

Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on the 8 April 2025 at 7.30pm

Councillors Present: B Hinder, P Mclean, A Brindle, I Davies, M Beckwith, M Cox, A Adams, P Sullivan, S Thompson, J Sampangi (from Item 5), V Jones, and C English together with Mrs D Baylis – Parish Clerk and 1 member of the public

1. **Apologies and absences**
Cllrs Akehurst and Bryant
2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or 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 A Brindle, seconded by Cllr C English and all agreed that members of the public be excluded from all items in the confidential section.
4. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 3 March 2025**
Agreed.
5. **Matters Arising From the Minutes**
None.
6. **Crime Report and Police Issues**
Report noted. Cllr Thompson said that there was a growing number of vehicle thefts. Kent police have asked householders with camera doorbells to sign up to a register that they could use to combat crime.

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.

A resident had attended to complain about fly tipping in Wents Woods again. A property adjacent to the woods had some groundworks done that comprised removal of a sleeper wall and installation of a brick wall. All of the removed sleepers had been fly tipped into Wents Wood. Nothing had been done about this yet. Cllr English said that there had been a massive upsurge in fly tipping and that the waste team was concentrating on fly tipping that has closed roads. There are only 4 members of the fly-tipping clearance team who are responsible for the whole Borough. He said that the Borough would clear this type of fly tipping. They would issue a 28 day notice to the householder and if not cleared then MBC would clear the fly tip and then invoice the householder. The resident said that a lot of rubble had been tipped on the embankment and was now covered in vegetation and that this would create a danger when the verge was mown.

7. **Draft Minutes of Recent Committee Meetings**
 - 8.1 Environment Committee 10 March 2025
Noted
 - 8.2 Estates Committee 19 March 2025
Noted
 - 8.3 Finance and General Purposes Committee 19 March 2025
Noted
8. **Finance**
 - 8.1 **Bank Balances**
Noted
 - 8.2 **Finance General**

The Clerk said that preparations for the Financial End of Year and internal and external audits was well underway.

8.3 **Receipts and Payments 1-31 March 2025**

Noted

9. **Policies and Procedures**

9.1 **Communications Press and Media Policy**

9.2 **Complaints Policy**

9.3 **Vexatious Complaints Policy**

9.4 **Co-option Policy and Application Form**

It was proposed by I Davies, seconded by Cllr C English and all agreed to adopt policies 9.1-9.4.

9.5 **Committee Terms of Reference**

It was proposed by Cllr English, seconded by Cllr M Cox and all agreed to adopt the Committee Terms of Reference.

10. **By-Election**

The cost for the Grove Green By-Election was £8,299.61. Another By-Election has been called for the North Ward vacancy and was likely to cost a bit more than this as the electorate was bigger.

A vote was taken on the proposal to issue poll cards. 6 voted for the motion, 4 voted against and there was 1 abstention. The motion was carried.

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

11.1 **Office Staff Report**

Noted.

11.2 **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Hinder said that he had received a call from residents in Forstal regarding problems with litter. He would meet with them and report further.

11.3 **Borough/County Councillor Reports**

Cllr Thompson reported that he had had a meeting about fly-tipping with officials. He had passed Cllr Bryant's fly-tipping report onto officers. Vigilance was needed on vehicle thefts which has increased. He had asked Helen Whately MP for assistance with gypsy and traveller issues and she has declined to give further assistance so there will be no national help. He would work with the Clerk on the verge damage under the motorway bridge in Sandling.

Cllr Jones had attended 2 litter picking events in Sandling (31 bags collected) and Lordswood/Walderslade (30 bags collected). She had contacted John Edwards as the bags had not been collected from Sandling. Fly tipping had been reported at Cobtree.

Cllr English said that there would be a substantial influx of new litter bins in the new financial year.

11.4 **KALC Representative**

Cllrs Brindle and Davies had attended the recent KALC meeting on the 31st March 2025. MBC have formed an informal group to look at Community Governance. There were no parish council representatives on this group which consists of one member from each political party. It had been agreed that a Parish Council representative could be the Chair or vice chair of KALC but not from Maidstone KALC. Members were not happy with this and Maidstone KALC would be writing to the chair of the committee and the CEO of KALC. The KALC AGM will be on the 19 May at Yalding Village Hal.

The Gypsy and Traveller review consultation is now working. Cllr English said that as MBC had not provided an additional site they would fail any appeals put in. There was no social housing provision for gypsies and travellers and it was very hard to pick a site as it would

be unpopular wherever it was placed. 3% of the national site total was in Headcorn. There was pressure on MP's as national law was not helpful in dealing with these issues and support was needed for planning authorities.

The model code of conduct was still under review. The revised draft would be circulated to parishes again for comments. The Clerk was asked to circulate this to members once received.

11.5 Grove Green Community Hall Representative

Cllr Mclean said that no meeting had been held.

11.6 Sandling Village Hall Representative

Cllr Hinder said that there was nothing to report.

11.7 Vinters Valley Nature Reserve Representative

Cllr M Cox reported that they were running a Walk for Wildlife event on the 13 April. He had been to St Johns and East Borough Schools to promote the event and both had been keen on attending. The event was being run by trustees and volunteers. They were getting more 'Friends of the Reserve' and were relaunching this scheme. Legacy donations were also increasing with one received of £40,000. They had a new Treasurer. The warden was now back to full fitness.

The AGM and Big Day Out would both be on the 14 June with walks, pond dipping and a tree walk. The App was now moving forward to the National Lottery stage and was taking about 2.5 hours/month of the wardens time.

11.8 Any other reports

Cllr Brindle reported that the Lidsing Stakeholders meeting had been held on the 27 March 2025 at Beechen Hall. It had focused on transport. Large maps of the various options on routing of transport links across the site had been provided. She felt that some issues were not being addressed and this included the north south route. Traffic through Boxley has increased year on year. An additional meeting had been held with 8 questions posed. Some had positive responses and some not so positive. There were still no firm draft proposals and she doubts these will be ready by the forecasted April date. Phase 1 would be the East West link from North Dane Way to Maidstone road. Phase 2 would use the existing bridge and then the new bridge link.

12. Sandling

The Chairman thanked the Parish Caretaker and Steve Akehurst for installing the new noticeboard. The Clerk was asked to send a letter of thanks to Steve.

13. A229 Bluebell HJII Road Improvement Scheme

A meeting was being arranged with Sir Paul Carter and KCC to discuss the proposals. Residents were submitting a petition to leave the road as it is with the speed reduced to 50 MPH. Cllr Hinder thanked all councillors for what they are doing to help residents affected by the proposals.

Cllrs A Brindle and J Akehurst had met with a resident and walked up Old Chatham Road to the petrol station. Observations were made on all the issues with the signage etc. A meeting had been arranged with KCC to look at the signage. Expenditure for improvements could come from the Parish Council's highways improvement budget.

14. Grant Applications

None.

15. Matters for Decision

None for this Agenda.

16. Appointment of new Councillors to Committees

It was agreed that Cllrs Thompson and Sampangi would join the Estates and Finance and General Purposes Committees.

17. **Matters for Information**

18. **Items for Next Agenda**

Noted,

19. **Meetings**

Next Meeting Tuesday 7 May at Sandling Hall.

It was agreed that tea, coffee, biscuits and cake would be provided for the Annual Parish meeting.

Confidential Section

20. **Personnel matters**

The Personnel Committee reported that one to one meetings had been held with all staff ironing out any wrinkles in the job descriptions. These would be revised and agreed with staff. Once this work had been completed then the salary structure and training needs would be looked at.

21. **.gov.uk email addresses**

It was proposed by Cllr English, seconded by Cllr Jones and all agreed to proceed with the change to .gov.uk email addresses hosted by the Parish Council website.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman Date