



BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

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It has not been possible, due to limitations on this website, to include some documents. Copies can be obtained by contacting the parish office, The parish council apologies for any inconvenience caused.

To Parish Councillors, members of the public and press.

21 January 2013

Members are hereby summoned and notice is given that a **Meeting of the Parish Council** will be held at **Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close** on **28 January 2013** commencing at 7.30 p.m. when it is proposed to transact the following business:

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| | 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 3 December 2012. | (7.33) |
| To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (pages 3-6). | |
| 4. Matters Arising From the Minutes. | (7.36) |
| 4.1 Minute 2487/4.1 Round Wood/Walderslade Woods; see report (page 6). | |
| 4.2 Minute 2487/4.2 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard; see report (page 6). | |
| 4.3 Minute 2487/4.4 Speedwatch: see report (page 6). | |
| 4.5 Minute 2489/12.4 Parish Tour: see report (page 6). | |
| 5. Report from the PCSO and Police Issues. | (7.40) |
| Crime statistics see report (page 31). | |
| To adjourn to enable members of the public to address the meeting. (7.50) | |
| 6. Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings. | (8.00) |
| For the parish council to receive the minutes. Members are allowed to ask questions of the Committee Chairmen but may not initiate a discussion. | |
| 6.1 Environment Committee meeting 3 December 2012 (pages 6-7). | |
| 6.2 Environment Committee meeting 10 December November 2012 (pages 7-10). | |
| 6.3 Estates Committee meeting 11 December 2012 (pages 10-12). | |
| 6.4 Environment Committee meeting 7 January 2013 (pages 12 – 15). | |
| 6.5 Finance Committee 8 January 2013 (pages 15 -17). | |
| 7. Finance. | (8.06) |
| 7.1 To note payments made out of meeting 03.12.12 – 21.01.13 (pages 25 - 27). | |
| 7.2 To note receipts for the period 27.11.13 – 21.01.13 (pages 28 - 29). | |
| 7.3 Account balances as at 21.01.13 (page 30). | |
| 7.4 To authorise payments of accounts (list to be supplied at meeting). | |
| 7.5 To agree a parish councillor to undertake an audit; Cllrs Perry and Dengate have offered to undertake the work. | |
| 8. 2013/2014 Precept and Budget. | (8.12) |
| To agree the budget and set the precept; the Finance Committee's recommendation is that "The budget be recommended to the parish council with a precept of | |

£114,682 being set.” The Chairman and Clerk to sign the relevant paperwork to apply for the precept. The Chairman’s commentary is enclosed for members’ and they are asked to bring the paper copy of the budget to the meeting.

- 9 **Cuckoo Woods.** (8.25)
To receive and consider a briefing note see report (pages 17 - 19).
- 10 **Solar Panels at Beechen Hall.** (8.40)
To revisit a decision by the Finance Committee not to release funds for this project, see report (pages 19 -21) plus enclosure. A resolution to release funds from reserves may be placed before the meeting.
- 11 **Land at Sandy Lane, Boxley.** (9.00)
The legal paperwork is being progressed by the solicitors. Should any confidential information be received of which the parish council needs to be notified, the Chairman will move to exclude the public and press for the duration of the item.
- 12 **Policies and Procedures Review.** (9.02)
12.1 Review of the Policies and Procedures Calendar 2013–2014) see report (pages 21 -22).
12.2 Member numbers for committees see report (page 22).
- 13 **Matters for Decision.** (9.15)
Date of annual meeting of the parish see report (page 22).
- 14 **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.** (9.20)
To allow councillors to report and discuss matters affecting the parish (page 22 - 23).
- 15 **Reports from councillors/office.** (9.30)
Representatives who attended any meeting on behalf of the parish council are invited to give a brief summary. See reports on pages 23 -24.
15.1 Report on Protect Kent – Maidstone Committee AGM held in County Hall on 5th December. Cllr P Brooks.
15.2 Cllr Brooks Report on my visit to the NEXT presentation at the Hilton Hotel, Cllr P Brooks.
15.3 CPRE Meeting – AGM for Protect Kent, Cllr P Brooks.
- 16 **Matters for Information.** (9.36)
KALC December Parish News
Rural News issue 124 (e-mail 13/12/12).
Kenward Trust Newsletter (e-mail 21/12/12).
Thank you, for the grant, letter from Victim Support.
Kent Downs AONB E Bulletin Dec 2012 (e-mail 10/12/12)
KCC Inside Track Nov 2012 issue (e-mail 05/12/12).
CPRE Fieldwork magazine Winter 2012.
ACRK Oast to Coast Winter 2012.
KALC Maidstone Committee minutes November 2012
- 17 **Next Meeting.** (9.37)
Monday 4 March 2013 at Weaving Village Hall, Weaving Street ME14 5JP
Councillor requests for agenda items are to be submitted no later than 24 February 2013.

Clerk to the Council.

Items to be returned to a future agenda: Quality Parish Council application.

In accordance with policy the meeting should close no later than 9.30 pm but the Chairman has power to extend it by 30 minutes.

Item 3 Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at the St Johns School, Provender Way, Grove Green, on Monday 3 December commencing at 7.32 pm.

Councillors present: Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Vic Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr T Harwood, Mr Bob Hinder, Mrs Wendy Hinder, Mr D Holmes, Mrs K Macklin (arrived with apologies during item 5), Mr G Smith, Mrs A Spain, Mr A Springate, Mr P Sullivan and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk, Borough Councillor Butler, PCSO Hawthorn and 3 members of the press/public.

1. Apologies and absences.

Cllr Perry (holiday). Cllr Paul Carter (KCC meeting).

2. Declaration of Interests or Lobbying.

All members present declared that they had been lobbied on item 12.6 Eclipse Park consultation.

Cllr Spain notified members that she had a Pecuniary Interest on item 8.

The Chairman took part of item 10 at this point in the meeting. He highlighted the need for meetings to remain focused on the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 5 November 2012.

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

The Chairman took item 5 was taken at this point.

4. Matters Arising From the Minutes.

4.1 Minute 2475/4.1 Round Wood/Walderslade Woods. **Noted** that the November meeting of the KCC Members Regulation Committee Panel had been cancelled; the meeting would be rearranged in January or February.

4.2 Minute 2475/4.4 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. **Noted** that the legal agreement had now been received for signature and would be cleared between meetings with a report circulated to members.

4.3 Minute 2475/4.5 Concurrent Functions/Parish Services Scheme. **Noted** that in view of the MBC deadline for setting the budget for the scheme the office had arranged a meeting with MBC on the 17 December 2012. **Action: Chairman and Clerk.**

4.4 Minute 2475/4.6 Speedwatch. **Noted** that another training date will be arranged and other councils will be invited. A reminder about the requested safety audit had been sent. **Action: office.**

4.5 Minute 2476/9 Cuckoo Woods. **Noted** that information had been requested from the interested parties and a briefing report would be supplied to the January meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

5 Report from the PCSO and Police Issues.

5.1 **Noted and received** the Crime statistics.

5.2 Members received Chief Inspector Bumpus's response. Following discussion on double taxation of residents and PCSO coverage of the parish, during which concerns were expressed that any change might result in PCSO Hawthorn being moved to another area, Cllr Springate proposed Cllr Harwood seconded that **"As, after due notice, it has not proved possible in negotiations with Kent Police to obtain an assurance of 100% dedicated PCSO cover for Boxley Parish, this council will give six months' notice of withdrawal from the relevant contract with effect from 1 January 2013"** The motion was **passed** (6 for, 3 against, with 5 abstentions). **Action: Clerk.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7.56 pm to allow a member of the public to inform members that her request for a salt bin for Grange Lane had been approved. The meeting reconvened at 7.58 pm.

Due to the interest and attendance of a member of the public the Chairman brought forward item 12.5.

6 **Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings.**

Noted and Received:

- 6.1 Environment Committee meeting 5 November 2012.
- 6.2 Environment Committee meeting 12 November 2012.
- 6.3 Finance Committee meeting 13 November 2012. Cllr Dengate raised an issue concerning fax machines and the Clerk will liaise directly with him. **Action: Clerk.** A question from Cllr Wendy Hinder about item 12 Grant Request was answered by the Chairman.

7 **Finance.**

- 7.1 **Noted** payments made out of meeting 06.11.12 – 26.11.12. Appendix A.
- 7.2 **Noted** receipts for the period 23.10.12 – 26.11.12. Appendix B.
- 7.3 **Noted** account balances as at 26.11.12. Appendix C.
- 7.4 No payments of accounts were presented.
- 7.5 Members were reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters; the need to check invoices against cheques when signing cheques; and that cheque stubs must be initialled by both signatories. Members also need to keep their register of pecuniary interest updated.

8 **Land at Sandy Lane, Boxley.**

Noted that the legal paperwork was awaited from the solicitor's. Members **received** the information with no discussion and so Cllr Spain was not required to leave the meeting.

9 **Annual Competency Reports.**

- 9.1 Members' **received** the Clerk's report on the annual reviews of committee competency. It was **agreed** to adopt the following statement "**Boxley Parish Council and its committees have undertaken an annual review of its style of management and methods of work. It is considered that decisions are taking place in an open and accountable way and that the public can a) understand how a decision was reached; b) monitor the work of the parish council and c) recognise that the parish council is acting legally and fairly**".
- 9.2 The Chairman's earlier comment had been noted by members. Cllr Wendy Hinder supported the need for more disciplined meetings. Cllrs Macklin and Holmes raised concerns that members might be discouraged from speaking or debating issues. The Chairman gave an assurance that he and the other chairmen would continue to encourage all members to contribute to discussion. Everyone's opinion was valued; but more brevity and objectivity were needed.

10 **2013/2014 Draft Budget.**

Cllr Harwood suggested that the parish council needed to consider the implications of the Local Development Framework and the increased work this might impose on the parish council and office, such as a need for:

- Public meetings;
- Notifications to parishioners;
- Legal advice

It was suggested that a substantial contingency sum should be placed within the budget. **Agreed.**

11 **Policies and Procedures Review.**

There were none scheduled for review.

12 **Matters for Decision.**

- 12.1 **Received** the proposed 2013/14 meeting dates. Members were asked to notify the parish office of any issues by 12 December 2012. **Action: Councillors and office.**
- 12.2 Annual Meeting of the Parish. It was **agreed** that the 2013 meeting should be held immediately before a meeting of the parish council. In view of the

financial situation, it was **agreed** that it should be a low key event, but with refreshments.

12.3 The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Annual Civic Service – Tuesday 12 March 2013. Cllr Macklin to attend. **Action – Cllr Macklin and office.**

12.4 Parish tour. Members were to be e-mailed asking for dates in March on which they will not be available. **Action: Councillors and office.**

12.5 Additional Parking in Boxley Village. Members **received** the feasibility study submitted for comment by a group of interested parties in the village. Several councillors spoke of the need to protect the Conservation Area and the AONB. The parish council had previously looked in vain for parking provision for visitors to access the Pilgrim's Way, but suggested that such a large car park and associated substantial residential development were totally unworkable. A smaller negotiated scheme might, however, be acceptable. The Chairman then proposed that **"The need for additional car parking at the village was recognised but it is felt that this proposal for a 60 space car park plus two residential dwellings was not acceptable. Rather than this a negotiated agreement to continue to use the ESO driveway should be sought by the interested parties."** Seconded by Cllr Brooks. **Agreed** (13 for 1 against).

12.6 Eclipse Park consultation. The Chairman encouraged members to attend if they were interested but were reminded of the need to remain objective. The difference between 'predisposed' and 'predetermined' was noted.

13 Reports from Borough and County Councillors.

Cllr Butler notified members that Cllr Ring, Cabinet Member, was willing to undertake a walk in the parish to view any roadside litter problem areas. The Environment Committee was asked to liaise with Cllr Butler. **Action: Environment Committee.**

A resident had requested a bus shelter in Grove Green. Cllr Butler was asked to pass on details to the office for the Estates Committee to consider. **Action: Estates Committee.** Members were also notified that a review of the change of location for the visitors centre was being undertaken.

Cllr Wendy Hinder's report was **received**. She has been dealing with various residents' issues and the drop kerbs had now been installed. She had also been told that the two salt bins that she had requested would be funded by County Cllr Carter. Comment was made about primary snow route clearance actually blocking side roads. The Clerk was asked to liaise with KCCH&T. **Action – office.**

14 Reports from councillors/office.

14.1 **Received** Cllr Perry's report on the Friends of Boxley Warren task day on 11 November 2012.

14.2 **Received** the Chairman's verbal report on the successful interview for the employment of a temporary office assistant at the parish office.

14.3 **Received** Chairman's report on the KALC AGM on 17 November 2012.

14.4 **Received** Cllr Bob Hinder's report on Maidstone KALC meeting on 21 November 2012.

15 Improving Local Government Transparency consultation.

Member's received the briefing report and after discussion the suggested response was **agreed**. Cllr Dengate advised members that there would be extra work involved in placing a readable document onto the website but it was possible. **Action: office.**

16 Matters for Information.

16.1 Cobtree Country Park newsletter Oct-Nov.

16.2 Thank you from VVNR and WWG for the released grants.

16.3 Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority draft plans for the future "Towards 2020 Update" is available on www.kent.fire-uk.org.

16.4. Financial update from NALC concerning setting of the precept.

16.5 Office arrangements over Christmas/New Year holidays:

Mon 24 - 27 December 2012 – closed. Fri 28 December – open.

Mon 31 December 2012 – open. Tues 1 January 2013 – closed.

- Wed 2 January 2013 – service resumes as normal.
- 16.5 CPRE Countryside Voice Winter 2012 edition.
 - 16.6 KWT Wild Kent Winter 2012/13 edition.
 - 16.7 Friends of Boxley Warren minutes of 20.11.12.
 - 16.8 ACRK Rural News issue 123

17 Next Meeting.

Monday 28 January 2013 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade. Councillor requests for agenda items are to be submitted no later than 20 January 2013.

Meeting closed at 9.09 p.m.

Item 4 Matters Arising From the Minutes *Purpose of item: information.*

Item 4.1 Round Wood/Walderslade Woods. The KCC Members Regulation Committee Panel met on the 21 January 2013 and the application will be discussed. An update will be supplied at the meeting.

Item 4.2 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard.

The Chair and Vice Chair will sign the MBC lease document, which has been checked by the Clerk. The requested changes concerning the dog waste bin and the interpretation/notice boards were amended as members wished. A query was raised about the wording of the clause dealing with play equipment and whether the word 'renew' would allow replacement with a different style piece of equipment. This will be allowed but members are reminded that the current play area is for young children and safety requirements do not allow mixtures of different age group equipment unless there is sufficient space to 'isolate' the age groups.

The procedure for safety checking the equipment has been agreed and these will commence. MBC will register the lease with Land Registry for the fee of £50 to be paid by the parish council.

Item 4.4 Speedwatch: Arrangements are being made to set up a training date.

Item 4.5 Parish Tour. The tour has been booked for Saturday 9 March 2013 from 10.00 – 4.00. For those attending, a draft itinerary is enclosed in their folders; any member wishing to add to the itinerary should contact the clerk as soon as possible.

Item 6. Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings. *Purpose of item: To receive.*

Item 6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 3 December 2012, at St Johns School, Provender Way commencing at 9.33 p.m.

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

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

There were none.

2. Apologies and absences

Mrs W Hinder (MBC training).

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

3. Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.

3.1 MA/12/1939 erection of a single storey side extensions (resubmission of MA/12/1078) at 12 Olivine Close, Walderslade ME5 9NQ

Do not wish to object. However members, while noting that the application is for an extension both lower and smaller than that refused previously, still 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 TA/0188/12 Tree preservation order no. 1969: An application for consent to remove epicormic growth from trunks, to thin crowns by 15-20%, to remove branches closest to roof of property, and to remove dead crossings or rubbing branches from 2(no) Oak trees at 12 Olivine Close, Walderslade, ME5 9NQ.

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

4. **Next Meeting.**

Next full Environment Committee meeting, 10th December 2012 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 9.38.

Item 6.2 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 10th December 2012 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllr Spain (unwell).

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

Cllr Brooks notified members that she knew the owner of the application MA/12/2086 but had not been lobbied.

Cllr Holmes notified members that he had a pecuniary interest at item 4.6 and if anything was going to be discussed he would leave the room for the item.

Chairman notified members that she had been lobbied on item 4.1

Cllrs Dengate, Holmes, Bob Hinder, Wendy Hinder and Cllr Brooks had been lobbied on 14.2. Noted all members' had received an invitation to the consultation.

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 5th and 12th November 2012.**

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

4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2480/4.1 private road sign at Cossington Lane. **Noted** a resident had requested the removal of the 'private road' sign at Cossington Lane. After discussion it was **agreed** (8 for 1 against) that a letter is delivered to all properties in Cossington Lane requesting that the signs' 'owner' remove it otherwise the parish council would arrange for it to be taken down and disposed of. Whilst sympathetic as to the reason it was displayed it was considered that it stopped the public using the road to access the woods. **Action;** draft to be cleared by Chairman.

4.2 Minute 2480/4.2 Public Right of Way, Round Wood valley. **Noted** KCC had refused, due to financial constraints, the request for the path to be designated a PRow. **Agreed** revisit in 12 months but until then **no further action.**

4.3 Minute 2480/4.3 Boxley Road/Grange Lane movement of speed restriction. Information on why the Police had refused to support the request to move the speed limit signs was awaited; as were any alternative suggestions to improve the junction. Cllrs Davies and Hinder notified members that this was raised at a KALC meeting and the Police Officer attending agreed to investigate and get back to the parish council. Clerk confirmed that no contact had been made and the Clerk was asked to contact the Police. **Action; Clerk.**

4.4 Minute 2480/4.4 additional white lining Boxley Road/Beechen Bank Rd. **Noted** the work had been partially completed. It was likely that bad weather stopped the work and so the situation will be monitored.

- 4.5 Minute 2480/4.5 Beechen Bank land ownership, members clarified that they wished to have a fuller understanding about the ownership in case of any future developments. **Agreed** expenditure would come from the Street Maintenance. **Action: office.**
- 4.6 Minute 2480/4.6 Saracen Fields open area. **Noted** a response was awaited from County Councillor Paul Carter who has asked an officer to investigate. **Action: chase for a reply.**
- 4.7 Minute 2480/4.7. **Noted** the suggestions, trees leaning over Walderslade Woods Road and other work, were submitted for consideration for Cllr Paul Carter's devolved budget.
- 4.8 Minute 2483/9.6 KCCH&T survey. **Noted** the survey was completed by Cllr Hinder and the parish council's response to DforT speed limit circular was also included as it related well to the questions being asked.
- 4.9 Minute 2483/9.8 Salt bins 'use on highways only' signs. KCCH&T had been contacted about whether they had signs that could be purchased. **Noted** response awaited.
- 4.10 Minute 2483/9.10 Maidstone Studios. **Noted** dates for a meeting were being awaited from the studio. **Action office.**

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

5. Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.

5.1 MA/12/2086 erection of a part two storey part single storey side extension and erection of a single storey rear extension at 6 Harbourland Cottages, Boxley.

Do not wish to object but there were serious concerns as it was considered that the bulk and scale of the proposed development might dominant the original dwelling compromising the street scene and design of the terrace.

5.2 TA/0186/12 application for consent to carry out works to approximately 65 trees including coppicing and crown lifting, as set out in the application, at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close.

Would like to see approved but in the interests of being open and accountable members asked that it be highlighted that the parish council was the applicant.

5.3 TA/0196/12 application for consent to crown lift to 4m and thin by 10% Trees T1, T2 and T3 (Hornbeams). Reduce height of Trees T4 and T5 (Hornbeams) by 30% and reduce height by 30% and balance crown of tree T6 (Hornbeam) at 24 Goldstone Walk, Walderslade ME5 9QB.

Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

6. Planning Applications and Appeals Decisions

MA/12/1458 REFUSED* TA/0171/12 AGREED WITH AMENDMENT TO WORKS ALLOWED

It was agreed that in future when the committee objects to an application and MBC supports this decision the committee should be notified.

Cllr Waller raised an issue regarding the Yew Tree public house application and whether the Yew Tree outside was protected? The office was asked to investigate.

Action: office.

7. Neighbourhood Development Plans

7.1 **Noted** Cllrs Brooks and Waller had completed the work on Sandling and submitted it to the office. Cllr Perry would submit his comments to the next agenda. **Action: Cllr Perry.**

7.2 Membership of the NDP working group **agreed** as Cllrs Wendy Hinder, Brooks, Ivor Davies, Holmes, Waller and Springate. Other members were welcomed to supply views and comments.

8. Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group

Cllr Springate gave a brief report on recent work of the group.

Cllr Bob Hinder gave a brief report on The Friends of Boxley Warren. It was **agreed** that the item would be renamed volunteer groups to allow reports from any group supported by the parish council. **Action: office.**

9. Highways and Byways.

9.1 Cllr Waller notified the meeting that the chestnut palling around Abbey Court was falling down and causing safety issues for pedestrians. Cllr Waller would report the issue to the highway department. **Action: Cllr Waller.**

Cllr Dengate reported a teetered pony on the verge at 3 Ashes. It was agreed he would report his concerns about road safety issues to KCCH&T and perhaps the RSPCA. Contact details for the Highway Stewart would be passed to councillors so that they can report any future safety issues directly to him to investigate if he was in the area. It was **noted** that numerous reports had been sent to the RSPCA about the pony. **Action: Cllr Dengate.**

Cllr Bob Hinder reported that he had stopped members of the public demolishing a Holly tree to make wreaths probably for sale.

Cllr Dengate reported that he thought that someone was living rough in Cowbeck Woods and he was concerned about their well being. It was **agreed** that the PCSO would be informed and asked if he could involve the relevant services to see if the person could be helped. **Action: office.**

9.2 Dog fouling. Members **received** information on the new byelaw that MBC was bringing into effect.

10. Policy and procedures review.

Wish list, members asked that additional information be included on the list to show when part of objectives had been completed etc.

Clerk was asked to obtain an update about the timing of the roundabout improvements paid for by a S106 from the KIMS development. **Action: office.**

11. 2013/14 Budget – draft.

Members' **received** a copy of the Street Maintenance policy.

12. Listed Building in the parish.

12.1 St Andrew's Chapel, it was **noted** that English Heritage has been contacted.

12.2 Listed Buildings Register **Noted** the parish office was producing a new listed building register for the parish by downloading information and maps from the English Heritage. **Action: office.**

13. Consultation; Extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses: technical consultation.

Members' **received** the briefing note and after discussion the response was **agreed**: shown as an appendix to the minutes.

Cllr Dengate & Holmes asked to be supplied a map showing the extent of the AONB area. **Action: office.**

14. Matters for information.

14.1 MBC call for sites to be identified for the Core Strategy.

14.2 Consultation at Eclipse Park for Next store. Members' who attended gave verbal reports to the meeting. Concern was raised over the lack of funding for real infrastructure improvements.

15. Next Meeting.

Next full environment meeting 7th January 2013 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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

The Chairman, in view of the confidential nature (personal details and data) on the

Enforcement item about to be transacted, moved that the public and press be excluded from the meeting.

16. Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.

Information was received on two issues relating to enforcement in the parish.

Meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.

Item 6.3. Minutes of the Estates Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 11th December 2012 at 7.30pm.

Councillors present – Mr V Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr I Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr B Hinder, Mr P Sullivan, Mr G Smith, Mrs M Waller together with the Assistant Clerk.

1. Declarations of Interest and Lobbying

Cllr I Davies for Item 7; all councillors for item 4.4.

2. Apologies and absence.

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 9th October, 2012.

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

4. Matters Arising From Previous Minutes.

4.1 Minute 2430/6.2 Playground Inspection Course – Members **received** and **noted** the clerk's report,

4.2 Minute 2430/6.3 Tree maintenance and boundary treatment to Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. Members **received** the Clerk's report and unanimously **agreed** for the Chairman, Cllr Harwood, the Clerk and the agreed contractor to carry out the necessary boundary work as suggested. Members will be notified by email in due course.

4.3 Minute 2433/13 Flag pole – This is in hand and will be progressed as time permits. **Noted.**

4.4 Minute 2473/7 Carbon Footprint – After some discussion members **agreed** that as only two quotes had been received that a further quote is obtained to give the committee a balanced view. A recommendation will be made out of meeting to finance committee. **Action Parish Office.**

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

5. Sandy Lane land issues – Members noted the working group would be meeting in the New Year to progress any identified issues.

6. Assistant Clerk's Report.

6.1 Hire fees were **received** and **Noted** for Oct/Nov with a comparison for the same period in the previous year

(Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

	2012/2013	2011/2012
Casual	£2,393.37	(£1,784.75)
Regular	<u>£4,164.84</u>	<u>(£2,947.75)</u>
Total	£6,558.21	(£4,692.50)
Cumulative figures for		
Casual	£11,016.97	(£ 7,843.14)
Regular	<u>£14,494.26</u>	<u>(£12,331.29)</u>
Total	£25,511.23	(£20,174.43)

6.2 New Hall Hire – **Ratified** the Assistant Clerk's decision after consulting with the committee out of meeting to allow Age Concern to hire Beechen Hall on Wednesdays and Fridays as a day centre. Members also **agreed** to purchase some kitchen equipment for the hall to enable this hirer to produce meals. Advice will be

sought from the RFO as to which budget this would be vired from.

Members also requested the first aid kit is checked and is equipped to cater for this type of hire.

6.3 Damage to Beechen Hall – Members **received** and **noted** the Assistant Clerk's report and unanimously **agreed** to the increase in hire fees for 16th/18th/21st Birthday parties and increase and cash the damage indemnity deposit. Members also **agreed** for the office to monitor these events and notify them if there any further issues. **Action Office**

6.4 Wall Mounted boiler – Members unanimously **agreed** and approved the cost for a larger 7.5 litre wall mounted water boiler to be installed in the kitchen at a cost of £830.00.

7. **Tree Maintenance at Beechen Hall.**

Members **received** the list of quotations and after discussion agreed to use J Hood to carry out the work at a cost of £650.00 which includes logging the wood. It is anticipated that works will take place shortly on a Sunday when there is less disruption to hirers of the hall.

8. **Caretaking at Beechen Hall.**

Members **received** and considered the Assistant Clerk's report and agreed the appointment of a third caretaker. Members were saddened but accepted the current relief caretaker's resignation. The advert, now for two caretakers, was approved with minor alterations and this will be placed on the noticeboards, on the website and in the Downs Mail. Interviews are likely to take place end of January 2013. The interview panel was **agreed** as Cllr Vic Davies (Chair), Cllr Bob Hinder (Vice Chair) and the Assistant Clerk. **Action Parish Office.**

Members **received** and **noted** the cleaning risk assessment, cleaning schedule and caretaking rota.

9. **Beechen Hall Profit and Loss report.**

Members **received** and **noted** the report and asked for it to appear as permanent item on the agenda going forward.

10. **Boxley Church Yard.**

10.1 **Long term responsibility of closed churchyard.** Cllr Ivor Davies proposed and Cllr Paul Dengate seconded with all in favour for the motion to approach Maidstone Borough Council to consider taking over the responsibility of this closed churchyard as indicated to the Clerk.

10.2 **Yew Tree and damage to listed wall.** After considering all facts Members **agreed** that they would like to see the Yew tree removed and to obtain a quote from J Hood. However, they also requested that advice was needed from MBC to ascertain if the tree is TPO'd before a final decision could be made. **Action Parish Office**

10.3 **Beech Tree at rear of closed churchyard.** Members **agreed** to review this again in six months.

11. **2013/14 Draft Budget** – Members have an opportunity to submit projects or issues for funding in the draft budget.

Hall Budget

11.1 New front doors and windows at Beechen Hall – The Assistant Clerk informed members this had been mistakenly added to the agenda.

11.2 Hand dryers for the toilets. Cllr Paul Dengate requested further technical information on one of the hand dryers and defer to the next meeting.

11.3 Hall internal/External decoration. Members unanimously **agreed** for £1,500 to be placed in 13/14 budget.

11.4 Outside lockable electric socket. Members unanimously **agreed** this expenditure which will come from the hall maintenance budget for 12/13.

General Budget

- 11.5 Common Land at Grange Lane – Members **agreed** not to pursue the possibility of maintaining this piece of land as it is not owned.
- 11.6 Cllr Ivor Davies has suggested a seat at the north end of Boxley Road on the small area there. Members **agreed** to put £650.00 into the budget.
- 11.7 Cllr Vic Davies requested a litter bin next to the existing seat and a new seat and litter bin at Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. After some discussion members agreed to an additional seat and litter bins. The location of the second seat and litter bin is to be clarified with the Clerk.

Additional Items for consideration for 2013/14 Budget.

Cllr Vic Davies requested £300.00 is put into the budget for a hearing induction loop.

Cllr Ivor Davies requested a provision is placed in the hall budget for the repainting of car park spaces and clearing the leaves in the car park at Beechen Hall.

Cllr Vic Davies requested a quote for an extraction fan in the kitchen to mitigate condensation and food smells.

12. **Review of Policies and Procedures.**
- 12.1 Review of Hall Hire Fees – Members received the Assistant Clerk’s report and recommendations and Cllr Geoff Smith proposed, and Cllr Pat Brooks seconded, with all in favour of the motion to review again in 6 months at the June meeting.
13. **Matters for Decision**
- 14.1 Royal visit commemorative plaque at the hall. Members unanimously **agreed** to a plaque to be placed in the foyer of Beechen Hall to mark this occasion. Cllr Ivor Davies will circulate the wording for the plaque to members and the Assistant Clerk will obtain a cost for producing the plaque which will come from the Weaving Diamond Jubilee budget.
14. **Matters for Information**
- There were none.
15. **Date of Next Meeting.**
- Tuesday 12th February, 2013 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 9.28pm

Item 6.4 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 7th January 2013 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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

1. **Apologies and absences**
Cllr Holmes (absent)
2. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**
Cllr Perry notified members that he knew the agent of the application MA/12/1426 but had not been lobbied.
Cllr Spain notified members that she had a non-pecuniary interest on application MA/12/1424.
3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 5th and 12th November 2012.**
The minutes were **agreed** with amendments and **signed** as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.**

4.1 Minute 2492/4.1 marker at Cossington Lane. **Noted** a further sign has been erected for restricted access for HGVs and clarification is being sought from KCCHT. A letter to residents has been drafted and agreed by the Chairman and once clarification has been sought will be distributed.

4.2 Minute 2492/4.3 Boxley Road/Grange Lane movement of speed restriction. **Noted** Information on why the Police had refused to support the request to move the speed limit signs were still awaited: as was a response from the police officer who attended the KALC meeting in December. **Action; Clerk.**

4.3 Minute 2492/4.5 Beechen Bank land ownership, **Noted** further information will be sent once a cheque has been raised by the Parish Council. **Action: office.**

4.4 Minute 2492/4.6 Saracen Fields open area. **Noted** a response is still awaited despite further requests, from County Councillor Paul Carter who has asked an officer to investigate. **Action: office to chase for a reply.**

4.5 Minute 2492/4.7. **Noted** A response is still awaited from KCCH&T regarding the overhanging trees along Walderslade Woods Road and other work, would be considered for Cllr Paul Carter's devolved budget.

4.6 Minute 2492/4.9 Salt bins 'use on highways only' signs. KCCH&T had been contacted about whether they had signs that could be purchased. **Noted** a response is still awaited.

4.7 Minute 2493/4.10 Maidstone Studios. **Noted** dates for a meeting were still being awaited from the studio. **Action office.**

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

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

5.1 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. Amended details received December 2012. Ratified the Clerk's decision, after consulting with the Environment Committee, The Parish Council wishes to reiterate its previous reasons [not produced for this report as it was a direct repeat of the previous decision], and makes further comments below.

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

8. Restrictions on the size of delivery vehicles entering into Penhurst Close.

9. Restriction on any take away service offered by restaurants and or cafes.

10. Restrictions on the lighting of the car parking and frontages on Penhurst Close.

5.2 MA/12/1883 erection of a two-storey rear extension and installation of first floor windows to the side elevation (resubmission of MA/12/0609) at 16 Trotwood Close, Walderslade. **Ratified** and **agreed** the Assistant Clerk's decision, after consulting with the Environment Committee, *Boxley Parish Council would like to withdraw its original decision on the above application, after carefully considering all the facts that have been presented to them they have decided they **Do not wish to object.***

5.3 MA/12/1931 Erection of conservatory at 1 Sandbourne Drive, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2JA. **Do not wish to object.**

5.4 MA/12/2110 construction of a rear balcony at 5 Round Wood, Walderslade ME5 9UL. **Do not wish to object**

5.5 MA/12/2119 single storey rear extension and new pitched roof to existing rear extension at The White House, Tyland Lane ME14 3BH 03/01/13. **Ratified** Clerk's decision, after contact with committee members, **Do not wish to object.**

5.6 MA/12/2142 Listed building consent for insertion of 4 conservation roof lights to rear elevation, the handing of the front door and adjacent window, insertion of a window to front elevation, and internal alterations including removal of existing staircase and insertion of new staircase to serve first floor self-contained flat at Barn

Cottage, Boxley Road ME14 3DN. **Do not wish to comment and defer to the views of the conservation officer.**

5.7 MA/12/2149 erection of a 2 storey and single storey rear extension insertion of a side and rear dormer windows and installation of a swimming pool (amendment to previously refused MA/12/1458) at Myosotis, Chatham Road, Sandling ME14 3AY. **Do not wish to object.**

5.8 TA/0206/12 application for consent to fell Silver Birch at 15 Ploughmans Way, Walderslade ME5 9DE. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consultation with members,

Do not wish to object but defer the decision to the borough landscape officer however a replacement tree should be of an indigenous species.

5.9 MA/12/2193 Erection of a rear storey conservatory at 14 The Hedgerow, Weaving, ME14 5TG. **Do not wish to object.**

6 **Planning Applications and Appeals Decisions**

MA/12/0693 GRANTED* Tesco application to vary delivery condition. **Noted.**

7 **Neighbourhood Development Plans**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Perry for his work on the Grove Green Neighbourhood plan and confirmed a meeting of the working group will be arranged in February 2013.

8 **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group**

Cllr Springate gave a brief report on recent work of the group which included developing a link between Cossington Valley and Roundwood Valley.

Cllr Bob Hinder gave a brief report on The Friends of Boxley Warren. A meeting has been arranged with Mike Philips to discuss the purchase of equipment and the next task day is scheduled for Sunday 13th January, 2013.

9 **Highways and Byways.**

Cllr W Hinder notified the meeting that the gutters in Brownlowe Copse and Beechmore Drive needed a sweep because there is lots of detritus due to impacted leaves. Cllr W Hinder also stated the litter bin at the Southern End of Boxley Road needs emptying **Action: Cllr Hinder.**

Cllr Dengate reported that a litter pick had been carried out by MBC along Gleaming Wood Drive approximately an hour before the refuse trucks collected the weekly rubbish which caused even more litter once they had left the site. **Noted**

Cllr Springate requested a litter pick along Lordswood Lane. **Action Cllr Springate.**

Cllr Bob Hinder requested clarification from Cllr Paul Carter for the work that is currently being undertaken on the Walderslade Woods Road between Tunbury Avenue and Impton Lane whereby islands have been installed. This area technically falls within Tonbridge and Malling and he would like to know if these islands will be installed further along the Road towards Roundwood Roundabout. **Action: office.**

Members were informed that MBC contact centre have been telling residents who request a litter pick or similar service that there is no money in their budget to carry out these duties and are referring them to their Parish Council. The Clerk has suggested an article is placed in the next issue of the Downs Mail newsletter advising residents on how to request a litter pick. **Action office.**

10 **Policy and procedures review.**

Members **received** and **agreed** to the review and the Clerk's comments.

11. **Examining the Speed Limit for HGVs over 7.5 tonnes on Single Carriageway Roads: A Consultation Document.**

Members **agreed** not to respond to this consultation on the grounds the Parish Council does not have any expertise in this field.

12. **Matters for information.**

12.1 Business rates retention and the local government settlement. A plain English guide is available at www.communities.gov.uk. **Received and Noted.**

12.2 Listed Buildings Register, members were notified the office had compiled a register for listed buildings within the parish based on information supplied by English Heritage. Members requested a copy is circulated once it had been checked and a laminated copy is kept in the environment box along with other useful documents. **Action Office.**

13. **Next Meeting.**

Next full environment meeting 11th February 2013 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 4th February 2013.

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

There were none.

Meeting closed at 8.22 p.m.

Item 6.5 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 8 January 2013 commencing at 7.32 p.m.

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

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

All members were present.

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

Cllr Wendy Hinder reminded members that she was a Borough Councillor.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 12 November 2012.**

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

4. **Matters Arising.**

4.6 Minute 2484/4.1 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard lease. **Noted** the amended lease had arrived and was being checked. **Action** – Clerk.

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

5. **Financial report.**

5.1 Income/Expenditure report of 2 January 2013. **Received and noted.**

5.2 Reconciliation of accounts report of January 2013. **Received and noted.**

5.3 Reconciliation of December 2012 bank account statements. **Received and signed off.** It was **agreed** to amalgamate items 5.2 and 5.3 in future. **Action** – Clerk.

5.4 Investment Bonds: Members were informed that the NATWEST paperwork was awaited. Members **agreed** that the maturing Cooperative 6 month bond would be reinvested in a 3 month bond. The Clerk confirmed that the two required signatures would be obtained when the form was received. **Action** – Clerk.

6. **2013/14 Draft Budget.**

Members considered the draft budget and what adjustments were necessary in view of the loss of the annual MBC Concurrent Functions Grant of £33,000, reduced from £48,000 in 2011). Members were notified that on present information, only £550

would definitely be forthcoming from the replacement Parish Services Scheme. Members expressed concern about the lack of any final confirmed figure from MBC given that its deadline for parishes to set their precepts was the end of January.

A lengthy discussion ensued covering the impact on residents of any precept increase; the use of parish council reserves; the amount required to meet possible legal and contractual commitments; and the need to fully explain to residents that any increase in precept was because of the loss of the MBC grant. After considering whether to cut grants to local groups etc; how much should be drawn down from reserves and the impact on residents, using the average (Band D) precept, of various amounts of increase to meet the shortfall; it was proposed by Cllr Macklin and seconded by Cllr Bob Hinder that **"The budget be recommended to the parish council with a precept of £114,682 being set."** This was **agreed** (6 for, 1 against and with the chairman abstaining).

7. **Policy and procedures reviews and adoption.**

- 7.1 Review of the Policies and Procedures Calendar 2013–2014: the document with a slight amendment was **agreed**.
- 7.2 Committee review of Financial Regulations: the Clerk's report was received and the suggestion for an update to standing order 11.3 to reflect a recent committee decision **agreed. Action** – Clerk.
- 7.3 Review of banking arrangements: Members' confirmed that they were happy with the current arrangements.
- 7.4 Procedure for payment of staff salaries by BACS: Members **agreed** the policy and procedure.
- 7.5 Reserves policy: After a request from Cllr Macklin that, in the interests of transparency, the text should be re-written on Plain English lines, it was **agreed** to defer the item to the next meeting for which the Clerk should produce a revised version. **Action** – Clerk and agenda.

8 **St Mary and All Saints Closed Churchyard**

Members considered a letter from St Mary and All Saints Church asking that the parish council retain responsibility of the churchyard. After discussion, Cllr Vic Davies proposed, seconded by Cllr Macklin that **the parish council approach Maidstone BC to request that it takes over responsibility for the closed churchyard. Agreed** (7 for with the chairman abstaining). The chairman requested that a letter be sent to the church saying that that the council understood its concerns but thought them unfounded as its own experience of MBC grounds maintenance had been good. **Action** – Clerk.

9 **Grant Requests.**

None received.

10 **Solar panels.**

The financial benefits or otherwise of such an installation and the future of the currently available Government Feed-in Tariff were debated at length. A number of members expressed disquiet about making such an investment in the current economic climate, while others expressed disbelief that there would be the promised financial return on the investment, quoting the experience of neighbours etc.

Cllr Vic Davies expressed concern at the possibility of the funds being withheld. The Estates Committee had investigated the subject in depth. Of quotations obtained from four companies, three had agreed that such an installation would be productive and would realise a financial benefit for the council. After full consideration, the Committee had decided to proceed, in accordance with its remit "to reduce the parish council's carbon footprint". He felt it would be wrong to now deny the funds to do so.

After further discussion, in which the lack of wall insulation at the hall was highlighted and members recognised that this should be installed, the chairman confirmed that it was indeed open to members to refuse to release funds if they were not satisfied that

this would be money well spent, and after taking into account the reduction in the carbon footprint.

Cllr Wendy Hinder then proposed seconded by Cllr Macklin that "**The Finance Committee shall not allocate funding from reserves for solar panels**". This was **passed** (4 for, 2 against with 2 abstentions including the chairman).

Cllr Vic Davies then proposed seconded by Cllr Smith that "**£1,000 be allocated from reserves for wall insulation at Beechen Hall**". This was **agreed** (6 for, 2 abstentions including the chairman). **Action** – office.

The Chairman asked that thanks be minuted for the considerable work that the Estates Committee and the Assistant Clerk had undertaken on this aborted project.

Cllr Smith notified members that he was unhappy with the decision regarding solar panels and will be considering a resolution to revisit the decision.

11 **Matters for Information.**

None as yet received.

12 **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 12 March 2013 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 3rd March 2013.

Meeting closed at 9.16 pm.

Item 10. Cuckoo Woods. *Purpose of item: To receive and identify any action that is required. The Clerk needs guidance on what action, if any, the parish council next wishes to take.*

At its October meeting the parish council received a letter from Burleigh Drive Residents Association (known as BDRA) suggesting that the Parish Council purchases and take responsibility of 4.3 hectares of Ancient Woodland at Cuckoo Wood. The issue was referred to the Environment Committee to gain some initial views and the recommendation was "**there was a need to undertake further investigations including:**

- **The possible partnership working with MBC and the other appropriate groups.**
- **The potential cost of purchasing the land.**
- **Future maintenance costs.**
- **Grant opportunities for the purchase and maintenance of the land."**

This report is a result of those investigations.

Cuckoo Wood is an area of ancient semi-natural woodland. This habitat cannot be recreated once it is lost making the continuation of the site as woodland the key priority. The importance of such sites has been identified by the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan.

A draft Management Plan has been produced by The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership. The management plan identifies the long-term plans including: management of the trees and paths; security of site; access and improvements to the area. Members will be familiar with the type of work that is envisaged as it is similar to the work undertaken in Vinters Valley Nature Reserve and Walderslade Woods.

Possible partnership working with MBC and the other appropriate groups.

Current 'partners' that are active and involved: BDRA; The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership

Silent or on the verge organisations: Maidstone Borough Council which approved a Land Management Agreement with BDRA.

Potential future partners/interested organisations: local community (possibly a Friends of type organisation); Forestry Commission; local school or Scouts etc.; Kent Wildlife Trust.

The parish council could choose to be a partner but the level of support etc. must be decided by members.

The potential cost of purchasing the land. The Environment Committee did not allow the Clerk to approach the Bona Vacantia Division of the Treasury Solicitor's Department for a potential cost. The

only other option open to the Clerk was to investigate auction sites but this was not undertaken as it would only give a vague idea of possible cost and b) the amount of work involved.

If the parish council wishes to consider purchasing the land it must consider the following policy.

“The Council will consider purchasing land* or building** after careful consideration of the following;

Where the use to which the land would be put would be primarily for the good of the parishioners. The judgement of what constitutes ‘good’ will be with the then Council but it is expected that the benefit to the parishioners would be recreational use, wildlife conservation or for environmental reasons either now or in the future.

Constitute good value for money in the context of the benefits (current or future), tangible and intangible that would accrue, in the first instance, to our parishioners. The Council would be required to obtain a land valuation, prior to purchase, and be able to justify any purchase and future maintenance costs including site security. Any decision on the purchase of land will take place at an open meeting after careful deliberation. The Council will endeavour to identify, in advance, a wish list for areas where Council held land would benefit local communities and the reasons why it is considered of benefit.

*Local Government Act 1972, ss 124,126,127 (Power to acquirement by agreement, to appropriate, to dispose of...) Local Government Act 1972, ss139 (Power to accept gifts of land).

** Local Government Act 1972, s133, s144. Local Government (Misc Prov) Act 1976, s19

Minute 2436/14.4

“**Agreed** – The Parish Council would consider purchasing land to stop detrimental development”.

Future maintenance costs.

No cost analysis has been produced for the draft management plan, however there will be expenditure on the following (* indicates work that may attract income or grants).

Should the parish council become immersed in the project (as it has done at Walderslade Woods and Vinters Valley Nature Reserve) then it could become involved in all of the following.

Activity	Possibility of a grant or income.	Annual or on-going costs
Support of a volunteer group and task programmes.	No	Equipment, training, insurance etc.
Coppicing of the majority of the woodland on a cyclical basis	Likely (set up grant).	Yes.
Creation of rides and maintenance of footpaths	Likely (set up grant).	Yes. Could be undertaken by volunteers but tools etc. would be required.
Creation of cleared glades	Likely (set up grant).	Yes. Could be undertaken by volunteers but tools etc. would be required.
Fencing	Likely (set up grant).	Yes. Could be undertaken by volunteers but tools etc. would be required.
Wildlife surveys		Minimal or no costs.
Control of invasive species.		Yes. Could be undertaken by volunteers but tools etc. would be required.
Involving the community.	Likely (set up grant).	Costs of paper, printing etc.
Safety audit		Yes.

If the parish council chooses to purchase the 4.3 hectares and maintain this (meeting the targets in the draft management plan) then there would be the following costs should local volunteers not become involved.

Activity	Possibility of a grant or income.	Annual or on-going costs
Coppicing of woodland compartments 15 & 16.	Likely (set up grant).	Yes.
Creation of rides and maintenance of footpaths	Likely (set up grant).	Annual maintenance costs.
Creation of cleared glades	Likely (set up grant).	Annual maintenance costs.
Fencing	Likely (set up grant).	Annual maintenance costs.
Wildlife surveys		Could probably find volunteers to do this.

Control of invasive species.		There would be a cost of eradicating any.
Involving the community.	Likely (set up grant).	Costs of paper, printing etc. Office time.
Safety audit.		Maintenance and safety checks will be needed by the public highway that abuts compartment 13 and by the footpath that runs through the land.
Safety work.		A significant portion of the land has a boundary next to a road or a property.

Grant opportunities for the purchase and maintenance of the land.

Funding from recognised organisations such as Heritage Lottery Fund, Awards for All and Forestry Commission does not normally cover the purchase of land. Smaller local charities also do not generally fund land purchase.

The Heritage Lottery Fund would generally be attracted to the preservation and enhancement of such habitats so it is likely that it would look positively on an application. The original grant for Walderslade Woods and more recently the Boxley Warren grant came from this source.

Awards for All (£10,000 in any three year period) would be attracted to a project such as this and could be used to provide tools etc.

The Forestry Commission provides some support (English Woodland Grant Management Scheme) and the market for wood is improving and so may provide some future income. Wood Fuel WIG: a European grant that is available until 2014 which supports woodland improvements that result in wood fuel becoming available.

Numerous other grants are available: Community Spaces (new application round awaited); Landfill Communities fund; a grant caused by a tax incentive and different landfill company's award grants; Rural Development Programme for SE England; Kent Downs AONB (maximum £1,000). The County Councillor devolved budget, parish council and other environmental charities may fund initiatives.

Enclosed for members is a another copy of the draft management plan's Summary of Prescriptions and Activities and a copy of the map showing the land that the Burleigh Drive Residents Association wishes the parish council to purchase.

Item 11 Solar Panels at Beechen Hall. *Purpose of report; revisit to a decision.*
Clerk's comment: The original request for funds was for

Clerk notice: Four councillors have indicated that they wish to revisit a decision undertaken by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 8 January 2013 (Item 10). A resolution has been written and as required by the parish council four signatures have to be collected prior to the start of this parish council meeting. Should there not be four signatures on the resolution then discussion will not take place.

Councillors are reminded that whilst they may be predisposed towards an issue they must consider the following information without prejudice and afresh. If they are unable to do so and are predetermined then they must declare as such and refrain from voting. The following report brings in other issues not considered at either the Estates or Finance Committee meetings.

The Terms of Reference for committees allows the parish council to 'take back' any issue as it sees fit.

Briefing note.

In 2008 the parish council expressed a wish to review and if possible reduce its carbon footprint. Work was undertaken and certain aims were identified; but due to the amount of work involved the issue was left to the parish office to do what it could. A request was also made that any planned improvements should consider whether the council's carbon footprint could be reduced. These instructions were observed by the Estates Committee when it replaced the hall floor, ceiling and lights and also the hall's boiler system. Other improvements included recycling, reduction in use of paper; more use of e-mails etc.

In 2012 the parish council again considered its carbon footprint and took the decision, due to its management of Beechen Hall, that the Estates Committee should be responsible for the carbon footprint review. This committee identified that the council's carbon footprint could be reduced by the installation of solar panels at the hall; there would also be a financial benefit to the hall due to the tariff paid by the Government. The office and committee investigated wind turbines, wood burning boiler, ground heat exchange systems etc. but none of these were suitable for the site.

Having undertaken the investigative work the Estates Committee made a recommendation to the January 2013 meeting of the Finance Committee that £10,000 be released from reserves to pay for the work which is time sensitive due to the reduction in the Government's tariff.

Clerk's comment: Due to the Christmas holidays it has not been possible to get costs for the wall insulation or advice regarding the planning situation; so a 'worse case' scenario was presented to the Finance Committee.

£10,000 was originally requested and this sum included: £6,287 for the purchase and installation of solar panels, £1,000 for wall insulation and a sum for any planning permission that was needed. Contrary advice has been received from Maidstone BC about the need for planning and this issue is being investigated. Prices for insulating the wall are currently being sourced and the Finance Committee has agreed the release of £1,000 for this work to be undertaken.

Details of costs are enclosed on the spread sheet enclosed for members. Members should note:

- £1,000 has been already released for wall insulation, but it is not yet clear whether this is a sufficient amount and to obtain the tariff wall insulation has to be in place;
- It is unclear whether planning permission is required so a sum of £340 should be included;

The cost of installation and planning is £6,627.

Cllr Smith and the three supporting signatories have submitted the following reasons for over-riding the decision and therefore releasing reserves.

- The parish council asked the Estates Committee to take on the task of reviewing and reducing the parish council's carbon footprint. Having done so, and with all councillors having received notification of the work being undertaken, the Finance Committee should respect the recommendation from the Estates Committee.
- The Finance Committee based its decision solely on financial implications and did not take into account the stated aim of the parish council to reduce its carbon footprint and the long term reduction in the carbon footprint if the solar panels were installed.
- Beechen Hall, under current conditions, would receive a tariff from the Government so this would be income for the hall and help to pay off the installation costs. Whilst this would not be large this tariff is soon to disappear and if solar panels are not installed then in the future the total cost will fall on the council.
- While considering the constraints of the current economic environment the parish council must also be mindful that the power companies have year on year increased the cost of supplied power and although Solar Panels will not eliminate this or indeed prevent it from occurring it will provide a reduction in the overall power cost to the Council and should thus be treated as an "invest to save" innovation.
- The Estates Committee and the Assistant Clerk has undertaken an enormous amount of investigation and work to show that there would be a long term financial gain. This information has been passed on to councillors via their copies of the agenda and minutes (or could be supplied on request) but at least one member of the Finance Committee said that they hadn't read any of the paperwork sent out and yet was totally against any expenditure.
- By installing solar panels at the hall the parish council will be setting an example to members of the parish that there is a need to be proactive in alternative energy production and we must all do our bit.

- It is recognised that like everything in life there are no certainties and the same applies to solar panels, these are somewhat dependant on light, but it is considered that over the course of 25 years there will be sufficient to make a visible indent into the Councils energy expenditure especially with the current rate of increase in energy prices.

Cllr Smith requests that if members do not wish to release additional reserves then it considers allocating the unspent, in 2012/13, £10,000 community budget and remove this budget from 2013/14.

Item 12. Policies and Procedures Review *Purpose of item; consideration and decision.*

Item 12.1 Review of the Policies and Procedures Calendar 2013–2014.

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

Members' may be asked whether, in the future, a report to a committee can be completed either as 'housekeeping' or biannually rather than annually. If this has been agreed then either **H** or a date will be added to the list on the understanding that members can require it is returned to them for consideration.

January	Review of this document to allow adjustments. Member numbers for committees (in time for change at May meeting).
<i>Office note</i>	<i>Chair to do minimum standards check, find Councillor volunteer for an internal audit Review Cooperative 6 month investment bond.</i>
February	No meeting
<i>Office note</i>	<i>Review Santander investment bond expires 25/04/14 Photocopier lease expires 30/06/13 – review.</i>
March	Equal Opportunities Statement. Replacement Procedure (for project not managed by parish office). Terms of Reference for Committees.
<i>Office note</i>	<i>Place reminder in agenda about Standing Orders to remind members of the planned review in April</i>
April	Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations
<i>office note</i>	<i>Include on agenda. "Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated". Chair to do minimum standards check.</i>
May	Complaints re Code of Conduct.
June	Guidance notes for site visits and lobbying.
<i>Office note</i>	<i>Hall electricity supply contract with Southern Electric ends 01/12/14, start review June 2013. Gas Total Gas and Power contract ends 07.05.2014. Start review January 2014. Start to review CCTV, alarm & sound system 12mth contract ends 22.09.13 Appliance service contract for boiler and oven expires July 2013.</i>
July	Parish Councillor Allowances. Press Policy
<i>Office note</i>	<i>Chair to do minimum standards check Chair to do minimum standards check, find Councillor volunteer for an internal audit</i>

August	No meeting
September	Adopted Code of Conduct – complaints Land & building purchase policy. Internal Complaints. Draft Minutes on website H. Civic recognition recommendations (take in confidence if needed)
Office note	<i>Include on agenda. "Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated".</i> <i>Find Councillor volunteer for an internal audit.</i> <i>Take Declaration of Pecuniary Interest forms to meeting to allow members to check and initial as up to date.</i>
October	Protocol for attending p.c. and committee meetings. Community Engagement Strategy
November	Freedom of Information Records Management Policy
Office note	<i>Chair to do minimum standards check)</i> <i>Remind members about 20 day deadline for F of I.</i>
December	PC annual competency report. Annual Statement of Competency of PC.
Office note	<i>Include on agenda. "Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they needed to check invoices against cheques when signing and cheques stubs needed to be initialled by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated".</i>

Item 12.2 Member numbers for committees. *Clerk comment: so far no committee has requested a review of the number of councillors on each committee.*

Item 12. Matters for Decision.

12.1 Date of the Annual Meeting of the Parish. At its December meeting the parish council agreed this meeting would be held before a scheduled parish council meeting but did not identify a date. This meeting must be held between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) so could be held on: 4 March 2013 at Weaving Village Hall; 8 April at Tyland Barn or 13 May at Beechen Hall.

Clerk comment: Members may wish to consider the 4 March as South East Water are due to attend that night to discuss the installation of water meters in the south of the parish. In view of the lack of space at Tyland Barn this might not be a suitable venue for this meeting.

Item 14. Reports from Borough and County Councillors. Purpose of report; information.

Report from Cllr Wendy Hinder. Just a couple of things I would like to mention this month. I have been contacted by several residents who have seen residents taking grit from out of some of the new grit bins and spreading it on their driveways. One resident has pointed out that responsible home owners should buy their own and questions if this is the right use of KCC,s grit given that resources are so stretched. The Parish Council identified where extra bins were needed and KCC responded and we now have them in position on potentially hazardous roads which do not come under the Highways gritting programme.

I would like to remind residents that this is stealing and the grit is put there to help local residents move safely on minor roads and to ask them to bear in mind that these roads are also used by children and the not so young and able. It is no point in using the grit on driveways if there is none left for use on the roads.

I have also been informed that someone is now parking on the new dropped kerb in Boxley Road; this is unbelievable and very inconsiderate. I will be asking the PCSO if he can keep a look out and if I get a chance I will take the registration number.

Item 14. Reports from councillors/office. Purpose of report; information.

Report on Protect Kent – Maidstone Committee AGM held in County Hall on 5th December

There were not many people there, mainly because of the weather. Felicity Simpson was unable to come as she was ill in bed and the only two members of the committee who were there were Gary Thomas, who has had to take on the duties of the Chairman who is now very ill in hospital and the secretary who took the minutes.

The Chair gave a report about the year's events. They had fully debated Oaken Wood and decided that they would not object as the Historic Houses Committee (part of CPRE who take care of listed properties etc.) require a large amount of ragstone for repairs to some of the buildings. He also pointed out that most of the land was, in fact, in the Tonbridge Malling Area. The people in Barming are the nearest to the proposed quarry works and Protect Kent have asked for several strict conditions to be imposed. That there should be 3 small sites working at the same time one to extract ragstone, one to be filled again after extraction and the third to be restored with broad-leaved woodland. Other conditions were asked to protect the residents of Barming from noise etc.

He then went on to say that the hardest thing had been the Core Strategy, which was a "complete shambles". They have now seen a 5 page document in which MBC says that it was wrong and they will have to look at it again. There was a note of despair in the room and people were saying that the situation was "dire" and the whole business was a "morass". I also gathered that in many ways it was better that they have withdrawn it as the whole thing was unlawful as it is a legal requirement that MBC should work in partnership over the Core Strategy with other Councils, on their borders, and KCC and have, apparently, done no such thing. This has caused many problems in the areas that have been suggested for housing, two or more sites are bordering with Tonbridge & Malling and this has created sites of weird shapes that developers are not interested in.

We then had a talk by Richard King who is Chairman of KCC. He was an excellent speaker, with a sense of humour and full of fascinating facts and tales of his past positions in KCC.

Cllr Brooks Report on my visit to the NEXT presentation at the Hilton Hotel

John and I went to view this, there were about three members of the public, quite a few PR people from Next, and Steve Gallagher there..

One member of the public was very angry and said that the site was meant for business use only not for retail and when they argued with him he told them to go back and read their documents. They brought in SG but he had little to say. I noted, with interest, that in the Downs Mail the CEO of Gallagher Group has stated that the site is intended for up market office use and that they would rather wait until they are able to build more offices in line with those already there.

When we were asked about our concerns I told them we were local people concerned about the increase in traffic and they said that it was the same as anywhere in the country and they would consult with Kent Highways (this did not give me much hope!!). I asked them why they were not going into the town and was informed that the young people liked out of town retail centres. My friends were incensed and said that was a not correct as their young people much preferred going into the town, which had some atmosphere and was more convenient. Candidly it was like looking at a travel brochure

all gloss but that might all go when it was built. I also mentioned it was intended for business use and they said that it was not it was intended for employment use.

Having read our response to the Core Strategy I am not happy about this suggestion as it goes against our decision and, once again, it would set a precedent. I cannot see the public going on to visit Maidstone if they travel to go to this retail, they are more likely to continue over the road to Notcutts.

As this is, more or less, giving my opinion I am quite happy to leave the room when the application finally arrives, if that is required.

CPRE Meeting – AGM for Protect Kent

Richard Knox-Johnston gave a report on the work that has been done over the past year. It was really quite impressive they had fought on so many issues and achieved a great deal. What has pleased them is that M.P's are now turning to them for advice, three of the Kent M.Ps in particular. They gave Gregg Clarke some praise that when he spoke about the NPPF he had taken on board many of their concerns and the whole thing had been tempered down somewhat but still needed some issues sorting out.

They do have more people with expertise on many subjects than the main body of CPRE which is incredibly helpful.

They are also concerned about the housing crisis and that there should be more high density. (I think Maidstone have already done this with all their flats). CPRE's idea, after searching the country for the best design for high density came up with Kensington and Chelsea!! They showed a picture of these lovely buildings with the comments that people living in them were very happy and just proved that design is "the name of the game". There were 300 people living in approximately 1 hectare of land and some of the apartments were now selling at over a million pounds!!

We then had a talk by one of our youngest farmers, James Smith, who is the Chairman of Kent NFU. He was extremely interesting and is the managing director of the farm near Maidstone which has been in his family for generations. He talked about the way farming had changed and how most farmers were now keen on bio diversity and conservation and recognised their value. He said it was quite a struggle to grow enough to feed our people and to try and keep prices down. He was very worried about this idea of covering so much of our agricultural land with concrete, thereby reducing the farmers ability to produce food and said that we must all pay attention to that concern when we see planning applications. He travels all over the world to meet up with growers to find out some of their ideas to grow larger amounts because people want various foods to be available all year round.

All together an enjoyable afternoon, with a great deal of interest.

Item 5. Crime statistics. *Purpose of report; information.*

Burglary

02/01/2013, Threshers Drive, Weaving, House broken into.

04/01/2013, Ash Tree Gardens Weaving, House broken into.

Criminal Damage

27/12/2012, Saracen Fields, Walderslade, Vehicle vandalized.

03/01/2013, Fir Tree Grove, Vehicle window damaged.

Theft from a Motor Vehicle

24/12/2012, Samara Close, Chatham, Vehicle left insecure, items stolen

23/12/2012, Cinnabar Close, Chatham, Vehicle left insecure, items stolen

23/12/2012 Micawber Close, Vehicle left insecure, Nothing stolen

23/12/2012 Micawber Close, Vehicle left insecure, items stolen

Theft of a Motor Vehicle

31/12/2012, Lock Lane, Sandling, Land Rover parts stolen.

08/01/2013, Timbertops, Chatham, Motor Cycle stolen.

10/01/2013, Autumn Glade, Chatham, Motor Cycle stolen.

Theft

09/01/2013, Boxley Road, Walderslade, Theft of a Wheelie Bin.