**Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Meeting held at Sandling Village Hall, Sandling Lane, Sandling on the 7 October 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Councillors Present**:  B Hinder - Chairman, P Mclean, A Brindle, I Davies, C Sheppard, M Beckwith, V Jones, , M Cox, A Adams, K Macklin, C English and J Akehurst together with Mrs D Baylis – Parish Clerk 2 members of the public and Maidstone Borough Councillor M Naghi

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllrs Sullivan, Bryant and Thompson.

Maidstone Borough Councillors R Burke and R Field had sent apologies.

1. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**

Cllr Macklin – Item 12.1 The grant application is a Kent Chamber of Commerce member.

1. **Motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting for all items in the confidential section.**

It was proposed by Cllr A Brindle, seconded by Cllr C Sheppard and all agreed that members of the public be excluded from all items in the confidential section.

1. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 25 September 2024**

Agreed with amendments and would be signed at a later date by the Chairman.

1. **Matters Arising From the Minutes**

Minute number 3892 Item number 11. Grove Green Planters complaint. Cllr Jones asked for proof of the 137 positive comments. Cllr Sheppard would circulate a screenshot of the Facebook post to members with names redacted.

Minute 3392 Item 9.4 Cllr Cox would forward the graph used by MBC to the Clerk.

Minute 3893 Item 17. The road names put forward by the Parish Council for the new development in Gleaming Wood Drive that honour the memory of Wendy Hinder were rejected by the Developer. The Developer has said that they will name a wood and some footpaths after her.

1. **Crime Report and Police Issues**

Report noted..

**Public Session at the discretion of the Chairman. Parishioners may address the meeting with regard to any item on the Agenda (time limited to 3 minutes per person). Items not on the Agenda must be submitted to the Clerk in advance of the meeting. Non-parishioners are only able to address the meeting at the invitation of the Chairman.**

The members of the public were here to support their Grant Application which was item 12.1

1. **Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings**

 None held since the last Parish Council meeting

1. **Finance**

8.1 **Bank Balances**

 Noted

8.2 **Finance General**

 The Clerk gave an update on the Barclays situation. It was agreed that the Clerk and the Chairman would make an appointment with the manager of the Maidstone Barclays branch.

1. **Policies and Procedures**

9.1 **Pandemic Policy**

 The requested amendments had been made.

9.2 **Health and Safety Policy**

 The requested amendments had been made.

9.3 **Whole Council Risk Assessment**

Deferred to next meeting.

9.4 **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

This was agreed as written. A clause will be added to the Contractors Health and Safety Policy covering mental health and wellbeing.

1. **Reports from Boxley Parish Councillors/Office**

10.1 **Office Staff Report**

No report for this Agenda.

10.2 **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Brindle reported that she, and Cllrs Hinder and Sheppard had attended the combined parishes traffic group meeting the previous week. Toby Butler had given a presentation on flashing speed limit signs with a comprehensive guide of the criteria necessary for their installation. This would be circulated to all members with suggestions welcomed as to where in the parish they could be fitted that met the criteria and provide a benefit to residents.

Cllr Brindle had attended the Annual Parish Seminar for transport. The Clerk had circulated the copy of the second newsletter from the Active Travel and Road Safety that had been received and had subsequently received the first one which she was asked to circulate. No solutions were raised to Operation Brock. There was a presentation on Highways updates. KCC were in the process of reviewing their highways maintenance contracts. 8.6 million was needed to fix potholes in the county. There was a face to face seminar scheduled for the 20 November following which slides and information would be circulated. Highway Improvement Plans were discussed. The impact of the Lower Thames Crossing was also discussed. The Travel Plan consultation was highlighted. The role of KCC in local planning applications was also discussed.

Cllr Brindle shared information on rural area signage with an exclamation mark sign that could be used when no other suitable sign was possible. This could be put on private land where KCC have no signage. The signs used are not a national requirement but down to each county as to which signs they install.

Cllr Sheppard reported that he had attended the recent MBC planning training seminar. The Clerk would circulate the slides to members once received.

Cllr Hinder reported that he was very proud of Boxley Parish Council and what it stood for. He asked that Councillors respond to emails sent as a matter of courtesy. He had emailed Cllr Jones asking for the name of the resident who had complained to her about the PC Agenda not being on the website as he wanted to send a personal apology from the Chairman for the error but had not had any response. Cllr Jones stated that she had not received the email from Cllr Hinder but gave him the name of the resident who he’d had previous contact with and he would now send a personal apology.

10.3 **Borough/County Councillor Reports**

Cllr Thompsons comprehensive report sent in advance of the meeting to all Councillors was noted.

Cllr English reported that Maidstone Borough and Kent County councils had re-established MBC’s quality bus forum. MBC were consulting on a heritage strategy. MBC were establishing resources to fight against environmental crime and ramping up environmental publicity. Additional work was being done on planning policies and landscape protection policies with the creation of several new public parks and nature reserves.

Cllr Jones reported that the judicial review for Lidsing had been turned down. The Supplementary Planning Document was being drawn up by MBC. A Lidsing Stakeholder Steering Group was being set up with its first meeting scheduled for November.

Cllr Jones has been working with The KCC Highways rep regarding double yellow line installation for Bellgrove Court. She said that KCC were happy to approve the installation of double yellow lines in this location and if Boxley PC put them on their HIP they would be funded. Cllr Hinder questioned the funding as at a recent meeting to discuss the HIP it had been stated that only the top 2 items would be funded from the very limited KCC budget for parish projects. This would be referred to the next Environment Committee meeting for discussion and a decision as they deal with all highways issues.

Cllr Naghi reported that the florist shop and café at the Mote Park crematorium had been approved. He also said that there was some CIL money available for infrastructure projects.

10.4 **KALC Representative**

Cllr I Davies reported on the KALC meeting held on 30 September 2024. Items covered: the failed judicial review request for Lidsing, The next review process to take the plan to 2043 will probably start in 2025 with an initial call for sites consultation.

the Gipsy and Traveler local Plan review. The DPD Reg 18B would be out for consultation shortly. It was felt that MBC had already accommodated a huge amount of gypsy, traveler and showman pitches within the borough following the adoption of the 2017 plan and therefore it may be possible for KALC Maidstone to at the very least challenge the proposed figures if required. Cllr English said that a public site was needed to ensure that lots of smaller sites were not approved.

The Code of Conduct for parishes.

The final draft of the Parish Charter would be circulated soon.

The majority of issues with refuse collection in rural areas had now been sorted out.

The discussion on Strategic playground grants was ongoing.

A consultation document on Discretionary Rate relief for village halls was open for comments until the 31 October 2024.

10.5 **Grove Green Community Hall Representative**

Cllr Mclean had nothing to report.

10.6 **Sandling Village Hall Representative**

Cllr Akehurst reported that they had successfully registered for a post code for the hall. Cllr Hinder asked her to pass on the Parish Council’s thanks for the use of the hall and to say how well looked after and run it was.

10.7 **Vinters Valley Nature Reserve Representative**

Cllr Cox reported that the management meeting had been held on the 27 September and he would forward the minutes for circulation. They would be doing their Christmas tree collection on the 11 January where residents can bring their trees to the reserve for chipping for a £5 donation to the reserve. They are looking for a 20ft shipping container to go in the middle of the reserve for storage. The next Trustees meeting would be on the 16th October at Vinters Community Centre.

10.8 **Any other reports**

Cllr Hinder reported that he and the Clerk would be attending the KALC Standards Conference on the 10th October 2024.

1. **Sandling**

Report noted.

1. **Grant Applications**

12.1 **Grant Application from We Are Beams**

It was proposed by Cllr Sheppard, seconded by Cllr English and agreed with 1 abstention and 1 Cllr not taking part in the vote to award the requested grant of £250 to We Are Beams.

1. **Matters for Decision**

None on this Agenda.

1. **Matters for Information**

None on this Agenda.

1. **Items for Next Agenda**

Noted,

1. **Meetings**

Next Meeting Wednesday 6 November 2024 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade, ME5 9RU.

**Confidential Section**

1. **Personnel matters**

Cllr Sheppard reported that the Personnel Committee had met at Beechen Hall on the 27 September. Following this meeting Cllrs Hinder and Sheppard had carried out an audit of the key fob system and staff timesheets. The key fob system was not fit for purpose as it only worked intermittently and could be accessed from a mobile phone. A new system was being looked into. The Clerk signs the timesheets of other staff and it was agreed that Cllr Hinder as PC Chairman would sign the Clerks going forward. There were some issues with staff cover especially if the Clerk was ill or on annual leave on a Friday. It has been agreed that the Assistant Clerk will work an additional day to cover any absences of the Clerk.

Meeting closed at 21.05 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman ……………………………………………….. Date ………………………………………………………..