**Minutes of the Boxley Parish Council Environment Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on 23 June 2025, commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Present**: Cllrs I Davies, A Brindle, J Akehurst, S Thompson, R Dines and V Jones along with Mrs D Baylis (Parish Clerk) and Cllr P Mclean

1. **Election of Chairman**

Cllr Brindle was nominated by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Jones. There being no other nominations she was duly elected as Chairman.

1. **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Cllr R Dines was nominated by Cllr Brindle, seconded by Cllr I Davies. There being no other nominations, he was duly elected as Vice Chairman.

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllrs Adams and Bryant.

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

Cllr Thompson advised that he is a member of MBC’s Planning Committee, so he would not comment on applications other than to ask questions that members might find relevant.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 May 2025**

Agreed.

1. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None.

**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.**

No members of the public were present.

1. **Planning Applications for Consideration – DECISION**

**25/502166/FULL Harp Farm Harp Farm Road Boxley Kent ME14 3ED**

Creation of 15MW Solar Farm (including cable route from site to point of connection) comprising 2.6m high solar panels, 6no. inverter stations, 3no. storage containers (spares, comms and welfare), 1no. transformer, substation, private switchgear, DNO switchgear, 2.2m high fencing, 40no. 4.5m high CCTV poles, access tracks, lighting, and temporary construction compound.

**Boxley Parish Council** would like this application determined by the Planning Committee. They do not think that enough information has been provided to enable them to make a determination. The application is lacking a Noise Impact Survey. There is no information on where the power to operate the system is coming from.

Boxley Parish Council has the following concerns which also need to be addressed:

1. Will the larger HGV~~’~~s proposed be physically capable of negotiating the northern section of Harp Farm Road without causing damage to the highway boundaries and the road structure?

2. The time taken for the escorted vehicles to traverse this section of road has not been quantified but it is likely to cause considerable delays to other through traffic held by stop/go boards. This could cause anger and frustration for some motorists.

3. Additional workers car/van movements will add to problems particularly in the peak hours.

4. The network of narrow country lanes in this area including Westfield Sole Road and Yelstead Lane is very susceptible to grid lock[,] sometimes caused by essential non planned road maintenance, traffic accidents, fly tipping incidents or over-sized vehicles.

5. The improved access onto Harp Farm Road will have sight lines of 2.4m x 110m northbound and 2.4 x 60m southbound (corresponding to measured 85th percentile traffic speeds of 42mph and 29mph). It is assumed that southbound traffic speeds are restrained by the presence of a series of bends immediately to the north of the proposed site access. These sight lines are minimal and it will be important to ensure that there is adequate maintenance throughout the construction and operational phases.

6. The northern section of Harp Farm Road is clearly substandard for access and egress by HGVs. The applicants are proposing controlling these movements by stop/go boards at various locations and “Pilot Vehicles” to escort HGV~~’~~s between Walderslade Woods Road and the site access. The pilot vehicles would circulate around Harp Farm Road, Lidsing Road and Yelstead Lane. This would generate additional traffic on these very narrow lanes.

If the development is permitted then there should be an agreement with KCC relating to costs relating to extraordinary traffic use.

There is very little detail regarding the underground cable connections to Bredhurst and such construction could cause similar problems.

**25/502256/FULL Dingley Knoll Old Chatham Road Sandling Kent ME14 3AJ**

Erection of a single storey front extension. Installation of a rear first floor dormer and two front dormers. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration.

**Boxley Parish Council** do not have any material planning reasons to object to this application.

**25/501855/FULL Linden Lea Weavering Street Weavering ME14 5JR**

Retrospective application for installation of 1no. air source heat pump and 2no. air conditioning units.

**Boxley Parish Council** do not have any material planning reasons to object to this application.

**25/502387/FULL The Old Vicarage The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DX**

Demolition of existing garage/garden store building and erection of replacement garden room/annex building ancillary to the main dwelling.

**Boxley Parish Council** do not have any material planning reasons to object to this application.

**25/502386/FULL The Old Vicarage The Street Boxley Kent ME14 3DX**

Erection of a detached two-bay open garage

**Boxley Parish Council** do not have any material planning reasons to object to this application.

1. **Ratifications**

It was proposed by Cllr Brindle, seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed with one abstention to ratify the planning responses made out of meeting.

1. **Planning Decisions, Appeals and Appeals Decisions**

Report noted.

1. **Highways and Byways – DECISION**
   1. **Highways Improvement Plan.**

Nothing put forward.

* 1. **Junction 3 of the M2/Bluebell Hill**

No response received from Helen Whately MP at the time of the meeting. It was agreed that meetings would be set up with local MPs and other organisations to ensure the concerns of the Parish Council are brought to the attention of all relevant parties.

* 1. **A249 Bearsted Road Major Infrastructure Project**.

Cllr Thompson reported that the MBC Cabinet have a meeting with KCC officers the following Wednesday on this project. Cllr Thompson also stated that funding might be found from the MBC/Ward Community Infrastructure Levy to aid in the completion of this project.

* 1. **Boxley Village**

The response from the Highway Steward at MBC was considered inadequate. The Clerk was asked to write to Spencer Dixon the new Kent County Councillor (copied to Cllrs Jones and Thompson as MBC Ward Councillors and the Cabinet member for Highways) pointing out that it was a Reform election pledge to fix potholes and that the response received was not adequate as the road was in a very poor state of repair.

* 1. **Lower Thames Crossing update**

Work may be starting on 5/1/2026.

* 1. **A229 Bluebell Hill Road Improvements**

No update for this Agenda.

* 1. **Any Highways issues raised at the meeting**

None raised.

10.8 **Cycle and Pedestrian Crossing of Lordswood Lane immediately North of its junction with Gleaming Wood Drive.**

It was proposed by Cllr Thompson, seconded by Cllr Jones and all agreed to commission a safety audit for this area.

* 1. **Parish Traffic Counts**

It was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Brindle and all agreed to ratify the decision made out of meeting to add additional traffic counters at Harp Farm Road, Westfield Sole Road and Pilgrims Way. The total cost was now £1,045.

* 1. **Safety Audits Weavering Street and Grovewood Drive South/New Cut Road**

It was proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Jones and all agreed to accept the quotation for safety audits at Weavering Street and Grovewood Drive South/New Cut Road at a cost of £1,700.

1. **Lidsing**

The next meeting of the Stakeholders Steering Group is scheduled for the 22 July at Beechen Hall. Cllr Brindle is unable to attend and has asked Cllr Dines to go in her place. Lorraine King would be contacting him with the details of the meeting.

1. **Sandling**

Report noted.

The Chairman extended the meeting.

1. **MBC Democracy and General Purposes Committee Urban Area Community Governance Review**

It was agreed to form a working party to look at this in more detail. The meeting will be held on Monday 30th June at 1pm at Beechen Hall.

1. **Policy and Procedures Review**

None on this Agenda.

1. **Task List**

Noted.

1. **Members and Officer’s Reports**

Information received from Cllr Burke noted.

1. **Residents’ Concerns**

Report noted.

1. **Volunteer Groups**

No reports received.

1. **Items for Next Agenda**

None put forward at this meeting.

1. **Next Meeting**

Next Environment Committee meeting 14 July 2025.

**In view of the confidential nature of the item about to be transacted, it is advised that the public and press were excluded from the meeting for Agenda item 18.**

1. **Enforcement and CIL/Section 106 updates from MBC**

Noted. The Clerk was asked to circulate the email from Cllr English on the ward CIL fund to all members.

Meeting closed at 9.50 pm

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

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