



BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL
www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent. ME5 9RU
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Clerk Mrs Pauline Bowdery **Assistant Clerk** Mrs Melanie Fooks

A G E N D A

To All Members of the Council, Press and Public

Members are hereby summoned and notice is given that a **Meeting of the Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 7 December 2015** at the **St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green, ME14 5TZ** commencing at **7.30 p.m.**

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| | Time guide
(7.30) |
| 1. Apologies and absences
To receive and accept apologies for absence. | |
| 2. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying
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. | (7.32) |
| 3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 6 November 2015
To consider the minutes and if in order sign as a true record (pages 3-5). | (7.35) |
| 4. Matters Arising From the Minutes | (7.37) |
| 4.1 Minute 2807/5.1 Boxley Warren Awards for All application. An application has been submitted and it is suggested that this item is now removed from the agenda. | |
| 4.2 Minute 2807/5.2 Boxley Warren/Pilgrims Way. Cllr Bob Hinder has been in discussion with KCC and the design of the recently installed site entrance is being reviewed. | |
| 4.3 Any other matters arising from the minutes which are not on the agenda. | |
| 5. Report from the PCSO and Police Issues
Report and Crime statistics will be included on the agenda supplement if received. | (7.39) |
| Adjournment to enable members of the public to address the meeting | (7.44) |
| 6. Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings
For the parish council to receive the minutes. Members are allowed to ask questions of the Committee Chairmen but may not initiate a discussion. | (7.49) |
| 6.1 Environment Committee meeting 9 November 2015 see report (pages 5-8) | |
| 6.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee 10 November 2015 see report (pages 8-10). | |
| 7. Finance | (7.53) |
| 7.1 Payments made out of meeting 10.11.15 – 30.11.15 see reports | |
| 7.1.1 The Cooperative Bank (pages 10-11) | |
| 7.1.2 HSBC (page 11). | |
| 7.2 Receipts for the period 24.10.15 – 30.11.15 see reports | |
| 7.2.1 The Cooperative Bank (page 11). | |
| 7.2.2 HSBC (pages 11-12). | |
| 7.3 Account balances as at 30.11.15 see report (page 12). | |
| 7.4 To authorise payment of accounts (list to be supplied at meeting). | |
| 8. Policies and Procedures | (8.01) |
| 8.1 Vision and Business Plan see report (Review) (pages 13-15). | |
| 8.2 Electronic Recording of Meetings policy and procedure was reviewed as part of housekeeping and considered still fit for purpose. | |

9. **Reports from councillors/office** (8.10)
 Members/staff who have attended any meeting on behalf of the parish council are invited to give a brief summary.
- 9.1 Kent Association of Local Councils AGM see report (pages 16-17).
- 9.2 KALC Maidstone Committee see report (page 17).
- 9.3 The intention to co-opt a Parish Councillor to the North Ward Casual Vacancy is currently being advertised.
10. **Reports from Borough and County Councillors** (8.15)
 Our Ward councillors are invited to report and discuss matters affecting the parish.
11. **Matters for Decision** (8.25)
 To consider any issues, such as attendance at meetings or as identified on the evening.
- 11.1 2016 KALC Community Award Scheme. If required the press and public will be exclude to allow councillors to discuss personal information.
12. **Parish Council Annual Competency Report** (8.33)
 12.1 To review the Clerk's report on the working of the Parish Council (pages 17-18).
 12.2 To consider the draft Annual Competency Report and Statement (page 18).
13. **Financial Regulation 12.3(f): Grounds Maintenance Contract** (8.37)
 To consider the Responsible Financial Officer's request to invoke this regulation for the Grounds Maintenance Contract see report (page 19) and confidential enclosure. If required the press and public will be exclude to allow councillors to consider commercially sensitive information.
14. **MBC Consultation Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy: Action Plan** (8.45)
 To consider a response to the document see report (pages 20-24).
15. **Correspondence** (8.50)
 15.1 KCC Winter Period update (an advertisement of the information on its website).
 15.2 Thank you letter from Helen Whately MP.
16. **Matters for Information** (8.52)
 16.1 KWT electronic newsletter November (e-mail 20.11.15).
17. **Draft Budget 2016/2017** (8.54)
 Members are invited to submit projects for consideration for the draft budget.
18. **Next Meeting** (9.00)
 25 January 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, ME5 9RU commencing at 7.30 pm.
 Councillors' reports and requests for items to be included on the agenda to be submitted no later than 18 January 2016.

Pauline Bowdery

Pauline Bowdery
 Clerk to the Council.

Date 2 December 2015

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.

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.

Items to be returned to a future agenda: Election publicity strategy review January 2015.

**Supporting agenda papers for the Meeting of the Parish Council
Monday 7 December 2015
The Chairman will assume that these have been read prior to the meeting.**

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

Item 4 Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at The European School of Osteopathy, Boxley Friday 6 November 2015 commencing at 6.07 pm.

Councillors present: Mr I Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr V Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr T Harwood, Mr B Hinder, Mrs W Hinder, Mrs K Macklin, Mr P Sullivan, Mrs A Spain and Mrs M Waller together with Mrs Helen Whately MP, the Clerk, Borough Councillor D Butler and two members of the press/public.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Helen Whately MP. He then paid a short tribute to the late Councillor Alan Springate, who had passed away suddenly on 7 October, reminding members of all that he had done for the community and his contribution to the work of the Council. A minute's silence was then observed.

1. Apologies and absences

Cllr Hinchliffe (previous commitment), Cllr Hollands (previous commitment), Cllr Smith (absent), County Councillor Paul Carter (KCC commitment) and PCSO M Adlington.

2. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

None submitted.

3. Helen Whately MP

Mrs Whately, having been invited by the Chairman to address members, gave a brief resumé of issues she was dealing with that directly affected the parish. These included Operation Stack and the need to provide more lorry parks to avoid closing the M20 and concomitant gridlocking; housing; development at junction 8; and health and hospital facilities. She then invited questions and discussion evolved on the following:

- HGV on-road parking and the fact that foreign lorry drivers often did not pay fines or tolls.
- MBC limiting consultation on the Local Plan to four weeks instead of the normal six.
- Development of green field sites in preference to brownfield sites.
- Traffic congestion especially at junction 3 of the M2 (Bluebell Hill/Walderslade Woods Road).
- Sustainable homes. Due to regulation changes houses being built now are less eco-friendly than 5 years ago.
- Local infrastructure and services not being able to cope with new developments.

Mrs Whately expressed interest in all the concerns raised and asked for details of unused brownfield sites. She said she would investigate and respond to the council on the possibility of criminalising traffic fines and the downgrading of the standards for sustainable housing.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Whately for making time in her busy schedule to attend the meeting before she left at 7.00 pm for another appointment.

A five minute comfort break was taken with the meeting reconvening at 7.06 pm.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 5 October 2015

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

5. **Matters Arising From the Minutes**

- 5.1 Minute 2796/4.1 Boxley Warren Awards for All application. The Awards For All grant application was now ready for submission. **Noted.** Cllr Harwood informed members that when the cats eyes were installed there would also be a massive clearance of flytipping and a litter pick of the area.
- 5.2 Minute 2796/4.2 Boxley Warren/Pilgrims Way. Cllr Bob Hinder notified members that he had raised the issue of the entrance design at the Maidstone Joint Transport Board meeting and has been in discussion with KCC about it. **Noted.** The Chairman, Cllr Bob Hinder and the Clerk to liaise about a letter to KCC (cc Cllr Harwood) to take matters forward. **Action: Cllr Ivor Davies, Cllr Bob Hinder and the Clerk.**
- 5.3 Any other matters arising from the minutes which are not on the agenda. None.

6. **Report from the PCSO and Police Issues**

Crime statistics. **Received** and **noted.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7.15 to allow a member of the public to inform the meeting that the Sandling Residents Association was being wound up. Meeting reconvened at 7.16 pm.

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

Received and **noted.**

- 7.1 Environment Committee meeting 5 October 2015.
- 7.2 Environment Committee meeting 12 October 2015. Item 11.1 the word 'midday' was amended to 'midnight'.
- 7.3 Estates Committee 13 October 2015.

8. **Finance**

- 8.1 Payments made out of meeting 07.10.15 – 23.10.15. **Noted.**
 - 8.1.1 The Cooperative Bank. **Noted.**
 - 8.1.2 HSBC. **Noted.**
- 8.2 Receipts for the period 29.09.15 – 23.10.15.
 - 8.2.1 The Cooperative Bank. **Noted.**
 - 8.2.2 HSBC. **Noted.**
- 8.3 Account balances as at 29.10.15. **Noted.**
- 8.4 Payment of accounts 01.10.15 – 31.10.15. **Noted.**
- 8.5 Members were reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, the need to check invoices against cheques and authorisations when signing and that cheque stubs need to be initialled by both signatories. They also needed to keep their register of interests updated. **Noted.**

9 **Policies and Procedures**

- 9.1 'Freedom of Information' and 'Records Management' had been reviewed by the Clerk as part of housekeeping and, with some minor refreshment, are still fit for purpose. The document now states that FoI requests must be in writing. **Noted.**

10. **Reports from councillors/office**

Received and **noted.**

- 10.1 Attendance at Lordswood Urban Extension Public Inquiry. Cllr Wendy Hinder gave a brief report on the inquiry and the Chairman commented that on the final day the Planning Inspector had complimented the parish council on its contribution.
- 10.2 Attendance at Maidstone Planning Committee: 22 Goldstone Walk. Cllr Dengate stated that he had put key points to the MBC Planning Committee and that a resident had also attended to speak against the development but unfortunately it was approved.

11. **Reports from Borough and County Councillors**

Cllr Wendy Hinder's written report covering the Public Inquiry and the Sanding Traffic Restriction Order was **received** and **noted.**

Cllr Butler notified members that he had visited the KIMS site and had learnt that 30% of attendees were from the NHS. Unfortunately there was already a shortage of parking

space so they were looking to expand to an adjacent site. The CEO was willing to attend schools to speak about employment opportunities at the hospital.
Cllr Macklin asked a question about the change of contractor operating the Museum of Kent Life.

12. **Matters for Decision**

12.1 KCC consultation on its use of the Maidstone Gateway facility. The suggested response was **approved. Action: Office.**

12.2 KALC AGM Sat 21 November at Ditton 9.30 – 15.45. The Chairman is attending and any other interested councillor is to contact the Clerk. **Action: Councillors.**

12.1 KCC consultation on draft budget. Members **agreed** a response that the proposed small increase without the need for a referendum was their preferred option. **Action: Office.**

12.2 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. MKD/Kent Orchards for Everyone Project suggested that a grant application be made to Tesco for education work and also a sculptural slide. Members **agreed** in principle.

13. **Correspondence**

Received and noted.

13.1 Thank you letter from British Legion for purchase of poppy wreath.

13.2 Thank you for donation letter from Heart of Kent Hospice for donation.

13.3 Thank you letter from Medway Education Business Partnership for supporting students with work placements.

14. **Matters for Information**

14.1 Remembrance Service St Mary and All Saints Church, Boxley Sun 8 November.

14.2 Kent Wildlife Trust October E-Newsletter 2015.

14.3 The parish councillor vacancy has been advertised on noticeboards.

15. **Draft Budget 2016/2017**

Members were invited to submit projects for consideration for the draft budget.

16. **Next Meeting**

7 December at St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green ME14 5TZ commencing at 7.30 pm.

Meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Item 6 Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings

Item 6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 9 November 2015 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm.

Councillors present: Mrs Wendy Hinder (Chairman), Mr P Dengate, Mrs P Brooks, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr B Hinder, Mr M Hinchliffe, Mr D Hollands, Mrs M Waller together with the Assistant Clerk.

1. **Apologies and absences**

None required as all members were present.

2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**

Cllr Dengate declared he was predetermined on MC/14/2395. All other councillors declared that they had been lobbied on application MC/14/2395.

3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 5 & 12 October 2015**

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

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- 4.1 Minute 2799/4.1 Bike barrier at Fitzwilliam Rd/Camomile Drive. A report from KCC H.W&T is awaited; the report will indicate the cost of purchasing and erecting a barrier. County Councillor Carter has been approached about contributing towards the cost. **Noted.**
- 4.2 Minute 2799/4.2 Advertising boards at Roundwood roundabout. These had been reported to enforcement and the Assistant Clerk confirmed that an email had been sent to chase progress and a response was still awaited. **Noted.**
- 4.3 Minute 2799/4.3 HGV parking on roads. The issue will be a motion for debate at the KALC AGM on 21 November 2015. **Noted.**
- 4.4 Redundant utility boxes on verges. **Received** and **noted** the Clerk's report confirming the PC was unsuccessful in persuading BT to remove the structure.
- 4.5 Minute 2800/7.4 Experimental Traffic Order, Sandling Road, Chatham Members **received** and **noted** the Clerk's report and were pleased that the order had been approved by Maidstone's Joint Transportation Board.
- 4.6 Minute 2800/7.5 Installation of hard standing/apron at Boxley Road noticeboard. Work to be undertaken. **Noted.**
- 4.7 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda. **None.**

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

5 **Planning Applications for Consideration**

15/508528/TPO TPO application to 1no. Sweet Chestnut - Crown lift to give a maximum ground clearance of 4m , Crown reduction by approx 25% by reducing crown height to 9m and crown spread to 4m at 18 Goldstone Walk Boxley Kent ME5 9QB. Defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

15/508600/TPO TPO application to 1no. Sweet Chestnut - crown lift to 3m, reduce lateral limbs by 2.5 to 3m at 33 Alexandra Glen Walderslade Kent ME5 9EB. Defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

15/508176/FULL Creation of first floor extension over existing garage at 20 Fitzwilliam Road Bearsted Kent ME14 4PY. To ratify Clerk's decision, taken after consultation with members. Do not wish to object.

MC/14/2395 Gibraltar Farm, Ham Lane. Outline application for up to 450 market and affordable houses. An amended illustrative master plan showing revised access arrangements and a transport assessment is now available on-line at Medway Council. **Noted.**

15/508130/FULL Erection of rear conservatory at 17 Celestine Close Walderslade Kent ME5 9NG. Do not wish to object.

15/508305/OUT Outline application for demolition of existing cattery and outbuildings and the erection of a two storey detached dwelling with associated double garage, parking and turning. Shared access with Lavender Cottage. with access to be considered at this stage and all other matters reserved for future consideration at Lavender Cottage Bearsted Road Weaving Kent ME14 5LD. Reserve judgement until full plans are submitted.

15/507199/FULL Single storey rear extension at 13 Crownfields Maidstone Kent ME14 5TH. Do not wish to object.

15/506330/FULL - Land adj. 35 Timber Tops (new dwelling). **Ratified** Clerk's decision, after consulting with members, to amend the response so that the parish council objected but no longer required the application to be reported to the planning committee.

15/507128/FULL – Single storey extension to side and rear with roof lights. Insertion of an additional window to east elevation at Ginton, Grove Green Lane, Weaving ME14 5JW. Do not wish to object.

15/509076/TPO – TPO application to 1no Silver Birch – Fell at Old Barn, Grove Green, Weaving, Kent, ME14 5PX. Defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

MC/15/3781 – Construction of a proposed 4 bedroom dwelling with detached garage and associated parking at Land Adjacent to 803 Lordswood Lane, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent, ME5 8JP. Noted.

15/508987/FULL - Creation of first floor side extension and erection of front porch at 29 Timber Tops Boxley Kent ME5 8XF. Do not wish to object.

15/503178/FULL - Revised drawings JCA -01 Rev A, JCA – 02 Rev A, JCA – 03 Rev A for L Shaped stable block for personal use and creation of hard standing area at Willow Farm, Tyland Lane, Sandling ME14 3BL. Do not wish to object.

6 **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions**

There were none.

7 **Highways and Byways**

7.1 Weaving Street Speed Reduction. Members **received** the Clerk's report. They were presented with several options to consider and after some discussion **agreed** to the following:

- Continue with the request to the Estates Committee who, in principal, have agreed to installing a new barrier design at the Weaving Street entrance to Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. A design has been created and is currently being costed and will go back to the Estates committee for approval.
- To look at displaying caution busy road signs. **Action Clerk**
- Cut back vegetation to increase the vision splay. **Action Clerk.**

8 **Volunteer Groups**

8.1 Walderslade Woodlands Group. **Received** and **noted** Rob Burrow's November report. Cllr Ivor Davies added that the group had had a good turnout for the task day.

8.2 Friends of Boxley Warren. Cllr Bob Hinder was delighted to inform members that the task days for the group had resumed and the next one is due on 1 December. He explained the Clerk has put in a lot of work for Awards for All grant which will be submitted shortly. He also said a request had also been made to F & GP for a grant towards running costs.

9 **Policy and Procedures Review**

Section 106 wish list. Members **received** and **noted** the Clerk's report. Members agreed to continue with the list as they felt it was helpful and useful document. They made a few grammatical changes and one deletion. Members asked for further clarification on section 106 and when it is paid to the December meeting. **Action Clerk.**

10 **Maidstone Local Plan**

No updates were received.

11 **Matters for Information**

None received.

12 **Draft Budget 2016/2017**

The draft budget was **received**. Cllr Dengate's suggestion to include some budget to clear vegetation and clean road signs was considered and after a lengthy discussion

members **agreed** to increase the Street Maintenance budget to £5,000 to incorporate this type of maintenance. A revised street maintenance policy will be drafted and brought back to the December meeting for consideration and adoption. Members also **agreed** to remove the maintenance budget for Roundwood roundabout if the appeal to place advertisements on the roundabout is successful. **Action: Clerk.**

13 **Next Meeting**

Next full environment meeting 14th December at Beechen Hall commencing at 7:30pm.

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

Received and **noted** four updates on issues regarding roof tiles, trees, unauthorised use and fly tipping.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Item 6.2 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 10 November 2015 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present: Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Vic Davies, Mr P Dengate together with the Clerk.

1. **Apologies and non-attendance**

Cllrs Bob and Wendy Hinder (previous commitment). Cllr Geoff Smith (absent).

2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying.**

Cllr Brooks declared that she had been lobbied on item 10.2 Sandling Village Hall and item 10.3 Friends of Boxley Warren.

Cllr Vic Davies declared an interest on item 4.2 Charitable Incorporated Organisations as he was a Trustee of the Vinters Valley Nature Reserve (a pecuniary interest) and was a member of the Grove Green Community Centre Management Committee.

Cllr Ivor Davies notified members that he is a Friend of Boxley Warren, item 10.3.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2015**

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

4. **Matters Arising From the Minutes**

4.1 Minute 2794/4.1. Purchase of pdf software will be arranged once the Microsoft 10 update has been installed. **Noted.**

4.2 Minute 2794/8 Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs). The Clerk reported that the four charitable organisations were progressing towards changing over to CIOs. **Noted.**

4.3 Minute 2795/9.1 KALC specific training. The logistics of arranging this to take place after the May 2016 elections, is being investigated. **Noted**

4.4 Any matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda. None.

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

5. **Financial report.**

5.1 Reconciliation of accounts report as at 26 October 2015. **Received** and **noted.**

5.2 Income/Expenditure report **Received** and **noted.**

5.3 Investments. **Received** and **noted.** It was **agreed** that as the maturity dates of investments could be included in the Reconciliation report, there was no need for these to be reported separately as hitherto. The investment item would then be made the next item. The Clerk's decision to reinvest the maturing three month Lloyds account was **ratified. Action: office.**

5.4 South wall repairs Boxley Village Green. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consultation with F&GP and Estates Committee members to increase, by £4,500, the

repair budget to meet the cost of immediate repairs. Sum to be vired from the Contingency Fund Budget.

Action Clerk.

Estates General budget 2016/17. £10,000 to be allocated from reserves to pay for the remaining section of the wall to be repair/refurbished. **Action: Estates Committee.**

6. Policies and procedures

6.1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure. The suggested split into two documents was **agreed** and the reformatted policies and procedures were also **agreed**. **Action: Office.**

6.2 'Recording of meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees' and 'Media Management' have been reviewed by the Clerk as part of housekeeping and are considered still fit for purpose. **Noted.**

7. Review of banking arrangements

The Unitary Trust Bank Account application had now been accepted and access is being arranged. Councillors will be advised when they can go on-line to activate their authorisation to access the account. Cllr Dengate asked the Clerk to investigate whether there was a training programme where members could practise prior to going live. **Action: Clerk.**

8. Investment Opportunities.

Members **received** and **noted** the Clerk's report on the legal position regarding investments and money generating opportunities. After discussion on various alternatives including property ownership it was decided that the parish council should consider the options available to maximise the income stream from investments when the council's earmarked reserves are reviewed at the January F&GP Committee meeting, members **agreed** it would be beneficial to identify the amount that could be made available for long term investment. **Action: F&GP Committee.**

9. Personnel matters

The Clerk's update on toil, annual leave and long-term sickness of staff was **received** and **noted**.

The Clerk was asked to arrange external training in Excel for office staff. **Action: Clerk.**

10 Grant Requests

10.1 Friends of Boxley Church. Cllr Dengate proposed seconded by Cllr Vic Davies £250 towards the cost of public liability insurance for events. **Agreed.**

10.2 Sandling Village Hall. **Agreed** £3,000 would be vired to the Estates Committee should it decide to make a grant towards the replacement floor. **Action: Estates Committee.**

10.3 Friends of Boxley Warren. Cllr Dengate proposed seconded Cllr Brooks that a maximum of £2,300 would be granted to FoBW. **Agreed** (with chairman abstaining).

10.4 Age Concern. After considering the request for the parish council to provide an ipad type tablet for Age Concern to use, it was **agreed** that they should be asked what model and facilities they had in mind. Request to be returned to the next agenda. **Action: F&GP Committee.**

As the time was 9.30 pm the Chairman used his devolved power to extend the meeting for another 30 minutes.

11 Draft Budget 2016/2017

Members considered and amended the draft budget. Cllr Vic Davies was asked to liaise with the Clerk concerning a grant application from VVT. **Action: Cllr Vic Davies and Clerk.**

12 Matters for Information

None.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12 January 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Item 7 Finance.

Item 7.1 Payments made out of meeting**7.1.1 COOPERATIVE BANK****Co-Op General Account****List of Payments made between 10/11/2015 and 30/11/2015**

Date Paid Detail	Payee Name	Cheque Ref	Amount Paid	Transaction
20/11/2015	Mrs P Bowdery	B2211PC03	2,133.71	Salary
20/11/2015	Mrs A Candy	B2211PC03	576.87	Salary
20/11/2015	Mr I Davies	B2211PC06	41.14	Chairmans Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mr V Davies Allowance PAYE	B2211PC07	33.68	Councillor
20/11/2015	Mr P Dengate	B2211PC08	25.28	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mrs M Fooks	B2211PC02	1,197.73	Salary
20/11/2015	Mr T Harwood	B2211PC09	33.68	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mr R Hinder	B2211PC10	33.68	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mrs W Hinder	B2211PC11	33.68	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mrs L Lake	B2211PC04	40.00	Downs Mail Delivery
20/11/2015	Mrs K Macklin	B2211PC12	42.08	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mrs M Smith	B2211BH01	604.60	Wages
20/11/2015	Mrs A Spain/Colney	B2011PC15	33.68	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mrs M Waller	B2011PC17	36.48	Councillor Allowance PAYE
20/11/2015	Mr B Douglas	B2011BH05	214.67	Wages
20/11/2015	Mr D Odell	B2011BH02	244.87	Wages
20/11/2015	HMRC	577PW00105	1,376.55	PAYE
20/11/2015	EFT Receipts Ac Contributions	IT00000068	98.79	Pension
20/11/2015	Flooring Sales Ltd	B11530	56.06	Bona Floor Cleaner
20/11/2015	Mrs A Candy	B 2011PC03 -	576.87	Salary
20/11/2015	Mrs M Smith	B2011BH01 -	604.60	Wages
20/11/2015	Mrs A Candy	B2011PC03	576.86	Salary
20/11/2015	Mrs M Smith	B2011BH01	598.69	Wages
Total Payments			6,851.31	

7.1.2 HSBC

HSBC General Account

List of Payments made between 10/11/2015 and 30/11/2015

Date Paid Detail	Payee Name	Cheque Ref	Amount Paid	Transaction
30/11/2015	SITA UK Ltd	2DD23	113.93	Refuse Collections
Total Payments			113.93	

7.2.1 COOP receipts

Co-Op General Account

Cash Received between 24/10/2015 and 30/11/2015

Date	Cash Received from	Receipt No	Receipt Description	Receipt Total
30/10/2015	Maidstone BC	51	Parish Service Scheme 2nd inst	7,007.00
03/11/2015	Kent County Council	52	Bellmouth Bond	1,003.76
05/11/2015	Cooperative Bank	53	Interest	4.79
Total Receipts				8,015.55

7.2.2 HSBC receipts

HSBC General Account

Cash Received between 24/10/2015 and 30/11/2015

Date	Cash Received from	Receipt No	Receipt Description	Receipt Total
26/10/2015	Bolton	134	Hall Hire Casual	76.05
26/10/2015	Neall	134	Hall Hire Casual	60.75
28/10/2015	Age Concern	137	Hall Hire Regular	583.58
28/10/2015	Balfour Short Mat Bowls	139	Hall Hire Regular	414.90
28/10/2015	NGREA	138	Hall Hire Regular	42.90
28/10/2015	Osei-Bonsu	136	Hall Hire Casual	110.10
30/10/2015	Helyar	91	Hall Hire Casual	49.00
30/10/2015	Teenie Boppers	90	Hall Hire Regular	99.00
02/11/2015	Pilates	142	Hall Hire Regular	118.80
02/11/2015	Sing & Sign	92	Hall Hire Regular	89.10
02/11/2015	Sing & Sign	93	Hall Hire Regular	89.10
03/11/2015	Burgess	140	Hall Hire Casual	40.00
03/11/2015	Rose	94	Hall Hire Casual	175.90
06/11/2015	Macdonald	143	Hall Hire Casual	122.62
06/11/2015	Sa'adedin	141	Hall Hire Casual	94.00
06/11/2015	Sa'adedin	141	Public Liability	2.00
07/11/2015	Kumon	95	Hall Hire Regular	237.50
08/11/2015	Tumbletots	96	Hall Hire Regular	217.80
09/11/2015	Yoga	97	Hall Hire Regular	302.40
10/11/2015	Borthwick	145	Hall Hire Casual	43.12
10/11/2015	Day	147	Hall Hire Casual	96.00
10/11/2015	Sharma	146	Hall Hire Casual	142.50
10/11/2015	Shelley	144	Hall Hire Casual	47.00
13/11/2015	A Bead in Time	98	Hall Hire Regular	91.25
13/11/2015	Scott	148	Hall Hire Casual	49.00
14/11/2015	Aderiye	99	Hall Hire Casual	173.00
16/11/2015	AACTS	101	Hall Hire Regular	1,320.67

16/11/2015	AACTS	100	Hall Hire Regular	68.40
16/11/2015	Karate	149	Hall Hire Regular	325.00
19/11/2015	Arnott	151	Hall Hire Casual	37.25
19/11/2015	Sharma	150	Hall Hire Casual	144.50
25/11/2015	NGREA	152	Hall Hire Regular	42.90
25/11/2015	Thanapalan	102	Hall Hire Casual	142.50
26/11/2015	Wright	103	Hall Hire Casual	103.10
27/11/2015	Interserve Healthcare	104	Hall Hire Regular	45.00
30/11/2015	Bolton-Botha	106	Hall Hire Casual	70.50
30/11/2015	Waters	153	Hall Hire Casual	110.00
30/11/2015	Yoga	105	Hall Hire Regular	121.80
			Total Receipts	6,098.99

Item 7.3 Account closing balances as at 30/11/2015
BANK ACCOUNTS (closing balances)

* Account in process of being opened.

HSBC Beechen Hall	£19,861.84
Unity Trust Bank*	£0.00
Coop General Account	£80,625.24
Santander Investment Bond (matures Aug 2016)	£75,000.00
Barclays Bank	£64,638.25
Lloyds 3 mth (matures 05.11.15)	£50,153.88
Lloyds 12 mth (matures 11.08.16)	£25,000.00
Nationwide Beechen Hall 12 mth (matures Aug 2016)	£40,000.00
Nationwide Parish Council 12 mth (matures Sept 2016)	£35,000.00
Cooperative Investment Bond	£0.00
Total in Banks	
Cash	150.00
GRAND TOTAL (Banks and Cash) 2014 comparison (£355,132.89)	390,429.21

Item 8 Policies and Procedures

8.1 Vision and Business Plan.

Clerk's note: This document is reviewed every two years. The following is the current version with a minor additional (in capitals and bold) at 11.

Boxley Parish Council Vision and Business Plan (review).

The Parish Council is committed to working solely for and with its residents and has a strong self-awareness of its role within its communities and also its position within the local government system.

To achieve this the Council will produce and regularly review its approach, policies and procedures to ensure that the work of the Council is:

1. **RELEVANT** – The Council will work for the short and long term welfare and improvement of the parish and its communities through projects that are of tangible benefit to all or part of the parish.
2. **RESPONSIVE** – it will respond positively and promptly to all requests, complaints¹ and queries from residents and other organisations. It will identify and respond to pertinent consultation from Government and other bodies.
3. **INCLUSIVE** - the Council welcomes local input and will work to its Community Inclusion Policy which actively seeks to involve its residents. It will work not only to serve but to empower its residents by working to attract people from diverse backgrounds to stand for election or co-option to the Council².
4. **SUPPORTIVE** - The Council will give fair and unbiased consideration to applications for financial support, in the form of grants, from parish groups and organisations related to the well-being of the parish and its residents³.
5. **ACCESSIBLE** – The Council will ensure that the parish office⁴ is open and welcoming to its residents. Opening times and contact details of staff and parish councillors will be widely publicised.
6. **INTERACTIVE** – The Council will offer all residents the opportunity to speak at its meetings⁵ and will offer support and guidance on how to do this⁶. The Council actively canvasses and welcomes residents' views via its website, noticeboards, social media and public consultations. In accordance with its Community Involvement Policy it particularly encourages such interaction when major projects are under consideration.
7. **DEMOCRATIC** – The Council will listen to its residents and communities. The Council will also campaign to ensure contested parish elections to allow electors to choose their own representatives. Between elections casual vacancies for co-option to the Council will be widely advertised and CVs invited. These will be considered at a full meeting of the council open to residents, where a decision will be made.

¹ Complaints Policy.

² To achieve this it will, where possible, make available a parish allowance and subsistence allowances so that no member is 'out of pocket'

³ Budget provisions are made. Budget document shows legislation under which payment is made etc.

⁴ Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close ME5 9RU

⁵ Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960.

⁶ Leaflets on: the right to attend and address a meeting; how best to present an issue; and alternative methods of providing information to the meeting are available. Office staff are also briefed on the need to be neutral and helpful.

8. PROACTIVE – The Council will always attempt to plan ahead and have the financial ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances⁷. It will keep and regularly review a 'wish list' of improvements that it wishes to see in the parish. This list will be drawn up in an open and accountable way to allow residents to suggest/identify local needs⁸.
9. PARTNERSHIP WORKING – The Council will openly consider opportunities to work in partnership with its residents, parish based Charitable Trusts/organisations and the local business community, including financial involvement if needed and always providing that the proposal meets identified needs/aims/local commitments.
10. OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE – The Council will endeavour to take all its decisions in open session and to supply in advance adequate information to allow residents to be become involved in an informed way. It will publish a monthly newsletter, maintain an up to date website and publish the chairman's annual report including an End of Year Statement. It will have clear and understandable policies and procedures so residents can see how the Council makes decisions.
11. EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT – The Council will undertake constructive reviews of its work and projects so as to learn from its successes or failures. It will willingly consider changes to the way it works if it will make it more effective and/or efficient or allow its service to be improved.
 - TRAINING: The Council will give relevant training to new councillors and staff, as this leads to a stronger and more knowledgeable team.² It will offer supplementary training as and when necessary to the same ends.
 - TEAMWORK: The Council will ensure that staff are allowed and remunerated for sufficient hours to ensure that work and projects can be completed². The Council will also ensure that the parish office is provided with adequate and up to date equipment/facilities and will operate with a minimum of paperwork while remaining cost effective.
 - PROJECTS: All Projects will be parish councillor **OR COMMITTEE** led with support from the parish office and with due deference to the role of the Responsible Financial Officer⁹. Projects and work will have a reasonable deadline with a timeline produced to enable progress to be monitored.
 - THE ESTATE – The Council will be a responsible manager of its property. It will have clear plans for maintenance, replacement and repair of all the Council's buildings, open spaces and other property, both movable and immovable.
12. FINANCIAL – The Council will continue to have robust management and auditing regimes when dealing with its finances.
 - Audit – The Council will continue to meet the legal requirements relating to the audit of its accounts.¹⁰
 - Financial management - Strong financial checks and risk assessments will be undertaken periodically and investments and reserves will be reviewed regularly.
 - Budgeting – An annual budget and precept will be agreed. The budget will include forecasts for 3-4 years in the future. The budget will be supported by an information document that gives details of maintenance programmes, contract finish dates and other information relevant to forward planning. The Council will include in this budget a healthy reserve so that it can be proactive in its service to the community.^s

⁷ Budget provisions, Reserves Policy, forward planning etc.

⁸ Wish List policy

⁹ Financial Regulations.

¹⁰ Accounts and Audit (England) Regulation 2011.

- Grants - Grant support for community organisations will be considered after relevant conditions are met and such organisations will also be encouraged, and supported, to apply for grants from other bodies.¹¹

13. **SWOT ANALYSIS**

An analysis of current **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities** and **threats** to the Council:

13.1 **Strengths**

- Proactive, qualified, experienced and attentive office personal
- An engaged and co-operative Council with strong leadership exercised by the Chairman
- Positive image
- Excellent policies and systems
- Reasonable financial reserves

13.2 **Weaknesses**

- Serving four widely separated communities with lack of a single heart to the parish
- Lack of knowledge by residents of what the Council does
- Age and demographic of current councillors
- Inability to attract input from residents

13.3 **Opportunities**

- Using the Council's internet and Facebook presence to consult with residents (including possible on-line petition facility and discussion forums)
- Four-yearly elections have the potential to attract new blood
- MBC adoption of Community Infrastructure Levy.

13.4 **Threats**

- Loss of key staff.
- If MBC fails to adopt Community Infrastructure Levy (loss of potential income)
- Apathy of residents
- Failure to attract new councillors
- Sudden loss of a number of experienced councillors
- Cuts in local authority services with the expectation that the parish council will take on or pay for them
- Loss of the council tax support grant because MBC decides not to pass it on or the government withdraws it

14. **OBJECTIVES**

- Increase knowledge of the Parish Council and its work in the parish by being proactive in implementing the Community Involvement Policy.
- To continue to produce relevant documents and leaflets that explain the work and systems of the Parish Council
- To maintain and further develop the website
- To maintain a presence on Facebook and develop other communication opportunities such as Community Alerts
- To continue to work for a better Boxley in all possible ways.

¹¹ Budget and Grants Policy.

Item 9 Reports from councillors/office

Item 9.1 68th Annual General Meeting of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KentALC), Ditton, 21 November 2015. Report by Ivor Davies

The above meeting, attended by Cllr Brooks and myself, opened with a presentation by the Chairman and CEO of the SE Coast NHS Ambulance Trust which, with 5m potential patients, is the second largest in the country. From a lot of information given, the most interesting was that, to meet the ever-increasing long waiting-times for ambulances to off-load at A&E departments (33% of the fleet can be so occupied), the service is dividing calls so that ambulances are only sent where really needed. The alternative Quick Response service of car-borne paramedics deals with cases on the spot, only summoning an ambulance if needed, most do not. The talk ended with a request that more parish councillors and members of the public should support the Trust – see its website.

For the second presentation we were honoured to have the Chairman of the National Association (NALC) for the first time in many years. Only a year into the job, Dr Jonathan Owen has initiated a complete review of NALC's activities and launched a new web-site. From questions from the floor, it was clear that the changes already made are much appreciated. Dr Owen said that his mantra was to give parish and town councils "stronger local delivery, fairer funding and more powers". He could not offer a solution to the vexing problem of double taxation which resulted from tiers of government cascading their non-statutory responsibilities but not the finance. In his opinion the government had moved to a Devolution agenda from an Austerity one, but the money was not coming with it. A number of questions were asked, most heated on NALC's arbitrarily increasing its subscription rate by 20%. This he defended by saying that this was what was needed to balance the books and provide the service demanded, but many people were not happy although nothing could now be done as the KALC national conference delegates' vote against had been in a minority.

The afternoon session was devoted to KALC business, commencing with an address from the Chairman in which he said that he thought that Kent's present arrangement of one county council, one unitary authority and nine district councils was unsustainable. There then followed the usual business of elections, acceptance of accounts and a somewhat fractious debate on increasing the KALC subscription rate (not unconnected with what had occurred in the morning).

Debate on a number of motions from parishes and area committees then followed. Paraphrased these were inviting lobbying action on the following:

- Exemption of public toilets from business rates (this was costing even some inland parish councils thousands of pounds) – carried.
- Introduction of UK and EU legislation to make it an offence for HGVs to use GPS navigation systems that do not identify unsuitable routes – carried (with two objections!).
- Amendment of the Highways Act to improve the process by which local authorities can serve orders on landowners who persistently fail to maintain 'offensive or dangerous' overhanging trees – passed after an amendment giving parish councils responsibility for deciding what is dangerous failed.
- Exclusion of housing in rural areas, particularly where provided to meet local housing need, from the proposed Right to Buy extension – passed.

The motion of most interest to us was that proposed by the KentALC Executive itself. This expressed concern "at the effects that unlawful HGV parking has on local communities across the county", supported "the development of adequate parking facilities, both within the county and elsewhere" and called on "the government, KCC and Medway Council to secure adequate funding to make this happen" while asking for "consultation with parish councils and local communities on possible sites". There was considerable agreement but I pointed out that although the motion was a good first step, it was not wholly adequate as it omitted any reference to enforcement or recovery of fines. This caused further discussion with one representative making the interesting suggestion (which I may have heard before) that foreign

HGV drivers should be compelled to deposit non-returnable funds on arrival in the UK which could be drawn down to pay for authorised lorry parks while here. The motion eventually received unanimous, I think, support.

Item 9.2 KALC Maidstone Area Committee (M-KALC) Meeting, Maidstone Town Hall, 23 November 2015. Report by Ivor Davies

The following points are of interest:

- **Economic Development Strategy consultation.** M-KALC had received replies from a number of parishes, the response has now gone to MBC.
- **Parish Councillors' Training.** Session on Open Spaces arranged, Landscapes and Design to follow. More in FY 2016/17.
- **JTB.** Meeting called to receive the Integrated Transport Strategy "hi-jacked" by KCC who argued that there was no point in investing in public transport as it was proportionately little used. MBC's response was that provision had to be made if the Local Plan was to pass the Inspectorate. Further work would now take place with a 2%-3% move to public transport forecast. Plan would now be considered on 1 December.
- **Bus Services.** Cllr Richard Ash (Bearstead) recommended that councils consider joining their local Quality Bus and Rail User Forums
- **Local Plan.** As of 43 Local Plans considered by the Inspectorate, none had had their housing numbers reduced, it was up to MBC to first reduce their assessed requirement, but this must be justifiable. Committee is to mobilise public opinion to lobby MBC to take action and also obtain professional advice (which will need financial support from parishes). If MBC does not submit a Local Plan by the end of 2016, one will be imposed by government but debatable whether the housing figure would be worse.
- **Public Spaces Protection Orders.** It was suggested that councils with 'problem' open spaces should lobby MBC to issue such orders to tackle rural anti-social behaviour.
- **Parish Liaison Group.** MBC will shortly appoint a new Parish Liaison Officer. Draft Parish Charter nearly agreed.
- **Short Deadlines.** Borough Cllr John Perry is taking complaint about the Local Plan consultation to full council. I mentioned that we had alerted Helen Whately MP to the problem and she had expressed interest.
- **Rural Parishes Police Liaison Meeting.** In answer to my question/complaint about only a few hours notice, I was told that the meeting scheduled for 19 November had been cancelled because it had proved impossible to find a clerk; Lenham PC having withdrawn theirs along with use of their hall. Volunteers were needed or an alternative solution found.

Item 13 Parish Council Annual Competency Report

Item 13.1 To review the Clerk's report on the working of the Parish Council.

Background: Each year the Clerk undertakes a review of the way the Council and Committees have worked and submits a report to the relevant meeting. This gives members an opportunity to:

- Discuss their performance;
- Recognise strengths and weaknesses;
- Identify where additional improvements might be made; and
- Consider the relationship between the office and meeting to ensure that members are receiving the support that they need to enable them to make informed decisions.

It is important to recognise that these reports are not just there to allow members to give themselves a pat on the back. As Clerk/RFO I actively seek out weaknesses to report to members and they should not shy away from discussing them in public.

Parish council meetings work well, keeping to good time and with members generally keeping on topic. Councillors are respectful of each other's views but they are also not afraid to make their own views known. The standing agenda items for reports from Borough & County

Councillors and from parish councillors and the office, which allow an exchange of information and ideas are a good example of this; and also of something simple working well. It meets deadlines and keeps to its own policies and procedures without losing the ability to be flexible when required. It rarely has items discussed in confidence however when this is necessary it is clearly stated why it is happening.

Over the years the one issue that has not really changed is the seeming inability of the parish council to galvanise the community. The parish council works in an open and accountable way, has relevant policies and procedures, uses its newsletter and social media etc. but often still considers that it does not sufficiently engage with its residents. Members may wish to recognise that as long as it keeps trying (it has an excellent Community Involvement Strategy) and does not become apathetic, that this is the way it currently is. For members' information the parish office has received many compliments about the Council's use of community alerts and also receives lots of thanks from organisations for displaying and advertising their events etc. on its noticeboards.

Overall the parish council and its committees are still working very well with effective and efficient policies and procedures, members are respectful of each other's and the public's views and are open to suggestions for change. Reports to committees again contained some minor reminders on trying to keep on topic and to finish the meeting as early as possible. The parish office will now be proactive in reporting back to the relevant meeting positive remarks from residents or hirers as well as the few criticisms.

Chairman's comments:

I share the Clerk's view that the parish council functions well. Councillors who have taken part in the reviews are already aware of this. Others, and residents, may refer to the relevant agenda items and minutes of meetings on our website to refresh their memory.

This and other reviews have again proved their worth. They are, I believe, well worth the time and effort given by the Clerk in preparing them. I am very grateful. I also thank you, my colleagues, for the professional competence identified in these reviews and for your ready willingness to take corrective action where needed. In this, as in all matters, at meetings there is lively discussion but no acrimony. Long may this continue.

One omission from the review process is the Parish Office. I have no doubt, in fact I know, that this is a continuing on-going process which the Clerk carries out diligently and discusses with me on the few occasions that problems arise. That this works well is well-evidenced by the exceptional service that we receive from Pauline and her team. I believe we all think it and probably tell her so, but this is my opportunity to say so publicly – and hope I speak for you all.

Item 13.2 To consider the draft Annual Competency Report and Statement

Clerk's note: The Parish Council, by seeking continual improvement in the way it works and responds to its residents, aims not to stagnate. Each committee is therefore required to undertake an annual review of its work, procedures and efficiency and in so doing highlight any weaknesses and omissions so that they can then be addressed. A similar review is conducted of the work of the full parish council. By undertaking such a public health-check, the parish council shows that it:

- a) Operates in an open and accountable way;
- b) Is willing to challenge its operating procedures; and
- c) Has a procedure which highlights that the council and its committees have ownership of and responsibility for their decision-making procedures.

Reviews of the Clerk's annual reports were undertaken by the following committees:

- Environment Committee on 13 July 2015.
- Estates Committee on 11 August 2015.
- Finance & General Purposes Committee 15 September 2015.

Each committee received a report from the Clerk on the effectiveness of the methods, procedures and reviews by which it worked. Members discussed issues highlighted under the "possible weaknesses" section of each report and appropriate actions were identified. The full Parish Council similarly reviewed the report on its own working at its meeting on 7 December 2015.

In the light of the above, the Chairman intends to move the following recommendation:

That Boxley Parish Council and its committees, having undertaken their annual review of management practices and working methods, considers that their decisions are made in an open and accountable way and that the public can:

- **monitor the work of the parish council;**
- **understand how each decision is reached;**
- **recognise that the parish council is acting legally, fairly and in the interest of the community at large; and**
- **see that the council is always seeking ways to improve its service to the community.**

**Item 14 Financial Regulation 12.3(f) and Grounds Maintenance Contract.
Purpose of item: DECISION.**

Financial Regulation 12.3(f) states

Where the circumstances make it inappropriate to invite the number of quotations specified above a lesser number of contractors, as decided by the Council, may be invited. Where the work or the supply of goods or materials is of such a nature as to render competitive tendering or the obtaining of a quotation impractical, the council or committee may decide to select a single firm with or without a quotation for the purpose. **Where the RFO believes it necessary to recommend waiving the specific financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the parish council** [Clerk's emphasis]. None of this shall apply where the cost of this exceeds £60,000^[1].

The current grounds maintenance contractor, who has successfully tendered for the contract repeatedly for a number of years, has contacted the RFO with an offer to renew the contract that is highly attractive and likely to be very competitive. If accepted by the council it would save office and committee time together with the administrative costs incurred with the normal tendering process. Given that councillors and residents have often made positive compliments about the work of the contractor, who has never given the office any problem or cause for concern, there is a strong argument for considering competitive tendering a waste of resources and therefore impractical.

While I, as RFO, rigorously apply the Financial Regulations on normal day to day work, it is my opinion that the PC can in this instance invoke the above regulation as being the financially sound thing to do. I am therefore reporting this issue to the parish council with a recommendation that:

The Parish Council invokes Financial Regulation 12.3 (f) to allow the 2016 Grounds Maintenance Contract to be decided outside of the tendering process.

A confidential report is enclosed giving more information.

Note: This recommendation is effectively a review of a decision of the Estates Committee. To ensure that Standing Orders are followed the RFO will obtain the signatures of four councillors on a motion to revisit the decision on Minute 2806/14 Policies and Procedures: Grounds Maintenance.

^[1] Standing Order 26(c).

MBC Consultation Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy: Action Plan. Deadline for response 9 December 2015.

An electronic or paper version of the action plan is available from the parish office.
The following extract is from the covering e-mail (24/11/15) inviting responses.

"With increasingly limited new public funding from either central or local government to fund green infrastructure projects , the focus of the action plan is to coordinate existing work by a wide range of organisations which help deliver the Strategy objectives, making best use of existing resources and enable joint bids for external funding.

In addition, the significant new development planned for the Borough, will put pressure on the green and blue infrastructure which this Strategy aims to protect and improve. It also brings funding and delivery opportunities to support green infrastructure. The action plan therefore also identifies where new development offers opportunities to make a contribution to green and blue infrastructure objectives.

I would be very grateful if you could review the draft document and to comment on any of the entries. We have tried to capture a range of actions - but if you would like to add any other practical suggestions which could be resourced, please let me know".

Clerk's briefing report: The Action plan identifies what needs to be delivered and which organisations, parish councils and voluntary bodies would play a part in delivering the strategy.

Below are produced the sections that identify partnership working with parish council and community groups. It is clear from the action plan and the covering e-mail that for this strategy to be successfully delivered it will require external funding. Currently the parish council has not been approached for any funding however if the parish council (or one of its sponsored groups) has been undertaking work to meet that action it is marked with * in the final column.

As the e-mail was not sent to groups that work within the parish and which may be approached to undertake some of the action points it has been forwarded on to Vinters Valley Trust, Friends of Boxley Warren and Walderslade Woodlands Group.

Type of action	Action	Delivery lead	Other partners	Potential sources of funding	Timescale	Climate change	Sustainable movement	Landscape character	Biodiversity	Sport and health	Community	Investment	Source of action	BPC or its sponsored groups already working to this aim
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Type of action: PL Planning policy S Strategy P physical project C communications O other project

C	Set up an umbrella group for environmental groups and individuals to share information about projects and funding etc	MBC planning	MVCP, KWT, community groups		S						X		GBI Strategy draft proposals consultee suggestion	
O	Achieve Green Flag Awards in public parks and green spaces to demonstrate quality and to motivate volunteers	MBC parks	Parish Councils	MBC	S					X	X		MBC officer comment	
O	Reduce the Council's use of herbicides and pesticides in public green spaces replacing with organic weed control methods wherever possible	MBC parks, Parish Councils		N/A	S	X			X				GBI Strategy draft proposals consultee suggestion	*
O	Set up more Friends of parks groups and involve local people in the design and management of green spaces	MBC, Parish councils	Community groups	MBC	M						X		Stakeholder meeting	*

P	Identify, manage or restore and where appropriate create viewpoints. Contact community and partner groups to identify viewpoints focusing on North Downs Way Corridor land ownership and select 1 project each year.	AONB Unit	North Downs Way Steering Group Community groups, MBC	AONB plus match funding	M			X					AONB action plan	*
P	Engage with businesses, local authorities and the forestry/ woodland sector to ensure the sustainable management of woodland in the Kent Downs – beyond minimum standards.	AONB Unit	MBC, Parish Councils,FC, CRPF (?)	Potential EU Interreg project with CRPF	S	X		X	X				AONB action plan	* In discussion re Wald Wds
P	KCC to empower local communities with information so they can prioritise resources on routes important to them	KCC PROW and access service	Parish Councils, community groups, volunteers	N/A	S		X				X		KCC countryside access plan	
P	Improve the standard of PROW furniture through the provision of quality materials and better design.	KCC PROW and access service	Parish Councils, landowners, volunteers		M		X						KCC countryside access plan	
P	Proactively seek opportunities to improve the accessibility of the footpath network, following consultation with local landowners and parishes	KCC PROW and access service	Parish Councils, landowners, volunteers		S		X						KCC countryside access plan	
P	Develop traffic-free walking and cycling facilities along green corridors, specifically to support school travel plans, the Healthy Schools initiative and the family recreational	KCC PROW and access service	Health care providers, MBC, Parish councils, community groups, volunteers, Kent Countryside		M		X			X			KCC countryside access plan	

			Access Forum										
P	Improve the quality of publicly accessible parks and green spaces with the aim of achieving 'good' standard in accordance with the quality audit 2014 and redesign where needed to address gaps in provision.	MBC parks	Parish Councils	Developer contributions	M				X			MBC sustainable community strategy	
P	Incorporate exercise equipment in existing and new spaces to encourage healthy lifestyles particularly for those who do not wish to participate in organised activities or team sports in conjunction with local communities.	MBC parks	Parish Councils	KCC Public health funding, Developer contributions	S				X			GBI Strategy draft proposals	
PL	Designate more sites as local nature reserves to help meet the Natural England standard of 1ha local nature reserve per 1,000 population	MBC planning	MBC parks, KCC, KWT, MVCP		M			X				GBI Strategy draft proposals	
S	Identify visual detractors from the landscape within the Kent Downs AONB and seek resources for their removal or mitigation	AONB Unit	Community groups, MBC	Funding required.	M		X					AONB action plan	
S	Undertake a playing pitch strategy to understand quantity, quality and accessibility of sports pitches and identify surpluses and deficits linking with Kent Football Association Strategy and other relevant sports associations	MBC parks	Sport England, Kent FA, NGBs, Parish Councils	Sport England, MBC	S				X			Stakeholder meeting	

S	Develop an Allotments Strategy to protect existing sites, provide new sites in new large development, ensure that they are well maintained, promoted, and have areas set aside for organic production	MBC, Allotments Associations			S	X				X			GBI Strategy draft proposals consultee suggestion	
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Members views are sought on the response they wish to make.

Suggested response: The parish council accepts that due to the financial cutbacks MBC and KCC will look to other organisations to fund or do the work identified in the action plan. The parish council requests that consideration is given now on how MBC/KCC plan to liaise and work with these bodies as the successful delivery of any of these strategies will hinge on proper early discussion and liaison with parishes and groups. For example difficulties occur without sufficient notice of issues as parish councils tend to only meet ten times in a year and precepts must be set by the end of January for the next financial year.

It is noted that within the section relating to Allotments there is no mention of parish councils. There should be.