



# Box Parish Council

13<sup>th</sup> January 2026

## Minutes of the Box Parish Open Spaces Committee meeting held at 7pm on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at The Parish Office, Box, SN13 8NX

1. **Present:**

Cllr M Tye (Chair)	
Cllr H Parker (Vice Chair)	
Cllr S Roche	
Cllr B Walton	
Cllr T Walton	
S J Vickery	Clerk and RFO

**Additional Representatives:**

Gillian Potts	Allotment Rep
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2. **Apologies:** Apologies were received as follows. The Committee was quorate.

Cllr I Johnston
Cllr R Davies
Cllr R Haslett

3. **Absence:** Nil

4. **Public Question Time:** There were 6 members of the public present. All wished to speak on the topic of succession tree planting at the Recreation Ground and the potential to impact the row of Mill Lane properties. Residents spoke in turn:

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> Member. There will be an impact on properties by some of the trees. There are sunlight, stream and a main sewer concerns. A wider buffer to the trees should be left. The minutes of a June 25 meeting were questioned, as there had been no communication to residents. There was a concern over planting near to the school wall. Would the Council accept any future liability for a grounds / Mill Lane issue.
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> member. Previously Wessex Water had changed the siting of trees. There was an impact on reducing recreational space with no consultation. No surveys or root assessments had been completed. Some environmental issues and agency input had been over looked. The Council was requested to pause, consider an aftercare plan and a new public consultation.
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> member. There was a rhetorical question on why there were no trees there currently. Some properties have had subsidence, as there are no concrete foundations so building move more readily. The wet clay layer is a concern. Minutes of schemes for succession

planning cannot be located. In the current Climate Change policy, it states that residents will be consulted.

- d. 4<sup>th</sup> member. There was concern about the proximity of new trees to the stream and the gradient of the slope. Trees will suck up water course and cause ground erosion. Trees will overshadow gardens, provide less privacy and impact daily lives.
- e. 5<sup>th</sup> member. There will be problems with the water course and potential main sewer issues.
- f. 6<sup>th</sup> member. Agreed with previous remarks.

5. **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

6. **Previous Minutes:** The Minutes of the of the previous Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were read and signed as a true record.

7. **Playing Fields.**

- a. **Bowls Club.** There was no representative or written update. The Committee requested that Avon Sports Maintenance Ltd are contacted, copied to the Bowls Club, to inform about the ending of the Council's administration of invoicing for services.

**Action: Clerk to draft note to ASM.**

- b. **Cricket Club.** There was no representative or written update. The Committee noted the need to update the Licence of Use to make clear that future work on the cricket field requires prior approval from Open Spaces (unless there is an emergency). The Club would be encouraged to maintain a dialogue.

**Action: Clerk to draft new Annex to Licence.**

- c. **Tennis Courts.** Cllr B Walton updated the Committee on matters. The next Working Group is 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026. There are now facilities for Pickle ball and Heywood School have booked 22 netball sessions in the spring term. A request to fix the the cabinet lid was made for the equipment at the lower court.

- d. **Football pitch.** The pitch was being well used with the prospect of new goal posts, using Football Foundation funding, ready for September 26.

- e. **Allotments.** GP updated the Committee; it was agreed to visit the allotment in April to check on plot upkeep. The rental renewal emails are about to go out. The Parish magazine now carries an advert for the allotment wait list.

f. **Play Areas.**

- i. New Fort at u7s. The new Fort has been well received and has a formal ROSPA inspection shortly. A Phase 2 was considered favourably to include a train, station and play cafe. This will include a ROSPA sign off and retention sum. The Working Group would propose further ideas.
- ii. Pendulum swing. The quote to repair and re-site the pendulum swing at £1800+VAT was accepted and **recommended to FC.** (subject to further specification from Bigwood).
- iii. Working Group. The WG is attempting to open a bank account to help secure grants etc. This was a work in progress. It was suggested that a notice board for the play park would be beneficial.

**Action: Clerk and Chair to source notice board options.**

g. **Lovar.** The funding of the Centenary bridge by the CPRE is still subject to further discussion. The Vice Chair will investigate with an answer expected in January 2026.

h. **Trees and Hedges.**

i. **GWCF Hedge planting update.** The new hedge has been planted on FP 71; Mulch is now required for the hedge whips. Tree Parts will leave some chippings for the use of Lackham students or CPB. IDVerdi's link with the Youth community Service who will potentially assist with mulching. Work dates to follow. It was requested that the OSM checks for any protruding wire at the horse field

**Action: OSM to correct exposed wire.**

ii. **Succession Planting on the Rec.** The Committee wished to correct some of the misperceptions expressed by the public at para 4:

- a) The Wessex Water tree statement was incorrect —Trees were not removed, they were never planted on this proposed area as they would have been affected by the Wessex Water plans
- b) There is a fully costed and funded 5 Year Plan.
- c) The School planting concern was their request to plant a hedge next to their wall and not to do with tree planting.
- d) Planned over the long term in concert with the Foot Path 71 hedge.? Can't remember this bit?
- e) Bid for and received over £18k of funding.
- f) Utilities have been considered for the planting scheme including the buffer zones.
- g) Some tree sites have been moved in discussion with an Arboriculturalist.
- h) Chair – succession trees are required as current trees are declining.
- i) Improved consultation would be strongly considered.
- j) The recent theft of a Scots Pine has underlined the need for a security review (including Tractor Shed).
- k) There will be a consolidated response in due course.

iii. Mill Lane Rec hedge cutting. As there is no option to lay the hedge much lower, (as agreement with the residents could not be reached) the tractor flailing technique is the sole option to cut the Mill Lane hedge. The cutting should take care to minimise the impact to residents. The cutting needs to be booked prior to the end of February 2026.

**Action: Clerk to book Mark Taylor.**

8. **Cemetery Grounds.**

- a. Headstone repairs. The repairs are booked for mid January 2026.
- b. Cemetery Path. Chippenham Paving have been asked to provide a date for the agreed eco-crete repair of the Cemetery pathway.
- c. Interpretation Boards (inside and outside). There is a need for a small notice board near the outside tap(s). The Chair would investigate further designs, possibly via the ~~Man~~ Brunel Shed organisation.

## 9. **Boxhill and Rudloe.**

- a. Commons management plan. The Chair outlined the plan to manage the grasslands at the Upper Common. Pathways would only be one electric mower width. Direction will be given at a meeting on site. The wood at the Upper common is now known as Wheeler's Wood. The verge on the A4 at the Bassets will be planned likewise. The Lower Common working group were encouraged to apply for a Caring for Cotswold Grant. The Vice Chair will work with the Group on ideas such as a pond and some decking.
- b. Rudloe Estate 'green space' initiatives. There were a number of opportunities to improve the habitat around the Rudloe estate. This would be a longer term project and the Clerk would set up a meeting with the Green Square and residents rep to consider a range of initiatives. The Clerk will keep Dave Martin Chief Exec of Corsham Town Council in the loop

**Action: Clerk to coordinate a site meeting to discuss opportunities.**

## 10. **Common to all Open Spaces.**

- a. Parish-wide tree survey. The tender with matrix is now ready to distribute. This will be done shortly by the Clerk.
- b. Parish-wide meadow grass plan. The Chair will continue to provide mapping for the grass cutting plan with walkarounds scheduled to explain exactly the requirement to the OSM.
- c. Recycling working group.
  - i. In the near future, it would be useful to tender the Recycling contract as this is now costing £3k per year.
  - ii. Linked to the recycling area, a height barrier might deter camper vans from the main car park but a new bin area would be required.
- d. Historic rubbish removal. Skip Part 2 is now required. To be booked. A 10 yard skip is now required to remove a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of historic rubbish.
- e. Asset stickers to report faults. Ongoing with the Clerk.

## 11. **Review of Policies**

- a. Cemetery Policy. The Committee noted the work to date but wanted longer to revise the policy. Ongoing work.

## 12. **Items for Discussion.** Nil.

## 13. **Correspondence.**

- a. Middlehill House parking area. There is a meeting with the Open Spaces Society (OSS) on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026 to consider the closure of the parking area at Middlehill House.
- b. Mill Lane track and ditch. The Lane has received considerable work this winter with a further day or 2 planned to improve the actual track.

- c. Holly Tree theft at the Chapel. The Chapel tree theft has prompted a review of security, to be considered by the Fin & Gov Committee.

**Action: Clerk to add security to the F&G agenda.**

14. **Forward Plan.** The latest Forward Plan, including the Policy matrix and Risk Assessments was noted. The hedge and bed of plants at the top of Valens Terrace required attention, with the removal of the sign – to be added to the Plan.

15. **Future Agenda and General reports.** Items of report and future Agenda items:

- a. Revels. The idea of a Centenary Treasure Hunt was mentioned with a prize available from the Council stand; there would be a potential new gazebo at the Pavilion 'extension' site.
- b. CPRE Best Kept Village. A new Cllr point of contact is required.
- c. Frog life. To note the Middlehill Road crossing of frogs this spring.
- d. Facebook linked to Instagram. There is now a degree of urgency for a Comms WG.

16. **Date of next meeting** – as above, 7pm on Monday 13th April 2026, with a walkaround at Rudloe, Upper Common and the Allotments scheduled in the week preceding.

***The meeting ended at 9.15pm.....Chair***