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**14. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm at Beechen Hall. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

*Daniela Baylis*

Daniela Baylis  
Clerk to the Council

Date 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**REPORTS AND ITEMS RELATING TO THE  
ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING 13 February 2023.**

**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 two working days in advance of the meeting. This will allow details to be circulated at the meeting (or in advance if particularly contentious) 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.

**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.

**Item 3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - DECISION**

**Minutes of the Estates Committee Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023  
held in the Acorn Room at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Chatham ME5 9RU commencing at  
19.30.**

**Councillors Present:** Mr V Davies (Vice Chair), Mr I Davies, Mr B Hinder, Mr P Sullivan & Mr D Hubbard.

**Council Staff Present:** Assistant Clerk Finance - Miss L Watt

**1. Apologies and Non-Attendance**

Mr D Hollands (Chair), Mr M Beckwith, Mrs P Huntingford, Mr C Sheppard & Mr P Dengate  
– Apologies Accepted.

**2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying**

Cllrs I Davies, B Hinder & P Sullivan declared they have dispensation to vote on Dove Hill Allotments.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

All agreed - pending minor changes.

***Adjourn the meeting to allow the public or press to comment.***

No members of the public present.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

It was raised that hall hire charges were due to be reviewed quarterly however given that the Estates Committee meetings are bi-monthly, it was agreed that the hire charges will be reviewed every second meeting going forward.

A Cllr felt that minutes should have each sub-number under a number category in bold to make reading minutes and agendas clearer.

**Action: Assistant Clerk Finance** to make appropriate change to own templates used and communicate the change to the Clerk so that they may do the same to their templates.

## 5. **Actions From Previous Minutes.**

Noted & Accepted.

## 6. **Out Of Meeting Decisions.**

**Action: Office** to add full list of Cllr names to out of meeting decision table so that those not responding to an out of meeting decision can be recorded as a non-response.

It was proposed by V Davies and seconded by I Davies to ratify the decision made out of meeting to change Beechen Hall Hire Fees. All Agreed.

It was proposed by V Davies and seconded by I Davies to ratify the decision made out of meeting to replace the allotment gate locks. All agreed.

It was proposed by I Davies and seconded by B Hinder to ratify the decision made out of meeting to employ 'Company 2' for hedging to replace the rotted (and now removed) fence around the back of Beechen Hall. 2 agreed, 1 abstained.

It was raised that some feel there are too many out of meeting decisions being made and as a result proper discussion before a decision isn't happening in person, which would be the preferred method.

## 7. **Beechen Hall**

### 7.1 **Income & Expenditure Basic Overview.**

Noted.

It was suggested by a Cllr that presentation of the previous year's data is unnecessary. The Assistant Clerk explained that this data was requested by other Cllrs in past meetings. It was also raised that the given data has no projections forward for the coming year ahead. The Assistant Clerk explained that given the expected change to Scribe Bookings & Accounts, future reports may well include projections forward and may be of an improved format overall. In the meantime, the assistant clerk can add next years budget figures.

**Action: Assistant Clerk Finance** to add next years budget figures to the Beechen Hall I&E Basic Overview Document.

### 7.2 **Account balances.**

Noted.

### 7.3 **Accident Report**

Noted.

### 7.4 **Audio for Acorn Room.**

It was proposed by I Davies & seconded by B Hinder that the Parish Caretaker go ahead as requested and purchase required stilts and lofts boards costing £38.46. All Agreed.

This will enable safe access to the 'access hole' above the Acorn Room. Further assessment can then take place.

Action: Parish Caretaker to purchase and install stilts and report back to the committee on any further works required or progress taken place on the fitting of the Audio equipment.

### 7.5 **Caretaker Extension Report.**

The committee would like to thank Michael Du-Lieu, our Parish Caretaker, for his many days of work collating and summarising the historical information found relating to the Beechen Hall extension.

It was proposed by B Hinder and seconded by I Davies that, based on the work of the Parish Caretaker and his resulting report, not to take the matter of building specifications having not been met any further. All agreed.

### 7.6 **Hirer Refund Request.**

None. Noted.

**7.7** Hall Hire Fees – Regular.

**Deferred to the next meeting.**

**7.8** Vending Machine.

**Deferred to the next meeting.**

**Action: Assistant Clerk Finance** to produce ROI Report. More data to be collected such as expected footfall and any minimum contract term.

**7.9** Car Park Cleaning

**Action: Parish Caretaker** to provide costs of appropriate Jet Wash, hose pipe and extension leads if also required.

**Action: Clerk** to communicate the need for this work and explain why the leaf storage area isn't used.

## **8. Matters for Information**

None.

## **9. Dove Hill Allotments**

**9.1** Allotment Report

Cllr B Hinder was due to report on progress made towards setting up an allotment committee. The 10 year Anniversary of Dove Hill Allotments having been open is approaching and Cllr Hinder has dedicated a lot of his personal time to the opening and running of the allotments over this past decade. It is with deep regret that Cllr B Hinder has decided to step back from this work.

Cllr Hinder also reported that he is unable to contact the Gerckhas regarding the allotment road surface as he no longer has a contact.

It was decided that Cllr P Sullivan will work with allotment holders to form a plan of works to improve the road surface.

It was put forward by B Hinder that the road area leading to the gate is the responsibility of Highways at Maidstone Borough Council (MBC).

**Action: Office** to contact John Edwards at MBC to request a road sweeper visit the site and meeting regarding ongoing maintenance. B Hinder has stated he is happy to meet with Mr Edwards to explain the issues of the road surface to the gate and resulting requirements.

**Action: Cllr P Sullivan** to report the progress to the estates committee.

**Action: Office** to circulate to allotment holders that the opportunity is available to form an allotment association if they wish to do so. It is to be mentioned that the newly formed association may want to organise a celebration related to the 10 year anniversary.

**9.2** Pest Purge Report.

Noted.

**9.3** Income & Expenditure Basic Overview.

Noted.

**9.4** Allotment Gate.

It was discussed that attaching a skid plate to the gate would cause faster rotting as it will not allow rain water to drain away. It was decided not to take this suggestion further.

**Action: Parish Caretaker** to contact Cllr P Sullivan to discuss the possibility of turning the gate.

**9.5** Allotment Shed.

The request for suitable safety equipment in order to work at height, fixing the shed roof was noted by the council. It was also noted that the caretaker has no vehicle in order to transport necessary equipment around the parish.

Cllr V Davies suggested that in lieu of purchasing more equipment, he meet the Parish Caretaker at the allotments with his privately owned safety platform.

**Action: Parish Caretaker** to advise the committee of the relevant Health & Safety at work law if the suggestion is not viable. If the suggestion is viable, to arrange directly with Cllr V Davies.

## **10. Parish Managed Play Areas/Open Spaces**

### **10.1** Impton Lane Open Space.

Noted.

### **10.2** Franklin Drive Play Area.

Noted.

### **10.3** Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard.

Noted.

### **10.4** Other Parish Areas. (Page 12).

Noted.

## **11. Policies and Procedures for Review**

### **11.1** War Memorial Inscription Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr B Hinder and seconded by Cllr I Davies that the War Memorial Inscription Policy be adopted subject to the discussed changes being made. All Agreed.

### **11.2** CCTV Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr B Hinder and seconded by Cllr I Davies that the CCTV Policy be adopted subject to the discussed changes being made. All Agreed.

**Action: Assistant Clerk Finance** to research sign requirements for CCTV before removal of sentence discussed in CCTV Policy. If appropriate, remove discussed sentence.

### **11.3** Estates Committee Terms of Reference.

It was proposed by Cllr P Sullivan and seconded by Cllr D Hubbard that the Estates Committee Terms of Reference be adopted subject to the discussed changes being made. All Agreed.

### **11.4** Lost Property Procedure and Disposal Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr B Hinder and seconded by Cllr I Davies that the Lost Property Procedure and Disposal Policy be adopted subject to the discussed changes being made. All Agreed.

### **11.5** Snow Policy

It was proposed by Cllr B Hinder and seconded by Cllr I Davies that the Snow Policy be adopted subject to the discussed changes being made. All Agreed.

## **12. Boxley Churchyard**

Clerk's Update.

Noted.

The committee are awaiting the full report from the Surveyor.

**Action: Clerk** to email the full report to the committee upon receipt.

## **13. Matters for Decision.**

None.

#### 14. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm at Beechen Hall. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.

Meeting closed at 21:24.

Signed as a correct record of proceedings.

Chairman..... Date.....

#### 5. Actions from Previous minutes

Meeting Date	Item Number	Description	Current Status
19/12/22	6.1	Assistant Clerk Finance to add financial projections forward for the hall once software that can produce these reports is in place.	Staff initial training days on Scribe now complete. Staff are working on the initial data entry as and when time allows. This is behind due to absence cover.
19/12/22	8.3	Assistant Clerk Finance to change the word 'TOTAL' to 'Balance'	All references to 'total' or 'profit/loss' have now been changed to 'balance'.
19/12/22	9.4	Office to add to opportunity to create an income from the woodland to the appropriate agenda for discussion.	Assistant Clerk Finance informed Clerk that this item needs to be discussed under the appropriate agenda. Assistant Clerk Finance emailed Clerk on 10 <sup>th</sup> March as it had not been added to an agenda.
13/02/2023	4	Assistant Clerk Finance to make bold all sub-numbers on templates used for agendas and minutes and communicate the change to the Clerk so that they may do the same to their templates.	Assistant Clerk Finance completed the task and informed the Clerk they should do the same.
13/02/2023	6	Office to add full list of Cllr names to out of meeting decision table so that those that do not respond to out of meeting decisions can be recorded as a non-response.	Assistant Clerk Finance added a list of all active committee members to the table.
13/02/2023	7.1	Assistant Clerk Finance to add next years budget figures to the Beechen Hall I&E Basic Overview Document.	Budget column for 23/24 column has now been added to allotment overview. 2022/23 budget column has been changed to 2023/24 on the hall overview.
13/02/2023	7.7, 7.8	Assistant Clerk Finance to add deferred items to the next agenda.	Deferred items are present in this agenda.
13/02/2023	7.8	Assistant Clerk Finance to produce ROI Report on a potential Vending machine revenue stream for Beechen Hall. More data to be collected such as expected footfall.	There has been no time to complete this work.
13/02/2023	7.9	Parish Caretaker to provide costs of appropriate Jet Wash, hose pipe and extension leads for car park cleaning if also required.	
13/02/2023	7.9	Clerk to communicate the need for the car park cleaning work and why the leaf storage area is not being used.	Clerk emailed councillors.

13/02/2023	9.1	<b>Assistant Clerk Finance</b> to contact John Edwards at MBC to request a road sweeper visit the site. B Hinder has stated he is happy to meet with Mr Edwards to explain the issues and resulting requirements.	An email was sent to John Edwards on 13 <sup>th</sup> March.
13/02/2023	9.1	<b>Cllr P Sullivan</b> to report any progress on the allotment road surface work (with allotment holders) to the estates committee.	
13/02/2023	9.1	<b>Assistant Clerk Finance</b> to circulate to allotment holders that the opportunity is available to form an allotment association if they wish to do so. It is to be mentioned that the newly formed association may want to organise a celebration related to the 10 year anniversary.	An email was sent to plot holders on 20 <sup>th</sup> April.
13/02/2023	9.4	<b>Parish Caretaker</b> to advise the committee of the relevant Health & Safety law relating to the suggestion of using Cllr owned safety equipment to enable the fixing of the allotment shed roof. If the suggestion is viable, to arrange directly with Cllr V Davies.	Parish Caretaker advised of the appropriate regulations relating to the use of equipment and has contacted Cllr V Davies to make arrangements.
13/02/2023	11	<b>Assistant Clerk Finance</b> to implement all agreed policy & procedure changes. <b>Assistant Clerk Hall</b> to publish updated documents where required.	Changes were made as agreed.
13/02/2023	11.2	<b>Assistant Clerk Finance</b> to research sign requirements for CCTV before removal of sentence discussed in CCTV Policy. If appropriate, remove discussed sentence.	Sentence Removed.
13/02/2023	12	<b>Clerk</b> to email the full report to the committee upon receipt.	

#### Item 6. Out of Meeting Decisions - Ratify

None.

#### Item 7. Beechen Hall – INFORMATION & DECISION

##### 7.1. Income & Expenditure Basic Overview.

Rialtas data not accessible at this time.

##### 7.2 Account Balances

Hall Bank Account	Date (last reconciliation)	Balance
<b>Unity Trust Bank - Hall</b>	31-3-2023	£46,531.66
<b>Nationwide</b> 95 Day saver account £66,000 is ringfenced as PC Funds	31-3-2023	£78,887.17

### 7.3 Accident Report

None at the time of this Agenda.

### 7.4 Audio For Acorn Room

Caretaker has not had sufficient time to complete the work. Project ongoing.

### 7.5 Hirer Refund Requests

None at the time of compiling this agenda.

### 7.6 Hall Hire Fees – Regular - Decisions

Our Hall Manager has brought to light that no changes have been made to regular hire rates since 2018 to begin January 2019.

Each regular hirer has their own rate according to what they were originally quoted. As and when increases occurred, a letter was issued to the hirer from the Assistant Clerk advising them of an increase.

Regular hirers are all on different rates, with no consistency between them. The charges range from £10 per hour for the Acorn Room or £15 to £27 per hour for the hall.

Current rates charged to new regular hires:

Rate per hour	Monday-Friday 0900-1800	Monday-Friday 1800-2230	Saturday 0900-2230	Sunday 0900-2030
<b>Beechen Hall</b>	£15.00	£19.00	£27.00	£27.00
<b>Acorn Room</b>	£11.00	£11.00	£20.00	£20.00

When making this decision it is important to note that as a public body you are able to engage in business activities in order to raise funds to put back into the community but are strictly unable to subsidise other businesses.

You can however subsidise community clubs, events and charities. A club is defined as being a group of individuals coming together for a shared interest or activity where no person aims to profit financially from the activity.

If the organiser of an event has an aim to profit from an activity (such as an exercise class) then it is defined as a business. The council strictly can not use public funds to subsidise a private business. Charging as little as we do to regular hires, we knowingly make a loss on all regular hires including businesses.

Going forward the council may wish to have 2 fee structures for regular hires, one subsidised for clubs and community events such as social clubs, health visitors, charities etc. and another fee for businesses.

The council may also wish to discuss charging for the storage they provide to regular hirers. Currently one hirer has use of 3 storage areas at no charge.

### 7.7 Skip Hire

The hall storage areas are currently housing many old and unnecessary items. Hall management staff would like to request a skip is hired.

### 7.8 Vending Machine

Time has not allowed any further investigation of this option due to extra work because of staff absence cover.

## **7.9 Car Park Cleaning - DECISION**

Deferred from last meeting:

The car park was cleaned on the 6<sup>th</sup> February as agreed at the Parish Council meeting on the 23 January 2023 minute number 2682 item 16. The cleaning was a success and the car park is greatly improved. Some of the moss was not removable in spite of jet washing as it is embedded in the tarmac. The recommendation is to now spray it with a trade strength moss killer which has been ordered and the Parish Caretaker will apply. Once dead it can be jet washed again. We do not currently have a jet washer powerful enough to do the job (previous caretakers used his own personal machine) so this will need to be purchased. Finance for this could come from the Parish Maintenance budget. Using a road sweeper to keep the car park cleaned could be done twice a year and could be included in next years budget to prevent build ups like this from happening.

Car Park report by Clerk

When Alan was here he spent many unpaid hours clearing the carpark using his own equipment and all the leaves went into the household waste bin. When he left, we were without a caretaker for some months over the winter period and no clearance was done. A person from Walderslade Woods was employed to clear the leaves. He filled up the leaf store and blew all the remaining leaves into the verges around the car park (with the permission of the then Assistant Clerk). This created a bank of leaves that did not rot down as leaves take a couple of years to decompose fully. Last year the car park was not pressure washed as we do not have a pressure washer (Alan used to use his own). This led to the car park looking a mess and a build up of moss that was thick and very slippery when wet. Clearing up this build up was more work than one person can reasonably be expected to do. The most effective solution to the problem was to hire a road sweeper and this was approved at a Parish Council meeting. This was very effective although there is still some ingrained moss that needs clearing with a jet washer. The leaf store is poorly designed and in a bad location. It will not hold the amount of leaves that fall every year in the car park. The road sweeper took 3 tons of debris away and Michael cleared 85 bags of leaves previous to this. There is no easy way to access the leaf store. It requires walking almost a complete circuit of the outside of the hall and we do not have a wheelbarrow or other means of transporting leaves.

Decision required on hiring a road sweeper at least twice a year to clear the leaves before jet washing.

### **7.10 Hall Floor & Walls**

Parish Caretaker has worked on the warranty with the flooring company as large gaps began to appear between the planks. This work is now complete with the company coming in a making adjustments to the floor under warranty.

The hall walls have been re-painted.

### **7.11 Grant for Kitchen Works**

The grant application for refurbishment to the hall was not successful. Most likely, in the opinion of Cllr Asseter, because they are mainly items that would be regarded as routine maintenance and refurbishment that should be carried out and budgeted for. He and the Clerk are happy to continue to try and find grants but they might have the same outcome.

The items on the grant were:

Kitchen Refurbishment: £16,925

Fire suppression system: £4,076

PA system with Disco Facilities: £1,018

Digital whiteboard with Trolley: £2,862

Purchase of new chairs (£3,262) and tables with storage trolley (£5,375)

Funding some of these this year or budgeting for them for the next financial year should be considered.

## **Item 9. Dove Hill Allotments – INFORMATION and DECISION**

### **9.1 Allotment Report**

Cllr P Sullivan to give verbal report on progress.

## **9.2 Income & Expenditure Basic Overview**

Rialtas data not accessible at this time.

## **9.3 Greenhouse on plot 7G**

*Caretaker report to Clerk*

20.03.2023 Dove Hill Allotment – Plot 7G

Breach of contract – Erection of a structure without consent and with non-permitted materials.

I visited the Dove Hill allotment site following a report of a structure being erected on plot 7G which was considered to be outside of the permitted dimensions / materials it was noted that a greenhouse was being erected with some of the glazing materials installed. Whilst the structure was within the permitted dimensions at 1.8 x 1.8 x 2.0mtrs the glazing material was not permitted being of glass.

I can find no record of permission to erect the structure being sought which is required under the terms and conditions forming part of the tenancy contract.

I will be writing to the plot owner informing them of the breach and requesting they remove the glazing material and replace with one of the permitted materials as outlined within their tenancy contract terms and conditions.

Clerks Comment: I would like to advise the committee that my research, as well as the research by the Parish Caretaker shows that most councils allow greenhouses with no restriction on the materials used. The Parish Caretaker was unable to find one example of any restriction on greenhouses and their materials.

## **9.4 Allotment Gate**

Caretaker is awaiting an update from Cllr P Dengate. Gate locks were replaced.

## **9.5 Allotment Shed**

Work is now complete.

## **9.6 Correspondence**

*Email received from Lisa White:*

Could you please bring up the matter of asking the allotment tenants to cut back the green growth from the shrubs that come through the boundary fence. Some of the tenants are very good at making sure the paths and area near the water tanks are kept clear, but other tenants do very little or nothing at all. Glenis who took over Anna's plot has done nothing in the last year regarding the shrubs that grow over and into the water tank, instead if there are any fallen branches near her plot she just puts them on the path instead of disposing of them. This makes it difficult to get to the water tank and also makes it difficult for the people cutting the grass.

Could you either get the caretaker to cut the shrubs back from the boundary fence or ask the council to do this or ask the allotment tenants who have a plot backing on to the fence to do this. It isn't too bad at the moment, but once the season starts it will become very overgrown.

A couple of years ago a group of people cut back the shrubs in the autumn or winter. Unfortunately some people haven't got any understanding when to cut back and prune certain plants, they cut back the Prunus trees (cherry trees) in the winter and killed one of the trees near my plot, Prunus trees should only be cut back in the summer.

I appreciate everyone at the allotment is busy with their own life, I am busy as well doing a PhD, but it is important to keep the paths clear for everyone concerned.

Many thanks.

Lisa White

## **10. Parish Managed Play Areas/Open Spaces – FOR INFORMATION AND DECISION**

### **10.1 Impton Lane Open Space.**

Nothing to report.

### **10.2 Franklin Drive Play Area**

Franklin Drive fence work is being done on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### **10.3 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard**

New bin to be installed to replace one that has been vandalised.

### **10.4 Other Parish Areas**

Walderslade Woods have a number of picnic benches that are not currently checked by the Caretaker and not present on the asset list.

Noticeboard cleaning has been very successful. 9 of 11 noticeboards are now cleaned.

## **11. Policies and Procedures**

### **11.1 Damage Deposits**

#### **Damage Deposits**

A refundable deposit of £250.00 will be charged on all children's parties of which part or all may be retained to pay for any damage caused during the hire period. Photos will be used as evidence should there be any dispute.

A refundable deposit of £500.00 will be charged on all Adult's parties of which part or all may be retained to pay for any damage caused during the hire period. Photos will be used as evidence should there be any dispute.

The damage deposit must be paid by bank transfer and should be paid no later than 2 weeks prior to the hire.

### **11.2 Discount Policy**

#### **Staff discount for hiring Beechen Hall.**

A discount of 15% on the hire fee is available to staff wishing to hire Beechen Hall for an event.

#### **Hire Discount for Charity Fundraising Events at Beechen Hall**

It is policy that the Parish Council will not give a discount on the hire fee, but a donation to the charity may be considered. If a donation is awarded it should not exceed 10% of the total hire fee. Each request will be considered on its own merits.

#### **Hire Discount for Staff hiring Beechen Hall**

A discount of 15% on the hire fee is available to staff wishing to hire Beechen Hall for an event.

## **12. Boxley Churchyard – FOR INFORMATION AND DECISION**

### **Report from the Clerk**

I had a meeting with the Structural Surveyor on the 25<sup>th</sup> January. Both parts of the wall were surveyed.

The official report has not come through yet but what was talked about was:

North wall – he was of the opinion that the tree would need to be removed and after this was done the wall would repair safely.

South Wall – This was surveyed from both sides. When the adjacent properties were built/developed some of the bottom of the wall has been left exposed. A concrete hip would need to be built to protect the wall from destabilising.

The low part of the wall adjacent to the remains of the barn. The recommendation was that raising the height of the wall would make it unsafe due to a 'lean factor'. His recommendation is to remove the ivy, build the wall level at its current height and cap for the whole length then instal a railing for the entire length from the churchyard side. Railing to run from the corner to the steps.

The full report will be produced shortly and circulated to members. If the recommendation is for a railing, we might need to make a completely new planning application as it might not count as a minor modification.

### **Request for Burial in the Parish Council burial ground**

A request for burial has been received from the relatives of John Terry who died recently. He was not resident in the parish but worshipped at St Mary and All Saints for many years but for the past 4 years had been unable to attend due to extremely poor health and mobility. He was on the Electoral Roll for the church.

## **13. Matters for Decision**

None at the time of compiling agenda.

## **14. Repairs to the South Wall in Boxley Churchyard – FOR INFORMATION AND DECISION**

### **Church Wall**

The structural surveys have been sent to the Diocese of Canterbury for the Faculty. They have also been submitted to MBC. Required for the tree to be removed that is damaging the wall and a minor material amendment to the long piece of wall. The Structural surveyor is recommending making the piece of wall adjacent to the barn conversion good to a height of 1ft or so and installing a railing for the entire length. Raising the height of the wall does not take into account the 'lean factor' and could still be dangerous for anyone leaning against it. A railing would keep people away from the drop and enable them to see the danger.

