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Clerk Mrs Pauline Bowdery Assistant Clerk Mrs Melanie Fooks

AGENDA

To All Members of the Council, Press and Public

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on **Monday 14 November 2016 at the European School of Osteopathy, Boxley Village, ME14 3DZ** commencing at 7:30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

Note: The venue will open at 7.00 pm for councillors and visitors to view information on proposed development in the village.

- 1Apologies 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 4 and 10 October 2016 DECISION** (7.33) To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order to sign as a true record. (pages 3 -6).
- 4. **Pre-application presentation** (7.35) To receive a presentation from the Rochester Bridge Trust Agent on development proposed for land at Forge Lane.

To adjourn to allow members of the public to address the meeting (7.45)

At this point item 8.1 may be taken.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
To receive any updates. See report (pages 3).(8.05)

Planning Applications for Consideration - DECISION (8 To receive and decide on responses to planning applications. See reports (page 3-4). 16/507292/OUT Outline Application at Newnham Park, Bearsted Road, Weavering, Kent. 16/507460/FULL Melverley The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DX.

16/507776/OUT Willow Farm Tyland Lane Sandling Kent ME14 3BL

16/507144/TPO 34 Spenlow Drive, Boxley, Kent, ME5 9JT.

16/507566/TPO – TPO 8 Aston Close, Boxley, Kent, ME5 9JW.

7. **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions - INFORMATION** (8:25) To receive any updates.

Highways and Byways - DECISION (8: 8.1 Flooding and the raised cushion outside of Kings Arms, Boxley Village. Cllr Clarke to

- report back on discussions she has had with residents, see item 5.5.
- 8.2 MBC dog bin removal programme. To consider any deferral from the parish council or further information from MBC.

(8:26)

(8.15)

- 8.3 TPO Cowbeck Wood Gleaming Wood Drive. MBC has still not progressed this work and have again confirmed that it will only escalate the work if the trees come under imminent threat.
- Westfield Sole Road and Yelsted Lane one way system. See report (page 4). 8.4
- 8.5 Averenches Road. See report (page 4).

10. **Grounds Maintenance - DECISION** (8.48)To decide any further action on the responses received from councillors (10.1) and to consider the option of whether to recommend the employment of a maintenance person (10.2). See report (pages 5-10)

Budget 2017/2018- DECISION 11. To consider the draft budget (already supplied to members). 11.1

11.2 Timber Tops Play area seat and bin. See report (page 4).

Members Reports 12. To receive any additional reports or notification of issues from members. 12.1 KCC Parish Highways Seminar. Cllr Bob Hinder to supply a verbal report.

FoBW report (pages 4-5).

Volunteer Groups - INFORMATION

Matters for Information - INFORMATION 14. To receive information.

15. Next Meeting

13.

Next Environment Committee meeting 12 December 2016 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7:30pm. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 5 December.

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.

16. Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC

To receive a confidential update, see enclosure.

Pauline Bowdery

Pauline Bowdery Clerk to Boxley Parish Council

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: 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.

Date: 7 November 2016

(9.20)

(9.21)

(9.22)

(9.15)

(9.03)

(9.10)

Supporting agenda papers for the Environment Committee Meeting 14 November 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 5. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- 5.1 Minute 2919/4.2 Inconsiderate parking Provender Way. As the parish office has not been able to obtain an update on the possible progress of this work the issue was escalated to Cllr Wendy Hinder.
- 5.2 Minute 2919/4.3 Grovewood Drive South yellow lines. KCC has advised the parish council that as there have been no accidents at the site and due to lack of funds this request will not be progressed unless the County Councillor or parish council pays for the project. MBC Parking was contacted about possible yellow lines and will be undertaking a survey/investigation.
- 5.3 Minute 2919/4.4. Land to the rear of Tesco Grove Green. Work will be undertaken, when time allows, to contact the owners concerning maintenance.
- 5.4 Minute 2919/4.5 Litter/flytipping signs. MBC has taken delivery of the signs which will be placed by the Impton Lane junctions which is the area that is currently most affected by litter.
- 5.5 Minute 2919/4.6 Flooding Boxley Road (near Longwood) and Brownlowe Copse. Response from KCC awaited. KCC chased for a response 05.09.2016 and 28.09.2016. The Maidstone Area Manager is undertaking an investigation and the parish office should receive a response by the 9th November. The Street drains are down to be cleared on 8 November and information on the Cossington Lane drains is awaited.
- 5.6 Minute 2919/4.7 Development Wildfell Close. The planning application will be reported to MBC Planning in either November or December.
- 5.7 Minute 2920/7 Litter picking and flytipping. To consider any issues/decisions raised by the November PC meeting. Community Payback Scheme has indicated that it can undertake work.
- 5.8 Grovewood Drive North Crossing facility. Contact has been made with Tesco about applying for a grant towards the cost.
- 5.9 Minute 2922/13.2 Gibraltar Farm Public Inquiry. MBC responded to the question as to why no MBC officer had attended. MBC were not asked to do so by Medway and as it has no Section 106 requests it was felt that there was no need.
- 5.10 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda.

Item 6 Planning Applications for Consideration - DECISION

16/507292/OUT - Outline Application with access matters sought for development of medical campus comprising up to 98,000 sqm of additional floorspace (including additional hospital facilities, clinics, consultation rooms and a rehabilitation centre (classes C2/D1); education and training facilities with residential accommodation (class C2/D1); keyworker accommodation for nurses and doctors (class C3); pathology laboratories (class B1); business uses (class B1); ancillary retail services (class A1, A2, A3); and up to 116 bed class C2 neuro-rehabilitation accommodation; internal roads and car parks, including car park for residents of Gidds Pond Cottages; hard and soft landscaping including creation of a nature reserve (to renew existing consent 13/1163). KIMS Newnham Park, Bearsted Road, Weavering, Kent. *Deadline for comments – 15 November 2016.*

16/507460/FULL. Erection of a two storey side extension at Melverley The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DX. *Deadline 22 November 2016.*

16/507776/OUT Outline application for demolition of existing commercial structures and erection of 2 no. 3 bedroom bungalows (All Matters Reserved). Willow Farm Tyland Lane Sandling Kent ME14 3BL. Deadline 28 November 2016.

16/507144/TPO – TPO Application – overgrown hornbeam to be pruned back by 40% at 34 Spenlow Drive, Boxley, Kent, ME5 9JT. *Deadline 28 November 2016.*

16/507566/TPO – TPO application to fell 1No Multistem Hornbeam and 1 No Elder to near ground level at 8 Aston Close, Boxley, Kent, ME5 9JW. *Deadline 29 November 2016.*

Item 8 Highways and Byeways- DECISION

8.4 **Westfield Sole Road and Yelsted Lane one way system**. Cllr Wendy Hinder has asked for this to be returned to the agenda for discussion. Members have previously discussed this however no further action was taken.

Clerk's note: should members wish to have this progressed then an early investigation in to what size HGV vehicles access Bredhurst Industrial area might be needed. A one-way system would require vehicles to be able to negotiate the bends and whilst it is likely that any lorry currently accessing the site could, because it has already negotiated the bends at the other end, it might be prudent to undertake an initial investigated. The parish council may wish to consider undertaking surveys on both Westfield Sole Road and Yelsted Lane to obtain usage information.

8.5 **Averenches Road ransom strip.** Thurnham PC was contacted about its decision to look again at purchasing the land and the following response was received.

Thurnham Parish Council was considering buying the road in front of the ransom strip from KCC many years ago and this was put on hold whilst the play area in Peveral Drive was under threat. At our last meeting it was agreed that the PC would review the email's with KCC to see whether they still wished to progress this. The purpose is to protect the road from being opened but nothing has been agreed at present. The ransom strip is owned by the developer but the road in front of it is owned by KCC.

Item 11. Budget 2017/2018 – consideration/DECISION

11.2 Cllr Dengate Timber Tops Play area seats and bins.

Project title or description of project: Timber Tops, Lords Wood Additional Seating to Toddler Play Area.

Quotations for stainless steel seats and benches range from Seat £940 - £1,726

Bench £689-£790

Cost depends on the grade of the stainless steel, it is recommended that grade 304 is used, and the size. It is suggested that members go mid-range.

Steel seats are slightly cheaper.

Project applicant/leader: Cllr Paul Dengate

Clerk's note. If a budget is approved it is suggested that it would progress the project if members consider delegating decision powers to ClIr Dengate and the Clerk/Asst Clerk. Using commonsense anything out of the ordinary would be reported back to the committee.

Item 13 Volunteer Groups - INFORMATION

Report from FoBW.

I thought it might be useful to write a catch up e-mail in an attempt to let everybody know where we are with funding and management plans for Boxley Warren.

Management Plan and Works Plan

- We currently have a management plan for Boxley Warren that has been approved by Natural England though it runs out at the end of next year
- There is also a work plan that was updated less than 12 months ago and approved by the Boxley Warren LNRAC
- An English Woodland Grant Scheme application has also been made which provides a felling licence for the works in the management plan and some limited funding for the works. The status of this is unclear to me.

Funding to carry out the works

There are several possible and confirmed sources of funding available to help implement the management plan and various costs have been submitted by SWS Woodland Services (Steve Wright) to help give indicative costs for carrying out glade clearance, sycamore removal etc. The sources of funding that I am aware of from my conversations with people are:

- Grant from Boxley Parish Council that needs to be spent by the end of the financial year
- Old Chalk New Downs (a KCC project to be funded through HLF) which, if the bid is successful will provide some funding allocated to Boxley Warren. My understanding is that Sally Evans at Mid Kent Downs has been liaising with the KCC person (Denise Roffey).
- National Grid have funding to carry out landscape enhancements around pylons. The entirety of Boxley Warren is within the catchment zone for this project. AONB Units have to apply for this funding and this is being co-ordinated (forgive me if I'm wrong) by Tim Owen at Kent Downs. National Grid have indicated that a collaborative approach would be preferred which in our case would probably mean Boxley Warren (either Parish Council and/or Friends of Boxley Warren), Bredhurst WAG and Mid Kent Downs

Item 10 Grounds Maintenance - DECISION

10.1 The following report, which was submitted to the October Committee meeting has been returned to the agenda after being updated.

KCC's contract for soft landscaping is up for procurement in 2017. Should the parish council wish to add an addition shrub cut at Walderslade then if a decision is taken now KCC would consider changing the cut date for the parish from June/July and September to the end of the year i.e. November. BPC could then undertake a cut at the beginning of the year May/June.

| Q | 11 responses were received. Env Comm 6, PC 5. | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Do you consider that the parish council should undertake additional grounds maintenance? | 7 people said yes, 4 people said no. Comments were made about double taxation and the fact that this responsibility belonged to other local authorities. One of the yes responses commented that they would expect the PC to pursue a rebate or some form of remuneration from the authorities that are responsible for the work. In the Clerk's opinion it is highly unlikely that any form of grant or remuneration will be received from KCC, the majority of the problem areas are KCC responsibility. |
| | | Conclusion: There is a wish for additional maintenance within the parish but also concern about cost and legal implications. |

| 2 | Should any such maintenance be undertaken on private land or footpaths? | The response came out against undertaking any work on private land. 3 people said yes, 6 people said no although there was a comment along the lines of No, unless there were exceptional circumstances. Conclusion: No work should be undertaken on private land. Anyone directly employed could be required to report any overhanging vegetation/encroachment from private land and a letter could be sent from the parish council asking for remedial work. |
|---|--|---|
| 3 | H&S only to keep the footpath/footway clear for safe passage. | 9 persons identified that they would only support maintenance for H&S reason, 1 person said no if highway land. 1 person said yes. Conclusion. Maintenance will only be undertaken if there are demonstrable H&S issues. |
| 4 | Aesthetic reasons? | 3 persons said yes to maintenance for aesthetic reasons, 5 persons said no. Conclusion. Maintenance will only be undertaken if there are demonstrable H&S issues. |
| 5 | Do you agree with 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. | 7 persons said yes, two persons said no, one person said no to any maintenance. 1 person queried how much regular work needs to be done and stated that the PC should start with 'most needed'. Conclusion: Members have indicated that they support this statement and this gives an indication of where any work should be prioritised. |
| 6 | Do you agree with the statement, The parish council will not undertake work on private footpaths or land unless it feels that there is a trip hazard to pedestrians using the adjacent public footway. The parish council will write to property owners, if they are easily identifiable, to ask for the work to be undertaken. The parish council will consider, if the owners cannot be identified, trimming back the intruding vegetation to the boundary line. | 8 persons said yes, 1 person said no, one person said no to any maintenance. A comment made is that work should also be undertaken if there is overhanging vegetation at eye level. Conclusion as members had already identified at Q2 that no maintenance should be undertaken on private land it is felt that this question becomes null and void. H&S issues (low level trip hazards or eye level branches) can be reported to the parish council for a letter to be sent. In 2016 only 1 letter was sent and this was at the instigation of a resident, the parish council should consider how to get residents to report issues. It is suggested that a reminder is placed in the Downs Mail and on the community alert. |
| 7 | Do you wish to use weed killer on road gulleys and footways/paths? | 4 persons said yes, 7 said no. A strong saline solution instead of a week killer was suggested. The negative impact on people, flora and fauna was identified. |

| | | Conclusion. No weed killing by use of a spray will take place. | |
|----|--|--|--|
| 8 | If no would you consider exemptions for footways/paths that are major links to public facilities? | 3 person said yes, 3 people said no. Conclusion. No weed killing by use of a spray will take place. | |
| 9 | Cut back intruding vegetation 15 - 30 cm from the pedestrian footway/path? | 8 persons said yes, 3 persons said no but it was suggested that the cut back should be 60cm. Conclusion: The response to Q9 and Q10, it would appear that if any maintenance does take place it is on footways with a cut 15-30 cm back from the edge. | |
| 10 | Cut back intruding vegetation 15 - 30 cm from the highway? | 4 persons said yes, 4 persons said no but it was suggested that the cut back should be 60cm. | |
| 11 | If maintenance involves shrub beds, do you want a complete additional annual cut of the shrubs to reduce them in size? | 3 persons said yes, 4 persons said no. I person said it depends on the cost. Conclusion: On the present response there is no clear strong support for the suggestion of additional grounds maintenance. | |
| 12 | If maintenance involves grassed areas, such as vision splays, do you want 4-5 additional cuts each year? | 7 persons said no. 1 person said yes. Comment was made that this was a legal requirement for KCC to undertake. Concern about setting a precedent. Conclusion: No grass cutting maintenance to take place. | |
| 13 | Comments received covered. | | |
| | Double taxation, that countryside maintenance of verges is a fairly modern concept, Problem of spiralling costs, escalation of PC involvement and the setting of high expectations from residents. | | |
| | This is necessary maintenance which isn't being done by anyone else. Boxley Road into Boxley Village needs work otherwise it will become an expensive problem. | | |
| | It was suggested that an odd job man be employed and this issue is dealt with below. | | |
| | Maps. | | |
| | Two councillors have identified that all the areas in Walderslade, Boxley Road and all the closes off Boxley Road. | | |
| | Residents have complained about numerous other areas. | | |

10.2 Employment of an odd job person.

The Clerk approached a few parish councils that were known to employ a village caretaker/odd job person. Members specifically asked that Bredhurst PC be approached about this and it has been confirmed that Bredhurst PC does not employ such a person, it brings in contractors as it feels necessary but most of the work is carried out by parish councillors.

As members are aware the Estates Committee is responsible for managing the parish council's

property and as such uses contractors and other people to maintain keep the areas clean.

Of the parish councils contacted most use an odd job person to maintain the parish council property. Only one specifically employs a village caretaker to undertake work, with another one including some minor work within a larger job description. Parish clerks appear to use discretion and occasionally instruct their worker to undertake additional work on KCC land e.g. an additional cut on a vision splay.

Prior to deciding whether to formally consider employing an odd job person to work within the parish, but not on parish council land/property, members must decide what work any such person will be required to do. It would be sensible to identify priorities and if necessary to set up a working group to decide how to progress the situation. Members may wish to start off with one or two priorities and see how things go before including other workloads.

The following is a job description that is a culmination of the information received from parishes. Rather than remove something that might not be relevant, at this point, strikethrough has been used so that members can see what other parishes are doing. Strikethrough is also used to indicate a task that is currently under the remit of the Estates Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE OPERATIVE

Reports to: Clerk

- To inspect all Parish council land and maintain it in a clean and safe condition and ensuring compliance with an agreed schedule for litter and rubbish clearance including glass and dog faeces. Note: this is currently undertaken by two members of staff but could be added should they leave. Estates.
- 2. To regularly inspect all play equipment and safety surfaces and to complete the weekly checklist and report any faults or repairs to the Clerk. Note: this is currently undertaken by two councillors and the Clerk and Asst Clerk but a person can be trained up to do this. Estates.
- 3. Undertaking work from the grass cutting schedule for those areas still undertaken directly by the Parish in accordance with the instructions of the Maintenance and Contracts Supervisor.Estates
- 4. To undertake any necessary general maintenance and repairs on Parish Council land and property including the Parish Office and Garage, and any other areas or land identified by the Clerk Estates
- 5. To undertake any minor construction and repair work of relevant structures and groundworks to a satisfactory standard in accordance with instructions given by the Clerk. Estates
- 6. To work in compliance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation and undertake any necessary training.
- 7. Undertake any other related duties as may be reasonably required from time to time.

Supervisor to the above post. As this job description repeats much of the above any such

sections have been removed.

- 1. Ensuring that the Parish vans, tools and equipment are maintained to the required standard and that the team are equipped with the necessary equipment to undertake the role.
- 2. Undertake any other related duties as may be reasonably required from time to time.

Job description for someone working within a village environment. One parish council (in the Ashford area) specifically employs, or did so last year a village caretaker who is responsible to the Clerk and they supplied the following job description. Another parish employs an odd job person for general tasks around the village, litter picking, clipping back of vegetation etc. and that person is managed (including risk assessments) by a parish councillor.

Village Caretaker (full time, employed by a parish council located between Tenterden and Rye, electorate of 956 [Sandling Village has just over 600], average Band D precept £40.06).

Village caretaker will take a pride in the village environment improve its appearance, safety and efficiency. Caretaker will work cooperatively with several other people and organisations that serve the parish. He or she will be responsible for the following tasks and any other duties as directed by the parish clerk.

General appearance and cleanliness of the village.

- Keeping the village footways on verges free from litter and debris (including leaves) in conjunction with the village tidy person.
- Checking publicly owned litter bins and coordinating waste collection with the borough council.
- Remove public notices on and from lampposts ensuring all loose ends of cable ties are removed, as directed by the parish clerk.
- Reporting all graffiti, removing this with the cleaning kit provided where possible if it occurs on parish own fixtures and fittings.

KCC Highways (through liaison with district highways managers and student).

- Clear gulley grates.
- Dig out blocked gullies.
- Clear verge grips.
- Clear headwall and culver entrances.
- Rod blocked drains, if practical.
- Advise landowners when their ditches need cleaning. Notify district manager when unsuccessful.
- Clear ditches with prior agreement (most will be private).
- Clear and clean dirty sreet furniture signs and bollards.
- Cutback trees and bushes obstructing signs on footways (most will be private).
- Repaint traditional finger and mile posts.
- Additional grass cutting and strimming along pathways and verges*.
- Cutback highway hedging*
- Negotiate with frontages for them to cut back overhanging vegetation and repair highway boundaries. Notify the district manager when unsuccessful.
- Side out footways and paths.
- Paint and repair highway fences.
- Clearing snow and hand salting footways.
- Other tasks agreed by district manager.

* KCC will remain responsible for routine cyclical highway vegetation clearance, cutting and strimming.

Safety inspections and cleaning of the play area and outdoor fitness area in the village. Caretaker responsibilities will exclude all maintenance work in the live carriageway or involving excavation of any kind.

Inspecting the areas weekly for deterioration and safety. Preventing the use of unsafe equipment with the materials provided.

- Reporting any faults/damage/risks to the safety or welfare of residents immediately to the parish clerk. To undertake basic maintenance when necessary and keeping a weekly inspection log.
- Sweeping and keeping the impact surfaces level and clear of contamination, hazards and obstructions.
- Removing litter and dog waste from these areas. Emptying litter bins.
- General cleanliness of the cemetery, churchyard, War Memorial, village green stop
- inspecting footways the bus shelters and other public areas.
- Remain vigilant for any hazards to safe passage by pedestrians around the village on footways and other public land (damage to walls, trip hazards, loose drain covers, rubbish, et cetera.) Acting promptly to resolve the hazard, where possible, reporting at the end of each shift to the parish clerk for follow up action. To highlight, or mitigate, any risk where possible and/or

appropriate.

Clerk's note. The above is Estates Committee responsibility.

Gardening

- General weeding or spraying (subject to acquiring the necessary training and certification) footways, gutters, walls, under noticeboards and public seats.
- Cutting maintaining the grass verges along the roadside and around Ashford Borough Council housing land.

Clerk's note, this job description goes on about the maintenance of the parish council land, how many cuts, weeding of flower beds etc.

General maintenance and occasional seasonal tasks stop

- Daily maintenance checks for the machinery, vehicle and trailer e.g. fuel, oil, water, lights, tyre pressures and any consumable parts.
- Washing and re-staining public seats stop washing/sanitising litter bins and street signage stop painting/treating parish owned fittings. **Estates.**
- Clearing snow from footways in the main thoroughfares in the front the village hall, and gritting them. Estates
- Supporting village events, like the summer fair, in consultation with the clerk.

Odd job person.

The 'cost' of employing a member of staff to undertake small scale maintenance will need to be fully costed and to do these members' will need to decide whether the additional grounds maintenance is going ahead. The following, rough, information will give an indication of the cost areas. * indicates when information has been gathered from another parish council.

Minimum wage (adult over 24) £7.20, the village caretaker (see above) was, at late 2015, paid £9.10 per hour).

Using the minimum wage as a starting point 10 hours per week would equate to staffing costs of $\pm 3,744$, using the $\pm 9.10^*$ figure this would increase to $\pm 4,732$ per annum. A parish council (recently contacted pays, for a 10 hour week approx. $\pm 4,600$ per annum).

Clothing and small pieces of equipment £1,300 -£1,700 per annum*.

Van costs (not including purchase) should the parish council have one will be in the region of £2,450* per annum.

Vauxhall Combo (recent purchase) £9,500, leasing over 5 years could be as cheap as £2400 per annum for five years.

Increased insurance on equipment £50 per annum.

Office time to supervise, check work and undertake health and safety checks on all new jobs. KCC calculates this as a minimum of 12% on top of all costs +£1226.

A very rough sub total for 10 hours at minimum wage - £11,440 per annum.

Waste disposal?

Vehicle and equipment storage

Training?