



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 Estates Committee on **Tuesday 14 June 2016** at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

Members are required to declare any interests, requests for dispensation, lobbying or changes to the Register of Interests.

2. Apologies and absence.

To receive apologies for absence.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 12 April 2016.

To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (previously circulated).

To adjourn the meeting to allow the public or press to comment

4. Matters Arising From Previous Minutes

4.1 Minute 2825/4.2 Listed Tombs St Mary All Saints Graveyard. The Parochial Church Council would like to work with the Parish Council and the Clerk is investigating external funding and the legal requirements. Due to the volume of work within the office the clerk is unable and cannot predict when she will be able to undertake this work. The assistant clerk is now preparing to undertake an informal survey and photographs of individual tombs and will be brought back to the agenda as and when this information is available.

4.2 Minute 2825/7.1 Burial Ground Internments (change to regulations). The Church is asking for a meeting with the parish office just to clarify some minor details a verbal update will be supplied to the meeting.

4.3 Any other matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda.

5. Dove Hill Allotments

5.1 Cllr Bob Hinder's Allotment report. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

5.2 Pest Purge report (page 3)

5.3 Allotment Fees (pages 3-4)

5.4 Allotment Working Group (page 4)

6. Burial Ground

6.1 To receive information on recent damage to a headstone, see report (pages 4-5)

6.2 To consider whether row L should be used in the burial ground, see report (page....) and enclosure (included for committee members available on request to other members).

7. Installation of Beechen Hall Noticeboard

Update see page 5.

8. Matters for Information

None at the time of compiling this agenda.

Ten minute comfort break (if wanted).

9. Assistant Clerk's Report

- 9.1 To receive hire fees income, see report (page 5).
- 9.2 Account balances see report (page 5).
- 9.3 Income and Expenditure see report (pages 6 - 8).
- 9.4 Accident Report. None at the time of compiling the agenda.

10. Beechen Hall Extension

Members are asked to consider whether they would like to make a recommendation to F& GP to proceed with the extension of the committee room. (page 9)

11. Policies and Procedures

- 11.1 Staff pay rise and any need to amend hours. (pages 9-10)
- 11.2 Village Hall Grant Policy – annual review. (pages 11-12)
- 11.3 Review training needs. The Clerk & Assistant Clerk are attending an H & S training course in June.

12. Matters for Decision

Box Trees, Boxley Green A request has been received from Cllr Lyn Clarke stating that these trees are looking stressed and could do with either being planted in the ground or in new planters, she has also indicated that the Boxley Society would be willing to take over the future maintenance of the trees ie watering etc.

13. Date of Next Meeting.

Tuesday 9 August 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 1 June 2016.

Pauline Bowdery

Pauline Bowdery
Clerk to the Council

Date 6 June 2016

Note to all councillors: you are welcome to attend meetings of committees of which you are not a member but only committee members may vote.

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 Agenda at a later date.

**REPORTS AND ITEMS RELATING TO THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING
14 June 2016.**

The Chairman will assume that these have been read prior to the meeting.

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

Item 5. Dove Hill Allotments. – *for information and decision.*

5.1 Bob Hinder's Allotment Report May 2016. FOR INFORMATION

A verbal update will be given at meeting.

5.2 Pest Purge Report. FOR INFORMATION

Dove Hill Allotments – Pest Activity Report
Period April 2016-May 2016

Rats:

16 bait stations remain on site, 14 of them with a nontoxic bait to monitor rodent activity; the attractant being used is Nara Bloc – Meat and Fish. (These are rubber blocks which smell strongly of these food types, and are regularly checked for signs of nibbling which would indicate that rodents are active). Two of the bait stations have been baited with rodenticide as I was asked to investigate some rat droppings found at one of the plots and some holes at another. At the first plot where the droppings were found rodent activity has ceased. The rodenticide has now been removed. The other plot is still being baited nearby at the present time as a preventative measure.

All the plot holders I have spoken with indicate that there has been very minimal pest activity, apart from the odd mouse hole being found occasionally.

No rats were seen during an evening shooting session on 23-5-16

Rabbits:

The rabbit shooting is confined to within the perimeter of the allotments; no rabbits were seen or shot on 23-5-16 within the perimeter. On walking towards the allotments up the track, six rabbits were seen during my visit and four were seen in the field next to the allotments. Should the rabbits in these two areas go unchecked, they may eventually start burrowing in as their numbers increase. At the moment there are no breaches to the perimeter fencing. The Parish Council could approach the owner of the field next to the plots and seek permission for me to shoot rabbits in that field during my visits. (The owner sometimes grazes sheep in there, but this in itself is not a problem as I am used to shooting rabbits on land where sheep are regularly grazed.) The next shooting session will take place in July 2016.

5.3 Allotment Fees – Review. This item was deferred from the December meeting to allow members to review the charges and decide whether to increase or let them remain at their present rate.

As at 1/06/16

Allotment fees Comparison				
Council	Size	Cost	Includes water?	Notes
NSALG guidance				States that the average rent for a 10 pole plot is from £35 - £150 or £2.50 - £15 per pole. Clerk comment : BPC has half (125 sq m/5 poles or rods) or quarter (62.5 sq m/2.5 poles or rods) plots
Boxley Parish Council	Half Plot	£30.00	Yes	£15.00 returnable key deposit
Maidstone Borough Council	Half plot	£16.00 With water £21.00	Yes (£5 extra)	£20 (returnable) key deposit. Clerk note: NSALG states that asking for a key deposit is illegal.
Medway Council	Half plot	£25.28	Yes	
Paddock Wood Parish Council	Half plot	£7.50	Don't know	50% discount for OAPs
Ditton Parish Council	Half plot	£7.70	Yes	50 pence discount for OAPs. Cost also includes one rubbish skip per annum
Aylesford Parish Council	Half plot	£18.75	Yes	
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Half Plot	£42.40	Yes	
Thanet District Council	Per 25sq m perch	Half plot £27.18	No	Using this 'perch' calculation a half plot would be £22 however Thanet has a minimum charge of £27.18.
Swale Borough Council	Plot Half plot	£34.00 £17.00	Don't know	OAP/disabled concession 50%
Chelmsford Borough Council	Half plot	£15	No	£7.50 for concessions
Dover Town Council	Plot Half plot	£29 - £66 £14.50 - £33 TBC		Price range reflects the different facilities available – for instance some plots will pay extra for water.
Ashford District Council	Half plot	*£27.50	Yes	Prices are rising to £30.00 from October 2016

5.4 Allotment Working Group. Cllr Lynn Clarke has asked to join the working group committee.

6. Burial Ground

Item 6.1 Members are informed that a grounds maintenance machine recently damaged a headstone in the burial ground. The family were informed and apologies were given for the distress caused. Arrangements currently being made to undertake a site visits member of the family and the stonemason insurance claim can be made against Landscape services. An update at the meeting.

Item 6.2 Some years ago Row L in the burial ground was removed from the burial plot plan, by the then Church Liaison person. This decision was taken due to the problems in digging the graves, damage to tree roots, a nettle bank and over hanging branches from the neighbouring trees. The neighbouring bank used to be full of nettles and whilst this is now under control the original lack of burials in row L meant that there was an informal path down that side of the burials, although a person might need to duck under some branches. Row L is very close to the boundary, see photographs and a plot burial plan is included as an enclosure.

Unfortunately, it appears that the church supplied the current liaison officer with an old plot plan and there has been a burial in L1. Should members wish to continue using row L then it would require a review of the situation regarding overhanging branches, an investigation as to whether the trees are covered by TPOs, identification and discussion with the landowner and it is likely that the parish council would have to pay for any work that it considers is needed. Whilst there are a couple of small trees on the bank, and within the parish council's land, the majority of the overhang will come from trees outside the boundary. The trees are outside the Boxley Village Conservation Area. Members who are able may wish to undertake a site visit before the meeting and the office will undertake a site visit to identify the trees and obtain more up to date photographs for the meeting.

7. Installation of Beechen Hall Noticeboard – DECISION.

KCC has advised the parish council that as there are utilities under the verge it was not advisable to dig there. This was known by the office and arrangements would have been made to hand dig the holes and a cat scan was undertaken last year so the whereabouts of electricity cables have been noted. KCC have now confirmed that there would be no fees for installing the noticeboard, however it has stipulated that it will need to be placed further back on the verge and possibly out of the sightline of motorists and passers-by. They have also indicated that because of recent complaint by the council regarding illegal signage along the verges surrounding Roundwood roundabout that planning permission may be applicable for this sign. The assistant clerk is currently liaising with MBC to determine this.

Item 9. Assistant Clerks Report – INFORMATION.

9.1 **Hire Fees** - To receive Hall Hire Fees for April/May with a comparison at the same point in the previous year.

	2016/2017	2015/2016
Casual	£2,809.00	(£3,208.63)
Regular	<u>£6,485.00</u>	<u>(£4,539.58)</u>
Total	£9,294.00	(£7,748.21)

9.2 Loss of Regular Hirer. Age Concern have, rather reluctantly, closed their Friday session at the hall due to lack of attendance and despite lots of advertising. They will still continue with the Wednesday hire, however that leaves a vacant slot in the diary. The office will be seeking invitations from prospective hirers/clubs to contact us with their preferences.

9.3 **Account Balances –**

**HSBC- as at 31 May (2016)
Beechen Hall**

Account Balances as per bank statement at 31 May 2016

Current Account	£26,339.19
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9.3 **Income and Expenditure report.**

Boxley Parish Council
Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/05/2016
Estates Committee
Report

Month No : 2

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Funds Available	% of Budget
<u>220</u> Burial Ground						
4045 Subscriptions	0	90	92	2	2	97.80%
4420 Admin Fee	0	0	250	0	250	0.00%
Burial Ground :- Expenditure	0	90	342	252	252	26.30%
1200 Burials	274	390	750	-360		52.00%
Burial Ground :- Income	274	390	750	-360		52.00%
Net Expenditure over Income	-274	-300	-408	-108		
<u>230</u> Green Spaces						
4400 Maintenance	29	65	2,700	2,635	2,635	2.40%
4450 Boxley Village Green	0	0	10,000	10000	10000	0.00%
4460 WDJ Orchard	0	0	1300	1300	1300	0.00%
Green Spaces :- Expenditure	29	65	14,000	13,935	13,935	0.50%
Net Expenditure over Income	29	65	14,000	13,935		
<u>240</u> Grounds Maintenance						
4500 Grounds Maintenance Contract	0	0	6,361	6,361	6,361	0.00%
4505 Roundabout Maintenance	0	0	306	306	308	0.00%
Grounds Maintenance :- Expenditure	0	0	6,667	6,667	6,667	0.00%
Net Expenditure over Income	0	0	6,667	6,667		

250	Street Furniture						
4550	Noticeboards	0	0	2,100	2,100	2,100	0.00%
4555	Seats	0	0	500	500	500	0.00%
	Street Furniture :- Expenditure	0	0	2,600	2,600	2,600	0.00%
	Net Expenditure over Income	0	0	2,600	2,600		
260	Beechen Hall						
4001	Wages	1,713	3,185	20,529	17,344	17,344	15.50%
4005	PAYE	197	393	2,496	2103	2103	15.70%
4010	Pensions	64	42	248	206	206	16.80%
4020	Administration	0	0	366	366	366	0.00%
4025	Audit	0	-200	328	528	528	-61.00%
4035	Rates	382	765	3,819	3054	3054	20.00%
4040	Licences/Leases	0	217	582	365	365	37.30%
4105	Insurance	0	0	1,082	1082	1082	0.00%
4210	Contingency Fund	0	0	6,000	6,000	6,000	0.00%
4605	CCTV/Alarms Maintenance	0	0	956	956	956	0.00%
4610	Consumables	0	26	914	888	888	2.90%
4615	Electricity	0	0	2,080	2080	2080	0.00%
4620	Gas	0	0	1,130	1,130	1,130	0.00%
4625	Water	0	0	969	969	969	0.00%
4630	Electrical Safety	0	0	400	400	400	0.00%
4635	Fire Safety	0	0	254	254	254	0.00%
4640	Gas Maintenance	0	0	257	257	257	0.00%
4645	Ground Maintenance	48	48	594	546	546	8.10%
4650	Hall Maintenance	30	196	2,700	2,504	2,504	7.30%
4655	Hall Marketing	0	0	125	125	125	0.00%
4660	Refuse Collections	100	100	1,347	1247	1247	7.40%
	Beechen Hall :- Expenditure	2,532	4,772	47,176	42,404	42,404	10.10%
1230	Hire Fees Casual	1,216	2,809	16,400	-13,591		17.10%

1231	PL Insurance Income	12	32	220	-188		14.50%
1235	Hire Fees Regular	2,425	6,485	31,775	-25,290		20.40%
1250	Wages - AEC	0	0	460	-460		0.00%
	Beechen Hall :- Income	3,654	9,327	48,855	-39,528		19.10%
	Net Expenditure over Income	-3,047	-6,481	-1,679	4,802		
270	<u>Beechen Hall projects</u>						
4550	Noticeboards	0	0	1,250	1,250	1,250	0.00%
4705	Internal Decoration	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.00%
	External						
4710	Decoration	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.00%
	Beechen Hall projects :-						
	Expenditure	0	0	3,250	3,250	3,250	0.00%
	Net Expenditure over Income	0	0	3,250	3,250		
280	<u>Allotments</u>						
4020	Administration	0	0	80	80	80	0.00%
4105	Insurance	0	0	276	276	276	0.00%
4400	Maintenance	190	190	1600	1410	1410	11.90%
	Allotments :- Expenditure	190	190	1,956	1766	1766	9.70%
1280	Allotment Income	0	0	1009	-1009		0.00%
	Allotments :- Income	0	1,006	960	46		104.80%
	Net Expenditure over Income	190	190	947	757		
	Estates :- Expenditure	2,751	5,117	75,991	70,875	70,875	6.70%
	Income	3,928	9,717	50,614	-40,897		19.20%
	Net Expenditure over Income	-1,177	-4,600	25,377	29,977		

Item 10 Beechen Hall Extension – PURPOSE OF ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION

Members have received a comprehensive report which has been produced by the office and Councillor Dengate. Further amendments were made to the cost analysis from April’s meeting, which has been forwarded to members. The purpose of the report is for members to consider and make an informed decision based on the information contained within the report on what further action to take and whether to make a recommendation to F & GP committee and ultimately the Parish Council to proceed with the proposed extension.

Item 11 Policies & Procedures – PURPOSE OF ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION

11.1 Staff pay rises and any need to amend hours. Members requested this item was brought back to the June agenda.

In June 2015 the committee decided

Minute. This item was brought forward to follow item 7 whilst the Clerk was still present to answer any questions. Members considered the spreadsheet detailing the financial impact of creating and maintaining a pay buffer zone between the minimum wage and actual staff pay.

After consideration it was unanimously **agreed** that in the first year a 5% buffer zone and the second year a 7.5% buffer zone is implemented. At this point Cllr Vic Davies left the room as he had declared an interest and the remaining councillors unanimously **agreed** to a 3% buffer zone in the first year and 5% buffer zone in the second year for the WDJ Litter Picker. In both cases the first year’s increase will be backdated to 1 April, 2015. **Action Clerk.**

Since this decision, and effective from 1 April there is a National Wage which matches the basic hourly rate paid to the caretakers and so the planned 7.5% buffer zone has disappeared. The tables below show what the buffer zones would be based on the current rate of pay and minimum living wage.

*Member’s identified that whilst they aspired to paying a living wage it currently was not felt possible to do so. It was **agreed** that the next meeting would give consideration to creating and maintaining a buffer between the minimum wage and the actual pay. Members’ indicated that they would wish any agreement to be back dated to 1 April 2015.*

Currently the National living Wage as it is now known is £7.20 per hour.

The Enhanced rate was traditionally time and a half of basic rate but it is now slightly higher than this. The current difference between minimum wage and enhanced rate is approximately 65%.

Members asked for options on the financial impact of different buffer zones.

Table 1	Buffer Zone Options			
Current Basic Pay rate Caretakers	Minimum wage	5%	7.5%	10%
£7.20 (Basic)	7.20	7.56	7.74	7.92

The following figures are based on retaining the 65% difference between the current basic and enhanced rates of pay.

Table 2
Current Enhanced Pay Rate Caretakers
£11.62 (Enhanced)

	Buffer Zone Options		
	5%	7.5%	10%
	12.20	12.49	12.78

The parish council also employs a litter picker and they are paid at a lower rate than the Caretakers.

Members will need to consider whether the responsibilities of the position are comparable to that of the Caretaker. *Clerk's opinion: the two roles are not comparable.* If members consider that they do wish to operate a similar buffer zone then table 1 is relevant.

If however they wish to consider a lower percentage of buffer zone options then these are presented below.

Table 3
Current Pay Rates Litter Picker
£7.20

	% options above minimum wage		
Minimum wage	3%	5%	7.5%
7.20	7.42	7.56	7.74

10.2 Village Hall Grant Policy to review

Estates Committee

Village/Community Hall Grants Procedure/Policy

In order to work prudently, obtain 'best value' and to be a responsible grant provider Boxley Parish Council's Estates Committee is setting a standard for considering and awarding grants to Village/Community Halls. Whilst the Parish Council wishes to continue to actively support the Village/Community Halls within the Parish it feels that it is essential to require applicants to meet a minimum standard covering project planning and supply of information. By undertaking this work the Parish Council can plan with Village/Community Halls adequate funding in advance of the project being committed to.

Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organisation for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be "in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it" and "the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure." Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

Boxley Parish Council policy is that

- Grants for maintenance will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as it considers that the day to day maintenance of the hall should be covered by the hire fees or fund raising.
- Village/Community Hall Management Committees will be required to show, for large scale projects costing over £3,000 that it is applying for funding from other sources; has undertaken fund raising events or has been saving towards the project. The Parish Council will be happy to assist the Committee to identify other funding sources.

- The Parish Council will only award up to 80% of the cost for essential repairs or renewals (e.g. windows, fire doors etc).
- For projects costing £3,000 - £10,000 the Parish Council would require the Management Committee to obtain 3 written quotations and for projects costing over £10,000, 5 written quotations should be obtained. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process.
- VH Management Committees will be required to liaise closely with the Parish Office so where possible the Parish Council can order the work and gift it to the Village Hall which will enable VAT to be reclaimed. This will increase the value of the grant given to the hall by the rate of VAT.
- Unless a schedule of payments has been agreed in advance by the Parish Council funds will only be released on completion of the work
- It would be advantageous to notify the Council if the VH Committee has undertaken any other projects in the recent past.

The Parish Council recognises that most halls are run by volunteers and will be happy to assist/advise VHMCs on how to meet these standards.

At the Estates Committee meeting in October or December the Committee will consider individual grant requests from Village/Community Hall Management Committees for specific projects in the following financial year so that provision can be made in the budget recommendation to the Parish Council.

An additional budget will also be identified from which other grant requests will be allocated in the current financial year. A maximum award of £500 for such unplanned applications will be considered. Once the additional budget is exhausted only emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations where the Parish Council has Custodial Trustee status, will be considered.

All organisations requesting assistance will be required to complete an application form which will include notification of the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Village/Community Hall Management Committees will have to sign that it agrees with the policy or submit details of their own policy. Management Committees should also agree to representatives of the Council being given the right to inspect the work on completion.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance will be requested to submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts.
- Copy of current hire fees with an explanation of any unusual agreements where a group pays less than normal.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can hire the hall.

A grant request, once received in writing, will be considered at the next meeting of the Estates Committee and the Estates Committee reserve the right to inspect the required work before a grant is agreed.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund raising activities.

Successful Applications

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment had been received from Boxley Parish Council.

Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the parish council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user.