

BOXLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk



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Beechen Hall
Wildfell Close
Walderslade
Chatham
Kent ME5 9RU

To All Members of the Council, public and press.

2 June 2015

There will be a meeting of the Estates Committee on **Tuesday 9 June 2015** at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:

The first order of business will be a quick visit to the Walderslade Woodlands Group shed.

1. Declaration of Interest or Lobbying.

Members are required to declare any interests, requests for dispensation, lobbying or changes to the Register of Interests.

2. Apologies and absence.

To receive apologies for absence.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 21 April 2015.

To consider the minutes of the meeting and if in order to sign as a true record (previously circulated).

To adjourn the meeting to allow the public or press to comment

4. Matters Arising From Previous Minutes

4.1 Minute 2746/4.2 Kestrel nesting box and insect houses at allotments. MBC has agreed in principle to the installation of a kestrel box but will need location and installation details before giving permission. A suitable tree at Dove Hill Wood has now to be identified.

4.2 Minute 2746/4.4 WWG additional storage at Beechen Hall. The Awards for All bid was successful with a 50% grant towards the cost being awarded. The unit has been ordered and the WWG will be preparing the ground for its delivery.

4.3 Minute 2747/5 St Pauls Scout Water bill. South East Water is investigating and an update is awaited from the Scouts.

4.4 Any other matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda.

5. Dove Hill Allotments

To update members of any developments. See report on (page 5). A verbal update from Cllr Bob Hinder will be provided at the meeting.

6. Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard

A bat walk with a moth trapping night at the Orchard is proposed for Tues 14th July see report (page 3).

7. Boxley Village Green South and North Walls.

To consider the action taken and to agree future actions see report (page 3).

8. Matters for Information

WDJO Annual Playground Inspection – This has been scheduled for July by ROSPA and minor surfacing repairs will be carried out by Cllrs Vic Davies and Pat Sullivan prior to the inspection.

Ten minute comfort break (if wanted).

9. Assistant Clerk's Report

- 9.1 To receive hire fees for April/May see report (page 3).
- 9.2 Income and Expenditure see report (page 4).
- 9.3 Account balance as at 31 May 2015 see report (page 4).
- 9.4 Fixed Term Deposit Account HSBC - Information to follow.
- 9.5 Accident Report - None to report.

10. **Beechen Hall Extension** – A meeting took place with Faithdean. They are returning to the hall with a conservatory company to provide cost options and a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

In view of the potential confidential nature (personal details and data) in the next item the chairman may decide that the public and press will be excluded from the meeting for the duration of or part of the item.

11. Staff pay.

Item requested at April meeting minute reads "It was **agreed** that the next meeting would give consideration to creating and maintaining a buffer between the minimum wage and the actual pay. Members' indicated that they would wish any agreement to be back dated to 1 April 2015." Confidential report enclosed for members.

12. Policies and Procedures

- 12.1 Village Hall Grant Policy – annual review. See report (pages 4-5).
- 12.2 Dove Hill Allotments Review of Annual Rents – See report (pages 5-6).
- 12.3 Housekeeping policy reviews. Late departure of casual hirers. Late arrivals of casual hirers. Early opening of hall. *These policies have been reviewed by the office and are still fit for purpose. A copy can be obtained from the office by request.*

13. Matters for Decision

None at the time of compiling the agenda.

14. Budget Projects 2015/16

14.1 Noticeboard at Beechen Hall – Update. A design will be submitted to members at the August meeting, but their views are sought on what should be included on the sign. The office suggestion is Beechen Hall – Venue for hire – 01634 861237 – www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk. The Assistant Clerk will be leading on this project.

14.2 Interpretation Board Impton Lane – Update. A design, along the lines of what was identified on trees in 2014, will be presented to members at the next meeting. The Clerk/Assistant Clerk will jointly lead on this project.

15. **Date of Next Meeting.** Tuesday 11 August, 2015 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, Chatham commencing at 7.30 p.m. Items for the agenda must be with the parish office no later than 31 July 2015.

Pauline Bowdery

Pauline Bowdery
Clerk to the Council

Note to all councillors: you are welcome to attend meetings of committees of which you are not a member but only committee members may vote.

Legislation allows for meetings to be recorded by anyone attending. Persons intending to record or who have concerns about being recorded should please speak to the Clerk.

**REPORTS AND ITEMS RELATING TO THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING
9 June 2015.**

The Chairman will assume that these have been read prior to the meeting.

Councillors wishing to suggest changes to any policy document or procedure in this agenda should notify the office, in writing, at least three working days in advance of the meeting. This will allow details to be circulated at the meeting (or in advance if particularly contentious).

Item 5. Dove Hill Allotments. – for information.

Clerk's Allotment report

Three quarter plots were uncultivated and the tenants were contacted. One tenant resigned from the tenancy but the other tenant was given notice to quit when the promised cultivation was not undertaken. The three plots have since been rented to existing tenants.

A notice to quit has also been served on a tenant and a number of other plots have been placed into a review calendar to either encourage the tenant to be more proactive on areas of their site or to at least keep any weed growth down.

Bob Hinder's Allotment Report.

Boxley Gardening Society Open Garden event Sunday 14 June. A further verbal report will be given at the meeting.

Item 6. Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard – for decision and information.

A guided bat walk with a moth trapping night at the Orchard is proposed for Tues 14th July (F&GP Committee meeting night). The event is being organised by the Kent Downs AONB Unit and is part of a Kent Orchard project.

Clerk's suggestion – The event will probably start at about 9.15 as it gets dark and it will not be possible to have any display at the site but does the committee wish to donate tea and coffee? Posters will be provided by Kent AONB and publicity could be undertaken by the parish council.

Item 7. Boxley Village Green South and North Walls– for decision and information.

Work to kill the ivy on both walls and to clear the overgrown area on the south verge of the green is commencing on 3 June 2015.

Two companies have visited the site and have agreed that they can undertake the work but the difficulty is that until the ivy starts to be removed it is not known what damage there will be. Further information and photographs are contained in the briefing note enclosed for members.

Item 9. Assistant Clerks Report – for information.

9.1 To receive Hall Hire Fees for April/May with a comparison at the same point in the previous year. However members must remember that the figures below are an indication of monies received for hall hire during this period.

	2015/2016	2014/2015
Casual	£3,208.63	(£2,039.48)
Regular	<u>£4,539.58</u>	<u>(£4,960.78)</u>
Total	£7,748.21	(£7,000.26)

9.2 Income and Expenditure report.

Due to the change in the accounting system this report is not yet available.

9.3 Account Balances – HSBC- as at 31 May (2015)

Beechen Hall	
Account Balances as per bank statement at 31 March 2015	
	£
Current Account	27,083.93
Reserve Account	25,045.37

Item 12. Review of Policies and Procedures – purpose of item for information and decision

12.1 Village Hall Grant Policy (review).

Estates Committee Village/Community Hall Grants Procedure/Policy

In order to work prudently, obtain 'best value' and to be a responsible grant provider Boxley Parish Council's Estates Committee is setting a standard for considering and awarding grants to Village/Community Halls. Whilst the Parish Council wishes to continue to actively support the Village/Community Halls within the Parish it feels that it is essential to require applicants to meet a minimum standard covering project planning and supply of information. By undertaking this work the Parish Council can plan with Village/Community Halls adequate funding in advance of the project being committed to.

Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organisation for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be "in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it" and "the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure." The parish council has Power of Competency so is not bound by the financial ceiling imposed by Section 137 however the principles of awarding a grant, as shown above, will apply when considering applications.

Boxley Parish Council policy is that

- Grants for maintenance will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as it considers that the day to day maintenance of the hall should be covered by the hire fees or fund raising.
- Village/Community Hall Management Committees will be required to show, for large scale projects costing over £3,000 that it is applying for funding from other sources; has undertaken fund raising events or has been saving towards the project. The Parish Council will be happy to assist the Committee to identify other funding sources.
- The Parish Council will only award up to 80% of the cost for essential repairs or renewals (e.g. windows, fire doors etc).
- For projects costing £3,000 - £10,000 the Parish Council would require the Management Committee to obtain 3 written quotations and for projects costing over £10,000, 5 written quotations should be obtained. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process.
- VH Management Committees will be required to liaise closely with the Parish Office so where possible the Parish Council can order the work and gift it to the Village Hall which will enable VAT to be reclaimed. This will increase the value of the grant given to the hall by the rate of VAT.

- Unless a schedule of payments has been agreed in advance by the Parish Council funds will only be released on completion of the work
- It would be advantageous to notify the Council if the VH Committee has undertaken any other projects in the recent past.

The Parish Council recognises that most halls are run by volunteers and will be happy to assist/advise VHMCs on how to meet these standards.

At the Estates Committee meeting in October or December the Committee will consider individual grant requests from Village/Community Hall Management Committees for specific projects in the following financial year so that provision can be made in the budget recommendation to the Parish Council.

An additional budget will also be identified from which other grant requests will be allocated in the current financial year. A maximum award of £500 for such unplanned applications will be considered. Once the additional budget is exhausted only emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations where the Parish Council has Custodial Trustee status, will be considered.

All organisations requesting assistance will be required to complete an application form which will include notification of the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Village/Community Hall Management Committees will have to sign that it agrees with the policy or submit details of their own policy. Management Committees should also agree to representatives of the Council being given the right to inspect the work on completion.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance will be requested to submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts.
- Copy of current hire fees with an explanation of any unusual agreements where a group pays less than normal.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can hire the hall.

A grant request, once received in writing, will be considered at the next meeting of the Estates Committee and the Estates Committee reserve the right to inspect the required work before a grant is agreed.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund raising activities.

Successful Applications

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment had been received from Boxley Parish Council.

Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the parish council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user.

12.2 Annual review of Allotment Rents – *for information and decision.*

The allotments have been in use officially for just over one year during this time the rental income from the plots totalled £1042.22. In a normal year the income should total £1035.00 which equates to 69 quarter plots x £15.00. Expenditure is more difficult to predict going forward as this last year's costs also included set up costs that would not normally be associated with an 'average years' expenditure. We know that £300.00 is for grounds maintenance. The water bill is estimated to be around £278.00 per year. Insurance is approx. £220.00, administration £10.00 and general maintenance of £200.00 (replacement signs, paint for shed etc). It is therefore anticipated that the likely expenditure would be in the region of £1008.00. **Clerk's comment** it is only a year since

an intensive review of allotment rents resulted in the current rent. It is suggested that another year or two is allowed for things to settle before another review.

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