

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at the European School of Osteopathy, Boxley, on Monday 4 November 2013, commencing at 7.30 pm.

Councillors present: Mr Ivor Davies (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Vic Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr Bob Hinder, Mrs Wendy Hinder, Mr D Hollands, Mrs K Macklin, Mr G Smith, Mr A Springate, Mrs A Spain and Mr P Sullivan together with the Assistant Clerk, Borough Councillor Derek Butler and 2 members of the public/press.

1. Apologies and Absences.

Mr T Harwood (Meeting), Cllr M Waller (Holiday) and Mr D Holmes (Absent)

2. Declaration of Interests or Lobbying on Items on this Agenda.

No declarations made.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 7 October 2013.

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

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

4.1 Minute 2574/4.1 Community Chest: **noted** that arrangements are in hand for the panel to meet.

4.2 Minute 2575/10.3 MBC call answering service: a reply to the Chairman's letter was circulated and **noted**. In discussion, members **agreed** that response times were improving but that was a poor strategic decision to go live with this service without first piloting it at a time of staff shortages.

5. PCSO's Report and Police Issues.

Members **noted** that a new PCSO had been appointed but had yet to take up duties in the parish. In the absence of a PCSO there was no updated crime report available.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.45pm to allow a member of the public to request additional dog fouling signs for the Bluebells Estate. The meeting reconvened at 7.48pm

6. Rural Fire Safety Project

A short presentation on rural fire safety, fire hydrants and open water resources was received from Chris Wheal of the Kent Fire & Rescue Service. He explained the speed with which a fire can spread and the importance of a readily available water supply from hydrants or other sources. Due to staff cuts and a lack of resources, KF&RS were seeking help from parish councils and the public at large to report damage to hydrant covers or their location signs. In answer to a question, he confirmed that work was still in progress on an interactive map for this purpose but that maps were available from KALC. After further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Wheal for his very informative talk. However, as we did not wish burden the office with more work, we would await the interactive map overcoming its teething problems before seeking volunteers from the public to 'adopt a hydrant'. He did however undertake to ensure that the relevant phone number for reporting damage was publicised.

Action: Office

7. Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings.

7.1 Environment Committee meeting 14 October 2013: **received** and **noted**.

7.2 Estates Committee meeting 15 October 2013: **received** and **noted**.

7.3 Estates Committee meeting 29 October 2013: minutes not yet available and therefore deferred to the next meeting.

8. Finance.

8.1 Payments made out of meeting 08.10.13 – 28.10.13: **Noted**.

8.2 Receipts for the period 31.09.13 – 28.10.13: **Noted**.

- 8.3 Account balances as at 28.10.13: **Noted.**
- 8.4 Payment of accounts due: **Authorised.**
- 8.5 Signing of the MBC Parish Funding Agreement by the Chair and Vice-Chair: **Authorised.**

9. **Dove Hill Allotments.**

Cllr Bob Hinder gave members a progress report and stated that the fencing contract had been let with a likely commencement date of 18 November, 2013. He had now completed pegging out the plots with the help of Cllr Ivor Davies and John Brooks. The working group was now engaged on soliciting tenders for installing the on-site water-lines, finalising the application and allocation procedure for plots and agreeing the advertisement for the Boxley Parish Mail and notice-boards. He also reported that the recent severe storms had caused no damage; and that the electricity company had finished their work on the pylon in the adjacent woodland. Negotiations were now in hand with MBC and UK Power Networks for replacement fencing along the eastern the boundary.

10. **Annual Competency Reviews.**

Members **received** the Chairman's report on the competency reviews and unanimously **agreed** the following **statement of competence**:

"Boxley Parish Council and its committees, having undertaken their annual review of their management practices and working methods, considers that decisions are made in an open and accountable way and that the public can:

- a) Understand how a decision was reached;**
- b) Monitor the work of the parish council; and**
- c) Recognise that the parish council is acting legally and fairly".**

Members **noted** that the office intended henceforth to produce a generic competency review that would carry forward from year to year with separate annual reports from each committee on new and previously identified weaknesses and remedial action proposed or taken.

11. **Policies and Procedures Review.**

Freedom of Information & Records Management Policy. Members unanimously **agreed** to minor changes to the text together with this new name for the erstwhile Freedom of Information and Document Retention Scheme.

12. **Matters for Decision.**

12.1 Police Parish Forum meeting Thursday 21 November 2013. Office to send apologies. **Action: Office**

12.2 Vacancy on the governing body of St John's School. The Chairman stated that he hoped that the parish council would continue to be represented. After discussion, one member expressed interest but was concerned about the degree of personal commitment needed, particularly during the working day. The latter they would discuss with their employer.

Cllr Brooks left the room while the following item was taken.

12.3 KALC Community Awards Scheme. This item was taken in confidence at the end of the meeting. There were two nominations for the award from councillors, who each made a presentation on their candidate. A vote was then taken and the successful nominee's name will be forwarded to KALC. Boxley Parish Council recognises the contributions that all community volunteers make to the quality of life in the parish and it was grateful there was an opportunity to recognise this. **Action: Office.**

13. Reports from Borough and County Councillors.

Borough Cllr Derek Butler explained the difficulties MBC are facing in delivering the Local Plan and drew attention to the challenge from Boughton Monchelsea PC. The root of the problem was that any deviation from the central government figures would have to be evidence-based. He also said that he was aware of concerns that MBC are spending disproportionately more money on Maidstone Town Centre than on the rural areas and that he was impressed by the parish council's allotments project.

Borough Cllr Wendy Hinder referred to her written report listing her on-going action regarding lorries parking on Old Chatham Road, fly-tipping in Tesco's car park and cars on the verge outside Sandling Village Hall.

14. Reports from councillors/office.

There were none.

15. Matters for Information.

Received and Noted

- 15.1 Mid Kent Downs Countryside e-bulletin
- 15.2 Kent Police Rural News issue Autumn 2013
- 15.3 Meet the Commissioner Event, Wednesday 6.11.13 in Tonbridge
- 15.4 CPRE Kent Voice Autumn/Winter edition 2013.
- 15.5 KALC Parish News issue 372. Members attention is directed to the lead article on the Sustainable Communities Act.
- 15.6 Roundwood – Email exchange Clerk/KCC
- 15.7 ACRK Rural news issue 132
- 15.8 Open Space magazine issue Autumn/Winter
- 15.9 Minutes of Boxley Warren LNR Management Committee meeting 18.10.13
- 15.10 Kenward Trust – Autumn/Winter Newsletter/invitation to AGM on 19.11.13
- 15.11 Maidstone Wind Symphony – Remembrance Concert 9.11.13

16. Next Meeting.

Monday 2 December 2013 at St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green ME14 5TZ.

Meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

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