

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk

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

Beechen Hall
Wildfell Close
Walderslade
Chatham
Kent ME5 9RU

E-mail – bowdery@boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk

To All Members of the Council, press and public.

5th March 2012

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Committee** on **Monday 12th March 2012** 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.** (7.30)
Members are required to declare any interests or lobbying on items in this agenda.
2. **Apologies and absences** (7.31)
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
3. **Minutes of the Meetings of 6th February 2012.** (7:32)
To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order to sign as a true record (already circulated).
3.1 Minute 2378/4 Cowbeck Wood. Map of the area, none received at the time of agenda being distributed.
4. **Matters Arising From Minutes.** (7.35)
4.1 Minute 2368/5.1 Walderslade Woods road/A2045 see report (page 3).
4.2 Minute 2368/5.2 inconsiderate parking Walderslade Village/Boxley Road. Chairman is due to escalate the issue as there has been no response from Medway Council.
4.3 Minute 2380/11.4 marker at Cossington Lane. Work is being undertaken to locate a sign that could be erected on a way marker post and to establish land ownership.

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

5. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration.** (7.50)
To consider planning applications. Members' are reminded to consider possible section 106 requests or to suggest any conditions.

MA/12/0271 – Retrospective application for the change of use of residential care home to single dwelling at Ruby, Chatham Road, Sandling *30/3/2012.*

TA/0020/12 – TPO No 24 of 1987, an application for consent to reduce Conifer by 30% and 2 Conifers by 10% at Ambleside, 4 Greenways, Weaving. *16/3/2012.*

TA/0025/12 – TPO No 2 of 1995. An application for consent to fell 2 Cypress trees at Forstal Pumping Station, Forstal Road, Aylesford. *16/3/2012.*

TA/0027/12 – TPO No 1 of 1969, an application for consent to Crown Lift T1 (Maple) to a height of 15 feet, crown lift T2 (Hornbeam) to a height of 22 feet and remove lower branch of T3 (Maple) at 7, Bellgrove Court, Boxley, Chatham *22/3/2012.*

6. **Planning applications taken to Planning Committee.** (8.00)
Planning rota –
MA/11/2023: Brooklyn Yard see report from Cllr Ivor Davies (page 3-4.)

7. **Planning Applications and appeals decisions.** (8.02)
 To note the Maidstone Borough Council's planning application decisions and Secretary of State's appeal decisions. Asterisk * indicates decision contrary to parish council views.

APP/U2235/A/11/2165169/NWF – MA/10/1627 Land of Beechen Bank, Boxley Road – This application was dismissed by Planning Inspectorate on 22 February, 2012.

MA/11/1310	*GRANTED	MA/11/1349	GRANTED
MA/11/1370	GRANTED	MA/11/1601	GRANTED
MA/11/1834	GRANTED	MA/11/1883	GRANTED
MA/11/2083	GRANTED	MA/11/2026	REFUSED
MA/11/2034	GRANTED	MA/11/2106	GRANTED
MA/11/2131	GRANTED	MA/11/2143	GRANTED
MA/11/2177	GRANTED	TA/0014/11	*REFUSED
TA/0025/11	REFUSED	TA/0050/11	*REFUSED
TA/0067/11	GRANTED	TA/0072/11	GRANTED
TA/0074/11	GRANTED	TA/0102/11	GRANTED
TA/0122/11	*GRANTED	TA/0136/11	GRANTED
TA/0180/11	GRANTED	TA/0205/11	GRANTED
TA/0209/11	GRANTED	TA/0211/11	WITHDRAWN

8. **Walderslade Woods and Volunteer Group** (8.08)
 8.1 To receive the Chairman's report (page 4-5), and an update on the group.
 8.2 Public Rights of Way see report (page 5).
9. **Highways and Byways.** (8.20)
 9.1 Old Chatham Road. Cllr Harwood has requested a deep clean of the area because of the increase in flytipping and waste from lorries using the area. The office has been advised that a meeting is being arranged between Tonbridge & Malling BC, MBC, KCC and the Police.
 9.2 Double yellow lines Cuckoo Wood Avenue. Members supported the residents request and arranged for details to be sent to Cllr Carter. Funds for the DYL have been approved and the legal/consultation work will commence in March. The resident has sent her thanks to the Parish Council.
10. **Strategy for dealing with highway issues not receiving KHS funding.** (8.40)
 To consider how to deal with issues notified by residents but for which there is no KHS funding see report (page 5-6).
11. **MBC Core Strategy Post Consultation Conference**
 Cllr Ivor Davies attended please see report on (pages 6-7).
12. **Policy and procedures review.** (9.15)
 12.1 Terms of reference see report (page 7-8).
 12.2 Street Maintenance 'Policy' for budget expenditure see report (page 8-9).
13. **Empty Properties.**
 To consider MBC's policy and work see report (page 9).
14. **Matters for information.** (9.28)
 14.1 Boxley Abbey see report (page 10).
 14.2 Medway Local Development Framework (LDF) Submission Draft Core Strategy – copies of the submission documents and supporting evidence is available to view online at www.medway.gov.uk/ldf

14.3 Joint Transportation Board Meetings – 2012/13 – Notification of scheduled meeting dates as follows:

Wednesday 18 July, 2012

Wednesday 24 October, 2012

Wednesday 23 January, 2013

Wednesday 17 April, 2013.

14.4 Neighbourhood Planning Workshops – Thursday 29th March at Lenham Community Centre organised by ACRK.

15. **Next Meeting.** (9.30)
Next environment meetings 2nd April and 16th April 2012 (full) at Beechen Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the confidential nature (personal details and data) on the Enforcement item about to be transacted, it is advisable that the public and press will be excluded from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item.

16. **Enforcement and Section 106 updates from MBC.** (9.31)
To consider a confidential update, enclosed for members.

Clerk to Boxley Parish Council

Item 4.1 Walderslade Woods road/A2045. *Purpose of item; information.*

The following was forwarded on from a resident who had been asked to lobby KCC about their wish to see the work to reduce the speed limit on Walderslade Woods road undertaken.

"I am pleased to inform you that following discussions with Paul Carter, one of the two local County Councillors for Walderslade Woods, he has agreed to contribute a significant proportion of the cost of the improvements from his Member Highway Fund. The scheme will now be designed and priced to determine what other contributions are required to implement all of the proposals. We are exploring other options of funding the remainder of the scheme. The scheme can now move forward to design and consultation. If for whatever reason the full amount cannot be obtained then the County Council will have to make a decision on what elements are to be implemented in consultation with the community. I trust that this is helpful. Your sincerely

Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member"

Cllr Carter has contacted the Parish Council to confirm an allocation of £15,000. £1,000 will be used to pay for the design stage. Once this has been received it will become clearer on costs etc.

Item 6 MA/11/2023: Brooklyn Yard - Planning Meeting 16/2/12 Cllr Ivor Davies report. *Purpose of item; information.*

I ran through our objections when I attended the MBC Planning Committee meeting on 16 February, but we were never going to 'win' this one. Officers and councillor after councillor (most (all?) of whom declared that they had been lobbied) said how they welcomed the close pre-application discussions that had taken place and hoped that this would be a model for the future. They generally agreed that, as there was a need for warehousing in the borough, this was best placed close to the strategic road network and that M20 J6 was therefore ideal.

As regards our specific areas of objection, officers stated that, having visited various parts of the AONB, he believed the development would be hardly visible against the general background of the motorway infrastructure and that little would be seen above the surrounding grassed bund from e.g. Forstal Road or Cobtree Park. There was therefore no justification for insisting on a green roof.

Our comments on the perceived traffic difficulties were better received but Highways reassured the committee that, with the splayed entrance/egress, our concerns about slow-moving lorries was unfounded. There was no record of any serious accident in the vicinity other than at the roundabout [Note: this ignored our comment that there would now be two new turnings on to this stretch of road where there had been none before]. Tony Harwood commented that since work had commenced on the Audi site, he had noticed that drivers were driving far more carefully [probably because one lane is coned off and there are huge warning signs]. In response to a question, Highways confirmed that they would install any necessary warning signs following a safety audit.

As regards the sustainability of an island site with no safe access on foot or by bike, a point stressed in our objection and to which I devoted a third of my speech, comment was there none from the committee. [This is something that I pointed out to Stephen Eighteen of the Downs Mail who asked me for a copy of my speaking notes].

The motion that permission be granted, subject to (numerous) conditions, proposed by T. Harwood and seconded by C. English was agreed unanimously.

Item 8.1 Walderslade Woodlands Group (WWG) Chairman's report for the financial year 2011/2012. *Purpose of item; information.*

The Group has come a very long way since this time last year. When I took over the position of Chairman in February 2011, our goals were extremely short term. Ensuring the best possible use of the grant from BPC was an imperative.

The main difference this year is that we now have a much clearer vision of our goals and objectives, and also we have a detailed plan of how to get where we want to be, and this is achieving properly managed and maintained woodlands and plateaux, which go to make up the Walderslade Woodlands.

Indeed, I would eventually love to be able to reach a level of self-sufficiency by pursuing activities such as the sale of wood for burning, and wood chippings for gardens. But this is some way off at the moment.

I am very pleased to say that one of my major fears has been eased somewhat. That is the group's static membership. We are, albeit slowly, increasing our membership by publicising ourselves, and our works, and I hope this trend will continue.

I think the best way for me to give at least a feel for what has been and still needs to be done, is to list some key achievements, tasks to be done, and issues still to be addressed.

- Grubber/mower purchase, training program, transportation & maintenance completed.
- Chain saw purchase, basic training program & insurance completed.
- All required risk assessments completed.
- All required protective clothing purchased.
- A suitable level of specialised First Aid knowledge is being acquired.
- A minimum standard of protective clothing is still to be defined and provided for all volunteers.
- Felling and coppicing training is still to be completed.
- A pole saw is to be purchased, and the required training/insurances set up.
- A motorised wood chipper is to be purchased, maintained and stored.

- Bat detectors are still to be purchased.
- Animal boxes are still to be acquired and deployed.
- A 5 year management plan is to be defined for the plateaux.
- The 5 year management plan for the woodlands needs to be brought up to date.
- 'Awards For All' scheme is to be investigated, as to whether it suits our kind of volunteering.
- Co-ordination with other groups is to be set up, to look at how we can share the skills and resources we have.
- To protect our woodlands and plateaux in the long term, by the pursuit of Village Green Status for Walderslade Woods.

I am very optimistic given how far we have come since this time last year, and am looking forward to growing our partnership with BPC, so that we can make even greater strides next year.

Rob Burrows.
Chairman WWG.

Item 8.2 Minute 2380/13 Public Rights of Way in the woodland. *Purpose of item: information and a possible decision.*

It is confirmed that the footpaths along the Tunbury Valley (KH655) and Cossington Valley (KH656) are registered as Public Rights of Way. The footpath along Round Wood Valley was never designated as at the time its exit/entrance at Walderslade Woods Road was not clearly defined.

Item 10 Strategy for dealing with highway issues not receiving KHS funding. *Purpose of item; draft for consideration.*

The Environment Committee controls a small Street Maintenance budget, once this budget is exhausted or if the cost of a project exceeds the annual budget the Committee has the right to approach the Parish Council (or in some circumstances the Finance Committee) with a recommendation for additional funding to be released from contingency or reserves.

In order to make a recommendation the following issues will need to be undertaken:

- Identification of what work/action is wanted;
- Identify the reasons why it is considered the work/action is needed (work that is solely for aesthetic/cosmetic reasons will not be considered);
- Relevance of the work;
- Benefit must be to a number of residents not just one or very few;
- Gain was commensurate with expenditure;
- What is any request has been made to Kent County Council, Cllr Carter or Maidstone Joint Transport Board. It is expected that these avenues would be exhausted prior to the Parish Council funding the work.
- Reasons why KCC did not undertake or fund the work.
- Is the work legal and would KCC recommend that it is undertaken.

To help deal with these issues, especially if the request comes from a resident etc. the following form should be completed

Checklist for requests for Parish Council financial support

Description of work required and why it is needed? Please try to be specific - health and safety improvements, benefits to residents.

Location of where problem is. Please be precise using house/road numbers/names or draw a plan

on a separate sheet.

Have you reported the problem to or requested that KCC Highways (any information might help the Parish Council evaluation the project or track down the initial request).

Any other supporting information

Item 11 MBC Core Strategy Post Consultation Conference. *Purpose of item: information.*

MBC Draft Core Strategy Post-Consultation Conference 29/2/2012

About 20 parishes were represented together with Borough councillors and some invited guests from CPRE, KCC, etc and a commercial planning consultant. This was an interesting day - made the more enjoyable by the feeling that BPC is ahead of the game in that we have already started drafting our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

After Chris Garland's introduction - the 2,736 comments received (all accessible on the MBC website) are still being analysed; this was therefore very much a work-in-progress report - David Edwards (Planning Director) gave a strategic overview of the infrastructure development requirement ("sustainable growth ... 10,000 new houses ... affordability ... employment opportunities", etc), and the need for a transportation plan that moved people, not vehicles.

Rob Jarman ran through the background to the need for a Core Strategy and the Local Development Plan under 'Localism' and the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Much of this we already know, such as the requirement for MBC planners to work in co-operation with both Parish Councils and businesses and the intention to remove bureaucracy [we shall see]. Two useful nuggets did emerge:

- Section 106 agreements will still be possible. They will run in parallel with the new Land Development Levy for infrastructure works.
- MBC will pay for referendums needed under the new Neighbourhood Planning system.

Huw Edwards of Barton Willmore gave the planning consultant's view. He saw this as a useful step-change compelling developers to take into account local residents' views and therefore removing some of the stigma that they currently attract. Living in Maidstone borough he welcomed this, but was honest enough to admit that, as a consultant, this would also be good for business. In his view, Localism is a real opportunity for ordinary people to become engaged in the future prosperity and sustainability of their neighbourhoods.

Flo Churchill, departing Head of Core Strategy Development, made a very interesting presentation (she promised send us a copy), running through the consultation document and explaining how parishes could use their responses in drafting their NDP.

The Q & A session addressed a number of issues, mainly connected with drafting NDPs. It was clear that most parishes had not yet started - and did not know how to start, even those with Parish Plans already in place and therefore halfway there. Several people asked for a template but Rob Jarman said that all he was allowed to give would be basic parameters. Other matters touched upon included quality of design (generally considered to be of a low standard - Rob Jarman much on the defensive); the need for a definition of "sustainability"; and whether motorway junction sites should be considered 'sustainable' given their remoteness. (The KIG consultant commented that he had come to the Village Hotel on the 101 bus, but the first driver had not known where it was and the second had dropped him off half-way up Blue Bell Hill as there was no nearer stop - the very point we have made about the Brooklyn Yard development).

A Neighbourhood Planning exercise concluded what I think all present felt had been a useful day. This not least because of the general atmosphere from all sides of "we are all in this together", which is the very heart of Localism. Or am I just being naive?

Ivor Davies
2/3/2012

Item 12.1 Terms of Reference. *Purpose of item; members to decide whether document is still fit for purpose or to recommend changes for the April meeting.*

**Ter
ms
of**

Reference - Environment Committee.

Role

The role of the Environment Committee is to represent the Parish Council on planning and highway issues and to make recommendations or take relevant action on other community issues.

Responsibilities

The Planning Committee shall:

1. Consider and make representations as to land use.
2. Consider and make representations on planning and other related applications.
3. To make representations on appeals notified and to attend public inquiries if considered necessary.
4. Represent the Council upon all matters relating to development plans as well as district, structure and local plans and planning policy proposals.
5. Determine all matters relating to street naming.
6. Represent the Council on matters relating to highways, street furniture, roadside waste bins and bus passenger shelters.
7. Deal with all car and cycle parking matters.
8. Deal with all matters relating to public transport, postal and public utility facilities.
9. Deal with all matters relating to street and footway lighting.
10. Deal with all matters relating to the public rights of way
11. Deal with all matters relating to the preservation of trees, historic buildings and conservation areas.
12. Consider and make representations on land drainage and water transport.
13. Consider and make representations to the Borough and County Council on the ground maintenance services and schedules for the parish.
14. Consider youth issues within the parish and to make recommendations/suggestions to the relevant bodies or agencies.
15. Make requests for Section 106 payments that would benefit the Council and community.
16. Development of policies and procedures in order to undertake this work.
17. Undertake, where relevant, public consultations.
18. Deal with requests for grants from community groups/organisations relevant to the role of the Environment Committee.

Budget

1. To draft the budget and decide priority ratings for the committee and to submit budget requirements and recommendations to the Finance Committee.
2. To manage the budget and vire, where necessary, between budgets held and managed by the committee.
3. To manage, according to Financial Regulations, the contracts and tenders for any projects within the budget of the committee.

Membership

1. The Committee shall consist of up to ten councillors, including as per standing orders the Parish Council's Chair and Vice Chair.

- The committee may appoint working parties to undertake any specific project work as necessary

Other.

The Parish Council has the right to identify issues that will be dealt with at the full meeting of the Parish Council.

Item 12.2 Street Maintenance and policy and pro forma. *Purpose of item; members to decide whether document is still fit for purpose.*

When suggesting additional work individual members are asked to identify the following:

- what additional work they want;
- why they consider it is needed (whether it is for practical or aesthetic reasons);
- (if known) whether the land/vegetation is highway or private. If private can they identify the property owner/house number etc.
- have they reported the problem to KHS at any time (reference number to be given if possible)?

The Environment Committee will consider requests for the budget to be allocated and has identified the following criteria/requirements that need to be considered before a decision is made.

Is the issue on Highway property (verges/footways) and have reasonable attempts been made to get KHS to do the work? *Reasonable is considered as a report/request made for the work and its progress is checked 7 days later. If work not scheduled or no answer than parish office to contact the Highway Inspector/Community Liaison officer for advice/response/schedule for any planned work allowing another 7 days for response/work. Issue then taken to Environment Committee for consideration. If there is a safety issue then response times allowed will be cut to 3 working days.*

Encroaching vegetation from private property. KHS can send a letter requiring the work be done and this can be arranged via the Highway Inspector.

Footways, especially if on a school, cycle or access to public facilities route are considered a priority by the Environment Committee. Salt bins can be supplied for footway maintenance.

Vision splays are a H & S issue if they are overgrown and should be cut as and when required. This is the same as vegetation around speed signs and highway directional signs.

When considering projects Environment Committee should consider the following

- whether the request is commensurate with the possible cost.
- H & S issues if it is going to arrange for work to be done.
- Who uses the footway, footpath etc.
- Why is it used (does it connect to a bus stop etc)
- Is it a 'make it pretty' request or a practical request.

There is a limited budget for work and where possible problem areas will be identified as soon as possible. The Environment Committee can consider work for aesthetic reasons but these should not take priority over work needed for practical reasons.

Street Maintenance. Checklist for requests for funding

Description of work required and why it is needed (practical, aesthetic, H&S issues)
Location. Please be precise use house/road numbers/names or draw a plan on a separate sheet.
If the land is not highways do you know who owns it? Give details.

Have you reported the problem to KHS (08458 247800) YES / NO
If yes give reference number and date reported.
Any Other information

Parish office notes

Prior to submitting to Env. Committee for consideration following has to be attempted.

Has KHS been chased (normally 7 days/3 days if H&S issue)
If no progress has the Community Liaison Officer/Highway Inspector being contacted (allow another 7 days for a response. Less if H&S issue)
Are benefits of work commensurate with possible cost
Any other information/notes

Item 13 Empty Properties. *Purpose of item; information and to decide what, if any, action should be taken.*

From MBC website Housing page. "Empty properties are also potential homes and if brought back into use will reduce the need for building on Greenfield sites. The government has set targets for local Councils to bring empty properties back into use. The Borough Council has a "Empty homes policy" with our own targets and is also considering grants packages to encourage owners, to repair and let out empty properties. To report an empty property or to discuss an empty property you own please contact us: Private Sector Housing, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ. By telephone: 01622 602470, or by email Private Sector Housing" MBC does not have a specific empty properties officer the work is split between 2 officers and there has been some success in returning properties. Any Councillor/resident/Parish Council can report an empty property but then it is up to MBC as to whether they can engage the owner.

Item 14 Boxley Abbey. *Purpose of item; information.*

The office has been informed that the Abbey owners have received an English Heritage Grant towards preserving the abbey.