



BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL
www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent. ME5 9RU
☎ 01634 861237 ☉ clerk@boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

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 March 2016 at Weaving Village Hall, Weaving Street ME14 5JP** 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 25 January 2016
To consider the minutes and if in order sign as a true record (pages 3-5). | (7.35) |
| 4. Matters Arising From the Minutes
4.1 Minute 2835/4.1 Boxley Warren/Pilgrims Way entrances see report (page 5).
4.2 Minute 2835/4.2 Honour Boards see report (page 5).
4.3 Any other matters arising from the minutes which are not on the agenda. | (7.37) |
| 5. Report from the PCSO and Police Issues
5.1 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.
6.1 Environment Committee meeting 25 January 2016. See report (pages 5-6).
6.2 Environment Committee meeting 8 February 2016. See report (pages 6-9).
6.3 Estates Committee meeting 9 February 2016. See report (pages 9-10). | (7.55) |
| 7. Finance
7.1 Payments made out of meeting 26.01.16 – 29.02.16.
7.1.1 The Cooperative Bank.
7.1.2 HSBC.
7.2 Receipts for the period 19. 01.16 – 29.02.16.
7.2.1 The Cooperative Bank.
7.2.2 HSBC.
7.3 Account balances as at 18.01.16.
7.4 To authorise payment of accounts (list to be supplied at meeting).
7.5 Members are reminded that they should not sign blank cheques or authorisation letters, they need to check invoices against cheques and authorisations when signing and cheque stubs need to be initialised by both signatures. They also need to keep their register of interest updated. | (8.00) |

8. **Financial Regulations** (8.08)
Change to Financial Regulations. See report (pages 14-16).
9. **Changes to Independent External Audit** (8.15)
9.1 Report on changes (page 16).
9.2 To consider the resolution that "**Boxley Parish Council chooses to stay within the Sector-led body procuring audit contract system**".
10. **Policies and Procedures** (8.24)
10.1 Equal Opportunities Statement (review) see report (pages 16-17).
10.2 Terms of Reference for Committees (review) see report (page 17).
10.3 Procedure on Engaging with Residents and Taking Photographs (new). See report (pages 17-18).
11. **Walderslade Woodlands – KCC Licence to Work** (8.28)
To consider a resolution to agree to a KCC licence to work within and manage Walderslade Woodlands. See report (pages 18-19).
12. **Reports from councillors/office** (8.35)
Members/staff who have attended any meeting on behalf of the parish council are invited to give a brief summary.
12.1 Maidstone Local Plan public meeting, 11 February 2016. See report (page 19).
12.2 KALC (Maidstone Committee) meeting, 24 February 2016. See report (page 19-20).
13. **Reports from Borough and County Councillors** (8.39)
Our Ward councillors are invited to report and discuss matters affecting the parish.
14. **Matters for Decision** (8.10)
To consider any issues, such as attendance at meetings or as identified on the evening.
15. **Correspondence** (8.12)
15.1 Thank you letter from Select Committee on National Policy for the Built Environment for responding to the consultation on 'Building Better Places'. The full report is available from the parish office (e-mail 22 .02.2016).
16. **Matters for Information** (8.13)
16.1 Kent Devolution. See report and briefing (page 20).
16.2 Police/Parish Liaison meetings. The quarterly meeting was again cancelled through lack of a clerk/minute taker. Maidstone police are happy to host in Knightrider Street but a volunteer is needed to organise and minute these meetings.
16.3 Post Office Network Transformation Programme Update. A copy of the presentation made to KALC Area Committee has been received. (e-mail 26.02.16).
17. **Next Meeting** (8.15)
4 April 2016 at Tyland Barn, Tyland Lane ME14 3BD commencing at 7.30 pm. Councillors' reports and requests for items to be included on the agenda to be submitted no later than 29 March 2016.

Pauline Bowdery
Clerk to the Council.

Date 1 March 2016

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: General Power of Competence May meeting;
Dispensations May meeting.

**Supporting agenda papers for the Meeting of the Parish Council
Monday 7 March 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 3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Monday 25 January 2016 commencing at 7.30 pm

Councillors present: Mr I Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr V Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr T Harwood, Mr B Hinder, Mr D Hollands and Mr P Sullivan together the Clerk, PCSO Matt Adlington, Ms Y Gordine MBC Parish Liaison Officer, Mrs Clarke and a member of the public/press.

1. Apologies and absences

Cllr Hinchliffe (holiday), Cllr W Hinder (MBC meeting), Cllr Macklin (work commitment), Cllr Spain (previous commitment) and Cllr Waller (previous commitment). Cllr Smith (absent). Borough Councillor Butler (MBC meeting).

2. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

None submitted.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 7 December 2015

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

4. Matters Arising From the Minutes

*4.3 Minute 2807/5.2 Boxley Warren/Pilgrims Way entrance. A request has been sent to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transport Board for the entrance design to be included on the next agenda to allow Cllr Bob Hinder to speak. **Noted.***

*4.4 Honour Boards. Members were informed that two light Oak boards, one to list past Chairman and the other people receiving community awards, would be sourced. **Action: parish office***

5. Report from the PCSO and Police Issues

*5.1 PCSO Matt Adlington gave a report and crime statistics information. **Received and noted.***

*5.2 Parking Enforcement. PCSO Matt Adlington's report that Kent PCSOs and Police were not able to issue civil parking tickets was **noted**. Cllr Dengate expressed concern that there was a lack of Police action on dangerous parking.*

The meeting adjourned at 7.45 pm to allow a member of the public to ask a question about the bollards on Old Chatham Road. It was explained that they will be replaced by KCC with a permanent deterrent, the parish council has asked to be consulted on the design. Meeting reconvened at 7.46 pm.

6. Co-option to casual vacancy (North Ward).

Mrs Lynn Clarke was welcomed to the meeting and invited to address members on her application to be appointed to the vacancy.

*After discussion the Chairman proposed her co-option. **Unanimously agreed**. Cllr Clarke signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.*

7. Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings

*7.1 Environment Committee meeting 7 December 2015. **Received and noted.***

*7.2 Environment Committee meeting 14 December 2015. **Received and noted.***

- 7.3 Estates Committee meeting 15 December 2015. **Received** and **noted**.
- 7.4 Environment Committee meeting 11 January 2016. **Received** and **noted**.
- 7.5 Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting 12 January 2016, with a typing error identified, **received** and **noted**.
- 7.6 Environment Committee meeting 18 January 2016. **Received** and **noted**.

8. **Finance**

- 8.1 Payments made out of meeting 08.12.15 – 18.01.16.
 - 8.1.1 The Cooperative Bank. **Noted**.
 - 8.1.2 HSBC. **Noted**.
- 8.2 Receipts for the period 01.12.15 – 18.01.16.
 - 8.2.1 The Cooperative Bank. **Noted**.
 - 8.2.2 HSBC. **Noted**.
- 8.3 Account balances as at 18.01.16. **Noted**.
- 8.4 Payment of accounts **Authorised**.

9. **2016/2017 Precept and Budget.**

- 9.1 The Chairman's report on the budget and the recommendation that reserves are used to allow a nil increase in the precept was **received** and **noted**.
The Chairman proposed seconded by Cllr Brooks that **"This parish council agrees the 2016/2017 budget and that a precept of £98,481 including local council tax support of £2,062, be set"**. **Unanimously agreed**.
- 9.2 The Chairman and Clerk signed the relevant paperwork to apply for the precept.

10. **Policies and Procedures**

- 10.1 2016/17 review calendar. **Received** and **noted**.

11. **Reports from councillors/office**

None submitted.

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

Cllr Harwood gave details of the draft work schedule for Boxley Warren, the plan to install more ponds, and the excellent work, with the support of Friends of Boxley Warren, that has been undertaken. Cllr Bob Hinder identified the urgent need to resolve the issue of the entrance gate. It was suggested that a letter be sent to the KCC Cabinet Member Cllr Matthew Balfour with a copy to Ward Councillor Paul Carter asking for him to intervene and resolve the issue. **Agreed. Action: Clerk.**

13. **Matters for Decision**

- 13.1 Parish Councillor internal audit. Cllr Clarke volunteered to undertake the audit. **Action: Cllr Clarke and Clerk.**
- 13.2 Lord Lieutenant of Kent's Civic Service Tuesday 15 March. Cllr Bob Hinder to attend. **Action: Cllr Bob Hinder.**
- 13.3 Meeting dates for 2016/2017. **Received** and **noted**.
- 13.4 Changes to the Grove Green Post Office. It was decided that the parish council would advertise the consultation but would not itself comment. **Action: parish office.**
- 13.5 Community involvement. Members considered the feedback from two residents who considered that the publicity for the 18 January Environment Committee meeting was insufficient. Members received information on the numerous methods used: Downs Mail, agenda on noticeboards, community alerts, website and Facebook. The St John's school newsletter will now also be used where possible. Members discussed the venue and problems hearing questions and various suggestions were made to try to improve the next meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

14. **Correspondence**

- 14.1 Thank you message from Mrs Vanessa Jones in response to Chairman's congratulations on the award of her BEM. **Noted**.

15. Matters for Information

15.1 *MBC Parish Liaison Officer. The Chairman welcomed Yasmin Gordine to the meeting and invited her to explain her role. Members asked questions and it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Ms Gordine concerning training opportunities, the Section 106 wish list and other issues that the parish council or office identifies. **Action Clerk and parish office.***

15.2 *MBC Parish Charter. Adopted in September 2015. **Noted.***

15.3 *Change to venue for 8 February 2016 Environment Committee meeting. Now being held at St John's School, Provender Way. **Noted.** Cllr Vic Davies suggested that the venue be changed to Grove Green Community Hall and asked that this be investigated. **Action Clerk.***

16. Next Meeting

7 March 2016 at Weaving Village Hall, Weaving Street ME14 5JP commencing at 7.30 pm.

Meeting closed at 9.18 p.m.

Item 4. Matters arising from the minutes.

Item 4.1 Boxley Warren/Pilgrims Way entrances. Cllr Bob Hinder addressed the MJTB and also attended a site meeting with County Councillor Balfour Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

Report from Cllr Bob Hinder

I attended the MJTB meeting on 22 February and made a statement about the entrance and the need to safeguard the site. I also attended a site meeting with KCC officers and the Cabinet Member Matthew Balfour on 24 Feb. It is apparent that KCC thinks that there is little that can be done about permanently restricting off road users and to be fair they do have a case. It is felt that the only real way to discourage this anti-social behaviour is for the Police to become actively engaged in enforcing the traffic restriction orders by issuing fines and seizing vehicles. I have asked the Clerk to advertise the need for residents to report any bikes or vehicles that they see or hear on the site by ringing 101. KCC recognises that this is important to do but it appears that they have not been reporting the cut off combination locks to the Police although this is criminal damage. I have arranged to receive a supply of combination locks and will myself regularly check whether the gate is secure, broken locks will be reported and KCC is going to approach MBC about putting in a covert camera.

It is hoped to block a path that has been opened up by bikers to the north of the gate and also trim back a tree to improve the vision of the chevron sights at the entrance. KCC has offered to give the volunteer group two warning triangles and it is hoped to now bring the group to work adjacent to the road. Some new bollards have been installed at the A229 end and KCC are looking to put in a Road Traffic Order to stop up the highway thus allowing bollards to be installed closer to, and thus more in view, of the highway.

Item 4.2 Honour Boards. Arrangements are being made to visit the County Archives to locate information on previous chairmen/women.

Item 6 Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings

Item 6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 25th January 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade ME5 9RU commencing at 9.25 pm.

Councillors present: Mr P Dengate (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr B Hinder, Mr D Hollands and together with the Clerk and Cllr Clarke.

1 Apologies and absences

Cllr Hinchliffe (holiday), Cllr Wendy Hinder (MBC meeting) and Cllr Maureen Waller (previous commitment).

2 Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

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

3 Planning Applications for Consideration

15/509438/FULL Erection of a single storey rear extension and retrospective partial conversion of garage at 13 Galena Close, Walderslade. Do not wish to object.

15/510627/ADV Advertisement Consent for No.2 internally illuminated aluminium painted fascia with acrylic Scania letters and logo, No.2 internally illuminated aluminium painted fascia with acrylic Scania Maidstone letters, No. 1 aluminium totem with acrylic Scania text and logo (Internally illuminated text and logo only), No.1 Double sided painted aluminium directional sign with acrylic Scania text and logo and applied vinyl text (Internally illuminated Scania text and logo) at Scania Gb Ltd Brooklyn Park Chatham Road Sandling Kent.

Do not wish to object however wish to express concerns that the 6.5m totem pole (no. 3) is immediately adjacent to the M20 and would cause a distraction to drivers. It is suggested, if permitted, that the lighting reflects that of the motorway so that the illumination is turned off when the motorway lights are. Concerns are also raised about the potential adverse impact on the AONB.

16/500287/TPO - TPO application to 1no multi stemmed Hornbeam, 2no. Hornbeam, 1no. multi stemmed Sweet Chestnut, 1no. Silver Birch, 1no. Willow and 1no. Maple - Crown raise to approx. 6 metres at Orbit Close.

Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

15/508978/FULL Amended details change of use from agricultural land to equestrian use and construction of a 20m x 60m outdoor riding arena at Stone House, Sandy Lane.

No objection to the amendment.

4 Next Meeting

Next full environment meeting 8th February at St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green commencing at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 9.37 pm.

Item 7.2 Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 8 February 2016 St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green commencing at 7.00 pm.

Councillors present: Mrs Wendy Hinder (Chairman), Mr Ivor Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr M Hinchliffe, Mr R Hinder, Mr D Hollands, Mrs M Waller together with the Mr Vic Davies, Ms Clarke, Mr Sullivan, the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Mr Buckwell of DHA and three members of the public.

1 Apologies and absences

Clr Brooks (unwell).

2 Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying

None.

Item 4 was taken at this point.

3 Minutes of the Meetings of 11th, 18th and 25th January 2016

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

4 Development at KIMS Medical Campus

A presentation was received from the applicant's agent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.18 pm to allow members of the public and councillors to ask questions. Issues covered were: parking spaces, light pollution, layout of building, impact on wildlife, landscaping, etc. The meeting reconvened at 7.35pm.

16/500360/REM Approval of Reserved Matters following outline planning permission MA/13/1163 for the erection of a 65-bed hospital, with associated parking and landscaping at Zone 10, Kent Medical Campus, Maidstone (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale being sought). Land South Of Kent Institute Of Medicine And Surgery Newnham Park, Grove Green.
Do not wish to object.

Cllr Clarke was invited to join the meeting as a member of the Environment Committee.

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- 5.1 Minute 2828/4.2 Advertising boards at Roundwood roundabout. These had now been removed. **Noted.**
- 5.2 Minute 2828/4.3 HGV parking. Clerk was requested to continue monitoring and to report back any developments. **Action Clerk.**
- 5.3 Minute 2828/4.4 Installation of hard standing/apron at Boxley Road noticeboard. KALC has been approached again about the prospect of getting KCC to cancel or amend the charge for parish councils to work on its verges. Details of the proposed work have been provided to KCC. **Noted.**
- 5.4 Minute 2828/4.5 Weaving Street Speed Reduction. Clerk was requested to continue monitoring and to report back any developments. **Action Clerk.**
- 5.5 Minute 2828/4.7 Maidstone Enterprise Zone. **No further action.**
- 5.6 Minute 2830/7.2 Inconsiderate parking Provender Way. Funding was not available from KCC and it was **agreed** that the parish council would approach County Cllr Paul Carter for financial support to get lines installed. **Action Clerk.**
- 5.7 Minute 2830/7.4 Old Chalk New Downs Project. Cllr Bob Hinder to attend consultation on 8th March. **Noted.**
- 5.8 Any other matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda. None.

6 **Planning Applications for Consideration.**

16/500303/FULL Single-storey front extension; Rear extension to garage; Alterations to driveway at 41 Timber Tops, Lordswood.
Do not wish to object.

16/500340/FULL Demolition and removal of existing conservatory and erection of single storey side and rear extension incorporating additional living areas with utility room, wet room, study and front porch at 7 Bakery Cottages Chatham Road Sandling.
Do not wish to object.

16/500421/FULL Demolition of existing dwelling and greenhouse, and erection of a replacement dwelling; Part demolition and alterations to existing outbuildings; Re-alignment of existing driveway at Park Croft, The Street, Boxley.
Do not wish to object.

16/500486/FULL erection of a single storey side and rear extension with internal alterations at Hillside, Harbourland Close, Boxley.
Do not wish to object but concern raised about the lack of additional on-site parking.

16/500663/TPO TPO application to 2no. Sycamore - Reduce by 50% and remove deadwood at 7 Bellgrove Court, Walderslade.
Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

MC/15/3781 Construction of a proposed 4 bedroom dwelling with detached garage and associated parking. Land adjacent to 803 Lordswood Lane, Lordswood. Revised design details and positioning of proposed development.
Clerk was asked to investigate previous response and liaise with members. **Action Clerk and councillors.**

15/508305/OUT. Amended details – Phase 1 Ecological Assessment. 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 Rd, Weaving. **Noted.**

16/500783/FULL Two storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory at 15 Travertine Road, Walderslade. **Do not wish to object.**

7 **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions**

MC/14/2395 - Gibraltar Farm, Ham Lane, Hempstead. Gillingham Planning permission refused by Medway Council.

*15/506694 Glenside, Boxley Rd, Walderslade. Conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation. **Permitted.**

The Clerk was asked to investigate whether a wooden structure beside a garage on The Banks had received planning permission. **Action office.**

8 **Highways and Byways**

8.1 Bollards on verge adjacent to Boxley Rd/Travertine Rd junction. Lengthy discussion took place covering: damage to the verge, inconsiderate parking, need to reinstate verge, number of bollards and a different design to stop all parking. The Clerk to investigate an alternative design and also to write to local residents about inconsiderate parking. **Action Clerk and office.**

8.2 Resident petition to have speed reduction and junction improvements on Walderslade Woods Road. Members are notified that, due to the recent crashes, one has been started and details will be supplied to the committee as it develops. **Noted.**

8.3 Resident petition to have speed reduction and traffic calming Lidsing Road. Members are notified that, due to the recent crash, one has been started and details will be supplied to the committee as it develops. **Noted.**

8.4 Parking problems Autumn Glade, Lordswood. Residents are discussing proposals to resolve the parking issues and details will be supplied to the committee as it develops. **Noted.**

8.5 Lower Thames Crossing Route Consultation 2016 – Have Your Say. The Clerk was asked to provide a briefing paper covering the areas relating to a possible knock on effect on the A229 and Walderslade. **Action Clerk.**

9. **NPPF Consultation**

Members **received** and **noted** the briefing note. A parish council response was **agreed.** **Action Clerk.**

10. **KCC Consultation- Making the best use of the Mobile Library Service**

Members **received** and **noted** the briefing note. A parish council response was **agreed.** **Action Clerk.**

11. **Volunteer Groups**

Received and **noted** Cllr Bob Hinder's report on the recent task day and the situation regarding the entrance.

12 **Policy and Procedures**

Inconsiderate parking advice notes, rescheduled to next meeting. **Noted.**

13 **Maidstone Local Plan**

The Local Plan public consultation and the draft Integrated Transport Strategy consultation will run for 6 weeks from 6 February until 18 March and a briefing will be included on the next agenda. Members were advised that a briefing note would be prepared and it was likely that an additional meeting would need to be arranged. **Noted.**

The consultation is to be advertised on the parish council's website with a link to the MBC website. **Action Clerk.**

14 **Matters for Information**

14.1 Annual Planning Conference on Monday 7 March 2016 at Lenham Community Centre. **Noted.**

14.2 Development on land west of Eclipse Park. **Received** and **noted** comments from councillors who had attended the public meeting.

14.3 The Larches, Pilgrims Way. The update on the KCC's inadvertent advertising of the site for disposal was **noted**. Members **agreed** to wait to see what KCC did next.

14.4 Kent Resource Partnership Delivery of letters concerning metal recycling was **noted**.

15 **Next Meeting**

Next Environment Committee meeting 14th March 2016 at Beechen Hall commencing at 7:30 pm.

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

Members were notified that an outstanding enforcement issue was now the subject of a planning application. Members expressed concern that MBC was ignoring planning conditions that it had imposed and encouraging planning applications to gain approval.

The Clerk was asked to seek information on an issue referred to by a planning officer which for which there appears to have been no action.

Meeting closed at 9.13 pm.

Item 7.3 Minutes of the Estates Committee on Tuesday 9 February 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm

Councillors present: Mr Vic Davies (Chairman), Mr Ivor Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr B Hinder and Mr P Sullivan together with the Assistant Clerk & Ms Lynn Clarke.

The Chairman opened the meeting and gave a warm welcome to newly co-opted councillor Ms Lynn Clarke.

1. **Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.**

Dispensation notification for item 5 Allotments received from Cllrs Vic Davies, Ivor Davies and Dengate, Hinder and Sullivan.

2. **Apologies and absence.**

Cllr Smith (absent) and Cllrs Spain and Brooks (convalescing).

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting 11 December 2015.**

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

As there were no public or press present the meeting was not adjourned.

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. The Assistant Clerk confirmed that this would be bought back to April's meeting for decision. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

4.2 Minute 2825/7.1 Burial Ground Internments (change to regulations) **Noted** an update has been requested from Mr Hollands, Chairman Boxley PCC and assurances have been received that it will be with members soon. **Noted.**

4.3 Any other matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda. **None.**

5. **Dove Hill Allotments**

5.1 Cllr Bob Hinder's Allotment report was **received** and **noted**.

5.2 Pest Purge report – was **received** and **noted**.

5.3 *Review of Allotment Rules and Regulations* – Cllr Bob Hinder provided a couple of amendments. It was agreed that the amended version would be sent to plot holders together with a reminder of the following points:

- *Strimming of pathways between plots.*
- *Conservation of water through water butts and installing guttering on any erected sheds.*
- *Disappearance of pegs and plot numbers.*

Cllr Bob Hinder also explained that he had 70 bean sticks which are available to plot holders and can be collected by contacting him on his mobile. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

6. **Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard/Weaving Street .**

6.1 *Safety Barrier* – Members unanimously agreed to proceed with the safety barrier and **received** two quotations, and after discussion members requested that a third quote is sourced. Members also requested that the successful company has sufficient public liability insurance required to carry out this type of work. They also requested that it was the responsibility of the company to check that there are no utilities/cables running under the area. It was **agreed** that quotations would be circulated to members for decision out of meeting. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

7. **Installation of Beechen Hall Noticeboard & Interpretation Board at Impton Lane** –

Members **agreed** not to proceed with the Interpretation Board at Impton Lane. They **received** the costs for proceeding with the noticeboard at Beechen Hall including the possible fee from KCC. The Assistant Clerk informed them that a request for a quotation had been submitted to a local company and would compare this to original quote and feed back to the committee via email. She also confirmed that the quotation together with the fee from KCC was within budget. **Action office.**

8. **Matters for Information**

There were none.

9. **Clerk's Report**

9.1 *Hire fees income.* **Received and noted.**

9.2 *Account balance as at 31 January 2016.* **Received and noted**

9.3 *Income and Expenditure report.* **Received and noted.**

9.4 *Accident Report.* Members **received and noted** a verbal report of an accident that occurred in the office.

10. **Beechen Hall Extension**

Members' **received** the Assistant-Clerk's update. Cllr Dengate explained to members that he had produced an analysis based on hire information provided by the Assistant Clerk for the last 3 years. This enabled him to look at the cost of the extension and the return on the investment and compare that to the return, if the money had been left in a bond or savings account. Further information is required from the Assistant-Clerk and RFO and it was agreed that this would be with the working group by the end of February and ready to be presented to the committee for consideration at the April meeting. **Action office/working group.**

11. **Policies and Procedures**

11.1 *Review of policies and procedure calendar 2016/17.* **Reviewed and amended.**

11.2 *Terms of Reference.* **Reviewed and amended.**

11.3 *Housekeeping policy reviews. Sharps policy, Disposal of hazardous material, hot water boiler risk assessment.* Still fit for purpose **Noted.**

12. **Matters for Decision**

There were none.

13. **Date of Next Meeting.**

Tuesday 12 April, 2016 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda to be received no later than Friday 1 April, 2016.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Item 7.1 Payments made out of meeting 26.01.16 – 29.02.16.
Item 7.1.1 The Cooperative Bank

Printed on : 29/02/2016

Boxley Parish Council

Page No 1

At : 10:26

Co-Op General Account

List of Payments made between 26/01/2016 and 29/02/2016

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
26/01/2016	Unity Trust Account	UTB 1	10,000.00		Opening Balance
06/02/2016	British Telecommunications PLC	3DD22	82.77		Telephone & Broadband Bill
09/02/2016	Mail Publications Ltd	3DD23	490.14		Downs Mail Page
09/02/2016	Capital Cleaning (Kent) Ltd	B000147164	36.60		Sanitary
09/02/2016	GJ & SJ Sands Ltd	B3977	81.60		Emergency Light Replacement
09/02/2016	Pilgrims Way Magazine	B2016/03	25.00		Beechen Hall Advertisement
09/02/2016	Olympic Electrical Supplies	B65989	35.40		Olympic Electrical Supplies
09/02/2016	Society of Local Council Clerk	B118948	82.80		Regional Roadshow
09/02/2016	Dr Chowdrey	C905	125.90		Returned Damage Waiver Deposit
09/02/2016	Mrs Punia	C902	250.00		Returned Damage Waiver Deposit
09/02/2016	Kent County Council	B210124	214.12		Miscellaneous
09/02/2016	B & Q	IMPREST 84	30.81	Rob Burrows	Sundries for lights
09/02/2016	Poultons	IMPREST 84	15.00		Hedge Trimmer Service
09/02/2016	Rob Burrows	IMPREST 84	20.29		Mileage and First Aid supplies
09/02/2016	Maidstone Borough Council	501308	50.00		Land Registry Fee - WDJ0 Lease
09/02/2016	Punia	C902	-250.00		Returned Damage Waiver Deposit
09/02/2016	Punia	C902	103.30		Returned Damage Waiver Deposit
09/02/2016	Punia	C902	-103.30		Ret'd damage waiver deposit
18/02/2016	Mrs M Fooks	DM/FEB/EDI	60.00		Downs Mail Delivery
22/02/2016	Mrs P Bowdery	22/02/PC01	2,133.71		Salary
22/02/2016	Mrs A Candy	22/02/PC03	554.27		Salary
22/02/2016	Mr I Davies	22/02/PC06	41.14		Chairman's allowance
22/02/2016	Mr V Davies	22/02/PC07	33.68		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mr P Dengate	22/02/PC08	25.28		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mrs M Fooks	22/02/PC02	1,234.74		Salary
22/02/2016	Mr T Harwood	22/02/PC09	33.68		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mr R Hinder	22/02/PC10	33.68		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mrs W Hinder	22/02/PC11	33.68		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mrs L Lake	22/02/PC04	40.00		Publicity
22/02/2016	Mrs K Macklin	22/02/PC12	42.08		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mrs M Smith	22/02/BH01	532.68		Wages
22/02/2016	Mrs A Spain/Colney	22/02/PC15	33.68		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mrs M Waller	22/02/PC17	36.48		Councillor Allowance PAYE
22/02/2016	Mr B Douglas	22/02/BH05	214.87		Wages
22/02/2016	Mr D Odell	22/02/BH02	312.71		Wages
22/02/2016	Yuet Juen Tong	22/02/PC05	34.50		Litter picking
22/02/2016	HMRC	577PW00105	1,400.60		PAYE
22/02/2016	EFT Receipts Ac	IT00000068	97.64		Pensions
22/02/2016	Mark Robinson Gas & Heating Se	B337	144.60		Boiler gas service
22/02/2016	KCC (KCS)	B21024	164.80		Administration
22/02/2016	European School of Osteopathy	B16/2/16	80.00		Room hire
22/02/2016	Haynes Bros Ltd	113537	525.73		Tractor repair
22/02/2016	Mrs K L Harris	B840	25.00		Returned hall hire deposit
Total Payments			19,159.66		

7.1.2 HSBC.

Printed on : 29/02/2016

Boxley Parish Council

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At: 10:21

HSBC General Account

List of Payments made between 26/01/2016 and 29/02/2016

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
31/01/2016	SITA UK Ltd	2DD29	139.15		Refuse Collections
09/02/2016	Co-Op General Account	102889	4,113.05		Payments made from Coop A/C
18/02/2016	Mrs Punia	C902	103.30		Returned damage waiver depos
24/02/2016	British Gas	2DD30	473.04		Gas bill
29/02/2016	SITA UK Ltd	2DD31	113.93		Refuse collection
Total Payments			<u>4,942.47</u>		

Item 7.2 Receipts for the period 19. 01.16 – 29.02.16.

7.2.1 The Cooperative Bank.

Printed On : 29/02/2016

Boxley Parish Council

Page No 1

At: 10:30

Co-Op General Account

Cash Received between 26/01/2016 and 29/02/2016

<u>Date</u>	<u>Cash Received from</u>	<u>Receipt No</u>	<u>Receipt Description</u>	<u>Receipt Total</u>
26/01/2016	Allan Highman	59	Allotment Rent + Key Deposit	27.48
26/01/2016	Osifeso	141	Hall Hire Casual	150.00
26/01/2016	Osifeso	141	Hall Hire Casual	-150.00
27/01/2016	HMRC	60	VAT Refund	3,388.18
27/01/2016	M Arnold	63	Tree Stake/Tie1	3.00
05/02/2016	Cooperative Bank	65	Interest	2.94
08/02/2016	Simpson	64	Allotment Key Replacement	15.00
09/02/2016	HSBC General Account		Payments made from Coop A/C	4,113.05
Total Receipts				<u>7,549.65</u>

Item 7.2.2 HSBC.

Printed On : 29/02/2016

Boxley Parish Council

Page No 1

At: 10:57

HSBC General Account**Cash Received between 26/01/0016 and 29/02/2016**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Cash Received from</u>	<u>Receipt No</u>	<u>Receipt Description</u>	<u>Receipt Total</u>
26/01/2016	King	142	Hall Hire Casual	36.15
26/01/2016	Kumon	143	Hall Hire Regular	241.00
26/01/2016	Osifeso	141	Hall Hire Casual	150.00
27/01/2016	NGREA	179	Hall Hire Regular	44.04
27/01/2016	Teenie Boppers	144	Hall Hire Regular	81.20
28/01/2016	Hussain	181	Hall Hire Casual	110.00
28/01/2016	Krauhaus	145	Hall Hire Casual	48.20
28/01/2016	Pilates	180	Hall Hire Regular	129.45
29/01/2016	Balfour Short Mat Bowls	182	Hall Hire Regular	232.75
29/01/2016	LD Training	146	Hall Hire Regular	60.00
30/01/2016	Yoga	147	Hall Hire Regular	232.88
01/02/2016	Adeoye	148	Hall Hire Casual	75.95
02/02/2016	Age Concern	184	Hall Hire regular	599.85
02/02/2016	Chowdrey	183	After Event Clean	30.00
02/02/2016	NCT Stretch & Relax	149	Hall Hire regular	45.68
04/02/2016	Tumbletots	150	Hall Hire Regular	167.48
08/02/2016	Napier	186	Hall Hire Casual	45.00
08/02/2016	Oluwakemi	151	Hall Hire Casual	147.50
08/02/2016	Punia	185	After Event Clean	30.00
09/02/2016	Botha Button	157	Hall Hire Casual	23.50
16/02/2016	Cats Protection	189	Hall Hire regular	18.75
16/02/2016	Karate	188	Hall Hire Regular	333.35
17/02/2016	MS Society	190	Hall Hire Casual	54.25
19/02/2016	Bliss	152	Hall Hire Casual	35.25
22/02/2016	Walderslade FC	191	Hall Hire Casual	88.35
23/02/2016	Aderiye	154	Hall Hire Casual	34.90
23/02/2016	Bliss	192	Public Liability Bliss	2.00
23/02/2016	Garrett	153	Hall Hire Casual	80.00
24/02/2016	NGREA	193	Hall Hire Regular	44.04
25/02/2016	Balfour Short Mat Bowls	194	Hall Hire Regular	275.88
25/02/2016	Pilates	195	Hall Hire Regular	94.85
Total Receipts				<u>3,592.25</u>

Item 7.3 Account closing balances as at 29/02/2016

BANK ACCOUNTS (closing balances)

* Account in process of being opened.

HSBC Beechen Hall	£20,201.85
Unity Trust Bank*	£9,750
Unity Trust ALTO (prepaid debit card)	244.00
Coop General Account	£40,607.58
Santander Investment Bond (matures Aug 2016)	£75,000.00
Barclays Bank	£64,638.25
Lloyds 3 mth (matures 05.05.16)	£50,225.94
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
Total in Banks	
Cash	150.00
GRAND TOTAL (Banks and Cash) 2014 comparison (£355,132.89)	360,817.62

Item 8. Financial Regulations

The NALC Model Financial Regulations have been updated to take into account recent legislation (The Public Contracts Regulations 2015) and the need to clarify some issues. In view of this the RFO recommends that the Parish Council's regulations are similarly updated. As the legislation came into effect on 1 January 2016 the review of the Financial Regulations has been brought forward from the April meeting.

Recommended changes are as follows:

Regulation 5 Principles of Expenditure and Authority to Commit.

Add an additional footnote to paragraph 5.6 referring the reader to regulation 12.

Regulation 6.2, dealing with authorised signatories, add:

A member who is a bank signatory etc., having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question. Authorisation of parish councillor and chairman allowances are, for reasons of practicality, exempt from this regulation.

Regulation 12 (Procurement) to be amended to take into account the new legislation as follows (renumbering of paragraphs will be required):

12.1 – 12.2 are retained.

12.3 Introduction to be amended to read: "Contracts (valued below £25,000) for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be procured as follows: ..." (Sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) are retained; (f) is dropped; and (g)-(i) moved to new paragraph 12.5. Add new 12.4. Contracts (£25,000 or more). The procedures to be followed are as follows:

Add new 12.4. CONTRACTS (above £25,000). Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.
- c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².
- d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.

Add new **12.5. Invitation to Tender and Opening of Tenders**

- a. Invitations to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract for which the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- b. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders 26 and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

Retain 12.3 (g) to (i) but renumber as 12.5 (c)-(e)

Retain 12.4 onwards but renumber as 12.5 (f)

Retain 12.6 as 12.6

Delete 12.7 as now covered in earlier items.

Add new **Regulation 14: Payments Under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works (Public Works Contracts)**

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£164,176)
- b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,104,394)

- a. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- b. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- c. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and notified by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

Renumber old Regulation 14 et seq as 15 etc.

9. Changes to Audit

9.1 RFO report on the changes.

A fuller report will be made to the F&GP Committee but there are a number of key issues that the parish council should be briefed on.

- New Practitioners Guide (for 2015 Regulations). Yet again there is a new guide that the RFO must work to and unfortunately I gather that there is a paragraph numbering change or mistake meaning that the old guide cannot be easily cross referenced to the new guide.
 - New Annual Return (purple). There has been a slight change to the return (previously green boxes) but this should not prove problematical.
 - New public inspection rules. The onus is now on parishes to sort out dates and comply to the regulars. Again this should not be problematical however it may be a lot of extra work for the first year.
- Sector-led body procuring audit contracts. New companies are being appointed and if a parish council does not opt out to have its own audit panel then the default is that it stays in the present system and will be allocated an auditor.

Parish Councils can choose to opt out and appoint own auditor using an independent audit panel but the work and system for doing this (example the independent audit panel must be truly independent, made up of able and competent people etc.) is such that it would not suit nor probably be achievable by the majority of parishes.

The RFO was informed of this change late last year and has learnt that the parish council should have passed a resolution to stay within the system. Due to the default position the parish council does not have to inform anyone that it is opting in.

Item 10. Policies and Procedures

10.1 Equal Opportunities Statement (review)

Present text:

The parish council values diversity and believes that it strengthens our community. The Council is committed to treating everyone fairly and with courtesy and respect. The aim in producing this statement is to ensure that the parish council eliminates discrimination in its own areas of responsibility and promotes anti-discriminatory practices in the wider community. The parish council wishes to create an environment where all forms of discriminatory or oppressive behaviour are unacceptable and every member of the council's workforce and the community is able to develop their full potential. It is recognised that the way in which we treat one another is a crucial element in ensuring that we create the right environment in which people can grow, develop and maximise their contribution.

The council therefore undertakes that:

No service user, employee or job applicant will be discriminated against or receive less favourable treatment on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital

or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation*.

* Terms used are based on the Equality Act 2010 definitions.

Note. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, the Parish Council undertakes an annual review of its obligations to ensure that the services it supplies meets, at a minimum, the legislation.

10.2 Terms of Reference for Committees (review)

Estates Committee. A change to allow up to 10 members is requested. This need has previously been identified but not actually actioned with a change to the ToR.

Item 10.3 Procedure on Engaging with Residents and Taking of Photographs (new)

While it is always sensible to follow the advice contained in "Lobbying and Predetermination", there is a need to have strict procedures and rules for cases where a councillor is dealing with a contentious issue, such as a planning issue or an issue where local emotions are running high. Although on other occasions a lighter touch may be acceptable and indeed welcomed by residents councillors should always be prepared for the worse. This procedure covers both scenarios.

Often councillors living in an area will spot something or be contacted by residents about something happening at a nearby property. A quick chat over a garden fence or knocking on the property owner's door will often yield information that explains what is being done or what is planned.

The ease and success of knocking on someone's door relies on so many factors, including the reason and personal experience, that it has to be left to the individual councillor to decide whether to do so. It should also be acknowledged that in certain circumstances it is easier if you are female and in other circumstances male. Councillors should always be mindful of their own safety and other people's concerns so use common-sense and don't approach someone late at night etc.

If you do approach a resident you will need to explain who you are and that someone had mentioned xxxx and you thought that it would be sensible just to approach them informally to try to understand the situation. The comment that "*there are always two sides to a story*" and "*I've got a bit confused about what is happening*" are generally well-accepted approaches.

You should however be prepared to answer some questions such as:

- 1 Did someone complain?
- 2 Why would the parish council be involved?
- 3 What does a parish council do?

So make sure you are ready to answer or refer them to the parish office/website. Some examples of possible answers to the above questions might help.

- 1 Not really it was just a general comment but it's funny how sometimes a comment makes its way to the parish office and if so I can tell them there is no problem because ... (but never name the complainant, just say that you are not at liberty to say).
- 2 The parish council is a legal consultee and the parish office is often approached about coming to talk to members before an application is submitted.
- 3 If you use a computer, there is a lot of information on our website and the parish council's page in the Downs Mail, which you probably receive, will keep you abreast of current concerns. If you don't have a computer I can drop some information round to you. If there is anything you think the parish council can help you with please contact us, you can even come to a parish council meeting if you wish.

The parish office will happily advise councillors on the options available in a particular situation. If for instance there is a need to request that overhanging vegetation from a private garden is trimmed as it is infringing on a footway a letter can be dropped off.

Photographs can be invaluable to show problems and Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council do ask for them to be submitted, via their websites, when you report issues. Also the parish is a large area and councillors cannot know all the nooks and crannies and so photographs can help 'place' a problem or show a problem to councillors who cannot go and view that particular area or site.

However before taking a photograph it is suggested that you ask yourself the following:

1. Is the photograph likely to infringe on someone's privacy? If for instance it is of flytipped rubbish beside a road then no it doesn't, however if it is of someone's house then it is likely to do so.
2. Do I feel uncomfortable in trying to take the photograph as I feel it might cause a reaction from a property owner or someone around me?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions then perhaps it is not a photograph you should be taking and rather than do so please contact the parish office.

If you have approached a resident about an issue and you want to take a photograph (a picture tells a thousand words) then please do ask them if they mind and tell them it is for information purposes only.

Advice can be sought from the parish office.

Clerk's briefing note (taken from the internet):

Do I need permission before I take someone's photograph?

There are no laws preventing photography of people, children, buildings, objects or anything else in a public place, or in any place open to the public where photography is not expressly prohibited. There is no expectation [in law] of privacy in a public place.

Where or when might it be wrong or illegal to take photographs?

If you take photographs on private land without the knowledge or permission of the landowner you could be charged with trespass, it's both prudent and polite to check it's OK before you start taking pictures. You are not permitted to take photographs on private land where the landowner has expressly prohibited photography. Photography is commonly prohibited in some shopping centres, museums and art galleries, some concerts, and within municipal buildings including courts. If one were to specifically capture an image of individuals engaged in a private act (such as using a long lens to peer into someone's bathroom or bedroom) that is clearly a no-no – nor should you repeatedly bother your subject which may leave you open to legal sanction. It is likewise unacceptable to capture an image for the purpose of defaming your subject(s) and it is an offence to capture an indecent photograph of a minor (the Protection of Children Act 1978).

Common-sense decrees that putting yourself in the position where you might inadvertently be accused of taking a picture of a child without a parent's permission, e.g. in the vicinity of a playground, although not illegal is inadvisable.

Item 11. Walderslade Woodlands – licence to work.

For a number of years the parish office and Walderslade Woodlands Group have been attempting to formalise the maintenance of Walderslade Woods, according to the KWT Management Plan, by WWG.

Approximately 4 years ago KCC suddenly questioned the right of WWG to work in the woods as no formal legal agreement or licence existed.

The lack of a licence, which it has now been identified is what is needed, means that WWG cannot apply for a Forestry Commission Management Plan which would allow access to external funding.

KCC are producing a draft 'licence to work' between them and BPC for members to consider. This will be forwarded to members when received.

The parish council and WWG have also been approached about becoming part of a Local Heritage Lottery grant application, covering 4-5 woods along the Downs, being put together by the Kent Woodland Employment Scheme (KWES), a registered charity, and The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership. More details will be supplied to the parish council should this progress, however in order to be part of this application the maintenance of the woodlands by WWG must first be formalised.

Item 12. Reports from councillors/office

Item 12.1 Maidstone Local Plan public meeting, 11 February 2016. Report by Ivor Davies.

This meeting was arranged by KCC and MBC member Paulina Stockell at the behest, they claimed, of MPs Helen Whately and Helen Grant. They both sat on the top table along with 10 others representing a wide spectrum of views, each of whom was given 3 minutes to set out their wares. BBC Radio Kent's John Warnett chaired admirably what was a lively meeting of some 200 people, despite the intense cold in one of the larger of the Maidstone TV Studios.

The meeting progressed much as expected with MBC coming under attack from all sides for what the majority regarded as an excessive housing need requirement and little else. It was interesting to see Fran Wilson, MBC Leader resolutely defending Rob Jarman (also present) who repeatedly came under attack from the floor, saying it was councillors who make these decisions not officers. This was met with derision. She pointed out that the decision to put out the draft Local Plan to public consultation under Regulation 19 had been decided in council 39-13. Rob himself kept silent throughout the meeting except for explaining the legal position.

Even more interesting was to see the, to me, unexpected and almost universal support for KCC expressed from the floor. Matthew Balfour, cabinet member for Environment & Transport, took it on the chin that the current infrastructure was imperfect but said that it was because of this that MBC's target was unreasonable and unattainable and could be lowered by invoking mitigation arguments.

However, much of the two hours was spent listening to speakers from the floor expressing dissatisfaction with how their particular patch was being unfairly treated and the ramifications on traffic congestion elsewhere in the borough. The need for a Leeds/Langley relief road was repeated frequently as was sewage and drainage problems to the south. Unsurprisingly, the northern parishes were hardly mentioned.

The meeting ended with our passing almost unanimously a very lengthy verbal motion, the gist of which was that "the number of new homes proposed by MBC has no credibility" and calling on the council to conduct a reassessment. We shall see.

Item 12.2 KALC (Maidstone Committee) meeting, 24 February 2016. Report by Ivor Davies.

Main points:

Lack of traffic modelling in rural areas. Leeds/Langley Relief Road was to be considered in MBC's Local Plan review.

The importance given to walking and cycling in the Local Plan was to validate the Integrated Transport Strategy which could otherwise be rejected. There was no legal requirement for an

ITS but it is the vehicle to demand contributions from developers. It should therefore be a positive document not one just listing constraints as in Local Plan matters the Inspectorate looks at the numbers first and only then applies mitigation.

The meeting agreed in principle to fund a professional review of the housing needs assessment as there were a number of inaccuracies which MBC have so far failed to address. The Chairman will be writing to Clerks but three parishes have already agreed to contribute £1,000 each.

Other nuggets: the movable crash barrier is being tested in Yalding.

The 3-year Parish Services Scheme is now due for review.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) will cease from 2017/18.

MBC will continue to fund Strategic Playgrounds.

Doubts whether the Gipsy & Traveller needs assessment is valid.

Polytunnels and Solar Farms: MBC about to draft a policy.

Next meeting: deferred until after the elections, therefore sometime in June.

Item 16. Matters for Information

16.1. Kent Devolution.

From KCC website.

Kent County Council Leader Paul Carter has published his proposals for giving councils more power to improve services for local people. Bold Steps for Radical Reform is about radical devolution to local communities and local government at all levels. It shows how real devolution and empowerment can deliver substantial savings of public money and drive up standards of service for local people.

The document recommends the removal of national quangos and regional bureaucracy. It proposes potential savings of between £15 to 21 billion, which is the equivalent of 2% Gross Domestic Product.

It also recommends the return of spatial planning and local commissioning powers to local councils.

Clerk's report: As devolution was covered at a recent Society of Local Council Clerks' conference, members may be interested in what was highlighted. Seven principal authorities had devolved powers and the feedback from affected parish and town councils is that parishes are being ignored when it starts and that the County Councils either continue to ignore them or start to court them to take on services. We had a talk from a legal company and the speaker flagged that when county or district councils were looking at farming out contracts etc., they were looking to save themselves money and it was most definitely a case of *buyer beware*. Recent court rulings and employment law meant that parishes were finding themselves caught out so it was essential that parishes obtained legal and employment advice. For example the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) apply if a contract is transferred. An East Sussex parish had not anticipated or understood this and has been faced with an unexpected large and ongoing financial liability; it was mentioned that a second parish council had also been so caught out. This is for information only at present but members should be aware.