

**Minutes of the Estates Committee Meeting on Monday 16 August 2021 held by a virtual Teams meeting commencing at 7.30pm**

Councillors present: Mr D Hollands (Chairman), Mr M Beckwith, Ms L Clarke, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr Vic Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr C Sheppard together with the Assistant Clerk, Mrs M Fooks and also Mr J Willmott.

**1. Apologies and Non-Attendance**

Cllrs Hinder and Sullivan – Apologies accepted. Cllr Monk Absent.

**2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying**

Cllrs Ivor Davies, Dengate and Sheppard declared they have dispensation to vote on Dove Hill Allotment items.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 21 June 2021**

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** and would be signed as a true record at a later date.

As no members of the public were in attendance, the meeting was not adjourned.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

- 4.1.** Minute 3495/4.1 Ceremony and plaque for Alan's Tree. **Ratified** the Assistant Clerks decision after consulting with the committee to purchase the plaque at a cost of £125.00 + VAT. It was **agreed** by Councillors that the ceremony is held at 7pm prior to the Parish Council meeting on Monday 6 September. Cllr Ivor Davies, who was Chairman during the latter part of Alan Springate's time in office, has agreed to give a speech. Members also asked that an invitation is extended to Rob Burrows and members of Walderslade Woodlands Group and the previous Clerk Pauline Bowdery as well as all Parish Councillors. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 4.2** Minute 3495/4.2 Refuse & Recycling at Beechen Hall. Members received the Assistant Clerk's report and unanimously agreed to revisit the possibilities of establishing more recycling at the hall in 12 months' time. Members suggested placing signage in the kitchen and in the bin store reminding hirers to take their recycling home with them and to include this in the hall's hire conditions. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 4.3** Minute 3495/4.3 WDJO Management Plan. Deferred until office time allows. **Noted.**

**5. Ratification of all decisions made at the June Meeting**

This could not be actioned as the meeting was virtual. All decisions for the June and August meetings will be ratified at the October meeting. Agreed

**6. Dove Hill Allotments**

- 6.1.** Allotment Report **received**. Members were informed of the delay for the tree maintenance which is now likely to be the end of October. Cllr Dengate suggested that the office liaise with Cllr Sullivan because of his experience to determine the best time to carry out the repairs and order the materials. **Action Assistant Clerk/Cllr Sullivan.**
- Cllr Sheppard proposed, Cllr Ivor Davies seconded with all in favour to accept the increase in size and cost of Plot 1C due to planting outside the plot boundaries by previous tenants.
  - Cllr Ivor Davies proposed, seconded by Cllr Dengate with all in favour to set a budget of £50.00 to replace the barge boards on the PC shed by the caretaker.
  - Members discussed the clearance of plots and the merits of hiring a skip and agreed that the clearance of plots was down to individual plot holders.

The Assistant Clerk confirmed that a site inspection was taking place w/c 23 August and letters will be issued to tenants with untidy plots if necessary. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

The Chairman conveyed the committee's thanks for work that has been carried out by Alan the caretaker throughout the parish.

- 6.2.** Pest Purge Report. **Received** and **Noted**. Members discussed the issue of squirrels and the cost to cull them could not be justified therefore it was agreed that no further action would be taken. Members also considered the reference to the encroaching vegetation on the perimeter fence on the left hand side by the public footpath and agreed that a date for a working party would be set to carry out the clearance of the vegetation and would be in conjunction with repairs to entrance road. Tenants will be invited to participate. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 6.3.** Leaky Disabled Tap. The Assistant Clerk confirmed that Cllr Sullivan has agreed to fix the minor leak in the very near future. **Action Cllr Sullivan.**
- 6.4** Pest Control Contract Renewal. After discussion members requested that a review of the contract was carried out and to request an extension to the current contract of 6 months to enable the office time to gather quotations to include in the report when considering Allotment Rents at its April meeting. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 7. Matters for Information**  
There were none.
- 8. Assistant Clerk's Report**
- 8.1** Hall hire fees income. **Received** and **noted**.
- 8.2** Account balances. **Received** and **noted**. The Assistant Clerk reported to members that a sum of approx. £17,000 would be transferred to the PC's UTB account for payments made from the UTB account on behalf of the hall for the period April – July 21. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 8.3** Profit and Loss. **Received** and **noted**.
- 8.4** Income and Expenditure. **Received** and **noted**.
- 8.5** Contract Cleaners at Beechen Hall. **Ratified** the Assistant Clerk's decision after consulting with members of the Estates Committee to enter into a 6 month contract with Kent Cleaning Solutions for a monthly cost of £786.15. The Assistant Clerk reported that the cleaning team of two and have settled into the job and so far there were no major issues.
- 8.6** Reopening of Beechen Hall. Members **received** and **noted** the Assistant Clerk's report on ventilation within Beechen Hall after some discussion it was agreed to get some idea of the costs of installing an air exchange system for future consideration. Cllr Wilmott put forward a name of a company based at Turkey Mill. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 8.7** Accident Report – None to report.
- 8.8** Review of Hire fees for weekend casual hirers. Members **received** the Assistant Clerk's report and it was proposed by Cllr Vic Davies, Seconded by Cllr Sheppard with all in favour to accept the suggested 'all in' price to include the cleaning fee for all of the different variations for hiring the hall. **Action Assistant Clerk.**
- 8.9** Leaf clearance during Autumn/Winter. Members considered the caretaker's request for an industrial leaf blower, vac, mulcher and shredder and after some discussion Cllr Ivor Davies proposed, Cllr Clarke seconded with all in favour to purchase a petrol version at a cost of £109.71, and to store the petrol can in the WWG storage shed once permission is given. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

## 9. Parish Managed Play Areas

### 9.1 Franklin Drive Play Area – Unveiling Ceremony for Wendy’s Bench, Saturday 23 October at 3pm following the Civic Service for Wendy.

Members **received** the Assistant Clerk’s report outlining the actions required.

- Replace bin as it is a co-mingle bin (litter and dog waste) – MBC have confirmed they will not do this.
- Produce new signage – Welcome to Franklin Drive Play Area (exact wording to be agreed)
- Produce additional No Dogs Sign.
- Purchase combination lock for gate leading to railway track.
- Contact Network Rail re providing an entrance gate to the play area.
- New landscaping at the rear of the of the play area replacing the bramble and weeds and vegetation from neighbouring properties.  
Plants to include Hebe, Hypericum, Hardy Geranium (Johnsons Blue Perennial), berberis and Potentilla.
- Removal of Ivy from fence the Clerk and the Chairman spoke to Network Rail during the Parish Inspection who agreed if they had time they would cut it back as it is growing on the track side. Cllr Sheppard has confirmed they have not done it. Landscape Services will be approached for a quote.
- Kill off weeds that are predominantly in the left hand side of the field.

Members **received** the quotation for the herbicide treatment to the grass and the brambles and vegetation and considered it to be expensive and asked for further quotes from Hoods Tree Services and MBC Soft Landscaping Team for comparison. It was **agreed** that all costs would be approved out of meeting for the above actions as timescales were tight. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

### 9.2 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard. Members received the remedial findings from the Annual Inspections of both Franklin Drive and WDJO. Thanks was given to Cllr Vic Davies and Alan Carroll (Caretaker) for the work they had carried out so far. Cllr Vic Davies agreed to collect replacement padlocks for both play areas. **Action Assistant Clerk/Cllr Vic Davies.**

### 9.3 Vandalism at WDJO. The Assistant Clerk’s report was received and various options were discussed. Members agreed to wait until MBC has found a solution to using overt cameras to see if one could be installed. Talk to the PCSO and ask him to do regular patrols of the area. It was also agreed to monitor the area and report back at October’s meeting. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

## 10. Policies and Procedures

### 10.1 Burial Ground Regulations. **No changes required.**

### 10.2 Burial Ground Fees. Agreed no increase. One minor amendment to text replacing owner with leaseholder.

### 10.3 Burial Ground Procedures. **No changes required.**

### 10.4 Parish Inspection. Members received the Clerk’s report and the following points were highlighted as requiring work:

- Dead Tree (south side) Boxley Village Green Cllr Wilmott stated this did not require clearing as it is not dead.
- Some Granite sets around the green require re setting along with some of the large boulders as these are set on concrete blocks which are dug into the ground. It was suggested that Goodsell’s provide a quote.
- Repainting and clearing vegetation from bus shelters. It was agreed to give this to the Caretaker.
- Coppicing of remaining overgrown hedge, it was agreed to get a quote from Hoods.
- Remove graffiti from Information Board next to the Bench in WDJO.

### 10.5 Asset Register. This is currently undergoing a major overhaul and will be brought back to a later meeting. **Noted.**

- 10.6 Annual Look at Beechen Hall. This could not be done as the meeting was virtual it was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would highlight any budgetary items for the hall at the October meeting. Cllr Vic Davies suggested as the Parish Council has returned to face to face meetings, that a quote for additional microphones and possibly speakers which connect into the existing hearing loop to enhance the audibility for Councillors at meetings. **Action Assistant Clerk/Cllr Vic Davies.**
- 10.7 Beechen Hall Snow Policy. **Agreed** with one small amendment under informative replace 'should be' with are.

## 11. Repairs to the south wall in Boxley Churchyard.

### 11.1 Clerk's Update

A revised quotation was still awaited from Goodsell's. The Clerk met with the Conservation Officer on 11 August who confirmed that planning permission would be required along with listed building consent for the repairs to the wall. The Conservation Officer also confirmed that he would approve the application as it is a necessity and needs doing urgently. The Clerk also confirmed that there would be a charge of between £200 - £500.00 to process the application.

## 11. Matters for Decision

There were none.

## 12. Boxley Village Green

- 12.1 Granite Sets around Boxley Village Green – See 10.4 above.
- 12.2 Village Green North Wall - The Clerk met with the Conservation Officer and he agreed that the heras fencing is removed. He has also requested the details of the landowner and will be reporting the repair of the wall through the enforcement team for action. **Action Clerk.**

In view of the confidential nature (personal details and data) on the following item to be transacted, it is advisable that the public and press are excluded from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item. There were none to exclude.

## 13. Caretaking Update

Members **received** the Assistant Clerk's report and the update that the potential new caretaker had, after some training, decided not to take up the position. A further person has been interviewed and the office is waiting for contact with them to determine what hours they can do. The Assistant Clerk has also been in contact with one of the temporary caretakers recruited just prior to the closure of the hall and is in discussions with them. It was suggested that as the latest advertisement had not pulled in a huge response that a banner is made and placed on top of the Beechen Hall sign at the entrance to Wildfell Close to advertise this position. It was agreed that the role of the caretakers and any enhancements to pay is looked at once the recruitment situation has been resolved. **Action Assistant Clerk.**

## 14. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 18 October 2021, 7.30pm at Beechen Hall. **Noted.**

Meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed as a correct record of proceedings.

Chairman.....

Date.....