

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk



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To All Members of the Council, press and public.

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on **Monday 18 May 2015** at **Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade** commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

1. **Apologies and absences** (7.30)
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
2. **Declaration of Interests, dispensations, predetermination or Lobbying** (7.31)
Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.
3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 13 & 20 April 2015** (7.32)
To consider the minutes of the meeting (already circulated) and if in order to sign as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising From Minutes** (7.35)
 - 4.1 Minute 2744/8.4 Parking at St Michaels Close. Awaiting response from KCC.
 - 4.2 Minute 2744/8.5 Dropped Kerb at Sandling Lane Response from KCC (page 3).
 - 4.3 Minute 2744/8.6 Westfield Sole Road Not suitable for HGV signs see report (page 3).
 - 4.4 Minute 2744/8.7 Parking charges at the Cobtree Manor Park car park see report (page 3).
 - 4.5 Minute 2744/11 Installation of hard standing/apron at Boxley Road noticeboard. A cost for the work is being sourced.
 - 4.6 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda.
- To adjourn to allow members of the public to address the meeting** (7.40)
5. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration** (7.50)
See attached list (pages 4-7). For decision.
6. **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions** (8.00)
To receive any information.
7. **Volunteer Groups** (8.01)
To receive any reports from volunteer groups associated with the parish council
 - 7.1 Walderslade Woodlands Group (page 7). For information.
 - 7.2 Friends of Boxley Warren (page 8). For information.
8. **Highways and Byways** (8.10)
 - 8.1 HGV parking on residential roads see reports (pages 8).
 - 8.2 Litter picking see information (pages 8-9.).
 - 8.3 Bike barrier, footpath linking Fitzwilliam Rd & Camomile Drive see report (page 9) and enclosure.

8.4 Repair work Boxley Road (Walderslade) centre lining potholes repairs, a resident has reported the condition of the road and KCC has indicated that repairs will take place.

9. **Policy and procedures review** (8.25)
Laminated planning advices available at the meeting. An office review has taken place and it is considered that these are still fit for purpose.

10. **Matters for information** (8.26)
10.1 Parish Guide to Drainage 2015 (electronic guide available from the office). This guide explains the policy, what an inspection entails and the actual work that might take place.

11. **Next Meeting** (8.27)
Next full environment meeting 8 June 2015 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 29 May 2015.

Pauline Bowdery
Clerk to Boxley Parish Council.

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

Items to be returned to agenda:

Jan 2015 Minute 2715/8.3 PROW Round Wood Valley, review the request to KCC PROW for it to be made a PROW in June 2015. Minute 2639/4.1 Grovewood Drive North crossing improvements.

Legislation allows for meetings to be recorded by anyone attending. Persons intending to record or who have concerns about being recorded should please speak to the Clerk.

REPORTS ATTACHED TO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA 18 May 2015

Members are reminded that the Chairman will assume that these papers have been read prior to the meeting.

Councillors wishing to suggest changes to any policy document or procedure in this agenda should notify the office, in writing, at least three working days in advance of the meeting. This will allow details to be circulated at the meeting (or in advance if particularly contentious).

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

- 4.2 Minute 2744/8.5 Dropped Kerb at Sandling Lane Response from KCC
"I have copied Elaine Hendren in to this e-mail so she is aware work can now commence. I am advised by Elaine that as there is no change to the road layout itself they would not normally install new signage however, she has agreed that signage can be erected to alert motorists that a new pedestrian point in is operation (e-mail 28/4/15)".
- 4.3 Westfield Sole Road Not suitable for HGV signs. KCC's response is that the *"signs were installed and then stolen". "The contractor is going to try again and place some new ones on the existing posts. We will have to wait a bit for the new signs to be ordered though I am afraid. If they keep getting stolen we will have a different problem and may have to rethink things".*
- 4.4 Parking charges at the Cobtree Manor Park car park. Response received from MBC (e-mail 08/05/15).
"Thank you for your e-mail in response to consultation process for the above proposed parking order.

Please be assured that your comments and observations have been recorded and will be considered as part of the traffic regulation process, we are carrying out the work on behalf of the Parks and I have contacted the Cobtree Officer for their comments.

- **Concerns that this is encouraging commuters to park.**

They do not currently experience any problem with commuters and the park is free, therefore they do not envisage this to change once a charge is introduced.

- **Make the first hour for dog walkers, mums with children using the playground free. Then make the additional charges in line with the proposed charges at Mote Park**

Charges are in line with other country parks. As Cobtree is a charity parking charges are being introduced to help manage the traffic flow and to provide a revenue stream to be used back in the park as costs have increased due to the much larger volume of people there.

- **Need further clarification on charges for vehicles over 1 ton in weight i.e. some 4x4's and SUV's fall into this category.**

All vehicles visiting the park will be required to pay.

- **There were concerns also that this might also encourage vehicles to park on the roadside.**

They have discussed with KCC highways issues of roadside parking. Which they have experienced in busy periods due to lack of space. KCC did not raise any concerns. However in the event of a problem further measures will be taken.

Thank you once again for taking the time to record your comments and I look forward to being able to update you on the progress on the proposal in the near future, however if you have any further questions please do not hesitate in contacting me".

Item 5 Planning Applications. *Purpose of report:* To consider planning applications. Members' are reminded to consider possible section 106 requests or to suggest any conditions.

15/502789/FULL – Change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to a residential care home (C2) at 8 Tollgate Way, Sandling, ME14 3DF. *Deadline 20 May, 2015*

15/502812/ENVSCR – EIA Screening Opinion: Change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to a residential care home (C2) at 8 Tollgate Way, Sandling, ME14 3DF. *Deadline 20 May, 2015*

15/503218/TPO – TPO application to fell 1 Silver Birch at 15 Brownelow Copse, Walderslade ME5 9JQ. *Deadline 20 May, 2015*

15/503359/OUT. Outline application with all matters reserved for residential development (approx 89 dwellings) plus open space, biomass plant and access road (plus emergency access) (Revised Scheme) at Land East Of Gleamingwood Drive Lordswood Kent. *Deadline 28 May 2015.*

Clerk's briefing note (more details to follow if considered necessary).

I am working my way through the plans and will send a 2nd briefing note if I find further information that you need to be briefed on.

BPC response to previous application

MA/13/1797 Outline Application with all matters reserved to develop the site for residential (approx. 89 dwellings) with open space, access road and biomass heat and power plant at Lordswood Urban Extension, Gleamingwood Drive ME5

Boxley Parish Council strongly objects to this application and would like see it refused and reported to the planning committee for the reasons set out below:

The development of this greenfield site is inherently unsustainable.

BPC was astonished and is gravely concerned at the MBC statement (made at the screening opinion) that "It is not considered that the scheme would have a significant additional urbanising effect on the area". The introduction of 89 residential dwellings into open countryside cannot be anything but urbanisation. Access to the site is through a woodland belt that has previously been protected from development as it is a buffer zone between the urbanisation of Lordswood and the countryside of a strategic gap which stops the conurbations of Walderslade/Lordswood connecting to Hempstead Valley.

The impact of dominating 2 to 3 storey buildings into a countryside setting will have a harmful and detrimental impact on the countryside, ancient woodland and character of the area including the loss of important wildlife habitats. It is therefore considered that this development is contrary to NPPF section 11.109/112/113/116/118/120 conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

The site is in the setting of the North Downs AONB and it is considered that any development is contrary to NPPF section 11.115 "Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the

Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty”.

The introduction of additional light pollution and noise pollution will have an unacceptable and urbanising impact on the local countryside.

The governments’ interactive mapping website (www.magic.gov.uk) shows the proposed site for development is replanted ancient woodland and not a general plantation as indicated in the application’s accompanying reports. It is considered that the proposed development will therefore be contrary to NPPF Section 11.118 “Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and the loss of aged veteran trees found outside ancient woodland”. Attention is drawn to the Natural England Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland (SAAW 2012).

The introduction of the access/egress highway infrastructure across ancient woodland is also contrary to section 11.118.

The applicant’s inclusion of a biomass facility is considered in this case unsustainable and over optimistic for the following reasons:

- At its most optimistic figure it will initially serve only 11% of homes at the site. Whilst there is an expressed wish to increase this facility unless the infrastructure to supply heat is supplied at the development stage it is unlikely to happen.*
- The fuel for the biomass facility will come from the replanted ancient woodland area and from another close by ancient woodland site. Whilst the parish council is not averse to seeing woodlands managed as a ‘cash crop’ it questions the practicality of running such a business immediately adjacent to residential dwellings.*
- Any expansion of the biomass energy supply to the remainder of the development will require fuel from other sources and the supporting documentation omits any mention of how the biomass facility will be run in the future and whether it will be set up as a separate business etc.*

NPPF Section 6 delivering a wide choice of quality homes sets certain standards for this type of greenfield development. It is considered that this application fails to meet these standards. Specifically section 49 sustainable development: 50 sustainable inclusive and mixed communities; 53 development would cause harm to local area; 55 sustainable development in rural areas “where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities”.

The Transport Assessment Statement regularly quotes the Medway Plan Policy T2. The actual road network that residents would use to access the motorway network is within Maidstone and KCC. It is considered that insufficient consideration/research has been undertaken on:

- The impact on Walderslade Woods Road, the M2 feeder roads and the heavily used narrow, winding Westfield Sole Road.*
- The ability of the junction of Gleamingwood Drive and Lordswood Lane to cope with the additional usage.*

The proposed entrance to this development is a narrow road accessed from Gleamingwood Drive and the proposed junction is on a very long bend. Gleamingwood Drive is poorly designed with inadequate vision splays, on-street car parking and multiple junctions on a long bend. A shared pedestrian/cycling route exists in Medway (small section in MBC). The MBC section of Gleamingwood Drive does not have a cycle path. Due to its poor

design any additional traffic introduced into this system will have an adverse impact on the safety of current users.

This application will contravene ENV35 of the MBC borough wide local plan and BNE34 of the Medway plan as development would have an adverse and harmful impact on the character of the area and the loss of a local amenity. It is considered that the economic and social benefits of this application will not outweigh the local priority to conserve the area's landscape. The loss of wildlife will also have a detrimental impact.

It is considered that the planning application fails to meet the three dimensions, as identified in NPPF Achieving sustainable development, namely

- **Economic role** – *the land in question is not the right type nor is it in the right place.*
- **Social role** – *there is an in-balance (towards larger houses) in the mixture of properties put forward with poor supporting local service infrastructure.*
- **Environmental role** - *The development will destroy biodiversity due to the loss of ancient woodland and the development of a greenfield site.*

Maidstone Borough Council Decision

The reasons for this refusal are:

1. The proposed development will appear as a sporadic, ad hoc and isolated extension of the built up area of Lordswood poorly related in siting and layout terms to the existing built up area while appearing as an incongruous and out of character incursion of built development into adjoining undeveloped countryside. It will therefore have an unacceptable visual impact on the rural character of the area and that of Area of Local Landscape Importance contrary to the provisions of policies ENV28 and ENV35 of the adopted local plan.
2. The proposed main access into the site and associated roadway and emergency access also onto Gleaming Wood Drive will both involve the creation of significant gaps in the currently largely unbroken woodland fronting onto this section of Gleaming Wood Drive. This will result in significant harm to the street scene and loss of visual amenity contrary to the provisions of the NPPF 2012.
3. The likely proposed road layout will result in the significant direct loss of ancient woodland while subdividing it into smaller less viable packets lacking connectivity. In addition the likely proximity of the proposed houses and gardens along with residential use taking place close to the ancient woodland with the associated lighting and activity and likelihood of informal and harmful recreational use taking place will further erode its function both as a wildlife habitat and a source of visual amenity to the wider area. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the provisions of paragraph 118 of the NPPF 2012.
4. In the absence of legal agreement being in place to secure developer contributions in connection with education, health, recreation and community services, the development will place additional demands on local services without provision first being in place to ensure that the additional demands placed on these services are being met. The proposal will therefore result in an intensified use of these facilities to the detriment of existing users contrary to the provisions of policy CF1 of the adopted local plan.
5. The proposal fails to make provision for affordable housing and as such will place further pressure on existing affordable housing stock while making inadequate

provision to meet the identified demand for additional affordable housing in accordance with the adopted Affordable Housing DPD (2006).

6. Information submitted with the application indicates that statutorily protected species are present which may be affected by the proposed development. However insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that there will not be significant harm to the protected species that has been identified. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the provisions of paragraph 118 of the NPPF 2012.

Situation regarding the Planning Inspectorate Appeal.

The appeal started in November 2014 but is not due to be progressed until September 2015 with a hearing scheduled for 13 October 2015. *It may seem an unfair situation however Planning Legislation allows for any number of applications to be submitted for the same site.*

Differences in current application Clerk's summary *other background comments are in italics.*

Working from Gleamingwood Drive into the development.

- The entrance is now a few yards to the North West. *KCC did not have highway objections to the original plan so is unlikely to object this time.*
- The road to the development is straighter so results in fewer trees taken in the ancient woodland.
- An entrance to West Sole Road has been removed it is now a footpath and emergency vehicle entrance.
- The road between the two pockets of development is now straighter so results in fewer trees taken in the ancient woodland.
- The footpath that was to the North East of the site which connected that part to Gleamingwood Drive has been removed.
- Additional tree planting and landscaping measures have been put in place to deal with keeping people out of the Ancient Woodland (which is owned by the applicant).
- A section 106 has been included.

15/503387/ADV. Advertisement Consent for 5 non-illuminated sponsorship sign at roundabout at Westfield Sole Road Walderslade. *Deadline 28 May 2015.*

15/503458/TPO. TPO application to crown reduce 1 Oak tree by 1-1.5m, remove two lowest limbs of 1 Hornbeam, crown reduction of 1 Pear tree by 3-4ft at 8 Travertine Road Boxley Kent ME5 9LQ. *Deadline 1 June 2015.*

MC/15/0550 – Revised drawings for the construction of a 4 bedroomed detached dwelling with associated detached carport/log store at Highview Farm, Lordswood Lane, ME5 8JP. *Deadline 26 May, 2015*

Item 7 Volunteer Groups *Purpose of report: Information.*

Item 7.1 WWG. Status Report for May 2015.

We have applied for funding through Awards for All (A4A), which is National Lottery based. This is to enable us to pay for our second store. The tree felling licence has been granted by Maidstone, so that we can position the new store next to the existing one.

We have been continuing our work in Cossington valley, and have now chipped down the valley as far as the top path. We have also 'tidied' several hung up trees in the lower valley. All this work was done with great care and an eye to minimising the impact on the bluebells in the area.

Rob Burrows Chairman.

Item 7.2 Friends of Boxley Warren.

Update. The request for urgent white lining at the entrance to Pilgrims Way/Boxley Warren has been passed on to the relevant team. KCCH,W&T have acknowledged receipt and state that it has been passed onto the relevant team.

Item 8. Highways and Byways. <i>Purpose of report:</i> Information.

Item 8.1 HGV parking on residential roads

(Taken from Annual Meeting of the Parish Council agenda) Maidstone Area KALC Meeting, 29 April 2015 – Report by Ivor Davies

Martin Hinchliffe and I attended the above meeting. Following is a summary:

HGV Parking. *The previous meeting had discussed the subject solely in the context of Operation Stack, I now broadened the issue to include indiscriminate and often illegal parking across the borough and indeed the country. Much support received from other members. Finally agreed that unless KCC replies shortly to outstanding letter, Area KALC would collect the 1,000 signatures necessary for a petition of which KCC would have to take notice. We reserved our position regarding organising a 10 Downing Street petition and deferred the issue of enforcement of fines on foreign lorry drivers/owners.*

KALC sent to all Parliamentary Candidates a letter explaining what KALC and Parish/Town Councils do and also a briefing note on issues being faced by parishes which included mention of illegally parked HGVs.

8.1.2 Petition.

A draft has been submitted to Cllrs Martin Hinchliffe, Paul Dengate and Ivor Davies and a further draft will be submitted to the Environment Committee when the office is notified that action needs to be taken,

8.1.3 KALC meeting with KCCH,W&T.

(Taken from the last agenda)From KALC “Unfortunately the meeting was postponed and KALC will now be meeting with the new Interim Director of Highways (Roger Wilkin) on 30 April. We will also be writing after Easter to all principal authorities about HGV parking”.

Clerk’s note: An update has been requested.

Item 8.2 Litter picking.

Clerk’s note. Correspondence has taken place between KALC Maidstone Area Committee and Maidstone Borough Council and the response may be of interest to members.

From MBC to Chairman KALC Maidstone Area Committee.

“Having looked into the points regarding litter picking and the PSS scheme, my view is that funding for Parish Councils to fund additional street cleansing would not fall within the funding conditions, as the council makes provision for this under their standard Street Cleansing contract.

However, I have also met with Jennifer Shepherd who manages the street cleansing team and she has provided some very useful information that I and is more than happy to attend our next liaison meeting to explore further the support we can provide. If it is helpful we can also provide a briefing note for you to share with parishes.

With effect from early June 2015, the Street Cleansing team restructure will come into effect, changing its current Monday to Friday rota system to a 7 days per week cover arrangement, with increasing staff resources and cover being provided. The new system will see an increase of cleansing in the rural areas, with hit squads and mobile teams being deployed throughout the week to respond to fly tipping collection requests and waste removal.

The rural areas should see clear improvements in street cleansing in their areas, so parish councils may want to wait to evaluate the changes to establish whether supplementary resources are required in their local area.

In addition to the changes to the main service, the team are also looking to purchase a crash cushion, which will allow workers to work safely on busy, high speed traffic areas. This could be a really good opportunity for some joint working that addresses the issues of the A roads etc., as the street cleansing team can provide the technical support, e.g. vehicle, driver, traffic management, protection crash cushion, Chapter 8 trained officer and risk assessment. There would still be a need to have volunteers for litter picking – either through the parish council, local residents groups or Maidstone Volunteers Bureau, with the usual policy and insurance requirements.

The Street Cleansing team are also happy to promote Community Clear Ups, providing the free loan of litter picks, gloves, waste sacks (and their collection) to local parish councils and resident groups.

Sarah Robson has also confirmed that the Probation service Community Payback scheme is being re-launched in Maidstone in the next few months and whilst this is something that some parishes already take advantage of, coupled with the crash cushion, it may become more feasible to use more widely.”

Item 8.3 Bike barrier, footpath linking Fitzwilliam Rd & Camomile Drive

A request for the parish council to purchase and pay for the instalment of a bike barrier on this footpath has been received. A visit from the Maidstone Community Safety Unit has identified that other footpaths in the area have barriers that slow motorbikes and an A frame has been recommended. As the footpath has two street lights it is likely that it is the responsibility of KCC and confirmation is being sought.

Clerk's comment: If this is a KCC footpath it is unlikely that the department will pay for a barrier, although County Councillor Carter can be approached. Would members consider, in principle, to allocating some of its street maintenance budget should other funding not be forth coming?