

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk

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To All Members of the Council, press and public.

3rd January 2012

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on **Monday 9th January 2012** at **Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade** commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business;

1. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.** (7.30)
Members are required to declare any interests or lobbying on items in this agenda.
2. **Apologies and absences** (7.31)
To receive and accept apologies for absence.

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

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 5th and 12th December 2011.** (7:32)
To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order to sign as a true record (page 3 - 7).
4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.** (7.36)
 - 4.1 Minute 2361/4.1 Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Road speed limit reduction. KCC have replied that undertaking the work is not a priority and the office has sent a response stating that a date 'when there is time' will not be acceptable. If not resolved by the meeting a request will be made that this is escalated. A response to the escalating of the roundel issue is awaited.
 - 4.2 Minute 2361/4.2 inconsiderate parking Walderslade Village/Boxley Road. Members felt that the Medway Council response was inadequate and requested a review on this agenda to see if Cllr Brake responded again.
 - 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. Clerk is investigating whether Cllr Carter might be interested in allocating some of his devolved highway budget.
 - 4.5 KIMS development website see report (page 8).

To adjourn to allow members of the public to address the meeting. (7.48)

5. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.** (8.00)
To consider planning applications. Members' are reminded to consider possible section 106 requests or to suggest any conditions.

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

MA/11/1965 erection of 7 no dwellings comprising 3 no 3 bedded dwellings and 4 no 2 bed houses at Penhurst Close, Grove Green. To ratify 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).

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. 18/01/2012.

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. 18/01/2012.

MA/11/2131 single storey front extension at 1 Elm Tree Cottage, Lidsing Road, Gillingham. 19/01/12

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. 19/01/12

KCC/MA/0517/2011 1 additional floor to approved depot office comprising office rooms and WC facilities at KCC Highway Services, Doubleday House, St Micheals Close. 13/12/12

TA/0205/11 – TPO No1 of 1969, application for consent to fell 1 Hornbeam and 1 Field Maple at 14 Iris Close, Walderslade. 18/01/2012.

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. 19/01/2012.

6. Planning applications taken to Planning Committee. (8.20)

Planning rota – Cllr Stead 5th January 2012. Cllr Spain 26th January 2012. Cllrs Brooks 16th February 2012.

7. Planning Applications and appeals decisions. (8.21)

To note the Maidstone Borough Council’s planning application decisions and Secretary of State’s appeal decisions. Asterisk * indicates decision contrary to parish council views.

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** (8.23)
To receive a report and an update on the group. To consider the expenditure ceiling see report (page 8).
9. **Highways and Byways.** (8.30)
9.1 Double yellow lines Orbit Close. MBC has assessed the area and agreed, if MBC allocates funds, that the junction with the hospital could receive yellow lines to restrict the inconsiderate parking. The parish office will monitor the situation and if MBC does not allocate funding will notify the Environment Committee so that the situation can be reconsidered.
10. **KCC Consultation - Household waste recycling centre service.** (8.38)
To consider whether to take part and if so to agree a response see report (page 8 - 10).
11. **Policy and procedures review.** (8.48)
Minute 2364/12 Boxley PC wish list 2012. To consider the spread sheet produced by Cllr Pepper, enclosed for members.
12. **Review of 2011/12 Projects.** (8.55)
All original projects have been completed. An additional project, the reduction in speed limit on Boxley Rd/Beechen Bank road was added and is still on going. If not completed in this financial year then the cost for the work will be carried over to 2012/13 financial year.
13. **Matters for information.** (8.57)
13.1 Vinters Valley LNR Wardens' report enclosed.
13.2 CPRE Planning e-learning course now available, details from parish office.
14. **Next Meeting.** (9.00)
Next environment meetings 6th February 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 about to be transacted, it is advisable that the public and press will be excluded from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item.

15. **Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.** (9.01)
To consider any information received.

Clerk to Boxley Parish Council
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Item 3.1 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 3.2 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 4.5 KIMS development website. *Purpose of item: information.*

Kent Institute for Medical Science – Grove Green.

A website to report any issues caused by building works will go live prior to the commencement of the main works. The web site www.vinciconstruction.co.uk/kims. Details have been included in the January Downs Mail and will be placed on the website and noticeboards.

Item 8 Walderslade Woods. *Purpose of item: to decide whether a previous decision is still required or in need of amendment.*

Members, at the request of the Clerk, had agreed that any expenditure over £30 will be referred to this committee. Since this decision was taken place the Walderslade Woods Group has appointed a chairman and is now working more smoothly. In view of this do members wish to review this financial ceiling and allow the group to take more financial decisions? If still set at £30 then the group is requesting funds (approx. £70) to purchase some wheels for the large machine. If this is agreed then the group will have to ensure that there is no damage to the machine (which is owned by the PC) and that it is a safe adaptation. Members are reminded that the group is now covered by its own insurance and takes H&S responsibility for itself.

Item 10 KCC Consultation - Household waste recycling centre service. *Purpose of item: to decide whether to participate and if so to agree a response. Deadline 09/02/12.*

Clerk's comment – a questionnaire (section A) concerning personal use forms the first part of the consultation and this has not been included in the response below. In view of some of the questions being asked it would be helpful if North Ward Councillors consider completing and submitting a questionnaire.

KCC comment. Our service review includes an assessment of the Household Waste Recycling Centre network in terms of:

- economy (costs and income generation)
- efficiency (productivity)
- effectiveness (customer satisfaction, recycling rates, material types and capture)
- location

It examines the current provision and location of Household Waste Recycling Centres, their operating policies, the potential for increasing income, as well as the options for making the service more efficient.

1. Proposed policies for consultation: Prohibit the deposit of tyres, gas bottles and asbestos
2. Limit construction waste to two (30 litre) sacks
3. Cease opening height barrier at Household Waste Recycling Centres on Wednesdays with provision made for domestic over-height vehicles on Saturdays
4. Prohibit access of vans, trucks, flat-bed vehicles and trailers to Household Waste Recycling Centres
5. Introduction of permit scheme along the west-Kent boundary to prevent non-Kent residents using Household Waste Recycling Centres
6. Consider future changes to the network to ensure efficiency.

We have a duty to dispose of household waste only. We have no waste disposal responsibility for commercial, trade, industrial or construction waste. We wish to know if Kent householders would support the Council in taking steps to exclude or reduce these types of waste so long as alternative disposal options exist for businesses.

If these types of waste are not controlled at our sites, Kent taxpayers' money will be used to subsidise businesses.

Section B: Operational policy changes

7) Do you consider that items such as tyres, asbestos and gas bottles, which are mainly commercial waste, should be excluded from Household Waste Recycling Centres, provided other disposal routes are available?

8) Would you support the exclusion of trade waste e.g. by ceasing to open the height barrier and excluding trade vehicles, which the Household Waste Recycling Centres have no duty to accept and costs the Council money?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

9) Would you support the exclusion of construction waste, which the Household Waste Recycling Centres have no duty to accept and costs the Council money?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

Recyclable waste is an increasingly valuable raw material. Good quality recyclable waste can be sold to produce an income to support essential services provided the material is not contaminated. Recycling also helps to conserve natural resources.

10) Do you believe that councils should increase income by maximising the diversion of household waste for recycling?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

Kent County Council Household Waste Recycling Centres near the county border with other local authority areas are used by non-Kent residents.

11) Do you believe it is reasonable for householders who do not live in Kent and therefore do not contribute to the funding of sites, to be excluded from using Kent's Household Waste Recycling Centres?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

Similarly, there are some Kent residents who use household waste facilities that are not Kent County Council's.

12) Do you use Household Waste Recycling Centres in other areas?

Yes, if yes, where?

Clerk's comment – a list is given but the most likely site will be Medway.

Section C: Infrastructure investment

The network of Household Waste Recycling Centres has evolved over many years. The types of material for recycling have greatly increased over time as listed in Table 2 (section A) and the sites are very well used especially at peak times.

13) Thinking of the Council's aim to continuously improve sites, do you believe that the Household Waste Recycling Centres are generally fit for purpose?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

14) To help shape the future network of Household Waste Recycling Centres, please tell us which of the following are the three most important to you. (Please select 3)

- Short or no queues to enter sites
- The range of materials accepted for recycling
- Ease of access around the site
- Short journey time from home to site (no more than 20 minutes)

- Helpful site staff
- *No steps on site*
- Undercover site
- Clear on site signage
- Other

Thinking of the Council's need to save money, it is an option to close one or two sites enabling funding to be utilised for improvements at other sites.

15) Would you support an overall reduction in one or two sites across Kent, provided the service continued to be operated to a good standard across the remainder of Household Waste Recycling Centres?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

16) Taking into account proposals to improve the facility at Ashford, do you believe it is reasonable to close the out of date and expensive to operate site at Hawkinge. provided services exist within a 20 minute drive time of your home?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

17) Taking into account that there is a facility at Deal and at Margate, both of which are operating under capacity, do you believe it is reasonable to close the out of date and expensive to operate site at Richborough, provided services exist within a 20 minute drive time of your home?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

18) The Household Waste Recycling Centres at Dartford Heath and Swanley currently operate at full capacity with no scope for expansion. Do you agree they should be replaced with modern facilities?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

19) Do you agree that the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Church Marshes, Sittingbourne, is inadequate and should be replaced with a new facility at a more accessible location, to provide a more efficient service to Swale residents?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

Kent County Council currently pays Medway Council in recognition of Kent householders using Medway Household Waste Recycling Centres, particularly those using the Cuxton site.

20) Do you support the provision of an additional Household Waste Recycling Centre in the Tonbridge and Malling area, which is currently not covered by the existing network?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

21) Do you support the upgrade of the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre at Ashford, which forms part of the proposal for a new waste transfer station (which bulks household waste for haulage to reprocessors)?

Response options. Yes No If No, why? Don't know

Your views are important to the Council irrespective of whether you are a site user. If you are not currently a site user your feedback is particularly useful in designing future facilities to increase access to Household Waste Recycling Centres for the whole community.

22) If you do not use a Kent Household Waste Recycling Centre, are there any improvements that would encourage you to?

Yes, if yes please specify No

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ITEM 13
Mentioned in Parish Council agenda as available.

Conserving & Enjoyment of Nature, the Warden's overview of the last 12 months activity at Vinters Valley Nature Reserve. *Purpose of item: information.*

The reserve remains a physical embodiment of the dreams of so many people who wish to reverse the decline in the loss of plants and animals, both locally in Maidstone and in the wider landscape, however Vinters Valley would not exist as a nature reserve if were not for the valuable support provided by many remarkable local people and organisations. Years before it became politically appropriate to praise the voluntary sector, many unsung heroes have supported Vinters Valley Nature Reserve, providing homes for the wildlife and a place for people to enjoy nature. It is good to see this community spirit continuing to prosper, despite the increasing financial pressures of recent times.

Over the last 12 months I am pleased to confirm that all the planned projects and ideas focusing on conservation and enjoyment of nature have been completed, along with a few additional tasks. In summary, these have included the following new projects (*with the main supporters in brackets*):

Wildlife Conservation

- A major expansion of our **reptile conservation programme** in the Cow Field conservation area, with 12 large hibernation structures and a further 125 log piles built to accommodate 1250 slow worms, viviparous lizards & grass snakes released into this area during 2011 (*Calumma Ecological Services & Akehurst Homes Ltd*).
- Three **new wildlife ponds** in the Cow Field conservation area (*Calumma Ecological Services, Akehurst Homes Ltd, Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership & IG Pilcher Ltd*).
- Additional **habitat enhancement work for reptiles** in the Gypsy Field conservation area (*Sony Corporation*).
- **Doubling the area of our wildflower meadow project** in MacGrory's Meadow (*a private individual supporters donation*).
- Three new **floating bird platforms** on the lake (*Medway Valley Countryside Partnership & the reserve's own volunteer team*).
- A new large **stag beetle pyramid** habitat created (*volunteers from the KCC*).
- **Habitat enhancement for overwintering birds** in the lower marsh area (*with the support of volunteers from the Mouchel Group plc, KCC and the reserve's own volunteer team*).
- Increased **wildlife surveying activities**, in particular nesting birds, breeding toads & reptile activity. (*Ben, Clive & the Kent Reptile & Amphibian Group*).

Visitor Improvements

- Major **improvements to the Bargrove slope pathway** (*The Cobtree Charity Trust, residents from Bargrove Road, plus the reserves own volunteer team*).
- **Replacement fencing** protecting the Gypsy Field conservation area (*Barclays Bank, Boxley Timber & the reserves own volunteer team*).
- **Seven new and four replacement seats / benches**, allowing visitors places to sit and enjoy the reserve (*the reserves own volunteer team*).
- On-going **pathway improvements**, allowing improved access for visitors to the reserve (*Private individual supporter's donation & the reserve's own volunteer team*).
- Two **new information notice boards**, to provide visitors with more information about the reserve (*the reserve's own volunteer team*).
- **Improvements to the lake side facilities** Improvements have been carried out to the main visitor area alongside this lake. This has included additional seats and a new fenced off area, protecting both wildlife and visitors from disturbance by over exuberant dogs. (*Medway Fabrication Services Ltd, Boxley Timber, local residents Chris & Sarah, & the reserves own volunteer team*).

Visitor activities

- The reserve is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Most visitors come to enjoy the reserve's nature with family & friends, perhaps to feed the ducks on the lake or watch the birds at our feeder stations, or just wind down and/or walk their dogs after a hectic day. To increase visitor awareness of our nature & conservation activities we also run **monthly visitor walks or activity days** throughout the year.
- In addition we run **an education programme for local schools and youth organisations**. In 2011 over 750 children, teachers and parents have attended organised wildlife activities at the reserve, increasing their understanding and enjoyment of the local wildlife on their doorstep and learning how important it is to provide space for wildlife in our increasingly urban society.

For a small, privately funded, nature reserve I think this is an impressive achievement, showing how supportive the local community has been of the nature reserve. For many of these projects would not have happened without the generous support of local residents (with offers of money, materials and time), plus the financial backing of community minded businesses and organisations.

So what of the future?

Over the next 5 – 10 years I believe that the voluntary wildlife conservation sector will have to take on the lion's share of conserving the wildlife we wish to see in the UK. In a quiet but determined manner, over the last four years, Vinters Valley Nature Reserve has expanded its wildlife conservation activities, providing suitable habitats to allow an increasing number of protected species to survive, in an ever expanding urban environment.

Over the next 12 months we wish to concentrate upon monitoring the recent reptile introduction projects, expand our wildflower meadow and improving the lower marsh habitat. Should further funds be forthcoming, we would additionally hope to further develop our Great Crested Newt Project.

Two bigger projects involve undertaking repairs to our two winter bat hibernation structures, both of which show the ravages of time. The ice house has now flooded and no bats have been found hibernating in the ice house for the last three years. Additionally the Barrel Bridge needs major structural repairs to prevent its partial collapse.

We also recognise the demands of local people who wish to gain greater access, enjoyment and understanding of the wildlife on their doorstep. For this reason we believe that an increasing emphasis must be placed on improving the visitor facilities provided by the reserve, but again this relies upon further funding being secured.

Financial Matters

I understand that these are difficult times financially for many of our supporters and we have therefore sort assistance from businesses, **Boxley Parish Council & The Cobtree Charity Trust** (both great supporters of the reserve over many years) to help achieve many of our goals. Our website, www.vintersvalley.co.uk (sponsors page), lists all our supporters and the valuable help they have provided over the last couple of years.

The 'friends of the reserve' scheme continues to be the bedrock of our financial support, with 150+ 'friends' contributing 55% of our day to day funding during 2011, however we continue to lose 'friends' as they move away and are always looking for new 'friends' to limit any financial shortfall over the next 12 months. If you would like to become a 'friend of the reserve' or know a friend who would like to become a supporter and help contribute to the reserve's upkeep, please contact me for a supporters application form, or obtain one from our website.

We must of course balance our income and expenditure, to ensure the reserve can continue to provide a lifeline for the local wildlife and a place where generations of local people can enjoy and appreciate the natural rhythms of life.

Thank You

I may be repeating myself from previous years reports, but in my job I try and provide a nature reserve which you, the community, feel proud of and involved in and where an appreciation of nature is fostered and passed on to future generations. I would like to thank every one of you, too numerous to name, for making my job so easy and for your valued support for Vinters Valley Nature Reserve; a place where enlightened local residents continue to demonstrate the community spirit necessary to create a living landscape, where people and wildlife can endeavour to co-exist in harmony.

Best wishes.
Steve Songhurst
Warden.



Statement of Assets & Liabilities, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss
Under Section 42(3) of the Charities Act 1993 for year ending 31st August 2011

MONETARY ASSETS

Assets	2010/11	2009/10
Current Reserve	9,375.48	1,830.01
Cash	10,005.56	15,180.99
Outstanding donations	409.36	409.36
	33.00	(2.00)
Total including restricted funds	19,823.40	17,418.36
Restricted funds		
Reptile Conservation	1,374.29	5,000.00
MacGrory Meadow	774.26	1,056.00
Total restricted funds	2,148.55	6,056.00
Unrestricted assets	17,674.85	11,362.36
Forecast Assets for 31 st August 2012 Excluding possible decrease/loss of Boxley Grant	11,000.00	11,000.00

NON MONETARY ASSETS costing more than £1,000:

Tractor, trailer and implements costing £19,000.00 in 2001

M. House
Hon. Treasurer

Alan Loft
Chairman
For and on behalf of the Trustees

AUDITORS REPORT

I certify that the Statement of Account for the year ending 31st August 2011 has been Prepared from and in accordance with the books and records of the Trust that have been produced to me.

Derek Parkhouse
Hon. Auditor

Chairman of Trustees: Alan Loft Secretary: Sharon Williams Treasurer: M House
Management Committee Chairman: Harry Lowder Secretary: Martin Brown Warden: Steve Songhurst
Headquarters: Vinters Lodge, Lodge Road, Maidstone ME14 5EH Tel 01622 693557