

**Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Environment Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on 5 June 2023**

**Councillors Present:** B Hinder – Chairman, A Asseter, C Sheppard, M Beckwith, P McClean, A Brindle and I Davies along with the Clerk, Mrs D Baylis

1. **Apologies and absences**  
Cllr H Bryant
2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**  
None.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 April 2023**  
Agreed.
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**  
None.

**To adjourn to allow members of the public to address the meeting.**

No members of the public present.

**5. Planning Applications for Consideration – DECISION**

**23/501743/FULL Bethany Boxley Road Walderslade Chatham Kent ME5 9JD**

Insertion of rear Juliet Balcony to prevent flat roof being used as a roof terrace with continuous placement of railings (part retrospective).

**Boxley Parish Council** have no material planning reasons to object to this application.

**23/502277/DEMREQ Lipscomb Cars Ltd Performance House Forstal Road Aylesford Maidstone Kent ME20 7X**

Prior notification for the proposed demolition of units 5 and 6 (324 m2 GEA each).

**Noted**

**23/502390/LDCEX Yew Tree Lodge Grange Lane Sandling Kent ME14 3DB**

Certificate of Lawful Development for existing use of building as 1no. independent dwelling.

**Boxley Parish Council** object to this application and think it should be re-submitted as a full planning application.

**23/502201/FULL 2 Franklin Drive, Weaving, ME14 5SY**

Erection of part single, part two storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory.

**Boxley Parish Council** have no material planning reasons to object to this application.

**23/502193/FULL 4 Autumn Glade, Boxley, ME5 8XP**

Garage conversion to a habitable room with part single storey side extension, single storey rear extension, 2no roof lights and changes to fenestration.

**Boxley Parish Council** have no material planning reasons to object to this application.

**23/501760/FULL 1 Abbey Gate Cottages, Boarley Lane, Sandling, ME14 3BT**

Demolition of the rear garden wall. Installation of a picket fence, new boundary fence, creation of parking space and arched pergola to front with entrance gate (retrospective)

**Boxley Parish Council** object to this application for the following reasons:

1. This work was refused in a planning application submitted in 2021 (21/506824/FULL). The applicant carried out the work even though planning permission had been refused and is now applying for retrospective planning permission. This sets a dangerous precedent.
2. The reasons for the 2021 refusal still stand and should be taken into consideration for this application.

If the Case officer is minded to approval, Boxley Parish Council would like this application determined by the Planning Committee.

**23/501761/LBC 1 Abbey Gate Cottages, Boarley Lane, Sandling, ME14 3BT**

Demolition of the rear garden wall. Installation of a picket fence, new boundary fence, creation of parking space and arched pergola to front with entrance gate (retrospective)

**Boxley Parish Council** object to this application for the following reasons:

1. This work was refused in a planning application submitted in 2021 (21/506824/FULL). The applicant carried out the work even though planning permission had been refused and is now applying for retrospective planning permission. This sets a dangerous precedent.
2. The reasons for the 2021 refusal still stand and should be taken into consideration for this application.

If the Case officer is minded to approval, Boxley Parish Council would like this application determined by the Planning Committee.

**23/502131/FULL 3 Crownfields, Maidstone, ME14 5TH**

Removal of existing conservatory, partial garage conversion into a room habitable, erection of a single storey rear extension with 2no. rooflights and changes to fenestration.

**Boxley Parish Council** have no material planning reasons to object to this application.

**6. Ratifications**

None on this Agenda

**7. Design and Sustainability Consultation**

Overarching Questions

1. How important do you think good design is in new development?  
Design is critical to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place before developments start.
2. Would you like to see improved sustainability standard in new development?  
Yes. All new houses should have solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric charging points as standard. This should be irrespective of when planning permission was granted.
3. Do you think we have identified all the issues that a Design and Sustainability DPD should consider?  
No
4. What should we be aspiring to deliver with the Design and Sustainability DPD?  
Sustainable buildings with infrastructure in place to support development before building works are started. More use of brownfield sites and an avoidance of building on agricultural land which is needed for food production.

5. Have we identified all the cross-boundary/strategic issues that the DPD should address?  
No. for example the Lidsing proposal consists of creating a garden settlement with no definitive plans for healthcare and school provision. It is assumed that these will be provided for residents by Medway Council. There are spaces left on the site for healthcare and a school but no indication of funding or who will build the structures needed. This is not good planning. It is also expected that residents pay a management fee to the developer to cover the cost of maintaining open spaces and community buildings but this amounts to double taxation as other residents in the Borough get these services as part of their Council Tax payment. Things like health care provision, schools, provision of community spaces need to be identified at the design stage with funding ring fenced by developers for the purpose. The maintenance of community spaces should not result in additional taxation. This detail is absent in the Design and Sustainability plan.
6. What do you think should be the end date for the Design and Sustainability DPD?  
No Opinion
7. What suggestions do you have to add to the content of the Design and Sustainability DPD?  
More emphasis on sustainable housing that is affordable. Most 'affordable' housing is still above the national average and out of reach of Kent's younger generation.

#### Placemaking

1. Have we identified the key issues related to Placemaking?  
Yes but these key issues need to be put into practice with every planned development.
2. What are the public places/spaces in Maidstone Borough that you enjoy spending time?  
Walderslade Woodlands, Mote Park, ???
3. What are the key features of buildings and places that you would like to see reflected in new development?  
Individuality to create a visually interesting street scene. Solar panels and electric charging points as standard. A reasonable sized garden or open area for recreation. Trees and planting that provide bio-diversity.
4. What are the elements of The Borough's heritage and identity that make the borough special?  
Its numerous small villages and historic buildings. It has a rich rural heritage and is a centre for agriculture, especially for the growing of hops and fruit. The town also played a significant role in transportation, as it was a major stop on the Medway Navigation, a system of canals and locks that allowed boats to travel inland to the town.
5. What do you think the DPD needs to do in order to deliver great places?  
Streets and Buildings
1. Have we identified the key issues relating to Streets and Buildings?  
Mainly yes as long as the principles are adhered to. Many new developments have convoluted road systems that are confusing to navigate. This is often to cram in as many houses as possible. Streets systems need to be simple.

2. How do you use the streets and buildings in your neighbourhood? How could we encourage greater use of spaces in your neighbourhood?  
Planted areas, benches, better lighting. Support for community facilities.
3. Are there examples of great spaces in the borough that you enjoy being in?  
Walderslade Woodlands
4. What are the architectural/unique features (locally and across the borough) that you would like to see reflected in new development?  
?
5. Do you think the borough should set out clear guidance on how to develop good urban design?  
yes

#### Open space and Nature

1. Have we identified the key issues related to open space and nature?  
Yes but not enough emphasis on preserving agricultural land for its intended purpose. Would like to see more wildlife corridors for wildlife that allow connectivity through developed areas.
2. What are the positive elements of Maidstone's natural environment that make the borough special?  
The North Downs AONB. Ancient Woodlands, farmland
3. How do you use the open spaces in your neighbourhood or where you work? how would you improve them?  
Walking, cycling, running, allotment gardening. Better made paths through Walderslade Woodland. Put barriers up on footpaths to deter nuisance quad and motorbikes.
4. Is there a good network of open spaces in your neighbourhood and adjacent areas for you to use and access other places?  
Very little connectivity between open spaces
5. Do you think the borough needs to set out clear guidance on how to deliver new development that fits within the landscape and natural environment?  
Yes but only if it enforces what it recommends. The guidance should be a requirement rather than just guidance.

#### Movement

1. do you think that the built environment provides attractive options to walk and cycle? And what would encourage you to walk or cycle?  
Better paths and lighting. Cutting back overgrown verges and trees overhanging paths. Sweeping roads so that they are clearer of debris for cycling. Better car management to slow traffic and make walking/cycling safer.
2. What do you think about the provision of charging points and ability to drive sustainably in your area?  
There are not enough charging points. Greater emphasis should be given to granting planning permission for installation of charging points to improve the network such as at community facilities.

3. Do you have a good range of options for moving around your neighbourhood and the borough?  
Yes.
4. do you think the borough needs to set our clearer guidance on coordinating different types of transport in new development?  
Yes.

#### Sustainable Buildings

1. Do you think it is important and necessary to have sustainable building standards?  
Its vitally important.
2. Are you aware of good or bad examples of sustainable building design, either in your neighbourhood or further afield? Please provide examples.  
The new housing in Wildfell Close is an eyesore and out of keeping with the woodland setting in which it sits. The plans had a provision for a sloping path to access the woodland. This was changed when the landscape plan was submitted and we are now left with a set of badly constructed unsafe steps that are not useable and apparently not enforceable as no detailed plans for the steps were submitted. There are no building regulations for this sort of step. Key design features such as this should not be altered to save the developer money. There is also a need to ensure landscape plans are enforced and damage rectified. This development is still a sea of mud. The verge outside it is deeply rutted and has not been restored to its original condition.
3. What are the most pressing sustainability issues you think should be addressed by new development?  
Reducing the need for fossil fuels and making housing more energy efficient.
4. Do you think the borough should set out clear guidance on how to achieve ambitious sustainability criteria in new development?  
Yes. Make sustainable features such as solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric charging points mandatory in all new buildings.

#### Design Quality

1. Have we identified the issues relating to design quality in the Borough?  
No
2. Do you think it is important to set design quality standards for new development in the Borough?  
Yes.
3. What are the unique features of your neighbourhood or further afield that you think contribute to quality of place?  
The trees and open spaces available to walk in. Busses and trains. Being able to access a doctor without a 3 week wait for an urgent appointment.
4. Can you think of good examples of attention to detail in new developments in your neighbourhood? Please provide examples.  
No
5. Do you think the Borough should set out guidance on how to interpret local distinctiveness and materials?  
Yes.

- 6. Do you think that we have appropriately avoided duplication with building regulation requirements? Please specify.  
Yes.

Evidence Base

- 1. Have we identified the key evidence base documents?  
Not sure.

8. **Items for Next Agenda – DECISION**

9. **Next Meeting**

Next full Environment Committee meeting 12 June 2023 commencing at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 21:50

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

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