

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk



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Beechen Hall
Wildfell Close
Walderslade
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To All Members of the Council, public and press.

2 December, 2103

There will be a meeting of the Estates Committee on **Tuesday 10 December 2013** 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 requested to declare any interests or lobbying on items in the agenda.
2. **Apologies and absence.** (7.31)
To receive apologies for absence.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meetings 15 & 29 October, 2013.** (7.32)
To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order to sign as a true record (previously circulated).
4. **Matters Arising From Previous Minutes.** (7.34)
 - 4.1 Minute 2582/4.1 Yew Tree at St Mary and All Saints Church. MBC has now decided that the issue will go to the planning committee early in January 2014. MBC had requested an application to fell a TPO Yew Tree and wished for this to go on the same agenda.
 - 4.2 Minute 2548/7.3 Beech Tree. This continues to be monitored.
 - 4.3 Minute 2583/11.2 Ground maintenance contract. Tender documents have been sent out.
 - 4.4 Minute 2583/9.1 Village Signs – Please see report on page 3.
 - 4.5 Minute 2583/9.2 Impton Lane Open Space – The trees for this open space are due to be planted early next year. It is anticipated that WWG will plant these on the behalf of the Parish Council.

To adjourn the meeting to allow the public or press to comment. (7.49)

5. **Dove Hill Allotments.** (7.50)
 - 5.1 To receive a report on the current situation see page 3.
 - 5.2 To ratify decisions taken out of meeting, see report page 3.
 - 5.3 To agree the Rules and Regulations see report pages 4 and enclosed draft documents.
 - 5.4 To agree the fees for an allotment plot see report pages 4-5.
 - 5.5 Insurance. To consider whether to insure the fence, troughs etc. and to what level see report page 5.
 - 5.6 Consumables see report page 5.
 - 5.7 Tree planting a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

In view of the confidential nature (financial) on the following item, the chairman will propose a motion to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item.

- 5.8 Water connection tenders. To agree the awarding of a contract see confidential enclosure.
- 5.9 Opening ceremony, to gain members' views on this.

Ten minute comfort break

- 6 **Review of Policies and Procedures.** (8.40)
6.1 Use of Parish Council Land – Deferred from October meeting, see report on page 6.
- 7 **2014/15 Budget** (8.43)
7.1 To consider the undiscussed items on the draft Estates Committee General budget. These will be highlighted at the meeting.
7.2 To consider the undiscussed items on the draft Estates Committee Beechen Hall budget. These will be highlighted at the meeting.
- 8 **Beechen Hall Reports** (9.13)
8.1 To consider the Oct/Nov Hire fees, with a comparison for the same period in the previous year, see report on page 6.
8.2 Profit and loss report, see page 6.
8.3 Hall hire fees – see report on page 7
8.4 Electrical Safety Maintenance Contract – Deadline for quotations is Friday 6th December and will be forwarded to members prior to the meeting.
- 9 **Matters for Decision.** (9.30)
9.1 First World War: then and now see report on pages 6-7.
- 10 **Matters for Information.** (9.35)
None at the time of compiling the agenda.
- 11 **Date of Next Meeting.**
Tuesday 11 February 2014 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 4 February 2014.

Clerk to the Council

**REPORTS AND ITEMS RELATING TO THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING
10th December 2013.**

Item 4.4 (Decision) Village Signs – All signs have been visited and checked and all seem in fairly good condition with the exception of Grove Green. This has started to rot at the point where the wooden post meets the metal base (a photo will be available at the meeting). Members have remarked in the past that this sign is too high and in the wrong location (This is the only site MBC would allow the PC to place this sign). The Clerk has suggested that now the PC is responsible for WDJO the sign could be repositioned here. One option would be to cut out the section that has started to rot and re set. It might require a new post altogether and therefore funds should be set aside in the budget for 2014-15 for this possibility and for cleaning, maintaining and preserving the wooden posts. Cllr Vic Davies will check the post and base prior to the meeting and report back to members the possible options.

Item 5 Dove Hill Allotments. – *Purpose of item for information and decisions*

Item 5.1 The following report was given to the 2nd December Parish Council meeting and if necessary a verbal update will be given.

Cllr Hinder Allotments update.

Fencing – the fence is nearly completed.

Entrance gates and area – completed.

Pegging out of plots, compostable toilet, water troughs and standpipe work has either been completed or is in hand.

Water connection is in hand with a contract soon to be awarded for the site to be connected to the mains.

Shed and noticeboards – these will be arranged.

County Councillor Carter has been approached for a grant for either the shed or towards the water troughs etc. and due to an issue at the site a £500 donation has also been received from UK Power Networks.

Tree planting – free hedgerow plants and trees have been obtained and the office will be arranging for them to be planted along the side of the allotments.

Still outstanding are the agreement of the allotment rules and regulations and the fees for the plots and these are being dealt with by the 10th December Estates Committee.

Due to the timescale set for the opening a number of decisions have had to be taken out of meeting or at the extraordinary Estates Committee meeting and I thank the Chairman of the Estates Committee and its members for their understanding and support for the allotment working group and the office.

2 December update.

Issues outstanding, and which are not covered in the above report are:

- Various signage will be needed so that allotment holders and visitors know where and where not to park. This will be a 'housekeeping' job for the office and AWG.
- Security. It is anticipated that it will be possible to purchase 2 padlocks that can be opened by one key. Thus allotment holders will be issued with a key that will open a padlock on the gate at Sandy Lane and also the gate into the actual allotments. The site is currently secured however the office is attempting to locate a padlock system that is 'master key locked' that way only the office could arrange for the keys to be cut.
- MBC fencing. MBC will repair its palling fence.

Item 5.2. To ratify decisions taken out of meeting after discussion with Allotment Working Group and Estates Committee members.

5.2.1 Supply and purchase of compostable toilet.

5.2.2 Supply and purchase of 6 x water troughs, 1 x lockable standpipe (for disabled plots).

5.2.3 Bases for troughs and shed (concrete posts).

5.2.4 Plot Allocation Procedure and Allotments Tenancy Application.

Item 5.3 To agree the allotment rules and regulations.

Clerk's briefing note.

For the allotments to be run fairly and to reduce any unnecessary work for the office it is important to have robust written rules and regulations. It was evident from the training that I undertook that the failure to a) have robust written rules and regulations and b) failure to impose the rules and regulations led to lots of time consuming complaints and issues requiring attendance at the allotments. It is recommended by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) that the parish council runs the allotments for 2-3 years before it considers whether to try to set up an Allotments Association. The NSALG can supply advice on and model documents on the setting up of an Allotments Association etc. The issue of an Allotment Association will be returned to the committee at a later date.

The draft documents supplied to members, which will be projected onto a screen so that we can go through them bit by bit, are recommended by the AWG and were based on NSALG model documents, legislation, the Clerk's Allotment training and on advice from existing allotment providers. The Clerk will notify members when a regulation or rule is legislation based and so is not open for discussion or change.

The AWG have carefully considered the draft documents and recommend their adoption. Members' permission is sought to allow some minor changes to grammar or presentation after adoption as long as no substantial changes to the rules or regulations are made. Unfortunately due to holiday and work commitments the Clerk has been unable to 'polish' the document to its final format.

Item 5.4 fees

Clerk's note: As members' will see the following table shows how different allotment fees are. Much of the difference can be explained by policy (a council may choose to support lower income families by having low fees) or history (a council has poor management and never really raised the rent fees or it is a service it provides for a minimum charge). Medway Council is the most recent allotment development around here and it is charging £22.91 which includes a shed. Members' are reminded that allotments do not make a profit it is a service that can be provided by councils. Some years it will look like a modest 'profit' has been achieved (income exceeds expenditure) however when balanced out with large scale set up costs and on-going future costs (replacement fence) allotments will never be a profit generating asset. If an Allotment Association is set up then it may volunteer to undertake the grass cutting schedule which will make a massive saving on the parish council's costs.

Currently MBC, Aylesford PC and Medway Council have waiting lists for their allotments.

Clerk's suggestion: it is suggested that members' focus on the rents being charged by Maidstone BC, Medway Council and Aylesford PC. A rent should be set for a half plot with this then pro-rata for a quarter plot.

Allotment fees Comparison				
Council	Size	Cost	Includes water?	Notes
NSALG guidance				States that the average rent for a 10 pole plot is from £35 - £150 or £3.50 - £15 per pole/rod. Clerk comment : BPC has half (125 sq m/5 poles or rods) or quarter (62.5 sq m/2.5 poles or rods) plots
Maidstone Borough Council	Half plot	£13.50 With water £18.50.	Yes (£5 extra)	£20 (returnable) key deposit. <i>Clerk note: NSALG states that asking for a key deposit is illegal.</i>
Aylesford Parish Council	Half plot	£3.50 per rod = £ 17.50	Yes	
Burham Parish Council	Plot	£15.00	Don't know	

Paddock Wood Parish Council	Half plot	£7.50	Don't know	50% discount for OAPs
Ditton Parish Council	Half plot	£7.25	Yes	50 pence discount for OAPs. Cost also includes one rubbish skip per annum
Medway Council	Half plot	£22.91	Yes	Hempstead Valley, includes a shed at
Thanet District Council	Per 25sq m perch	£4.20 Half plot £26.00	No	Using this 'perch' calculation a half plot would be £21 however Thanet has a minimum charge of £26.
Swale District Council	Plot Half plot	£32 £16.00	Don't know	OAP/disabled concession £15.25
Chelmsford Borough Council	Half plot	£15	No	£7.50 for concessions
Dover Town Council	Plot Half plot	£29 - £66 £14.50 - £33		Price range reflects the different facilities available – for instance some plots will pay extra for water.
Ashford District Council	Half plot	£20	Don't know	
Sevenoaks Town Council	Half plot	£2.40 per rod = £12	Don't know	STC has just served notice of a large increase (from £1.65 to £2.40 per rod)

The following might help members' discussions on the fees.
Clerk's suggestion for a half plot fee is somewhere between £20 - £25.

Item 5.5 insurance.

Insurance will be arranged for the various structures however members views are sought on the level of cover.

Quotes from the insurance company are:

Field gate (entrance gate)
All risks cover **£2.71.**
Impact only **£1.29**

Weldmesh panel fencing and gates
All risks cover **£169.00.**
Impact only **£ 80.95.**

Quotes have not yet been obtained for the other structures but members views are sought on the level of cover that should be sought.

Item 5.6 Consumables.

The compostable toilet will need toilet rolls and hand sanitizer and it is considered that there are the following option.

- Each tenant is required to have their own supply.
- The parish council pays for the toilet rolls and sanitizer.
- An honesty box is placed in the unit for people to pay to 'spend a penny' and tenants can use this to restock the unit.

Item 6 Review of Policies and Procedures– Purpose of item to review and recommend any changes

Item 6.1 Use of Parish Council Land

Permission must be sought from the Parish Council in advance of any use that is outside the normal informal recreational use designated for that space. Upon receipt of an application, the Parish Council's Estates Committee will consider the suitability of the event for the setting, possible annoyance to neighbouring properties and other pertinent factors.

The applicant must agree to:

- Make good any damage to the land or any structures.
- Avoid blocking access for residents or the emergency services.
- Notify the police in advance if a large attendance is expected.
- Supply a copy of the organiser's Public Liability insurance to the parish office before the event.
- Remove all litter promptly from the site.

Prior to the planned event, the parish office will survey the area and supply a condition report to the event organiser. After the event, the area will be resurveyed to check that it has been left in good order and the organiser will be informed of any problems.

Additional restrictions on Boxley Green

- No decorations, flags, banners, etc. are allowed on the Lych Gate, War Memorial, or attached to the church wall.
- No vehicles are to be parked on the village green.

Item 8 Beechen Hall reports. *Purpose of item: Information reports from the Asst Clerk with possible decisions required.*

Item 8.1 (information) Hall Hire Fees for October/November

(Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

	2013/2014	2012/2013
Casual	£ 2,234.14	(£2,393.37)
Regular	<u>£ 4,977.44</u>	<u>(£4,164.84)</u>
Total	£ 7,211.58	(£6,558.21)
Cumulative figures for		
Casual	£ 8,292.96	(£11,016.97)
Regular	<u>£20,978.89</u>	<u>(£14,494.26)</u>
Total	£29,271.85	(£25,511.23)

Item 8.2 (information) Beechen Hall – Profit & Loss Report

Profit and Loss Statement (some figures shown are flexed)	
Beechen Hall	
1 April to 30 November 2013	
	£
Revenue	32,406.52
Less costs*	1006.16
Gross Profit summary	31,400.36
Less Expenses	24,989.80
Net Surplus	6,410.56
Estimated PC Office Running Costs	2,528.00

* Costs include consumables and damage waiver

Item 8.3 (decision) Hall Hire Fees.

The Assistant Clerk has suggested that as the current hire fees were implemented in September this year that a review is deferred until April 2014. This will allow members to review the profit and loss report and will allow time for any increases in utilities and consumables to be taken into consideration. It is also recommended that the review of hire fees is made in April each year.

Item 9. Matters for decision– Purpose of item: information and decisions.

Item 9.1 First (Decision) World War: then and now.

The following is information on a grant scheme that has been set up to mark the centenary of the First World War. Details have initially been placed before the Estates Committee as it is thought that a likely focus of any idea would be based around the War Memorial. Do members wish to take this project further?

First World War: then and now

First World War: then and now provides grants of £3,000 to £10,000 for communities to mark the Centenary of the First World War.

We also provide grants of more than £10,000 for First World War projects – see [Understanding the First World War](#) for more information. Here, we provide examples of projects we have funded and information about the partners we are working with.

You can read more about First World War: then and now in the application guidance. Your application will have a better chance of success if you read this thoroughly before you apply.

The difference we want to make

With a grant from us you could make a real difference to a wide range of people by helping them understand the war and its impact better. In particular, we believe that involving young people in marking the Centenary is important. See [examples of the heritage your project might explore](#).

In assessment, we take account of the broad range of [outcomes](#) that your project might achieve. Under First World War: then and now, we expect your project to achieve a minimum of one outcome for people from the list below. It is unlikely that your project will achieve a large number of these outcomes.

Outcomes for people

With our investment, people will have:

- learnt about heritage
- developed skills
- changed their attitudes and/or behaviour
- had an enjoyable experience
- volunteered time

Outcomes for heritage

With our support, heritage will be:

- in better condition
- better interpreted and explained
- identified / recorded

Outcomes for communities

With our support:

- more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.