

**Minutes of the Estates Committee Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
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 P Dengate, Mr C Sheppard,  
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 B Hinder – Apologies Accepted.

**2. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying**

Cllrs I Davies, C Sheppard, P Sullivan & P Dengate declared they have dispensation to vote on Dove Hill Allotments.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

All agreed.

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

No members of the public present.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

None.

**5. Actions From Previous Minutes.**

Cllr P Dengate requested that more detailed information be provided within these reports. To report back the item number from previous minutes, action description and noting that it's complete is not detailed enough. Staff are to cross reference with areas in current minutes (such as 'see page 7 item 9') if relevant as well as give a detailed explanation of what was done in order to complete the action. Out of meeting decisions report showing how councillors voted and who voted was noted.

**Action: Assistant Clerk** to liaise with Clerk to standardise the format of reporting the status of action items across council meetings.

**6. Beechen Hall**

**6.1 Income & Expenditure Basic Overview.**

A Cllr requested that the income titled 'cleaning fees' needs to be changed to something that sounds less like a cost to the council.

**Action: Assistant Clerk** to amend this title.

It was requested that a financial projection forward be included in future reports. Assistant Clerk pointed out that we do not have the software to provide this feature based on our current bookings into the future at this time. If new bookings software is put in place as discussed, this may be able to be easily added at a later date.

**Action: Assistant Clerk** to add financial projections forward once software that can produce these reports is in place.

- 6.2 Account balances.  
Noted.
- 6.3 Accident Report – None at the time of compiling the agenda.  
Noted.
- 6.4 Audio for Acorn Room.  
A through discussion took place on the access to the loft space above the acorn room.

The office have been requested to produce the following:

- Information relating to any ten year statutory that may cover the erection of the extension.
- Comprehensive list of defects relating to the build specification and minuted changes made to it in working group meetings.
- Information on the project manager hired and our contract with them.

**Action: Cllr P Dengate** to provide the office with access to the one drive that stores the original building specifications and the minutes from approximately 33 working group meetings.

**Action: Parish Caretaker** to read all material relating to the erection of the extension provided on the one drive and produce report that covers the information listed above.

**Action: Working Group** of Councillors to be formed to discuss taking the matter of the building specifications not being met and what may be done about it at this stage.

- 6.5 Soffits.  
Noted.
- 6.6 Hirer Refund Request.  
Noted.
- 6.7 Vending Machine  
A discussion took place regarding the potential benefits of providing vending machines to hall users. The idea was positively received though some potential risks were raised.
- Action: Office** to provide information on:
- Where the machines would be sited given they may be visible through the glass foyer doors while the building is closed and hold cash in them.
  - Potential Income
  - Potential Expenditure (i.e. electricity costs)
  - Liability for illness and injury (i.e. food poisoning)
  - Information relating to potential volume of use.

It was mentioned that if the volume of use is not high enough there can be issues of vending machines not being refilled.

## 7. **Matters for Information**

Scribe Bookings & Accounts.

Assistant Clerk provided brief report stating that the combined bookings and bookkeeping solution offered by Scribe is a saving against our current package.

**Action: Parish Clerk** to provide a full report at the next F&GP Meeting for a decision to be made.

## 8. Dove Hill Allotments

- 8.1 Allotment Report.  
Cllr B Hinder not present to report on the formation of an allotment association.

A number of plots are still vacant.

**Action: Office** to advertise plots in newsagents and put extra posters up where possible. To send alert to mailing list (Community Alert) held by the council.

- 8.2 Pest Purge Report.

**Action: Assistant Clerk** to chase Pest Purge for a report.

- 8.3 Allotment Income & Expenditure Basic Overview.  
Noted.

**Action: Assistant Clerk** to change the word 'TOTAL' to 'Balance'.

- 8.4 Allotment Gate.  
The Caretaker report was noted.

It was raised that there are still issues outstanding relating to the allotment gate. The hasp fails to latch on occasions, a skid plate hasn't been attached, the locks seem to be at the end of their useful life and the working party/allotment association hasn't yet been formed.

### **Actions:**

- **Caretaker** to continue working with Cllr P Dengate regarding the skid plate.
- **Caretaker** to add a chain to the gate with an additional lock (fitting current keys) so that when hasp does not catch the chain can be used to close the gate.
- **Caretaker** to discuss turning the gate with plot holding councillors.
- **Cllr B Hinder** to work on forming an allotment association as per agreed.
- **Assistant Clerk** to send alert to plot holders reminding them not to use WD40 on the locks.

- 8.5 Allotment Shed.  
Noted.

## 9. Parish Managed Play Areas/Open Spaces

- 9.1 Impton Lane Open Space.  
Cllr V Davies Proposed and Cllr P Dengate seconded that quote 1 be accepted. All agreed. WDJO (Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard) budget to be used to cover the cost while the WDJO work shall be moved to next years budget.

- 9.2 Franklin Drive Play Area.  
Cllr V Davies proposed and Cllr P Dengate seconded that this work should take place as part of the budget for 2023/24 with £3,500 set as the budget and company 2 used. Three agreed, one abstention due to conflict of interest.

**Action:** Office to ask company 2 to re-quote for the works in the new financial year.

- 9.3 Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard.  
Cllr C Sheppard proposed and Cllr V Davies seconded that the WDJO tree works be postponed and moved to the 2023/24 budget with an amount of £2,000. All agreed.

- 9.4 Other Parish Areas.  
A discussion took place regarding Walderslade Woodlands. It was felt that there is an opportunity to produce an income from the timber produced.
- Action: Office** to add to appropriate agenda for discussion.
- 10. Policies and Procedures for Review**
- 10.1 Hall Hire Conditions.  
A number of changes were discussed.
- Action: Office** to create new draft incorporating changes discussed and then send to councillors for approval out of meeting.
- 10.2 Hall Hire Fees.
- It was proposed by Cllr V Davies and seconded by Cllr C Sheppard that the new fee structure be accepted and reviewed quarterly. All agreed.
- There was a brief discussion on what the price changes were based on. Assistant Clerk explained it was based on an unfinished hall costings report they had been working on along with the Parish Caretaker.
- Action: Assistant Clerk** to provide a copy of the unfinished report to councillors.
- 10.3 Late arrival, departure and early opening for casual hirers.  
A number of changes were discussed.
- Action: Office** to create new draft incorporating changes discussed and then send to councillors for approval out of meeting.
- 10.4 Christmas closedown period of hall for following year.  
It was discussed that this item should not be part of the estates committee and requested that it go to the next finance meeting.
- Action: Clerk** to place this item on the next F&GP Meeting Agenda.
- 10.5 Lost Property Procedure and Disposal.  
Item deferred to the next meeting of the estates committee.
- Action: Assistant Clerk** to add this item to the next agenda.
- 11. Boxley Churchyard**  
Clerk's Update.  
Noted.
- 12. Matters for Decision.**  
Snow Policy  
Item deferred to the next meeting of the estates committee.
- Car park clearing  
Item deferred to the next meeting of the estates committee.
- Action: Assistant Clerk** to add these 2 items to the next agenda.
- Proud PAC Grant Application.  
It was raised that the committee could not award the grant as it could be a conflict of interest. When considering that Beechen Hall would benefit financially from any money received via a grant given by the council and that the Estates Committee

oversee the management of the hall, the grant application was turned down by the estates committee on this basis.

Having turned down the grant it was recognised that Proud PAC are a struggling business who offer a vital service to potentially vulnerable members of the community. It was proposed by Cllr P Dengate and seconded by Cllr C Sheppard that the committee temporarily waive the fees for this hirer. All accepted.

**Action:**

**Office** to ensure future grant applications go to finance meetings for the council to approve/deny so that the estates committee are removed from the process.

**Action: Office** to implement the agreed fee waiver for Proud Pac.

**13.**

**Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 13th February 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm at Beechen Hall. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

Meeting closed at 21:55.

Signed as a correct record of proceedings.

Chairman.....

Date.....