

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk



Clerk – Mrs Pauline Bowdery
Assistant Clerk – Mrs Melanie Fooks
Tel – 01634 861237

E-mail – Clerk@boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk

Beechen Hall
Wildfell Close
Walderslade
Chatham
Kent ME5 9RU

To All Members of the Council, public and press.

5 August, 2014

There will be a meeting of the Estates Committee on **Tuesday 12 August 2014** at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

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

2. Apologies and absence.

To receive apologies for absence.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 10 June, 2014.

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

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

4. Matters Arising From Previous Minutes

4.1 Minute 2660/4.1. War Memorial Old Middle Drum the Clerk is still waiting for a response concerning the seat from the Church.

4.2 Minute 2660/4.2. MBC Play Area Strategy. Work is currently still being undertaken the matter will be discussed at the October meeting.

5. Dove Hill Allotments

5.1 To receive an update from Cllr Bob Hinder- see report on (page 3).

5.2 To receive an update on the access road to the allotment site. See report on page 3.

5.3 Additional grass cutting at Allotments – To ratify the Assistant Clerk's decision after consulting with the Chair and Vice Chair out of meeting to award the additional grass cutting to KCC Landscape Services at a cost of £200.00 for the year.

5.4 Official Opening – Sunday 24th August at 12 noon see report on page 3.

6. Boxley Village Green and South Wall

To consider the Clerk's report on the South Wall see page 4-5.

7. Matters for Information

None at the time of compiling the agenda

Ten minute comfort break (if wanted).

8. Assistant Clerk's Report

8.1 To receive hire fees for June/July with a comparison for the same period in the previous year please see report on page 4.

8.2 To receive a marketing report see pages 4

8.3 To receive Income and Expenditure report see page 4.

8.4 To receive Bank Reconciliation see page 5.

9. Beechen Hall Extension

To receive a report on the initial meeting with Faithdean RS see page 5.

10. Policies and Procedures

- 10.1 Annual Look at the Hall – To look at the condition of the hall and its contents and to identify any expenditure for consideration in the new budget. See report on page 5.
- 10.2 Annual Competency Review – See report on page 5-6.
- 10.3 Housekeeping risk assessments see report page 6.
- 10.4 Risk Assessment - Dove Hill Allotments - See report on page 7.

11. Vacant position for Relief Caretaker

Due to a resignation the office has advertised the position of Relief Caretaker. An update will be given at the meeting.

12. Matters for Decision

- 12.1 Height Barrier at Beechen Hall. To start planning for a replacement if a repair cannot be made.
- 12.2 Personal Licence cover for Beechen Hall. To consider whether this requires renewing in August 2015.

13. Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 14 October, 2014 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 3 October, 2014.

Pauline Bowdery

Clerk to the Council

REPORTS AND ITEMS RELATING TO THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING 12 AUGUST, 2014.

Item 5.1 Dove Hill Allotments – *Purpose of item for information.*

Allotments report

Things still progressing well apart from two rabbits appearing for a short spell of time
A meeting with Gallagher's, contractor for the Bell Mouth works and a rep. From KCC highways took place and all appears to be in order for the work to proceed shortly.
A revised contract with the grass cutting team has been agreed to cover extra areas at the site
Bob Hinder

Report to follow if received in time this will be circulated prior to the meeting, otherwise it will be brought to the meeting.

5.2 Dove Hill Allotments entrance work.

Clerk's report: A verbal update will be given at the meeting but as of this moment I am waiting for Gallagher's to sign the KCC agreement and payment of the fees and bond will then be made at which point Gallagher's can start the work.

5.4 Dove Hill Allotments Official Opening– To receive an outline of the procedure for the day. *Purpose of item for information.*

The date has been agreed as Sunday 24th August, at 12noon and Andy Garland of BBC Radio Kent Sunday Gardening programme has agreed to come and officially open the Allotments. This will take approx. 1 hour followed by an informal barbeque for plot holders and their guests. Invitees will include Parish Councillors, Allotment holders and their guests, representatives of St Paul's Scout Group, 32 Regt Royal Engineers, Local NSALG Rep and County Councillor Paul Carter. The official opening will be organised by the Parish Council therefore volunteers are needed to help set up and to assist with parking.

Clerk's report. The visit of the MBC Conservation officer resulted in the following comment.

Item 6. Boxley Village Green and South Wall – To receive the Clerk's report. *Purpose of item for information and decision.*

It is a ragstone wall, obviously of some age, and would definitely be considered to be curtilage-listed.

The ivy has obviously caused considerable damage, leading to a couple of areas of collapse. The wall is a historic feature which should be preserved and in my view the ivy should be removed. Obviously this would need to be carefully done in order to minimise further damage to the wall. There is a lot of information on the internet about ivy removal, including an English Heritage seminar report from 2010. In view of the Grade II status of Parsonage Farm it might be worth contacting EH to see if they can offer any technical advice.*

I have located and read the document referred to above and have approached English Heritage to request a site visit. Due to staff holidays at EH there will be a delay in arranging a site meeting and in the meantime they have asked for a photographical record which will be arranged.

A quotation, from the parish council's maintenance contractor has been received for the clearance work that members wanted, as this may involve the removal of some trees permission is being sought from MBC however some photographs are needed and arrangements are being made to complete the relevant paperwork. **Action Clerk.**

Item 8. Assistant Clerks Report – *for information and decision*

8.1 To receive Hall Hire Fees for June/July with a comparison on the previous year
(Brackets indicate income over same period previous year).

	2014/2015	2013/2014
Casual	£1,428.80	(£2,111.75)
Regular	<u>£5,516.70</u>	<u>(£4,965.24)</u>
Total	£6,945.50	(£7,076.99)
Cumulative figures for		
Casual	£ 3,468.28	(£5,010.57)
Regular	<u>£10,425.08</u>	<u>(£11,121.32)</u>
Total	£13,945.76	(£16,131.89)

8.2 To receive a Marketing report on Beechen Hall. *Purpose of item, for information and decision.*

The office has set up a Facebook page for Beechen Hall and has invited casual hirers to leave feedback after their hire. Comments so far have been very positive and it is hoped that overtime as the halls presence increases the take up of the hall will also increase. At present casual bookings are down on the previous year and we are managing this by producing a leaflet/flyer that will be delivered with the Walderslade copies of the Downs Mail. We will also promote availability on the Facebook pages and the website. It is also hoped to record a video giving a virtual tour of the hall for potential hirers to view the hall on-line.

Casual hires - the Assistant Clerk has been given delegated powers by the committee to give late availability discounts of up to 10% if the need arises. Despite advertising no hirer has up to this date requested this. I can only conclude that bookings are generally down and the hopefully the action described above will raise our profile.

Regular bookings at the hall are currently healthy, however in order not to become complacent and to be able to react to any changes, the ability for delegated powers to give a small discount when necessary is requested. Such delegated powers will mirror those given for casual hirers. After consideration and discussion with the Chairman and the Clerk it is suggested that a nominal sum of £40.00 per regular hirer is allocated to be used to help them boost their classes. For example this could be offset against additional hire time over a short period whilst a new club is establishing itself or an existing club wants to boost its class. It is suggested that this is monitored reviewed on a regular basis. This will enable the Assistant Clerk to make instant minor decisions after consulting the Clerk without putting the request to the committee which only meets every other month.

8.3 Income and Expenditure report to 31st July 2014

Beechen Hall	
1 April 2014 to 31 July 2014	
	£
Revenue	14,553.29
Less costs*	564.47
Net Revenue	13,988.82
Less Expenses	13,343.61
Other Income	0.00
Net Surplus	645.21
Estimated PC Office Running Costs	1,264.00
* Costs include consumables and damage waiver	

8.4 Bank Reconciliation – HSBC- 1 August 2014 (2014-2015)

RECONCILIATION - HSBC Beechen Hall

From Accounts	£13,923.97
Payments not cashed Add	£150.91
Receipts not entered Subtract . .	£275.26
Statement should be	£13,799.62
Reserve Account	£25,000.00

Item 9. Beechen Hall Extension – *To receive a report on the meeting and to consider suggestions from Faithdean RS if received in time for meeting.*

A meeting took place at Beechen Hall on Wednesday 2 July with Andrew Carney and Keith of Faithdean RS and Cllrs Vic Davies, Pat Sullivan, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. A draft brief was

Item 10. Policies and Procedures – *purpose of item for information and decision*

given to them with specifications outlined at the last Estates Meeting. Various ideas were discussed and a quick tour of the hall was given. It was agreed that Faithdean would prepare some options together with ball park costs and whether the work could be done in stages to enable the Committee to decide on a budget for the project.

10.1 Annual look at the hall – Future projects needs as highlighted by the committee.

Replacement windows- to be annually reviewed and included in the budget when considering Beechen Hall extension.
Replacement front doors- to be annually reviewed and included in the budget when considering Beechen Hall extension.
Ceiling Insulation over kitchen, 'caged store room and chair store. <i>Note; this part of the hall is extremely difficult to get to but as far as can be seen the majority of the areas are covered by the new layers of insulation.</i>
Replacement lighting in car park (installed 96 or 97?) <i>This was reviewed in 2013 after cutting back trees in the car park and these are now deemed sufficient.</i>
Replacement floor in ladies and disabled toilets - review annually. As original flooring consider 15/16? Or complete refurbishment of toilets. If planned investigate tap sensors to stop water wastage?
Grey Water System.
Replacement kitchen- to be annually reviewed and included in the budget when needed. Fairly good condition at present probably need it 2019/20?
Replacement tables and chairs. To be replaced as and when required (ad hoc). Tables and chairs purchased in 1994. Oct 2011 with three tables being replaced 2010 – 2012. New Chairs should be considered when looking at extending storage space possibly 15/16 budget

10.2 Annual competency review/statement. *Purpose of report:* Information or consideration.

The Clerk is tasked with undertaking an audit of the working of the parish council's committees and councillors are also encouraged to take a few moments to reflect on the previous work of their committee. The purpose of the audit is to highlight any strengths, good working practices, weaknesses and/or poor working practices with an aim to improve the procedures and the way the committee works.

Clerk's report: Generally the committee works very well with decisions made in good time to meet deadlines etc. Where weaknesses, and it is acknowledged that some of these are nit picking, are identified action points have been suggested.

Strengths:

- Procedures' and working practices are fit for purpose and generally have adequate in-

- built flexibility to allow work to progress.
- This is a very complicated committee due to its two monthly meetings and the range of issues it is responsible for. The balance and commitment of its members is what makes it work.
- Councillors are respectful of each other and of their colleagues' views.
- Members are open to suggestions for change, open to constructive criticism, willing to improve where they identify need and also willing to set a high standard and strive to reach it.

Weakness:

- The fact that it only meets every two months means that a number of issues will always have to be finished outside of a meeting. To ensure the committee meets its open and accountable remit this way of decision making should be kept to an absolute minimum. **Action: It is essential that members do not bring queries to meetings without first notifying the office and giving time for investigations etc. It would help if members could prepare for the meeting immediately they receive the agenda. Advance planning for projects is needed and the Clerk and Asst Clerk will play an important part in this work however it also requires the support of members.**
- Request for action or investigations which requires input from councillors. Occasionally confusion occurs when either the office or councillors do not understand or complete the action that has been set for them. Between meetings councillors may forget that they are supposed to be coming to the next meeting with some information. **Action: The draft minutes show action points and these are placed on the website but not issued to councillors until the parish council meeting at the same meeting the agenda for the next committee meeting is given out. Members' views are sought on what the office can do to remind them that a response is received in time for an agenda, for example would an action e-mail summary to committee members help.**
- Sometimes, with all due respect, members stray from the item being discussed and this can adversely impact on the efficiency of the meeting. Councillors and prospective councillors may be put off serving on a council by constant late finishing times and whilst a social and relaxed atmosphere often oils the workings of the committee it occasionally needs controlling. **Action: Councillors and Chairman to keep an eye on the time and consider the relevance of any anecdote.**

Clerk's comment: Committee chairmen are encouraged to pass on suggestions, either from themselves or from members, about how the office support and service to their committee may be improved or enhanced.

Item 10.3 Risk assessment classified housekeeping.

Clerk's report: Three 'housekeeping' reviews have been completed with documents being updated or refreshed where necessary on: Beechen Hall Clerk's delegated powers; Burial Ground Regulations; and Risk Assessment for Fire, Drink and Public licence.

10.4 Dove Hill Allotments Annual Risk Assessment.
Risk Management Dove Hill Allotments – Estates Committee 12 August 2014

Ref	RISK	RISK LEVEL	PROPOSED ACTION
1	Personal injury due to uneven ground. Poor maintenance gates etc.	Medium	<p>The nature and use of the site is such that uneven ground is an occupational hazard. Members of the public are only on site at the invitation and under the supervision of a tenant.</p> <p>The parish council will maintain the communal areas with a grass cutting regime so that tenants and visitors can see the uneven ground.</p> <p>The parish council will undertake regular checks on its fixtures and fittings and an allotment working group will undertake small day to day maintenance.</p>
2	Illness due to contact with micro-organisms such as tetanus, leptospirosis etc.	Low	<p>Low - If tenants follow basic hygiene practices. Tenants are responsible for their own health and safety and these organisms naturally occur in soil.</p> <p>Members of staff going onto the site to be advised of such issues and supplied with sanitizing hand gel.</p> <p>Instructions on how to change the containers in the compostable toilet are supplied to tenants and also displayed in the toilet.</p> <p>Protective gloves are available for this work.</p> <p>The parish council has a responsibility to control rats on the site. Water troughs are provided and in winter water will be turned off, and the troughs emptied of as much water as possible. The remaining standing water will be treated.</p>
3	Fires on site. Burns to people and damage to property.	Low	<p>The allotment regulations allow individual tenants to have contained fires. Members of the public are only on site at the invitation and under the supervision of a tenant.</p> <p>The parish council will produce a separate risk assessment should it decide to have a bonfire on any of the communal area.</p>

Note: The Allotment Regulations are part of the risk management at the site. Regulations cover the responsibility of tenants to safeguard visitors to their plot; dogs are allowed but must be kept on a short lease etc. A first aid kit, a matter of courtesy is kept on site. The parish council supplies no tools or machinery.