012, a mistake concerning location was identified.
- 7.2 Environment Committee meeting 9th July 2012.
- 7.3 Finance Committee 10th July 2012.
- 7.4 Estates Committee 14th August 2012, a request for a slight amendment was made.

8 Finance.

- 8.1 **Noted and received** payments made out of meeting 03.07.12 – 28.08.2012. Appendix A.
- 8.2 **Noted and received** receipts for the period 26.06.12–28.08.2012. Appendix B.
- 8.3 **Noted and received** account balances as at 28.08.12. Appendix C.
- 8.4 **Authorised** payments of accounts.
- 8.5 **Noted and received** the signed off Annual Return for 2011/2012.
- 8.6 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 signatories; and that they were personally responsible for keeping their Register of Interests details up to date.

9 Land at Sandy Lane, Boxley.

An update on the current situation was **received**.

10 Flag at Beechen Hall.

Members **agreed** that only the Union Flag would be flown at the hall and that, as was becoming common practice elsewhere, it would normally be flown continuously because of the difficulty of rostering staff to raise and lower it. The Clerk assured members that protocol would be followed when state mourning was declared and also that the design of the flagpole would be such as to ensure that the flag could not be tampered with.

11 Parish Council Payments Consultation.

Ratified the Council's response that supported the removal of the 2 signatories' requirement.

12 Matters for Decision

- 12.1 Action with Communities in Rural Kent Annual Meeting on Thurs 13 September 2012, any interested members would contact the office.
- 12.2 KALC Annual Finance Conference Saturday 20th October 2012 at Lenham Community Centre. Cllr Macklin and the Chairman expressed interest in attending and the Clerk would supply details to them. **Action Cllrs Macklin, I Davies and the Clerk.**

13 Reports from Borough and County Councillors.

Cllr Wendy Hinder brought up the issue of inadequate highway maintenance and the problems and complaints that this was causing. It was **noted** that the issue would be

discussed at the next Environment Committee meeting.
Cllr Butler discussed the Core Strategy Consultation and notified members that Core Strategy public meetings were being held by MBC.

14 **Policies and Procedures Review.**

- 14.1 Code of Practice for Handling Complaints against the Parish Council. It was **agreed** that, with the amendments required by the change to the Code of Conduct, the document was still fit for purpose.
- 14.2 Policy on dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints. **Agreed.**
- 14.3 Dispensations (new policy). **Agreed**, after discussion, the proposal from the Chair that the proposed policy be adopted with the Proper Officer of the Council dealing with any requests for dispensation.
- 14.4 Land and Building Purchase Policy. Members **agreed** that the policy was still fit for purpose but, for the sake of clarity, Cllr Macklin proposed seconded by Cllr Bob Hinder that it be placed on record that "**this policy allows the Parish Council to consider purchasing land solely to stop detrimental development**". This was **agreed** with 1 abstention.
- 14.5 Draft Minutes on Website. **Agreed** as still fit for purpose. It was also **agreed** that this policy need only be returned to the Council if problems arose.
- 14.6 Standing Orders Revisions (due to changes brought about by the Localism Act 2010). **Agreed.**

Noted the planned review of policy and procedure for Internal Complaints and Civic Recognition Recommendations had been deferred to the October meeting.

15 **Reports from councillors/office.**

- 15.1 Walderslade Ward (Medway) PACT Meeting, 16 July 2012: report by Cllr I Davies.
- 15.2 Friends of Boxley Warren Meeting 21/8/12: report by Cllr I Davies.
- 15.3 Cobtree Country Park: report from Cllr Smith.
- 15.4 Maidstone JTB: report from Cllr Bob Hinder. Members were concerned that Cllr Hinder had not been allowed to speak to the Committee and it was **agreed** the Chairman would write a letter concerning the issue. **Action Cllr I Davies.**

16 **Parish Services Scheme.**

Members **received** an update on the situation. It was **agreed** that the latest information from KALC should be circulated to members for consideration but concern was expressed that a petition would not work and that a parish poll would be very expensive. Cllr Macklin suggested that the Parish Council should consider putting to Maidstone Area KALC that it uses the new Right to Challenge legislation against MBC. The Clerk was asked to produce a briefing paper. **Action: Clerk.**
Cllr Butler agreed to take up the issue regarding the maintenance of trees on open spaces.

As it was 9.30 pm the Chairman used his devolved powers to extend the meeting by 30 minutes.

17 **Matters for Information.**

- 17.1. Agenda items, clarification from the Parish Clerk.
- 17.2 Report from Mike Phillips (Mid Kent Downs Officer) Celebrating Boxley Warren Update for Boxley Parish Council – April 2012
- 17.2 ACRK Rural News 118, 119 and 120.
- 17.3 Kent County Playing Fields Association newsletter August 2012.
- 17.4 Openness and transparency – a guide for councillors (sent electronically to all councillors).
- 17.5 Medway Neighbourhood Watch newsletter issue 28.
- 17.6 KALC Maidstone Area Committee minutes 25.07.12.
- 17.7 Thank you letter from Friends of Boxley Church for the grant.
- 17.8 Thank you letter from Kent Wildlife Trust. The grant will go towards updating a walks leaflet as well as installing an information board at the Tyland Barn site.
- 17.9 Cobtree Park newsletter Aug – Sept 2012.

18 Next Meeting.

Monday 1st of October 2012 at 7.30 pm at St Johns School, Grove Green.

Meeting closed at 9.38 p.m.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Item 4.3 Website *Purpose of item: for information and to agree recommendations of the working group.*

Assistant Clerks' report: The meeting highlighted a number of housekeeping type issues which will be undertaken over the next couple of weeks. There were further questions raised that only the hosting company can answer and a request has been submitted. The website will now be managed by the parish office and any councillor requesting information to be placed on there should contact either myself or Pauline.

One outstanding issue that members' views are sought on is whether on the Parish Councillor pages photographs and a brief resume of individual councillors are included.

Item 4.4 Parish Tour; *Purpose of item to confirm a date and suggest any additional areas to visit.*

The 27th October had been suggested but as this coincides with school holidays and some Councillors have child care commitments, Councillors were asked to confirm their availability in November and from responses so far the 24th November appears to be the most popular date.

Item 5 Crime figures for Boxley. *Purpose of item: information.*

Crime figures for Boxley 21/08/2011 to 20/09/2011

Burglary

06/09/2012, Gleamingwood Drive, Chatham, 2 Bicycles, Golf clubs and hand tools stolen.
06/09/2012, Larchwood Close, Chatham, 2 Bicycles stolen, Garage on-bloc.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Lawn Mower, Strimmer and kids toys stolen.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Lawn Mower stolen.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Rotavator stolen.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Landscaping tools stolen.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Pest control items stolen.
08/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Lawn Mower stolen
10/09/2012, Boarley Lane, Sandling, Power Tools stolen
10/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Lawn mower, Hand tools and a Crash Helmet stolen.
11/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Power drill stolen.
15/09/2012, Harrow Way, Weaving, Jewellery stolen.
16/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Power tools and a bicycle stolen.
18/09/2012 Higham View, Sandling, Power tools and a bicycle stolen.

Theft of a motor vehicle

30/08/2012, Larchwood Close, Chatham, Vehicle stolen.

Theft from a motor vehicle

19/09/2012, Boxley Road, Chatham, Mobile phone stolen.
19/09/2012, Briar Fields, Weaving, 4 Wheel Centre caps stolen.
19/09/2012, Henley Fields, Weaving, 2 Fog lamps stolen.
19/09/2012, Old Chatham Road, Sandling, Shoes stolen from a lorry.

Item 6. Draft Minutes of Meetings since Previous Parish Council Meetings.

Purpose of item: To receive.

Item 6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 3rd September 2012 at European School of Osteopathy, Boxley commencing at 9.43 p.m.

Councillors present –Mrs W Hinder (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr B Hinder, Mr K Perry, Mr A Springate, and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk and Mr D Holmes.

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

Cllr Wendy Hinder notified members that she had been lobbied on item 4.

2. Apologies and absences

Mrs A Spain (holiday).

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

3. Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.

3.1 MA/12/1078 Erection of a single storey side extension at 12 Olivine Close, Walderslade. **Ratified** Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Ivor Davies, Cllr P Brooks.

Do not wish to object. However members have concerns that this further addition to the original footprint constitutes over-development of the site and also it will have a detrimental impact on the street scene when looking into and out from the cul-de-sac at the side of the property.

3.2 MA/12/1218 Alteration to external appearance at level 3/Roof level of existing building to facilitate conversion of plant/storage areas into office accommodation at The Maidstone Studios, New Cut Road, ME14 5NZ. **Ratified** Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Ivor Davies.

Do not wish to object.

3.3 MA/12/1234 Listed building consent to remove feather edge boarding and replace with treated stained boards to same profile at Barn Cottage, Boxley Road, Boxley ME14 3DN. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder.

Do not wish to object.

3.4 MA/12/1326 Variation of condition 10 of planning permission MA/11/1349 (The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans 1540.PO.11 & 12 received 9/8/11 and 1540.PO.10 Rev A and 14 Rev A received 10/10/11) being alterations to fenestration, enlargement of chimney, finished floor level increased BY 300mm and repositioning of garage at Glenside, Boxley Road, Walderslade ME5 9JE. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Ivor Davies

Do not wish to object

3.5 TA/0085/12 application to reduce crown by 60% to 5m above ground level of 2 Ash Trees at Sandhurst, Grove Green Road, ME14 5JT. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Perry.

Make the following comments but defer to the Landscape Officer's view; concern about the proposed 60% reduction which seems excessive

3.6 TA/0090/12 application to reduce crown of 3 Hornbeams by 30% at 2 Olivine Close ME5 9NQ. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Perry.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.

3.7 TA/0102/12 - Application to crown lift to 6m and thin canopy by 15% 2 Hornbeam and re-coppice 1 Hornbeam at 8 Round Wood Close, Walderslade ME5 9UL. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Perry. *Make the following comments but defer to the Landscape Officer's view; concern as no reason identified as to why the work needs to be done.*

3.8 MA/12/1390 Erection of a single storey side extension at 20 Spenlow Drive, Walderslade ME5 9JT.

Do not wish to object but concerns as the development is right up to the boundary. Do not wish the application reported to the Planning Committee.

3.9 MA/12/1424 Erection of a two storey side extension at 27 Silver Tree Close, Walderslade, ME5 9ST.

Do not wish to object.

3.10 TA/0046/12 - Tree Preservation Order application: TPONo.2 of 1991 an application for consent to cut back all branches of all trees overhanging 11 Wents Wood at 11 Wents Wood, Weaving, ME14 5BL.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.

3.11 TA/0114/12 - An application for consent to prune back to boundary overhanging branches of three Maple Trees, two Ash Trees, one Hazel and Leyland Cypress; all trees being subject to Tree Preservation Order number 24 of 1987 at 4 & 5 Greenways, Grove Green, Weaving ME14 5JU.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view. Concern was raised that the application had no indication of the quantity of the work being requested.

3.12 TA/0121/12 - Tree Preservation Order application: TPO No.2 of 2001: an application for consent for works to trees as described in application TA/0121/12 at Heath Wood, Sandy Lane, Penenden Heath ME14 3DJ.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view, please note that this area may not be in the parish boundary.

4. **KCC vegetation maintenance.**

The Chairman notified members of the number of complaints that were being received about the lack of vegetation maintenance by KCC Highways Department. It was a particular problem in the North Ward due to the woods etc. but there were also problems in the South Ward especially in the rural areas. Discussion took place on what could be done and the Clerk was asked to obtain the KCC policy on what was deemed safety critical. Members **agreed** that the Council might have to become more proactive in trying to get extra cuts. It was also suggested that perhaps the Council, being mindful of the current financial situation, could create a priority areas list so that these could be targeted. Cllr Bob Hinder suggested that this could be an issue taken to the Maidstone JTB. It was agreed that this needed to be discussed further

5. **Next Meeting.**

Next Environment meeting 10th September 2012 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 10.08.

<p>Item 6.2 Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Monday 10th September 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm.</p>

Councillors present; Mr K Perry (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies Mr P Dengate, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk and 10- members of the public.

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllrs Spain, B Hinder and W Hinder (holidays).

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

All members declared lobbying, by residents, on MA/12/1426. The Chairman notified members that he personally knew the agent for the application and so that there could be no concerns raised he would abstain from voting. Councillors confirmed that they had not been lobbied by the developer. Later on in the meeting members declared lobbying, by Borough Councillors, on the Core Strategy consultations (items 11 & 12).

In view of the public interest the Chairman took MA/12/1426 and item 4 at this point in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.33 pm to allow members of the public to comment on MA/12/1426 but as letters of objection had been written and seen by members they choose not to comment. The developers present offered to answer any questions but did not, at this stage, wish to make a statement. The meeting reconvened at 7.34 pm.

A 5 minute comfort break (8.02pm – 8.07 pm) was taken after MA/12/1426.

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 9th July 2012.**

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

4. **Land at Impton Lane.**

Mr Begeman of Kitewood addressed members about the land at Impton Lane and the wish of the company to engage with the Council about future development of the 5.5 hectare site. Issues covered in the general discussion covered.

- Areas of Ancient Woodland and the ecological restraints.
- Previous planning history.
- Community usage.
- Local housing needs.
- The previous plan to development the front of the site (adjacent to Walderslade Woods Road) with a Scout Hall was not now feasible.
- The company would now be interested in developing the middle area of the site.

It was **noted** that Cascade (part of the Kitewood Group) could work in conjunction with the Parish Council to arrange for a housing needs survey to be undertaken.

Mr Begeman was thanked for his attendance and it was **agreed** that the company would need to make some form of submission of ideas before the issue could be considered any further by the Council.

5. **Matters Arising From Minutes.**

5.1 Minute 2415/4.1 marker at Cossington Lane. After considering costs for an Oak fingerpost it was **agreed** that a cost for a metal and aluminium post would be sought. **Action** – parish office.

5.2 Minute 2415/4.2 PRoW Round Wood valley. **Noted** the parish office was in consultation with KCC to have a deed of dedication (the most cost effective route for officers) submitted rather than a lengthy form.

5.3 Minute 2415/4.3 Lidsing Road additional signage request. **Noted** reasons why KCC would not consider additional signs. It was **agreed** to consider this is issue with the poor maintenance review. **Action** – parish office.

5.4 Minute 2416/8.1 Boxley Road/Grange Lane speed restriction. **Received** Cllr Bob Hinder's report. The Maidstone JTB response to parish council letter would be awaited.

6. **Planning applications and appeals decisions.**

MA/12/0529 – Amended plans for the erection of new two storey classroom block for Invicta Grammar School and new three-storey classroom block for Valley Park School

at Valley Park Community School. **Ratified** Assistant Clerk's decision, after consulting with Cllr Wendy Hinder and Cllr Kevin Perry. *Do not wish to object.*

MA/12/1426 – Erection of single storey building comprising four retail units for uses falling within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A5 or D1 with associated pedestrian and vehicular access ways, refuse stores, car parking and landscaping at Land at Penhurst Close, Grove Green.

Lengthy discussion took place on the application with questions asked of the land owners and agent. It was **noted** that 8 objections from residents had been received. Members decided (5 votes for objection with the Chairman abstaining):

Wish to see refused for the following planning reasons:

- *Highway issues. The development would attract additional traffic and potential on-street car parking in Penhurst Close causing a hazard for pedestrians and other road users. The developers are relying on potential customers using the Tesco Car Park however if this becomes unavailable or proves an unattractive option to customers they would use the car parking at the rear which would be inadequate.*
- *Impact on residents. Any additional traffic, especially frequent traffic movements associated with such development, on the close would have an adverse impact on the residential amenity and quality of life for residents living there.*
- *Noise pollution. The type of development planned for the site, especially A3 & A5 is inappropriate for a small residential close. The late night traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) associated with such development will have a detrimental impact on Penhurst Close residential properties and would also impact on the residential properties on Grove Green Lane and Weaving Street.*

Machinery associated with A3 & A5 development is often poorly insulated and when in such close proximity to residential properties will have, especially late at night, an unacceptable impact on residents.

- *Air pollution. It is impossible to eradicate food smells from A3 & A5 development and again the close proximity to residential properties would make such development unacceptable.*
- *Litter and anti-social behaviour. Penhurst Close and the open space at the end has, because of its isolation from the surrounding roads and its position close to the minor shopping area, attracted anti-social behaviour in the past and it is likely that this development, especially if A3 & A5 is allowed, would attract anti-social behaviour. Concern was raised about the alleyway between the development and the Dentist.*

If the Planning Committee was minded to agree the development then members asked that the following conditions be imposed:

1. *Do not allow A3 & A5 development. If allowed there should be a condition requiring owners to undertake regular litter picks of the Close and Open Space.*
2. *Restrictions on opening hours and delivery times to ensure residents are not subject to disturbance early in the morning, late at night or on Sundays.*
3. *Noise suppressors and relevant insulations on machinery to mitigate against noise.*
4. *Installation of proper controls/machinery to stop strong smells etc.*
5. *Landscaping should reflect and compliment the planting at the adjacent community orchard.*
6. *A proper planning out crime survey. Concern was raised over the alleyway being created and the lack of lighting and security.*
7. *No flashing or illuminated signs as this would disturb residents living in close proximity to the units.*

MA/12/1377 – Erection of a single storey rear extension at Randbrook, Tyland Lane, Sandling, ME14 3BL. *Do not wish to object.*

National Planning Policy Framework Training 2nd August 2012. **Noted** a copy of the presentation given by MBC was available from the parish office.

MA/12/1565 – Single storey extension at Ipplepen, Weaving Street, Weaving ME14 5JN.

Do not wish to object, but wish to point out that the sky lights in the development may be overlooked if there is a window in the adjacent property.

MA/12/1603 – Erection of a two side extension, single storey front and rear and extension of driveway and vehicular crossover at 24 Olivine Close, Walderslade ME5 9NQ.
Do not wish to object.

TA/0085/12 – Tree Preservation Order application TPO No. 24 of 1987 an application for consent to reduce crown by 60% to 5m above ground level of 2 (no) Ash Trees and 4 Leylandii at Sandhurst, Grove Green Road, Weaving ME14 5JT.

Parish Council wishes to reiterate its previous comments.

TA/0125/12 Application for consent to crown lift canopy of Hornbeam to allow 4m ground clearance and reduce crown by 30% at 15 Celestine Close, Walderslade ME5 9NG 17/09/12.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.

TA/0129/12 application to reduce row of Field Maples to previous cuts and fell 2 no conifer trees at Trefilan, 6 Greenways, Weaving ME14 5JU.

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.

TA/0137/12 – Tree Preservation Order No 1 1969: An application for consent to remove one branch of a hornbeam tree overhanging the rear garden at 10 Violet Close, Walderslade ME5 9ND

Do not wish to object but defer to the Landscape Officer's view.

7. **Planning Applications and Appeals Decisions.**

MA/11/1414 REFUSED.

8. **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group**
Received Cllr Springate's report.

9. **Highways and Byways.**

9.1 Beechen Bank Road, Boxley Road. **Noted** the speed limit reduction work had been completed but there was still a missing sign, old white lining that should be refreshed etc. These issues had been notified to KCC. **Action** – parish office.

9.2 **Noted** KCC Member Highway Fund & Community Fund 2012/13. Members were asked to notify the parish office of any suggestions, including maps if appropriate. **Action** – Councillors and parish office.

9.3 Signage at KH64 – North Downs Way. **Noted** KCC are looking to update the website and change the post so that motorbike riders are kept away from the area.

9.4 Advertisement vehicles parked on Gleamingwood Drive. It was **noted** that 2 to 3 vehicles had been parked there for weeks on end often without moving. All were taxed but their positions and number of vehicles was causing safety issues for other road users. It was **agreed** that the Police would be notified as would Enforcement. **Action** – parish office.

10. **Consultation on revision of DforT speed limit circular.**

Members **received** the briefing note and after discussion **agreed** the response.

Q1. Do you agree that this advice about introducing 20mph zones and limits provides useful guidance to authorities considering speed management in urban areas? If not explain your reasons.

YES.

Q2. Do you agreed that traffic authorities should be able to consider the implementation of 20mph limits over a number of roads, where mean speeds at or below 24mph are already achieved. If not explain your reasons.

YES.

Q3 NO COMMENT.

Q4. Do you agree that the compliance with air quality limits could be a factor in the choice of speed made by traffic authorities? If not explain your reasons.

YES.

Q5. Do you have other comments about the drafting of the revised circular?

The Parish Council welcomes the clarification in the draft circular but consider that the Department For Transport is missing an opportunity to vastly improve the safety and quality of life for rural and village residents and wishes to make the following comments.

Section 7. Rural Speed Management

Para 113. The 600m assessments should be increased or a safeguard put in place to ensure traffic authorities have to also take a holistic view too. The crash record of some rural roads can be extremely poor but this is not recognised if the road is divided into 600m sections.

Para 114. Should include a strong reference to the need to consider whether a footway exists and also to sight lines that are restricted by curves, hedgerows or banks.

Table 2. Consideration should be given to revising the table to ensure that rural lanes (A or B classification) without footways are not automatically allowed to have 60mph limits. It is considered that many rural roads without footways with a 60 mph limit are dangerous for vulnerable users.

Para 116. The Parish Council considers that the guidance should be changed so as not to allow a 60mph speed limit on a C or unclassified rural road. This is to protect vulnerable road users and drivers.

Para 118. Rather than 'welcome applications' for zonal speed limits (40 mph in an AONB for example) could the DFT not set a standard and automatically require traffic authorities to install 40 mph limits on undivided roads? Too often traffic authorities ignore the needs of residents and visitors to such areas and can use the guidance to 'prove' there is no requirement to do so. A safeguard could be included that would allow an appeal to the DFT if it felt that it could not allow a 40 mph speed limit.

It is the Parish Council's experience that despite all the evidence (much of it quoted in the guidance) that rural crashes are a) more lethal - *68% of road deaths in Britain occur on rural roads* and b) can be reduced - *A 90% death rate at 60mph is reduced to 50% at 48mph* there has been a reluctance, or that is the experience in this parish, for the traffic authority to proactively deal with the issue. Also due to the financial situation many Traffic Authorities have reduced roadside vegetation maintenance and this is having an adverse impact on sight lines so it is imperative that speed is reduced.

The Parish Council understands that the DFT is trying to give traffic authorities the flexibility to decide on speed limits but what protection is there for rural residents and visitors when that flexibility allows a traffic authority to choose not to act?

11. Core Strategy; Strategic Sites Allocation Consultation.

Members **received** the Clerk's briefing notes including comments by the two Borough Councillors.

Lengthy consideration took place including discussions on:

- NPPF policy and Government's presumption for development.
- Core Strategy policies.
- Traffic issues surrounding Grove Green.
- Traffic flows through surrounding areas.
- The Strategic Gap and whether due to Government policy and the current development this was already lost.
- Impact on natural environment and AONB.
- Impact on residents from development at junction 7.
- Impact on Grove Green from traffic generated by the 'Sutton Road' development proposal.
- Parish Council wish list and community needs.
- Junction 8 and the impact of any or no development at the sites there.
- The almost certain inevitability that the strategy would be adopted, could there be benefit to the parish in offering to work with MBC in mitigating the effect of some at least of the proposals rather than objecting outright to the whole.

Members expressed concern that without strong proactive input from the Parish Council a chance to improve the lives and futures of Grove Green, especially the traffic issues, would be lost.

Members **agreed** to respond.

Policy SS1 Strategic housing location to the north west of the urban area.

Policy SS1a Bridge Nursery. **No comment.**

Policy SS1b - East of Hermitage Lane. **No comment.**

Policy SS1c - West of Hermitage Lane. **No comment.**

Policy SS2 - Strategic housing location to the south east of the urban area

Policy SS2a - Langley Park

Policy SS2b - North of Sutton Road

Policy SS2c - North of Bicknor Wood

It is likely that many residents of the proposed 1,075 new dwellings will use Willington Street/Ashford Rd/New Cut to access the motorway at junction 7 although the area is slightly closer to junction 8. Policies SS2a-c contains S106 payments for highway improvements in the immediate area but with no contribution to highway improvements further afield.

Policy SS4, Newnham Park deals with traffic issues caused by the proposed development but it contains no reference to any additional traffic from the 3 'Sutton Road' development areas. The lack of a strategic overview connecting the 2 increased traffic flows is considered a weakness in both the Core and Integrated Transport Strategies.

It is considered that the SS2a-c policies should contain Section 106 contributions to highway improvements around Grove Green.

It should be a requirement of the policies that the infrastructure is improved prior to any development commencing.

Strategic employment location at junction 8 of M20 motorway

Boxley Parish Council fought against the KIG development at junction 8. While recognising that some limited development may eventually be allowed there, it objects to the development proposed at Woodcut Farm and objects to B1a

development on any land as warehousing and distribution offers, in the main, only low-grade employment.

Strategic employment site at junction 7 of M20 motorway Policy SS4 - Newnham Park.

In an ideal world, Boxley Parish Council would not wish to see the Strategic Gap disappear. This has hitherto acted as a vital buffer zone between the urban development and the AONB. However this protection has been eroded in recent years and it is obvious, from the approval for the KIMS development, that the M20 is now seen by Maidstone Borough Council as the new urban boundary. The recent Government change to the planning legislation, with its presumption for development, has also made it likely that the strategic gap will be further developed. Rather than almost automatically, and probably fruitlessly, object to any future development, the Parish Council has reluctantly decided that it needs to be pragmatic and take a proactive stance to work with MBC and local developers to ensure that the local communities gain from, what it accepts is probably inevitable.

In view of this the following comments are made:

SS4 Newnham Park.

General comment 1. The Parish Council considers that the amount of land being allocated for development under SS4 is excessive and should be reduced. Additional nature reserves/wooded areas should be included in the policy to break up the mass of development and to create wildlife links to the AONB and Vinters Valley Nature Reserve etc.

On site.

1. Provision of a maximum 150,000m² of specialist medical facilities set within an enhanced landscape structure.
MBC should include the relevant Use Classes Order details with, where necessary, restrictions on Permitted Changes allowable under Use Classes Order. This will ensure that no 'lower grade' development will be permitted on the site.
2. Replacement retail facilities at Newnham Court Shopping Village, confined to the immediate vicinity of the existing footprint of the current retail park;
The Council would welcome the redevelopment, on its current footprint, of Nottcutts Shopping Village. However there is concern over the impact on businesses in the Town Centre. The policy should include height restrictions on such development.
3. Creation of a parkland nature reserve of 3.03ha on land to the south east of the site, as shown on the policies map, to be transferred to the Borough Council or maintained by a Trust;
The Council agrees to the creation of a parkland nature reserve to the south east of the site but it does not consider that there is enough land protected (see general comments above).
4. Construction of high quality buildings of a sustainable design that reflect the site's prime location as a gateway to Maidstone;
Agreed, however it is felt that MBC should go further and produce a design or character statement that should influence what goes on the site rather than wait for 'off the peg one size fits all' buildings being included in applications. This is a very sensitive site and MBC must protect the AONB and local communities from the fashions and vagaries of architects. The council does not want another Eclipse Park.
5. Mitigation of the impact of development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting by the provision of new and the retention and enhancement of existing structural and internal landscaping, by the use of the topography in site layout plans to exclude development on more prominent parts

of the site, by the restriction of building heights to a maximum of two storeys and the use of low level lighting, and by the use of green roofs where practical; *Agreed, however MBC should include a reference to the need to mitigate the impact of any development on the views from Grove Green as well as the AONB. The reference to excluding development on the most prominent parts of the site, and by restricting height on others, is welcomed but considered weakly worded. MBC should include in the Core Strategy the creation of additional parkland nature reserves on some of the prominent parts of the site, thus requiring the developers to include landscaping and planting to mitigate the impact of the new development and to increase bio-diversity. At 6.10 MBC refers to the need for a robust internal landscape structure but unless it identifies, in the actual plan and policy, locations or minimum square footage there is little faith that it will be successfully delivered.*

6. Medical facilities on land to the south of the hospital and west of the stream will be delivered in advance of medical facilities on land to the east of the stream; *Agreed.*
7. The cumulative quantum of retail floorspace will be restricted to the provision of up to 500m² above that which already exists, and any additional retail floorspace above this limit must be complementary to town centre uses and, by means of a sequential sites assessment, demonstrably require an out of town location; *As stated in 2 the Parish Council is concerned about the impact on the Town Centre if more retail space is included at Newnham Park. Retail attracts more traffic from a wider area and this will have an impact on an already congested highway infrastructure. As the Parish Council considers that too much of the land is being given over to development it is suggested that this additional retail provision is dropped. It is believed that the proposed redevelopment of Nottcutts shopping village would give adequate provision for local needs.*
8. Submission of a retail impact assessment for both comparison and convenience goods, to be approved by the Borough Council, in order to assess the impact of retail park proposals on the town centre; *Agreed, however retail development at Newnham Park would also impact on the Grove Green Minor Shopping Centre and a retail impact assessment should be produced as any adverse impact would particularly affect the more vulnerable members of society in that area.*
9. Provision of a minimum 30m landscape buffer along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to protect Ancient Woodland, with tracts of planting extending into the body of the development; *Agreed but without the quantity of land given over to this landscaping being identified this statement is weak.*
10. Provision of a minimum 10m landscape buffer on both sides of the stream running north-south through the site (minimum 20m width in total); *Agreed.*

General Comment 2. No consideration appears to have been given to the residential properties at Gidds Pond Cottages. It is considered that a landscape buffer zone should be included to protect these properties from the massive development on their rear boundary. The provision of a small area, adjacent to Gidds Pond Cottages, of off road car parking, for property owners might be welcomed.

11. Submission of a full landscape assessment and ecology survey, to be approved by the Borough Council; *Agreed.*
12. A watching archaeological brief; *Agreed.*

13. Vehicular access to the site from the New Cut roundabout, with bus and emergency access from the A249 Sittingbourne Road;
Agreed, but only if the proper improvements to the highway infrastructure are included.
14. A bus interchange as part of the retail redevelopment together with a car park management plan;
Agreed.
15. Enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to the residential areas of Grove Green, Vinters Park and Penenden Heath, and to Eclipse Business Park;
Agreed.
16. Submission of a Travel Plan, to be approved by the Borough Council.
The Parish Council has little or no faith in travel plans, however if they are required then they should be properly produced and subject to local scrutiny before being accepted by the Borough Council.

Off site:

17. (16 sic) A signed legal agreement for off-site highway improvements prior to the commencement of development;
Agreed and strongly supported.
18. (17 sic) Capacity improvements to the Bearsted roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road with the A249 Sittingbourne Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;
Agreed and strongly supported.
19. (18 sic) Capacity improvements to the New Cut roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road and New Cut Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;
Agreed and strongly supported.
The Parish Council requests that Section 106 is obtained to install a roundabout at the junction of New Cut and Grovewood Drive South. The current junction cannot cope with the existing traffic and the changes and increased traffic caused by development at Newnham Park and also around Sutton Road will not only increase the existing congestion and problems of residents living on Grove Green but will also endanger lives as with only 2 access and egress as emergency vehicles will be further delayed.

General Comment 3.

The Parish Council requests that the document is changed to reflect the actual names of the roundabouts (previously agreed with KCC). The roundabout referred to in this section and also section 19 is Weaving Roundabout.

20. (19 sic) The upgrading of Bearsted Road to a dual carriageway between Bearsted roundabout and New Cut roundabout;
Agreed, as long as any land that is required to do the work is supplied from the Newnham Court Site and not taken from Vinters Valley Nature Reserve or Maidstone Crematorium. The Core Strategy or associated document should clearly state that this.
21. (20 sic) Traffic signalisation of the M20 motorway junction 7 roundabout;
Agreed and strongly supported.
22. (21 sic) A subsidised shuttle bus to operate between the site and the town centre, via New Cut Road and Ashford Road;
It is not clear why MBC places a value on a subsidised bus service. It is unlikely that someone shopping at Newnham Park would want to also shop in

the Town Centre (or visa versa) and , if they did, do so by bus. It is also highly unlikely that the workers at the proposed development would be able to go into Maidstone in their lunch break. The money would be better spent on providing a good bus service that took in other local residential areas or for subsidising the P&R bus service which could be required to stop off at Newnham Park.

23. (22 sic) Bus priority measures on New Cut Road, where feasible, and traffic signal priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and the A20 Ashford Road;

See response to 19 as an additional roundabout is needed on New Cut Road.

24. (23 sic) Improved bus links to the site from the residential areas of Grove Green and Penenden Heath.

Agreed and strongly supported.

General Comment 4.

Highway improvements are required on Grove Wood Drive North and if development at Newnham Park means that there will be increased traffic use of this road then a S106 contribution should be sought to improve width of Grovewood Drive North and install better pedestrian crossing points.

General Comment 5.

Increased traffic and the introduction of a dedicated bus lane on New Cut Road will require Grove Green Roundabout (outside Maidstone Studios) to be improved.

Financial contributions:

25 (22 sic) Provision of appropriate contributions towards highway improvements.
Agreed and strongly supported.

General Comment 6.

The Parish Council is aware that the Grove Green Scouts wish to have a dedicated Scout Hall and require land. As the land at Newnham Court is the only remaining land available for such development it is requested that some land is reserved for community use/facility.

General Comment 7.

It is regrettable that Maidstone Borough Council is not looking to use brownfield sites.

General Comment 8.

The Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to be proactive at the development stages of the site.

In accordance with policy the Chairman used his devolved power, as it was 9.30 pm, to extend the meeting by up to 30 minutes.

12. Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.

After discussion members **agreed** the response.

Action 1 (2012 – 2015): Implement highway improvement schemes at strategic development locations in the north west and south east of Maidstone Urban Area and in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and M20 Junction 8 to enable development at strategic site allocations

Due to the proposed development in the Core Strategy at junction 7 (SS4 Newnham Park) the Parish Council would support improvements to the highway infrastructure around junction 7

a). M20, Junction 7. This includes converting the M20 eastbound approach and the two A249 approaches to the roundabout to traffic signals, whilst leaving the M20

westbound approach as a give way; to prevent traffic tailing back on to the motorway during peak periods. In addition, road markings will be rearranged to improve visibility on the roundabout.
Agreed and supported.

b). A249 / Bearsted Road Roundabout. This includes capacity improvements and provision of a pedestrian crossing at Bearsted Roundabout.
Agreed and supported.

c). Bearsted Road / New Cut Road Roundabout. This includes capacity improvements and an enlargement of the roundabout.
Agreed and supported.

The Parish Council requests that Section 106 is obtained to install a roundabout at the junction of New Cut and Grovewood Drive South. The current junction cannot cope with the existing traffic and the changes and increased traffic caused by development at Newnham Park and also around Sutton Road will not only increase the existing congestion and problems of residents living on Grove Green but will also endanger lives as with only 2 access and egress emergency vehicles will be further delayed.

The Parish Council requests that the document changed to reflect the actual names of the roundabouts (previously agreed with KCC). The roundabout referred to in this section is Weaving Roundabout.

d). Bearsted Road, between Bearsted Roundabout and New Cut Road Roundabout. This includes the upgrading of the road to a dual carriageway in both directions.
Agreed, as long as the land needed is not taken from Vinters Valley Nature Reserve or Maidstone Crematorium.

e). Constructing bus priority measures on New Cut Road.
While welcome in principle, it is feared that such measures will only exacerbate the serious congestion problems that already occur here.

f). Signalising bus priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and A20 Ashford Road.
See above.

Action 4 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a 16+ Travel Pass for bus travel

Agree and supported however it is considered that this should be expanded to include any person (older than 19) who is in full time education.

Action 5 (2012 – 2015): Investigate a reorganisation of the Park and Ride fare structure to target private vehicles rather than passengers only

Pay to park would be supported however it is felt that an opportunity to further increase income is being missed. Boxley Parish Council has previously brought to MBC's attention that it should investigate the possibility of slightly amending the P&R bus routes to allow them to 'dip into' residential areas and pick up fare paying passengers. This 'opening' up of the P&R buses to use by residents would mean fewer empty buses and an improved service for residents. By increasing the frequency of public transport it is likely that residents will find it more convenient to use buses and hence reduce the amount of traffic on the road. It is understood that by having additional stops that it may discourage some people from using the P&R system so it should not be a full bus service but one that either compliments the current service. It could also be that the 'extended' P&R service only operates at residential bus stops in off peak times. The Sittingbourne P & R by-passes 2 large residential areas with empty buses.

Action 6 (2012 – 2015): Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce its overall demand for car parking

The Parish Council has long been concerned about the fact that on-street car parking is causing problems for residents especially in the Lordswood and Walderslade areas. The converting of residential garages into rooms and the fact that most residential garages are too small for modern cars means that some residents have no alternative but to park on the street which often causes problems for pedestrians and other road users. Perhaps the planning department should force developers to build bigger garages and put on a restriction that they cannot be used for any other purpose.

Action 7 (2012 – 2015): Increase long stay parking tariffs (4+ hours) and season ticket tariffs for Council owned car parks by 50% (excluding inflation)

It is unlikely that this will encourage many motoring commuters to use alternative means of transport. The convenience of the private car is too great and bus schedules often do not match today's extended working hours. But money spent on parking is money that cannot be spent to support town-centre businesses.

Action 8 (2012 – 2015): Increase short stay parking tariffs (<4 hours) for Council owned car parks by 20% (excluding inflation)”.

It is felt that this would have a negative impact on the plans to rejuvenate and retain a buoyant Town Centre economy. Shoppers will find the readily available fee car parking at Bluewater and elsewhere even more attractive than now. See also Action 7 above.

Action 12 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a subsidised shuttle bus between the Strategic Development Location at M20 Junction 7 and the town centre, to be funded by development coming forward at this location

It is not clear why MBC places a value on such a subsidised bus service. It is unlikely that someone shopping at Newnham Park would want to also shop in the Town Centre and access this by a bus service. It is also highly unlikely that the workers at the proposed development would be able to go into Maidstone in their lunch break. The money would be better spent on providing a good bus service that took in other local residential areas or for subsidising the P&R bus service which could be required to stop off at Newnham Park.

Congestion along New Cut Road is currently bad and with the additional traffic likely to worsen. Sittingbourne Road should be considered as the bus route.

Action 22 (Ongoing): Implement Maidstone's Air Quality Action Plan to minimise the impact of transport on air quality and facilitate the delivery of low carbon vehicle infrastructure

The Parish Council supports action to improve air quality throughout the Borough not just within the Town Centre.

No mention is made of the need to increase street tree, green wall, semi-natural green space and other vegetation coverage in urban areas and areas near motorways etc. It is felt that an additional Action should be included to require every S106 funded highway improvement to include planting or landscaping that would benefit the community by reducing pollutant levels.

Objection: Action 17 (2012-2015) Maintain existing P & R provision at the current level of service

See response to Action 5.

General comment. No mention is made of the use of the River Medway. Whilst it is understood that river travel is slow and the issue of cyclists using the currently inadequate tow path is problematical to ignore the potential of the river, if improvements could be made, is a lost opportunity.

13. Policy and procedures review.

Pre application discussions – deferred to the October meeting.

14. **Neighbourhood Development Plans**

The draft audits on Lordswood and Walderslade and Grove Green were deferred to the October meeting. It was **noted** that a NDP had been produced for Upper Eden and details were available from the parish office.

15. **Beechen Bank.**

It was **agreed** that the issue needed further investigation and the Clerk was asked to contact MBC and if necessary the Land Registry to obtain further information on the number of private owners. **Action** – Clerk.

16. **Saracen Fields open area**

Members **agreed** that County Councillor Carter should be contacted about the situation as it was felt that KCC had a moral obligation to gain ownership of the land and maintain it in the future. **Action** – parish office.

17. **Matters for information.**

Noted 2 letters had been received from residents thanking the Parish Council for arranging and paying for the reduction in the speed limit on Boxley Road and Beechen Bank Road.

18. **Next Meeting.**

Next full environment meeting 9th October 2012 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the confidential nature (personal details) of the next item a resolution was passed to exclude the public and press for the duration of the item.

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

Members **received** and discussed the update on enforcement being under taken by MBC.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

<p style="text-align: center;">Item 6.3 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 11th September 2012 commencing at 7.30 p.m.</p>

Councillors present – Mr I Davies (Chairman), Mrs.P. Brooks, Mr. K Perry and Mr. G Smith together with the Clerk.

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

Cllrs V Davies, B Hinder, W Hinder and Macklin (holidays).

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

There were none.

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

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

4. **Matters Arising.**

4.1 Minute 2411/10 Penhurst Close lease. **Noted** MBC's legal section has accepted the majority of the Council's requests for changes to the draft lease. The request to have the clause regarding the dog waste bin removed has been referred to another department and a response is awaited.

4.2 Minute 2428/13 Outstanding TOIL. The Chairman proposed, with the agreement of the members who had been consulted via e-mail, that **Boxley Parish Council will purchase 175 hours of the Clerk's outstanding Time Off In Lieu at a cost of £3,540.88, including employees National Insurance contribution. Unanimously agreed.**

A monthly report on the amount of TOIL due will henceforth be supplied to Finance Committee members and a draft policy to ensure that TOIL and annual leave is managed proactively will be presented to the November meeting.
Action – parish office.

5. Financial Reports.

5.1 Income/Expenditure report of 3rd September 2012 was **received**.

Agreed virements from Contingency fund budget (code 45):

- i) Code 12 £100. Increased expenditure was incurred due to the Royal Visit.
- ii) Code 77 £1,300 to cover the additional work on the War Memorial.
- iii) Due to the decision at 4.2. Codes 7 and 8 would need a virement from the Contingency Fund to cover the increase expenditure.
- iv) to have a total of £3,5£3,111.50 and Code 8 £429.38.

Noted an amendment will be made to code 103 as this amount has been wrongly coded.

Members discussed various expenditure against budget issues and it was **noted** that there was:

- v) an income coding error at code 64. This should actually be code 63 and an amendment was requested.
- vi) Code 142 would need a virement from the Contingency Fund to cover the increase in the rates bill.

A report on the expenditure at code 6 Photocopier was requested for the next meeting as it appeared that expenditure might exceed the budget.

Action – Clerk.

5.2 **Received** and **signed off**. Reconciliation of accounts at 4th September 2012.

5.3 Doubtful Debt. **Noted** as the agreed £50 payments had ceased the warrant had been reactivated. Members requested that the issue be revisited in September 2013 if payments did not resume. **Action** – parish office.

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

6. Policy and procedures reviews and adoption.

6.1 Health and Safety Policy. **Agreed**, with a few minor changes and improvements.

6.2 Members reviewed the audit controls and **agreed** the Annual Governance Statement.

6.3 Responsible Financial Officer's supporting notes to Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2012. Members warmly welcomed this explanatory document which would be supplied to Councillors and placed on the website.

7. Investments

7.1 **Ratified** the decision, after consultation with committee members, to invest £68,000 into a 6 month Cooperative Investment Bond.

7.2 **Received** Clerk's report on investment options. The Chairman proposed £100,000 be invested for an 18 month term at Santander and £63,300 for 12 months at Natwest. **Agreed. Action** – Clerk.

8. Internal Audit.

Received Cllr Bob Hinder's internal audit report dated 30th August 2012. His recommendation that the quarterly minimum standards check should now include a check on salary payments made since the last minimum standards check was **agreed**. The Chairman asked that his thanks to Cllr Hinder for undertaking the work be recorded. **Action** – Clerk.

9. Payment of staff salaries by Standing Orders.

Member's considered the request to allow staff salaries to be paid directly into their bank accounts. After discussion on an identified weakness of such a system it was **agreed** that if possible this option should be taken up, subject to the views of the Independent Internal Auditor. **Action** – Clerk.

10. Grant Request.

None received for consideration.

11. Matters for Information.

Noted Kent Wildlife Trust letter of thanks for the recent grant.

12. Date of Next Meeting.

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

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Item 9 – Power of Competency for information of summary.

Clerk briefing note.

The general power of competence is a statutory power (Localism Act 2011 sections 1 – 8) which provides an eligible council with “*the power to do anything that individuals may do*”.

However the Parish Council cannot undertake an activity that is already restricted by another specific power. The power cannot be used to obtain loans or set a precept as the current procedures relating to borrowing are still in place.

Examples:

You cannot just install a seat onto a highway verge because legislation states you must gain the permission of the highway authority.

In providing a service you must comply with the Crime & Disorder Act 2006 section 17, The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 s23(1), Equalities Act 2010, Health & Safety Legislation, Employment Law, Planning Law etc.

Parish Council’s will still need to have adequate funding, community support etc. but now it only really needs to ask itself the question “Is there any power restricting the action/activity being implemented?”

What is the advantage of having the power? The most obvious is that it allows the Parish Council to set up a company and make a profit from that company.

What is the immediate benefit of the power? At the moment none however it does mean the Parish Council can react quickly to any opportunity that might arise.

Item 10 Policies and Procedures Review. *Purpose of item: review and if required amend the policies/procedures.*

Clerk’s note. The internal complaints document referred to in the September agenda as being deferred was included in the revised September complaints document so requires no action.

10.1 Community Engagement Strategy. To consider the current policy and decide whether it is fit for purpose. Clerk’s note: Cllr Macklin would like to comment on the failure of the Parish Council to have a display at Tunbury School Fete.

Parish Plan (see ** below) may need updating as Neighbourhood Development Plans can now be produced.

**Boxley Parish Council.
Community Engagement Strategy**

Boxley Parish Council is committed to engaging and empowering its residents and communities so that they are can be actively involved in decisions that affect them.

The parish council will use the following strategies to ensure this.

- Making information on what decisions are being considered and how residents can influence or contribute to the discussions/decisions available (in good time) to enable contributions.
Methods used to ensure this will be the website, 11 x neighbourhood noticeboards, leaflets, posters, consultations, word of mouth and easily understandable reports. Facebook/twitter will be considered, further investigation is needed.
- Boxley Parish Council will be proactive and be willing to consider any reasonable opportunities that support its purpose of making information available and increasing contributions from the community, especially those difficult to reach i.e. housebound and disabled. See Appendix 2 Petitions.
- All meetings of the parish council and its committees are open to the public and there is a period set aside for residents to comment.
Residents can access agendas for the meetings via the website, parish office and noticeboards. The website and leaflets explain the procedure and offer tips for residents wishing to address members. Facilities also exist where residents can, where appropriate or necessary, make written reports or have a case presented on their behalf to members.
- The parish office is required to play a neutral role so that residents can be confident that they are receiving unbiased information and support.
This neutral involvement allows more flexibility in the service and the personal element of the contact hopefully encourages more involvement from the hard to reach members of the community. Whilst the parish office has core times it will be opened outside these hours to accommodate people who work etc.
- The Parish Council will produce and arrange distribution of a monthly newsletter for all properties in the parish.
- Details of how to contact the parish office will be displayed on the noticeboards, website and in the monthly newsletter.
- The Parish Council will continue to produce information and leaflets (available from the parish office, website and Beechen Hall) that support the engagement of the community (e.g. Useful Contact Details, Meeting Dates, Can I be a Parish Councillor?)
- The Parish Council will continue to use any opportunities afforded to be present in the community e.g. school fetes. Every opportunity to increase this public presence will be welcomed and considered.
Individual councillors as well as the parish office play a role in identifying opportunities.
- Where possible the parish council will go to the community rather than expect them to travel (sometimes long distances) to meetings. The current position of using 5 venues in different area of the parish to hold the parish council meetings is to be continued.
- When dealing with 'controversial' issues or with issues that affect a particular community then consideration will be given to holding special meetings in a local venue (e.g. additional Environment Committee meeting at Grove Green to deal with Maidstone Studio planning application).
- Consultations and surveys are to be considered where necessary and appropriate and results will be made available. See appendix 1 - Consultations
- ** Parish Plan. The Parish Council, due to community inertia, has up until now been unable to produce a **community led** parish plan. It will however hold a 2 yearly review of this to ensure that if situations become more favourable then the issue of parish plans can be addressed.

- The Parish Council will be receptive to requests from residents or communities and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the parish council but also to other organisations.
This may be by including an item for discussion on an agenda, allowing a local group to put their opinions into an official report undertaken by the parish council or by meeting youngsters at a local playground.
- The Parish Council will be open and accountable in its dealing with residents and the community. It will make information on its policies and procedures freely available.
- The Parish Council will, where appropriate, ensure local people and communities are referred to the correct department/officer/ Borough or County Councillor and that they are aware of the ways that they can use the relevant systems to make their views known.
- The Parish Council will review its Community Engagement Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant.

Appendix 1 Consultations

Consultations will be considered when any of the following apply:

- When there is a plan to significantly change an amenity or equipment on an amenity site
- When there is an issue identified by the Council, Councillors or office as controversial e.g. a large planning application.
- On receipt of a petition from residents see Appendix 2 Petitions

Who should we consult?

- If a consultation has been identified as needed then the Council or relevant committee will be required to consider how, size of consultation, who to consult and the timeline for the work.
- Consultations will be decided at a Council/Committee meeting and identified on the agenda as being under discussion. It is the responsibility of the local councillors to attend the meeting considering consultation or to submit suggestions to be taken to the meeting.

Issues to be considered in deciding the consultation are:

- What residents will be affected by the proposal;
- Whether to consult with all residents directly effected; and/or
- A wider range of residents.
- Local groups or organisations who may be affected or benefit from the proposal/issue i.e. play groups; scouts; elderly peoples clubs etc.
- Local groups or organisations which the Council may wish to have input into the decision process see appendix 3.

FORM OF CONSULTATION

Consultations should be either/or mixture of;

- Letter drop outlining proposal/issues with tick boxes to gather views. The Council/committee should decide wording of consultation and if necessary include maps, diagrams or suggest options. Arrangements will be made to pick up the documents or allow them to be dropped off at a locally held meeting/location.
- Public meeting held at a local venue to allow views to be gathered.
- Open evening with displays and councillors available and, if appropriate, people able to give expert advise.
- The Council's noticeboards, website and Downs Mail will be used to advertise the consultation and encourage response. Arrangements will be made to allow responses through the website.
- Any literature/display material produced by the Council will be in plain English and have balanced argument/views allowing residents to fully understand the issues.

In addition to the above other forums can be used Café conversations, drop in events, talks, brain storming session, etc.

At the consultation (or at any other appropriate stage) residents will be invited to 'log' their interest for e-mail updates.

If a consultation is identified as needed then it will be expected that all councillors, but especially local councillors and those councillors promoting the idea, should be prepared to become actively involved in, if it is required, delivering any documents or attending open days etc.

If substantial changes are made to any plans/issues then the Council needs to consider readvertising (but not necessarily re consulting) the changes before a decision is finalised.

Results of consultation

The Council not only has a responsibility to consider the views of the local community but also the benefit to/needs of the wider community.

In reaching a decision the Council should:

- Be open and accountable in all the discussions/decisions e.g. debate/decide in a public meeting, allowing the public to speak.
- Consider and be prepared to justify/outline the benefits
- Consider the responses received and if going against the majority decision be able to clearly identify why.
- If, after a full consultation there is little or no support then the council should consider whether it is wise to proceed with a project unless it is felt that there is an overriding community benefit.
- If preferences are given i.e. pieces of equipment, then the majority view should stand.

If in advance of a meeting individual Councillors have identified issues that they consider need resolving or debating they are required to make these known to the parish officers to allow research to be undertaken and if necessary information to be supplied to all councillors/public.

Appendix 2. Petitions

The Council will consider petitions received on any issue. Residents/organisations submitting petitions will be required to;

- Have the wording of the petition on each page that has signatures.
- Include the name and address (or post code) of all persons signing.
- It is expected that signatures will be from people within the parish but at the discretion of the council signatures outside the boundary may be accepted.
- A petition can only be presented once to the Council.

The Council in deciding whether to support the issue being petitioned about will take the decision in an open and accountable way e.g. debate/decide in a public meeting, allowing the public to speak.

Appendix 3. Local Groups/organisations.

The Council will consider and welcomes input from a local group or organisation, however it reserves the right when considering such input to take into consideration the size, locality, makeup of a group etc.

Local groups and organisations will be encouraged to:

- Be properly formed with a constitution.
- Be open to the community and not run membership on an invitation only basis.
- Be willing to work with the Council to identify possible compromises/changes that might improve a project or make it more acceptable.

Item 10.2 Civic Recognition Recommendations. An opportunity for councillors to consider any recommendations that it considers should be made. If considered necessary the Chairman will suggest a resolution to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the duration for the discussion.

Item 10.3 Protocol for members of the public attending parish council and committee meetings.

Clerks note: the following is available as a laminated sheet at meetings and is the basis of the information leaflet produced by the office.

"If you are attending a parish council or committee meeting and wish to address the meeting it may help you to be aware of the procedures.

Members of the public are not entitled to become part of any of the meetings of the council. For a member of the public to speak the meeting must be adjourned and then will be reconvened after you have spoken. You have no right to question councillors or enter into a debate with them. You will be allowed a maximum of three minutes to address the meeting. If you are disabled, the issue is very personal, have a speech or hearing impediment or just find it difficult to talk to a public gathering please discuss this with the Clerk who will make alternative arrangements for your issue to be notified to members.

The parish council's meetings have a period set aside to allow members of the public to address the meeting and you will be invited to speak during this period.

It would be very helpful if you could give advance warning of any question or any query you may have. You can do this by either writing to or telephoning the parish office. This will allow the relevant information to be gathered. If this is not possible it is not a problem. You will probably be approached by the Clerk as you enter the room if not just introduce yourself to her or any member of the parish council. You will be asked for your name and on what subject you wish to speak. The Chairman has the power to recommend a change to the order of the agenda so that you are not kept waiting too long to speak. You are of course welcome to stay for the whole of the meeting but are free to leave at any time.

Once the allocated time for public involvement has been reached the Chairman will generally welcome you to the meeting, addressing you by your name and invite you to speak. Three minutes is quite a long time to talk but can go very quickly if the issue is complex so the following suggestions may help you to effectively get your comments across.

- ◆ Stand whilst you talk, acoustics can be a problem in some halls.
- ◆ Open your talk by explaining the location of any problem, try to be as specific as possible e.g. the piece of land at the junction of.... and
- ◆ Have a list of the relevant points you wish to make.
- ◆ Try to be concise and not go off the point.
- ◆ If you know what you want please ensure that you clearly inform the council.
- ◆ The parish council may wish to send you information or keep you in touch with any developments, don't forget to supply your name and address to the Clerk. You may use this piece of paper and there is always a spare pen at meetings.

The official minutes of the meeting will not include any of your personal details. The minutes should only record decisions taken in the meeting but the Clerk will keep a separate note of your issue and any work that needs doing. You should note however that this is a public meeting and a member of the press and sometimes other members of the public are generally present. You should not slander anyone nor make any comments that are offensive or which you feel should not be public. If this is a sensitive issue please contact the Clerk to discuss the best way to proceed.

If you are disabled, have a speech impediment or find it hard to talk to a public gathering again discuss this with the Clerk who can make alternative arrangements for your issue to be notified to members.

Please remember that the people you are addressing are volunteers from your community. They have volunteered because they care about the community and wish to help the local residents. Parish councillors are always pleased to have visitors to the meetings especially

if there is an issue that the parish council might be able to help with.”

Item 11 Matters for Discussion. *Purpose of report; Guidance or instruction*

11.1 Speedwatch. To discuss the current situation of no organised Speedwatch through lack of volunteers and leadership.