**Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on the 3 March 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Councillors Present**:  P Mclean, A Brindle, I Davies, M Cox, A Adams, V Jones, and J Akehurst together with Mrs D Baylis – Parish Clerk, Borough Councillor Stephen Thompson and 1 member of the public

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllrs Beckwith, Bryant, English and Hinder.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Kaz Macklin had resigned on the 1st March. A Notice of Vacancy will be put up in due course.

1. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**

None

1. **Motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting for all items in the confidential section.**

It was proposed by Cllr P Mclean, seconded by Cllr A Brindle and all agreed that members of the public be excluded from all items in the confidential section.

1. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 22 January 2025**

Agreed.

1. **Matters Arising From the Minutes**

None.

1. **Crime Report and Police Issues**

Report noted. Cllr Jones reported that the Police surgery held at Bredhurst had been very successful.

**Public Session at the discretion of the Chairman. Parishioners may address the meeting with regard to any item on the Agenda (time limited to 3 minutes per person). Items not on the Agenda must be submitted to the Clerk in advance of the meeting. Non-parishioners are only able to address the meeting at the invitation of the Chairman.**

A resident had attended to complain about fly tipping in Wents Woods. A property adjacent to the woods had some groundworks done that comprised removal of a sleeper wall and installation of a brick wall. All of the removed sleepers had been fly tipped into Wents Wood. This had been reported to MBC twice. The response had been that they would not do anything as it was private land. MBC own and maintain Wents Wood. It had also been reported at the advice of MBC to the police who came and spoke to the home owner and contractor. Cllr Jones took the reference number and would chase up action from MBC’s head of waste crime.

1. **Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings**

8.1 Environment Committee 3 February 2025

 This meeting had been cancelled.

1. **Finance**

8.1 **Bank Balances**

 Noted

8.2 **Finance General**

 The Clerk was asked to write another letter to Barclays threatening legal action. Cllr Brindle only had Januarys bank reconciliation to review and sign.

8.3 **Receipts and Payments 1-21 February 2025**

 Noted

8.4 **To Consider the External Auditors Report**

 The External Auditors reports was considered.

 Cllr Jones raised the advice for .gov.uk email addresses. The Clerk had written a report for the April Agenda and was waiting for quotations for setting up and hosting the email addresses and changing the website domain name so that a full report could be put on the April agenda for decision..

1. **Policies and Procedures**

9.1 **Policies and Procedures review calendar – minor amendment**

9.2 **Mission Statement**

9.3 **Freedom of Information Policy**

9.4 **Records Management Policy**

9.5 **Publication Scheme**

It was proposed by Cllr P Mclean, seconded by Cllr M Cox and all agreed that the above policies be adopted by council.

1. **By-Election**

Report noted. Cllr Adams asked if there had been any update on costs. The Clerk said that it was likely to be nearer to £10,000 as the Poll Cards had been posted to electors.

1. **Devolution**

Report noted. Cllr Thompson confirmed that Kent had not been selected as part of the Devolution process this time. Devolution refers to mayoral authorities. He said that MBC’s process would be more of a local government reorganisation. MBC would be carrying out a community governance review concentrating on the unparished areas. Grove Green would be part of this. He recommended the topic note from NALC which covered best practice and effects on Parish Councils after formation of a unitary authority.

1. **Reports from Boxley Parish Councillors/Office**

12.1 **Office Staff Report**

Noted.

12.2 **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Brindle had attended the Lidsing Stakeholder Steering group meeting. She had concerns that not enough work had been done on the SPD’s. There was not enough detail on any of the proposals so far. The traffic modelling concentrated on East/West movements and not on the North/South movement of traffic. A request will be made at the planning application stage for very tight construction traffic controls to prevent any construction traffic going through Boxley Village.

It was very disappointing that no consultation was being held in Boxley Parish. On the consultation day on the 10th March Lidsing and Sandling roads are closed and any residents from the South would have to do a major detour to attend. It was felt that residents would be unlikely to do the extended route and were therefore being excluded from the consultation. The next consultation event would be held in Boxley and Beechen Hall would be offered as a venue for this. There will be paper copies of the questionnaire that residents can complete once the consultation information has been reviewed. The location of these questionnaires will be published on the usual media.

The next meeting was on the 27 March and would be held at Beechen Hall.

Cllr Akehurst reported that there was a lot of despair and disgruntlement from residents of Sandling. She has now attended three A229 improvement meetings and spoken to residents at all of them. Councillors can complete the questionnaire twice as both resident and councillor and she encouraged them to do so. The proposal as it stands takes away the green verges and KCC are looking at buying 8m of the gardens in Greywethers to make space for the road widening. This would make the carriageway extremely close to the adjacent properties and residents were rightly concerned over the safety of having the carriageway so close.

The other cause for concern was the prospect of lorries going right at the Lower Bell, behind the garage and straight onto the A229 or down Old Chatham Road and on to the A229 at Tyland Barn. The slip road from Tyland Barn would stay the same. This would lead to a great deal of through traffic through Sandling.

Cllr Akehurst and Cllr Brindle had walked the length of Old Chatham Road with a resident looking at all the issues such as poor speed limit signage, inadequate cycleway signage etc and a detailed report for action would be put on the Environment Committee agenda.

12.3 **Borough/County Councillor Reports**

Cllr Thompson had attended a public engagement event at Tyland Barn for Sandling residents to look at the A229 Bluebell Hill improvement plans. As a result of this he had compiled a list of a dozen questions to be answered by KCC. This had been sent off and he was hopeful of getting an answer by the end of the week which he would circulate to councillors. The new plans were not a product of the previous 2020 consultation. Compulsory purchase of land would come in at the planning application stage.

Cllr Thompson reported on the Lidsing SPD’s. A draft will be presented at the end of April. The draft plans will be on display at the 2 consultation events being held in Bredhurst in March. The SPD’s are the last opportunity to make modifications to the plans. MBC’s cabinet has the final sign off on the SPD’s

12.4 **KALC Representative**

Cllrs Brindle and Davies had attended the recent KALC meeting. There had been a 1 hour presentation with Q&A from Ryan O’Connell from Midkent on Devolution/Community Governance. The Code of Conduct review had been sent out to parishes for comment. The JTB was still not functioning. The next meeting would be the 31 March.

12.5 **Grove Green Community Hall Representative**

Cllr Mclean thanked the Parish Council for their grant and reported that the CCTV system was up and running.

12.6 **Sandling Village Hall Representative**

Cllr Akehurst reported that all was good.

12.7 **Vinters Valley Nature Reserve Representative**

Cllr Cox reported that the next trustees meeting was on 12 March. Cllr Mark Naghi has been appointed the MBC representative. They were assisting with an App re wellness in nature.

12.8 **Any other reports**

None.

1. **Sandling**

Cllr Akehurst would try and find someone to help with the noticeboard installation.

1. **Grant Applications**

None.

1. **Matters for Decision**

None for this Agenda.

1. **Matters for Information**
2. **Items for Next Agenda**

Noted,

1. **Meetings**

Next Meeting Tuesday 8 April at Beechen Hall at 7.30pm.

It was proposed by Cllr McLean, seconded by I Davies and all agreed that for the 2025/26 meeting calendar all meetings should be held on a Monday wherever possible.

**Confidential Section**

1. **Personnel matters**

Cllr Akehurst said that the Personnel Committee had met and would be liaising with staff in one to one sessions re job reviews.

Meeting closed at 9.36 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman ……………………………………………….. Date ………………………………………………………..