

# BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT BOXFORD VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2016

Present: Cllr. M. Hayes-Newington (Chairman)  
Cllr. A. Britton  
Cllr C. Oliver-Bellasis  
Cllr P. Kilding  
Cllr V Sandars  
Mrs Kim Lloyd (Clerk)  
2 member of the public

### Action

1. **Apologies for absence.** Cllr P. Thompson
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting** held on 4<sup>TH</sup> July 2016 was approved (prop. MH; sec. COB.)
3. **Declarations of Interest** –None
4. **Open Forum** – an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions
5. **Planning Applications** -Little Thatch Boxford – Ref-16/02205/LBC2 – MH and VS reviewed plans online, PK was invited to site. No objections found, PC supports the application.

**Planning Enforcement Protocol** – Previously some concerns over enforcement of planning policy had been brought up with the Parish Council. These issues had not previously been brought to the Parish Council, and MH stated in light of reductions in planning resources the Parish Council may get more approaches. Consequently MH had produced a protocol for Parish Councillors regarding any concerns raised by residents or Councillors about planning control or enforcement PK and Clerk highlighted an amendment required to the protocol, to confirm the Clerk will bring any planning enforcement issues to the parish council meeting for discussion/approval before taking any next steps. MH agreed and would amend the document. All Councillors were asked to read the full protocol and bring any questions if required to the next meeting. All

### 6 **Financial Matters**

The status of the bank current and deposit accounts and the prognosis for the current year previously circulated, were noted. Approved expenditure: (prop.PK. sec. MHN)

The Clerk reported the external audit had been returned with no comments.

Mrs K Lloyd – (Clerk) July and August remuneration £445.21 (prop MH sec PK).

**Income** - £473.13 paid in account from Boxford VH on 30 June towards the Grounds and

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Maintenance payment.

**Expenditure** – £1,125.60 was paid out on 1 August for M & C Landscapes' (GM Contract-grass cutting for June & July)

The Clerk reported the transparency code grant is approved. £857.90 would be paid in the PC account. The grant was for a Laptop, Scanner, and Software. The amount of £400 is allocated towards website training for the Clerk. PC authorised the Clerk to purchase the items listed. The Clerk will order items once the funds are in the bank account.

**Clerk**

7. **Clerks Payroll Contract Agreement** – The Clerk reported she had been in communication with the payroll company who do not issue contracts or terms and conditions. After full discussion, PC all agreed a more formal engagement would be required. AB proposed he would send a letter of engagement stating the Councils understanding of terms of conditions to the payroll company.

**AB/ Clerk**

- 8 **Lime Trees**, to vote on preferred action – Lime Trees

The council faces a very difficult decision with regard to the future of three lime trees in front of the church. Ahead of discussing the matter all councillors had received a review of the key facts, correspondence and costs for various courses of action.

Technical information has come from West Berkshire Councils tree officer and a report from an independent RHS arboreal expert. Both experts state the westerly tree is infected with honey fungus and there is evidence of distress and disease in the middle tree. The Church council had also discussed the matter and their conclusion on the trees.

The Council discussions covered a number of options from looking at only doing minimal essential work on one tree to complete replacement of the trees. The discussion covered:

**Safety** – It was stated that the position of the trees means the Council must take seriously the risks presented by branches falling or worse a falling tree trunk endangering people and property in place where the public pass frequently.

**Financial** - The Council presently has access to funds from recent developments and an offer of a donation towards planting mature trees. Restricting work to only pollarding tree one may put longer-term ongoing stress on finances, and when full replacement is required, spare funds may not be available.

**Aesthetics** - The trees are an important feature but their impact was suggested in large part to be down to their common symmetry and size. For this impact to be kept for posterity it would be best that any solution does not create a mismatched set of tree sizes and types. The replanting means there is no absolute loss of trees.

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With all the information discussed on taking a vote it was agreed:

1. The council unanimously agreed it was not appropriate to take action on only tree one as this would create significant contingent financial risk and would destroy the aesthetic value of the trees
2. The Council unanimously then agreed that the optimal solution is to fell the three existing tree and replace them with mature new (honey fungus resistant) trees while money was available to secure this solution.

The Council will then take the following steps:

- Make an application to West Berkshire Council for the removal of the trees and their replacement with mature trees, including providing some suggestions for the replacement trees albeit the tree officer may be prescriptive about replacements  
Formalise a plan and budget for the felling and removal of the existing trees and the work required for their replacement with mature specimens. **MH**

9. **Boxford Station Waiting Room/Bus Shelter** – PK reported skills may be available within the village to reduce the labour costs. PK reported he had received offers of time and effort from people in the village who have the expertise to do the job. PK will complete the scheme of works and bring to next meeting. MK and PK said they would visit site and address all the works required and would work together in getting a working team within the village. The Clerk reported there was a total of £480.00 raised so far towards the project from local residents (which are all banked). The Clerk agreed to confirm that her understanding that the Councils insurance contract would cover people working on the project **MH / PK**

- 10 **Councillors Questions and Reports** – COB reported that Gigaclear was not cleaning up after works. COB had received reports from other residents. COB had arranged to meet with the foreman to discuss the matter in a personal capacity. The Clerk will also write to them. **COB/Clerk**

MH reported the line marking carried out recently in the village was very poor, MH will send the Clerk photos for forwarding to WBDC. **MH**

**Thank you. - All Councillors said a big Thank you to Joy Appleton and team on behalf of the Parish for all the hard work in the Big Dig.**

- 11 Matters for consideration and future discussion from open forum and Councilors questions and reports. – None.

Meeting Close - Date of next Meeting Monday 7 November 2016