



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

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on **Tuesday 13 December 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade ME5 9RU** 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 7th and 14th November 2016 - DECISION** (7.33)
To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order to sign as a true record. (previously circulated).

To adjourn to allow members of the public to address the meeting (7.35)

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes** (7.45)
16/507993/FULL and 16/507994/LBC (Listed building consent. Retrospective application for change of use garage space to use as teaching space. Boxley House The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DZ. Deadline. 15 December 2016.

16/507366/OUT Outline application for plots 6, 7 and 8 for B1 office development in relation to extant planning permission MA/13/0389 with all matters reserved for future consideration. Plots 6,7 & 8 Eclipse Park Sittingbourne Road. Deadline 23 December 2016.

16/508119/TPO TPO Application - Fell Sycamore tree or alternatively crown lift for clearance of 5m, thin canopy by 30% and remove dead wood. 20 Spenlow Drive Boxley Kent ME5 9JT. Deadline 22 December 2016

5. **Planning Applications for Consideration - DECISION** (7.52)
To receive and decide on responses to planning applications. See reports (page 3).
6. **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions - INFORMATION** (8.00)
To receive any updates.
7. **Highways and Byways - DECISION** (8:05)
 - 7.1 Minute 2932/8.1 Flooding and the raised cushion outside of Kings Arms, Boxley Village.
 - 7.2 Westfield Sole Road and Yelsted Lane one way system. Contact has been made with KCC concerning crash statistics and requesting information on any recent investigations being undertaken due to the recent lorry jack knives etc.
 - 7.3 Parking on verges and inconsiderate parking at Grovewood Drive North, Shepherd's Gate Drive and Provender Way. See report (page 3).
 - 7.4 HGV Parking Restrictions Old Chatham Road. To receive an update. See report (page 3).

8. **Grounds Maintenance - DECISION** (8.21)
To consider and agree policy and procedures. See enclosure and report (page 4).
9. **Budget 2017/2018- DECISION** (8.35)
 - 9.1 General Reserve for Highway/safety improvement projects. See reports (pages 4-9).
 - 9.2 To consider the draft budget (updated copy as an enclosure).
10. **Policy and Procedures - REVIEW** (8.50)
Section 106 wishlist. See reports (page 9-12).
11. **Members Reports** (9.00)
To receive any reports or notification of issues from members.
12. **Volunteer Groups - INFORMATION** (9.05)
To receive any reports.
13. **Matters for Information - INFORMATION** (9.10)
Kent Minerals and Waste Sites Plans. Call for sites. See report (page 13).
14. **Next Meeting** (9.11)
Next Environment Committee meeting 9 January 2017 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7:30pm. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 3rd January.

In view of the confidential nature (personal details and data) on the Enforcement item about to be transacted, it is advisable that the public and press will be excluded from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item.

15. **Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC** (9.12)
To receive any update on issues.

Pauline Bowdery

Pauline Bowdery
Clerk to Boxley Parish Council

Date: 5 December 2016

In accordance with policy the meeting should close no later than 9:30pm but the Chairman has devolved powers to extend it by 30 minutes.

Items to be returned to agenda: January 2017 Minute 2932 TPO for Cowbeck Wood etc. Gleamingwood Drive. Decision on Maidstone Local Plan.

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.

**Supporting agenda papers for the Environment Committee Meeting 13 December 2016.
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. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- 4.1 Minute 2930/5.1 Inconsiderate parking Provender Way. County Councillor returns from leave on 13 December so an update will not be possible until the January meeting. This information also relates to item 4.8.
- 4.2 Minute 2930/5.2 Grovewood Drive South yellow lines. Awaiting response from MBC Parking Unit which is undertaking a survey/investigation. Photographs have been provided to MBC and so far 18 complaints have been received from residents.
- 4.3 Minute 2930/5.3. Land to the rear of Tesco Grove Green. Work will be undertaken, when time allows, to contact the owners concerning maintenance.
- 4.4 Minute 2930/5.4 Litter/flytipping signs. It appears that MBC did install the signs by the Impton Lane junctions however they may have been stolen so new ones are being purchased.
- 4.5 Minute 2931/4.6 Flooding Boxley Road (near Longwood) and Brownlowe Copse. KCC Highways state that drainage at the Boxley Road site has been investigated/resolved as much as it can be. Cossington Lane one drain has been cleared and the KCC have been asked to revisit the site and look at the other two drains. Since the installation of the Springgate pond layout at the top of Cossington Lane, and the clearance of the soakaway located there, a resident reported that the water flow down the lane during downpours has been almost non-existent. The parish council and WWG have received a thank you e-mail.
- 4.6 Minute 2931/5.6 Development Wildfell Close. The planning officer has requested some clarification and it now looks like the item will go to the January MBC Planning Committee. The RFO has been asked to review and update some of the financial information and this was undertaken.
- 4.7 Minute 2931/5.7. Litter picking and flytipping. Community Payback Scheme has indicated that it can undertake work and the office now has to complete all the forms to put forward projects.
- 4.8 Minute 2931/5.8. Grovewood Drive North Crossing facility. The resident organising the petition is not yet ready to submit it.
- 4.9 Minute 2932/8.2 Dog Waste Bins. MBC has agreed to install an additional 7 co-mingled bins, including one at Lodge Road. An 8th has been requested but MBC will need to investigate the need as this is in East Ward.
- 4.10 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda.

Item 7 Highways and Byeways- DECISION

- 7.3 Parking on verges and inconsiderate parking at Grovewood Drive North, Shepherd's Gate Drive and Provender Way due to filming at Maidstone Studios. Councillor Wendy Hinder has been in touch with Maidstone Studios. PCSO Adlington has advised "Unfortunately the Police have no powers to deal with vehicles parked on grass verges etc. We can make enquiries and ask the owners to move their vehicles but if they are in the TV studio with their mobiles turned off, it wouldn't be possible to do this. I took a traffic warden to patrol St Johns School with me on Monday and we spoke about the issues regarding grass verge parking. They are also powerless to deal with it unless there are either double yellow lines put down or parking plate is put up which states no parking on the grass verges". Clerk's note: to make this legal a Road Traffic Order has to be introduced and this would normally be the responsibility of KCC however in extreme circumstances MBC has applied for such an order.
- 7.4 HGV Parking Restrictions Old Chatham Road. To receive any update and to notify members that the Clerk has sourced parking restriction

Item 8 Grounds Maintenance - DECISION

November 2016 meeting. Minute "After considering the information in front of them members **agreed** in principal to look to employ a contractor on an ad hoc basis. To apply for a budget which is to be agreed and to pay for the work. Members requested draft policy and procedures for identifying and approving maintenance around the parish. **Action office**".

Identifying Maintenance.

The Environment Committee currently has a street Maintenance policy and procedure for identifying work (enclosed for members).

- a) Members responses to the recent questionnaire identified:
 - Work is not to be undertaken on private land. Property owners are to be contacted (parish office can do this if notified of the issue, house number etc.), if the owner is unknown members might consider work to cut back any overhanging vegetation to the boundary line.
 - Maintenance work is for H&S reasons only.
 - Members agreed the statement *only well used footways/paths that are used to access local facilities or connect to major footways will be considered for additional maintenance.*
- b) Members should decide whether the current criteria for identifying a project is fit for purpose specifically:
 - Whether the request is commensurate with the possible cost.
 - H & S issues if it is going to arrange for work to be done.
 - Who uses the footway, footpath etc?
 - Why is it used (does it connect to a bus stop etc.)?
 - Benefit to the wider community.
 - Is it a 'make it pretty' request or a practical request?
- c) Members have decided that a contractor or the Community Payback Service will be employed to do the work. A contractor/CPS will require a work specification, maps etc. The current Street Maintenance procedure (enclosed) has an application form that members could complete when requesting work. This document may need to be tweaked to ensure all the information needed is supplied.
- d) Budget. Members must decide what budget they wish to put in place. Note: It is difficult to forecast the financial need as it hoped to get the Community Payback Service to do some of the work.

Item 9. Budget 2017/2018 – consideration/DECISION

9.1 General Reserve for Highway/safety improvement projects. Deferred from November Environment Committee agenda, where the following statement was made.

The Chairman suggests that the Environment Committee applies for £40,000 from the earmarked reserves to be included in its 2017/2018 budget. The budget to be identified for highway/safety improvement projects that are approved by the full parish council.

It is recognised that KCC Highways now only funds safety critical improvements and yet there are community needs to do with proactively improving pedestrian safety or resident's quality of life. By including a budget, even if the committee's ability to use it is restricted by having to obtain permission from the parish council, it will allow the Environment Committee to feel confident that feasible projects can be progressed. The Clerk has recommended that if this budget is identified that the Environment Committee should produce a list of clear priorities for judging and approving submitted projects should be produced at an early stage.

Briefing note.

Current Policy.

The Environment Committee already has a policy concerning funding highway projects. Clerk's note: This policy had been left off the annual policies to be reviewed calendar hence members not being reminded that it existed.

Policy for dealing with highway issues that do not receive KHS funding

The Environment Committee controls a small Street Maintenance budget, once this budget is exhausted or if the cost of a project exceeds the annual budget the Committee has the right to approach the Parish Council (or in some circumstances the Finance Committee) with a recommendation for additional funding to be released from contingency or reserves.

In order to make a recommendation the following issues will need to be undertaken:

- Identification of what work/action is wanted;
- Identify the reasons why it is considered the work/action is needed (work that is solely for aesthetic/cosmetic reasons will only be considered in exceptional circumstances);
- Relevance of the work;
- Benefit must be to a number of residents not just one or very few;
- Gain was commensurate with expenditure;
- What is any request has been made to our County Councillor, Kent County Council or Maidstone Joint Transport Board. It is expected that these avenues would be exhausted prior to the Parish Council funding the work.
- Reasons why KCC did not undertake or fund the work.
- Is the work legal and does it meet KCC's guidelines

To help deal with these issues, especially if the request comes from a resident etc. the following form should be completed.

Checklist [found in the form]

Description of work required and why it is needed? Please try to be specific – health and safety improvements, benefit to residents etc. location. Please be precise use house/road names, numbers/names or draw a plan on a separate sheet.

Have you reported the problem to requested that KCC highways undertake an investigation/work? Any information might help the parish council evaluate the project or track down the initial request. YES/NO

Any other supporting information.

Members attention is bought to the Street Maintenance policy included with the agenda as an enclosure.

Introduction.

Members are aware that KCC Highways now appears to only be undertaking work that is deemed safety critical and are unable/refusing to fund work that is not supported by proof e.g. statistics showing several crash/personal injury reports. Borough Councillor Hinder has contact County Councillor Carter about this issue and has suggested a closer working partnership to try to ensure that some projects that the parish council might be willing to fund/part fund are progressed. The aim is to also obtain access to County Councillor Carter's devolved budget.

If County Councillor Carter chooses not to support a project and should the parish council wish to continue alone then it must engage a Traffic Consultant to design the alterations. Proof of local support via either a formal consultation will be required and the alterations costed. The parish will also be required to employ a contractor to implement the changes once approval from KCC is given for the design changes. County Councillor Carter's support would simplify the parish council's involvement and work load.

Currently issues identified to the Environment Committee, either by complaints received, notification from the PCSO etc. are

Reduction in speed limit along Walderslade Woods Road. County Councillor had indicated that he would support a 60 to 50 reduction and undertook discussion with the Police but then a resident contacted him asking for a 40mph speed limit and the work doesn't seem to have progressed.

Yellow lines on Provender Way, at the junctions of the closes to stop cars blocking drop down kerbs and sight lines. The school approached the PCSO to take this up. The school has been approached about sending a letter to the Education Department and getting evidence from the walking school bus but so far this has not happened (last chased 22/11/16).

Safer crossing point on Grove Wood Drive North. A resident contacted the parish council and the County Councillor about this and a petition has been raised but the resident is not yet ready to submit it.

Yellow lines on Grovewood Drive South, to stop commuter parking. KCC Highways referred the parish council to Maidstone BC and they are investigating so this is on the back burner. 18 residents have contacted the parish office about this. The school has been approached about sending a letter to the Education Department and getting evidence from the walking school bus but so far this has not happened (last chased 22/11/16).

Permanent design for the new cycleway and parking provision on Old Chatham Road, Sandling. KCC Highways needs £110,000 but only has £85,000 to do the cycle route, this means that the parking by the residential area will not be properly progressed until other funding streams are located. County Councillor Carter has been approached by Borough Councillor Hinder about funding.

Other issues that are being brought to the Clerk's attention are:

Parking on verges at Grovewood Drive North, Provender Way etc. due to large events at Maidstone Studios.

Request for traffic calming/improvements on Weaving Street.

Drainage/flooding The Street, Boxley.

Possible way forward.

Clerk's observation: The parish council, not just this committee, is struggling to get information and the length of time to take a decision is sometimes disproportionate to the 'problem' being discussed. This is due to many factors but members and staff are often having to go over old ground to refresh their memories as to where they got to etc. and all of this impacts on the meetings and staff time. It is clear, and many members have voiced this, that the situation will get worse with further cutbacks and the parish council may need to do something radical.

INFORMING/EMPOWERING RESIDENTS. A lot of office time is spent dealing with residents who have identified needs but don't know how to approach KCC or the parish council. They often have no understanding of how KCC funding and support for projects have changed in the past 5 years, with the resident often being emotional about an issue it would help to have an agreed leaflet and procedure written down to give to them. This would also ensure that the parish council is operating in an open and accountable way and is being consistent.

PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE. By identifying and working to an agreed and clear procedure, timetable of reviews and deadlines it is hoped the parish council becomes more proactive, effective and efficient, if nothing else it will help focus the work within the office which is bogged down by constantly having to chase for replies etc. and will hopefully ensure a better service to members, meetings and residents.

Members attention is brought to the enclosed Street Maintenance Procedure and form as this could be amended to obtain information if members wish to have a form. An agreed form has proved successful for the Grant Applications made to F&GPC and the Estates Committee.

Brief summary of a possible procedure.

Currently some decisions take an inordinate amount of time to discuss and debate and the aim is to try streamline the procedure.

A (rough) 6 month timeline/deadline for dealing with an issue with identified times for: an early decision on whether the request is feasible and reasonable; an agreement of a concise statement giving reasons for undertaking the project; reviews on the information received/missing and a periodic reviews of whether the project is still realistic. After 6 months, unless the Committee has clear reasons why the review deadline should be extended, there will be an automatic recommendation that there be **no further action**. Should the no further action decision be taken then Standing Orders about revisiting a decision would need to be met to reopen the project. A flowchart of the procedure is attached.

Realistic intervention and identification of projects.

Currently the Environment Committee often makes reactionary rather than proactive decisions. Issues are often emotive and residents can be very persistent. With the dramatic scale back in work by Local Authorities more residents are looking to parish councils to resolve issues. In the Clerk's opinion is sometimes seems that the committee and parish office are not in control or effectively managing issues but are being driven/thwarted by outside sources.

..... New procedure/policy also(possibly the basis of an information leaflet).

Title? [an obvious title may become apparent during discussion].

Identification of and Procedure for considering project.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that requests for parish council involvement/funding are processed in an open and accountable way and that they are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

By identifying a meeting/decision/review timescale it is hoped to focus resources to obtain a decision in a reasonable time. Ultimately decisions made by the Parish Council/Environment Committee may not be to the liking of residents however if they are taken in an open and accountable way the reason for a refusal to undertake/fund a project will be clear.

Clerk's note: A number of questions arise from the draft procedure:

- 1. Do members only wish for something to go on the agenda if the resident/councillor has already made a complaint, if possible, to the relevant authority?**
- 2. Do members wish to have a statement included that the Environment Committee expects residents or councillors to take a part in gathering information on local views prior to the request being submitted to level 2?** Reason: it is sometimes difficult to gauge whether this is one person complaining or if it is a community issue.

Start of process

Project/issue/problem notified to office or identified at a meeting

- A councillor or resident is asked to give basic information and the issue is deferred to the next meeting.

Level 1

Meeting 1 (deadline for decision/review process starts)

- Information is presented to members who then decide:
 1. Whether to proceed with further investigation or whether to take no further action,
 2. If proceeding what other information they may need,
 3. What guidance they give to the resident/councillor e.g. keeping of a log of the problem, canvassing neighbours etc.

Level 2

Meetings 2-3

- Submission of a briefing note to the committee containing details on: health and safety, options, legal situation etc.
- Members decide:
 1. Who actually benefits from the project.
 2. If it is feasible/practical to action and whether there should be any further consideration/investigation. Past history of trying to resolve similar issues, KCC policy etc. will influence this decision.
 3. Clear identification that this is something the parish council should become involved in e.g. the reasonable rule. Members of the Environment Committee should be able to produce a clear and concise statement identifying the reasons why the parish council should consider funding the work. Failure to be able to do this would identify why there might be a decision to take no further action (Committee being open and accountable).
 4. Is local support identified or does there need to be further investigation?
 5. What is the response from other local authorities responsible for the work but due to lack of funds or other reason are not undertaking it?
 6. The legal implications.
 7. Financial implications including on-going costs, possibility of external funding in the way of a grant.

Level 3.

Meeting 3 or 4

•If at level 3 there is still no clear project or insufficient information to allow progress to the next level then members should consider:

1. Whether a review of the feasibility of the project taking place is needed,
2. The need to identify a new timeline for a review or a cut off point for consideration.
3. Identifying an escalation process and whether to make a formal complaint to the authority about the lack of response to inquiries etc.

•**Reason: to identify a clear procedure to stop projects dragging on, tying up committee and office time.**

Level 4.

Meeting 4 or 5

•If the Environment Committee fails to meet the deadline it has set to progress the project then unless there are clearly identifiable reasons why the project should not be dropped then there will be an automatic **no further action decision**.

Level 5

Meeting 5 or 6

• apply to the parish council for permission, in principle and subject to further cost details being submitted, to allocate funding from reserves or through an increase in the precept.

Level 6

- the parish council takes the decision.
 - The Committee agrees an action plan to progress the project, to obyaion costs and relevant permissions.
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Item 10 Section 106 wishlist - DECISION

Clerk's suggestion: The Environment Committee has produced this document which it regularly reviews and at least once a year supplies to MBC planning. Whilst there have been some minor successes in influencing/reacting to planning and highway issues it is suggested that members may now wish to consider becoming more proactive in its use of this document.

The Environment Committee could choose to highlight one item on its wish list, preferably one that is potentially achievable, and work towards a positive outcome by raising the issue and putting pressure on the relevant department/council to have the issue investigated.

It is not suggested that the parish council axes this document but currently it is not clear what it really achieves in the present format.

Boxley Parish Council 106 wish list	Lead responsibility	complexity and impact	impact	prospects	When idea first tabled	Date obj completed
Grove Green and surrounds						
Groveswood Drive/New Cut junction improvements	Kent Highways	serious traffic management changes	large on traffic flows	Poor because costly		
Improve TV Studio Roundabout design	Kent Highways	serious traffic management changes	large on traffic flows	Poor because costly		
Improve TV Studio Roundabout design by road markings	Kent Highways	Simple white lining	large on traffic flows	Good		
Improve width of Groveswood Drive and install pedestrian refuges	Kent Highways	major changes path and road designs	encourages pedestrians	Poor because costly		
VVPT always looking for funding of projects	VVPT Trust	Various high to low cost	interest groups mainly	Good		
Anything on road design to alleviate congestion	Kent Highways	Various high to low cost	large on traffic flows	Poor because costly		
Contributions to play areas (new and existing)	MBC and Boxley PC	Various high to low cost	Family activity and exercise	Low for MBC High for PC. MBC Blue and Green Infrastructure policy is likely to see removal of small areas and Shepherd's Gate Drive play area with a replacement all aged facility at Groveswood Drive North.		

Community facilities for young people	MBC and Boxley PC	could be simple on open spaces	Young people seen as creating ASB	Low, Consultation always throws up objections. Some provision may be provided at the new area planned for Grovewood Drive North.		
Improve Weaving Street for pedestrians	Kent Highways	serious traffic management changes	Safety and traffic flows	Poor because costly		
Walderslade/Lordswood						
Missing footways around Impton Lane	Kent Highways	Ransom Strips exist leading to high cost	Safety and pedestrianisation	Poor because costly		
Roundwood project and facilities therein	KCC	evolving project, complex but supported	Positioned as a key community opportunity	Good but a really complex relationship with KCC		Village Green status-01/13.
Community facilities for young people	MBC and Boxley PC	could be simple on open spaces	Area has only small children facilities	Land in short supply. Adult recreation takes up space. MBC refurbished Timber Tops so slightly more provision but still a need for more.		TT refurbished 2016
Speed reduction Wald Wds Rd	Kent Highways	major - traffic islands needed	Safety	2016 County Councillor Carter approached to fund a reduction 60 to 50 mph		Islands in Jan 2013

Westfield Sole Road improvements for traffic flow	Kent Highways	serious traffic management changes	a black spot for potential accidents -a rat run	Low but woodland land adjoins this road. Could be land allocated for development		
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Other

Land for recreational use at Boxley and Sandling and further allotments	Landowners but Rochester Bridge Wardens key	Needs to be close to communities	Family activity and exercise	medium		DH Allotments opened 03/2014.
School improvements of facilities	School Governors and KCC	Could be simple projects	schools key to creating life paths for children	Good if politically acceptable		2013 St J's Expanded to double the previous intake
Dual Carriageway road by Maidstone Crematorium	Kent Highways	serious traffic management changes	large on traffic flows	Future development of KIMS site may trigger this		
Roundabout names	Kent Highways	Could be simple	key landmarking of community areas	Good if Kent Highways have the will But despite reminders appear not to take on board this request.		
Passing places on narrow lanes in the Parish	Kent Highways	Land purchases and civil works involved	a black spot for potential accidents -a rat run	Poor. Sat Navs and rat runs in a growing community		

Item 13 Matters for Information - INFORMATION

(e-mail from KALC 05/12/16) Kent Minerals and Waste Sites Plans. KCC is commencing work on the preparation of 2 spatial sites plans, which is a key part of the plan making process and will allocate sites suitable for minerals and waste development in Kent, and has issued the following:

- A Call for Sites
- A consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how and when communities can most effectively get involved with the town and country planning issues that concern them. As well as the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, it sets out opportunities for getting involved with the planning applications the County Council determines.
- A consultation on the Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which offers guidance on how to proceed with planning applications which have minerals and/or waste safeguarding implications

The deadline for site submissions and the SCI and SPD consultations is 17:00pm 30th January 2017. Please respond direct to KCC as outlined in the e-mail below and the attachment.

Clerk's note: Unless members indicate otherwise this information will just be noted.