

Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Woodland Management Committee held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade at 7pm on 1st October 2025

Councillors Present: Cllrs V Jones (Chair), R Dines, N Zand, S Thompson (from item 10.5), A Brindle and I Davies along with Patrick Fox and Rob Burrows.

Minutes – Cllr V Jones

1. **Apologies and absences**
None.
2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination and Lobbying**
None.
3. **Motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting for all items in the Confidential Section.**
It was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Brindle and all agreed to exclude the members of the public from items in the Confidential Section and to add items 10.3 and 10.4.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on the 23 June 2024**
Agreed with the deletion of Cllr R Dines as his name appears twice on the list attendees. Proposed by Cllr Brindle, seconded by Cllr Zand.
5. **Appointment of 3 Members of the Walderslade Woodlands Group to the Committee as Non-Voting Members**
Two expressions of interest received. Patrick Fox and Rob Burrows asked to join the Committee. It was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Brindle and unanimously agreed.
6. **Impton Lane Open Space**
Review at next meeting following the Parish Tour.
7. **Weaving Diamond Jubilee Orchard**
Review at next meeting following the Parish Tour.
8. **Franklin Drive**
It was noted that the RoSPA inspection highlighted branches at low level although the Tree Inspection by Hoods found no problems. Item deferred to next meeting following the Parish Tour.
9. **Beechen Hall**
Application submitted By KCC to remove a dead Oak adjacent to the Parish Office. Decision expected 17th October 2025.
10. **Walderslade Woodlands**
 - 10.1 H&S Training Event -Volunteer/BPC Feedback
Patrick and Rob confirmed the course was helpful. Eight volunteers attended. Cllr Jones explained the 2nd part of the course will be conducted on site, hopefully, during W/C 6th October. BPC will provide the date to the volunteers once we have heard from Neil Coombs.
 - 10.2 Review of SWOT Analysis
Members discussed the document and agreed with the recommendations. Cllr Zand emphasised the importance of items W2 and T6 in the report.
 - 10.3 Revision of Management Plan
Patrick Fox provided documents regarding the management of the grassed areas which will be forwarded to Neil Coombs. The Management Plan was discussed in the Confidential Session.

10.4 Allocate Funds for Further Work

It was proposed by Cllr Zand, seconded by Cllr Brindle and all agreed to add a further £1,500 to the budget covering the revision of the 5-year Management Plan and follow up meetings with Neil Coombs and the volunteers.

10.5 Short Term Timetable of Activities for Return to Work by Walderslade Woodlands Group

Location of areas requiring urgent work has been shared to BPC. It was suggested that some work could resume once Neil Coombs has carried out the onsite health and safety training and, if Neil agreed, the emphasis to be on path clearance. This will require the use of chainsaws which only qualified volunteers may operate. No felling to take place yet as this will be covered in the work plan. This was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Zand and unanimously agreed.

10.6 Accident Book Review

It was agreed that the form headings in the accident book which is currently in use need to be amended to better reflect completion by a volunteer group and that the process of reporting accidents needs to be clear for BPC and WWG. Cllr Zand offered to circulate a flow chart to identify areas of responsibility and suggested using two reporting processes. One for reporting incidents and corrective actions and another for reporting near misses. It was agreed that all accidents and near misses to be reviewed quarterly by this committee.

Action Point 1: Cllr Zand to circulate flow charts to this committee.

Action Point 2: The Clerk to add quarterly reviews to future agendas.

11. Resident Engagement

Cllrs considered ways in which we can highlight the asset of Walderslade Woods to residents. We need residents to engage with BPC to celebrate this community asset and to share thoughts on what they want from the woodland and suggestions for improvements. BPC's social media needs to be improved in content, including more photos of tasks completed, and to reach a wider audience. Cllr Zand offered to assist with training which will incorporate the use of AI. All agreed this would be of benefit.

Action Point 3: Cllr Zand to provide training.

12. Nature Recovery Strategy

Items 12 and 13 taken together. Nature Recovery and Making Space for Nature to be incorporated in the revision of the Management Plan, coordinating with appropriate partners, to be considered in all aspects of BPC decisions. There is a Parish Council Environment Group which we could engage with and develop links. This should also feature in BPC's five-year plan.

13. Making Space for Nature

See above.

14. Parish Council Environment Group

The merits of working with other parishes was discussed and the possibility of sharing expertise was welcomed.

15. Items for Next Agenda

16. Next Meeting

26th November 2026.

Confidential Section**17. Insurance Claim**

The ongoing claim was discussed, and the financial settlement amount would be circulated to members once it was known.

18. Internal Accountability

It was highlighted that the chain of communication must be followed by office staff. The Chair of BPC and/or Chair of Woodland Management Committee must be informed of woodland related issues prior to any members of the public being informed.

Meeting closed at 8.20pm

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman Date