BOXTED PARISH COUNCIL (BPC)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2026 AT 730PM IN BOXTED VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Members – Councillors Jamie Seakens (Chair), Arabella Brentnall, James Collitt, Amin Dedhar, Jon Hunt, Angela Mclauchlan, Gene Pugh, Lee Smith and David Taplin. Clerk – Karen Thompson

ALSO PRESENT There were members of the public present.

26/149 **Welcome and noting apologies.** Jamie Seakens welcomed everyone.

26/150 **Declaration of Interests** – Cllr Arabella Brentnall declared an interest in Item 26/156 specifically Planning applications 261735 and 261736.

26/151 **Public Participation**
Two members of the public had been invited to address the council for items 26/152 and 26/155.

26/152 **Rabbit control options from a local controller**
A local pest controller gave a short talk on controlling rabbits providing some interesting facts about rabbits and he talked about shooting as one recommended method of reducing numbers. The council resolved to investigate this option further by looking to see what other public authorities had done, noting that this year the rabbit problem was particularly bad with huge holes over a large part of the field which were a health and safety risk to walkers, and our football and cricket teams. The council were aware that a member of the public had sustained a broken ankle after tripping on a rabbit hole.

26/153 **Colchester City Council (CCC) and Essex County Council (ECC)** – none.

26/154 **Minutes of the last meetings of the Council held on 9 September 2026.**
Councillors are asked to agree the draft minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate account of the proceedings (see attached). These were approved.

26/155 **Churchyard works**
To consider assisting St Peters Church with funding for grounds maintenance (see attachment). Mr Whybrow spoke about the money raised and work done at the churchyard and cemetery at St Peters Church in Boxted. The council recognised that the residents right to be buried at St Peters and considered the churchyard and cemetery to be village assets. He spoke about the increasing costs of maintenance, the difficulty attracting new volunteers and asked if the council would consider reestablishing the grant to help with costs. The council discussed the request and resolved to support the church by up to £1500 per annum.

It was also decided to investigate a establishing a documented relationship between the Boxted Village Hall Charity and the Parish Council as the Council has a lease with the PCC and Diocese for the building that the Boxted Village Hall charity operates from. The findings will be reported to a future Parish Council meeting.

26/156 **Planning Applications**

.1 **To consider the following planning applications and any other applications arriving after the date the agenda is published:**

Reference	Address	Description	Action
261589	Rose Cottage,	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for existing use of land as garden.	There was no planning concerns raised, and no comment would be made.

	Workhouse Hill		
261743 Exp 20/10	6 Brook Cottages, Wet Lane	Erection of a part first-floor rear extension, with alterations to the existing first-floor layout and changes to rear fenestration.	There was no planning concerns raised, and no comment would be made.
261735 & 261736 Exp 28/10	Vine House, Cooks Hill	Listed building application for installation of pool, replacement gates and associated landscaping. New light fitting fixed to house.	There was no planning concerns raised, and no comment would be made.

2. **Decisions**

To note the following decisions that were approved:
261023 Retrospective permission for change of use from agriculture to dog field at 25 Straight Road
261265 Erection of single storey rear extension. Honeysuckle Cottage, Queens Head Road

To note the following decisions that were refused:
260960 Retrospective permission for erection of an annex ancillary to the main dwelling 25 Straight Road, Boxted

These were noted.

.3 **Call-in for Councillor decision is changing**

Boxted Council noted the changes to the provision for Parish Councils to request that an application is "called-in" (see attachment).
In summary Applications which officers can refer to Planning Committee are Schedule 2 applications, including major planning applications, certain commercial applications, retrospective applications and reserved matters relating to a large outline permission.
But for these, there is no automatic right for a Parish Council or individual councillor to call them in. The application can go to Planning Committee only if the Nominated Member and Nominated Officer agree that it raises either:

- issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area, or
- significant planning matters when assessed against the development plan and other material planning considerations.

The change takes effect on 30 Oct 2026.

.4 **Defibrillator in Church Road – Conservation area**

The council has been gifted a defibrillator for the Church Street area of Boxted, which is the Conservation Area. To consider how best and where to place the defib and box.

The council resolved to write to residents in Church Street and see if a volunteer household would be willing to host the defibrillator and storage box.

26/157 **To note the objection to Regulation 19 of the Colchester Draft Local Plan Consultation** This was noted.

26/158 **Parish Council Finance**

.1 **To receive the Parish Council Financial Report as at the 30 Sep 2026 (see attachments including bank and card statements).** The council noted the current bank position of £46,467.75 at the halfway point in the year.

.2 **To approve for payment the invoices presented.** These were approved.

.3 **To agree to draw down on the Football Foundation pitch improvement grant (£20k over 6 years).** The council noted the spend to date on pitch improvement and resolved to draw down on the pitch improvement grant for future works.

26/159 **Audit**

To note the conclusion of external audit with a comment in Section 3. This has been queried as the asset revaluation occurred because of 5-year building review for insurance purposes. The conclusion of audit notice is published on the BPC website.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AG in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. The smaller authority has not restated the prior year figure when revaluing assets in Section 2, Box 9. Please note that the Practitioners' Guide allows smaller authorities to use any reasonable valuation method, provided that the prior year figure is restated for consistency and comparability.

The Council noted the external audit comment.

26/160 **Colchester City Council seeking views about traffic leaving the Colchester United stadium.**

To note a proposal for a six-game trial opening the barrier from United Way onto Boxted Road for an hour after home matches, to help ease congestion. Cllr Rowe sought view, attached is an initial council response. The council noted the trial and would seek statistics from Colchester Council on the volume of traffic using Straight Road, Langham Road and Dedham Road during the trial.

26/161 **Recreation Ground**

.1 **To consider using the additional Football Foundation pitch improvement grant to apply a topsoil dressing, recommended by Moser Groundcare. This would be achieved by tackling the full-size pitch in the first year and the smaller pitches in the second year. Matches to be arranged away for Sept and Oct. Waiting for a quote.** It was agreed to seek pricing for top dressing the pitches and to schedule one pitch for the first financial year and the other pitches for a later year.

.2 **Rebound wall repair options. 2 quotes received £1972 and £3328. (see attached).** The repair at £1972 was agreed.

.3 **To note that S106 funds (approx. £10,000) can be used for recreation ground basket swing, confirmed by CCC Parks and Recreation team.** This was noted.

26/162 **Pension Resolution** that Boxted Parish Council nominates the current holder of the 'Handyman' position, Mr Steve Kent, for membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme operated by Essex County Council. And Boxted Parish Council authorises the Clerk/RFO to notify the Council's LGPS administering authority to undertake the necessary arrangements to implement the pension provision. This was approved.

26/163 **Review of Financial regulations**

To consider and readopt the Financial Regulations. The council noted that the regulations were unchanged and approved them.

26/164 **Review Standing Orders**

To consider and readopt the council Standing Orders. These were approved.

26/165 **New – IT Policy**

To consider a draft IT policy. This will help the council meet the new Assertion 10 audit requirement which required an IT policy with regular review. The council considered the draft IT policy and made some changes at the suggestion

of Cllr Lee Smith, adding a section for the use of AI and allowing for some flexibility. The Council agreed that AI use should be via an account in the Councils email. The council approved the IT policy.

26/166 **Gigaclear – application for a free community building access to broadband**
To consider applying for a free Gigaclear connection for Boxted Village Hall as part of the Gigaclear community services program. The council agreed to apply for a community Gigaclear connection for the village hall.

26/167 **Village Hall**
Quotes for foyer painting (see attached) -2 received. The council decided this agenda item in their capacity as trustees for the Boxted Village Hall Charity and would minute the decision as Boxted Village Hall Trustees and not as the Parish Council.

26/168 **Clerk's Report**
The clerk's report was received, and the council noted the following:

- New and repaired microphones at Village Hall
- To trial meeting recording device
- Rateable value on Café at Hub ongoing
- To note the course attended by the clerk – AI for Parish Councils and recognition that AI was now being used to help the clerk.

26/169 **Items for the next or subsequent meeting agenda(s)**
To note or propose items for the next agenda including any raised.

- Draft Budget

26/170 **Date of next and future meetings**
The date of the next meeting is 11th November 2026 at 730pm was noted with delegated authority being granted to the Clerk with authorisation from the Chair for emergency and time critical issues.

Signature _____ Signed by _____