



Box Parish Council

15th April 2026

Minutes of the Box Parish Open Spaces Committee held at 7pm on Thursday 13th April 2026 at The Pavilion, Box, SN13 8NT

1. Present:

Cllr M Tye (Chair)	Cllr S Roche
Cllr H Parker (VC)	Cllr P Suchley
Cllr R Davies	Cllr B Walton
Cllr R Haslett	Cllr T Walton
Cllr I Johnston	
Clerk – S Vickery	

In Attendance as Representatives:

D Wirght (Bowls and CVW)
G Potts (Allotments)
S Murphy (Lower Common)
J Thomas (Tennis Courts)

2. **Apologies.** There were no apologies for absence. The Council was Quorate.
3. **Public Question Time.** There were no members of public present.
4. **Declarations** of interest relating to items on the Agenda. There were no new declarations.
5. **Previous Minutes.** The minutes from the previous meeting on 12th January 2026 were read and signed as a true record.
6. **Playing Fields.**
 - a. **CVWS - Rights of Access (DW).** DW briefed that owing to new interpretation of requirements, tensions now exist between the OSS, Wiltshire Council (WC) and land owners. WC are responsible for the Definitive Path. The division of responsibilities and the latest British Standards for infrastructure on access paths was explained. To date, some 65 gates have been done by Wardens, however this will now cease, due to increased beaurocracy and a need for specialist utility checks. This will change the work of the CVWs. There was a question on redundant stiles – these cannot be touched unless land owners agree.
 - b. **Bowls Club (DW).** The annual Agreement is now signed. The top of the perimeter hedge needs to be cut this autumn by the OSM.

Action: Clerk to task OSM when cutting resumes, 1 September.

- c. **Cricket Club.** Apologies were sent. The remaining task is the return of the signed Appendix confirming that permission must be sought prior to future major grounds work.
- d. **Tennis Courts (JT).** The lower court line painting and colour coating is complete; there are also Pickle ball lines on the lower court. There is a cabinet trunk on the court for equipment. There is new information for the website to be updated. Hire fee is £5 per hour or £50 per year. There is £7k in the bank. Heywood School will continue to use the netball courts in the winter. There was a discussion on ongoing finances; the Club will be able to bid for grant applications. An official opening will be discussed by the Club.
- e. **Football pitch.** The football pitch is being well used by Sunday teams. New goal posts will be organised for September 2026. The new pitch and posts at Rudloe has been well received.
- f. **Allotments (GP).**
 - i. The fencing at the rear of the allotments has become a safety issue; this might be more than just a dead hedge. A recent accident was reported.
Action: Clerk and OSM to meet GP to investigate. There might be a cost implication.
 - ii. Plots 9B and 8B require 'reminder' letters. 4B would be monitored. There would be a follow up visit in May to inspect plots.
- g. **Lower Common (LC) group (SM).** There has now been 4 years of combined (Payback, Parish, Neighbours, CVWs) work since February 2022. The LC Vision statement was explained, emphasising native flora and fauna and the fruit orchard. The new Cotswold Grant application is progressing; there might be some H&S matters to address with reference to a pond. SM agreed to show the slides at the RCC Annual Community Meeting in May. Work parties are advertised in the Parish Magazine.
- h. **Play Areas.**
 - i. There has been no recent meeting of the Playground Group.
 - ii. The Clerk would check the progress of the of the GWR grant for Phase 2, making sure that projects would be ready very quickly if and when the grant is confirmed.
 - iii. **Recommendation:** the purchase of a new notice board was agreed, up to £1000 for 2 (shared with Cemetery, see Item 7b), using the Interpretation Board budget. The board must not hinder the drive through for the Mule.
- i. **Lovar.**
 - i. New benches were not approved for the Lovar 'extended area' – it was suggested to carve a bench from a suitable log. Removing the concrete posts and fence was a priority - probably using the Payback team.
 - ii. There was a new item of quarry stone purchase to spruce up the pond surround, at £180 +VAT, agreed by the Committee.

7. Cemetery Grounds.

- a. **Cemetery Grounds and Path.** Chippenham Pathways have agreed to return to complete the Cemetery path edging; a date is awaited. A meeting would be held with J H Jones (20th April) to confirm no mow May and to confirm areas of wild flower.

- b. **Interpretation Boards.** The cost of a new notice board was agreed – see earlier **Recommendation** at 6i.
- c. **Bridge on the Ha-ha.** The bridge was completed by the CVWs, but now gates are required for the permissive path. Two gates will cost £255 each, £35 delivery charge and a further £140 for wooden pens. **Recommendation:** to accept a further spend on the bridge and path of £750+VAT (using the Fencing and Gates budget).
- d. **Horse Field. There is a 5 year Lease** in place but this will be amended to reflect the new Permissive path.
- e. **Clerk's update on interments and income.** The Clerk wished to convey the increased income of £12,830 from interments and headstones set against a budget forecast of £7,500.

8. **Boxhill and Rudloe.**

- a. **Commons management plan.** The walkaround has confirmed how the Commons should be managed, in particular the 'one width' of mower cutting for pathways.
- b. **Lacy Wood.** Teenagers have been playing in the wood, but keeping it tidy. There is now a major Network Rail site set-up in order to repair the Brunel Tunnel. The sign near the viewing platform needs to be refurbished or changed.
- c. **Albion Terrace / Middle Common.** Improvements in upkeep have been noticed bar the washing line umbrella which will be reported as 'fly tipping' to WC.
- d. **Rudloe Estate 'green space' initiative.** In order to gather information on any proposed allotments, trees, litter bins, benches and meadow planting across the estate, parishioners will be invited to the Annual Community Meeting on 14th May. There will be an A3 map with post it notes to help inform the process.

9. **Common to all Open Spaces.**

- a. **Parish-wide tree survey.** The 2 tender documents were considered. Factors discussed were cost, regionality, quality of bid, staff training and reference sites.
Recommendation: to accept the Tree Parts quote with the caveat of checking what is meant by an ongoing active assessment.
Action: Clerk was to inform Tree Works post FC.
- b. **Parish-wide meadow grass plan.** The Plan for grass cutting was agreed at the walk around on 19th March, but this was required in writing.
Action: Chair to draft the grass maintenance plan.
- c. **Planters and baskets.** It was considered that high-quality planters and baskets would be beyond the budget this year, so this idea was paused until next year, 27-28. There might be a crab apple tree at the Bassets.
- d. **CPRE Best Kept Village.** All outstanding tasks are complete. There would be an sentence added about Lacy Wood. The Clerk would check the insurance liability and ask the OSS for any further advice.
Action: Clerk to seek insurance and OSS advice.

10. **Review of Policies**

- a. **Cemetery Policy.** The revised Policy was approved incorporating the Chair's new wording on unauthorised items in the Rules.
- b. **Tree Policy.** The review was deferred, pending the new survey.

11. **Items for Discussion.**

- a. **Climate Action film.** It was agreed to book the film on Climate Action. The 16th July is the planned date for Box.
- b. **War Memorial.** A new planting scheme for the Garden was approved.
Recommendation: to purchase plants costing £514+VAT, for sowing on 9th May.

12. **Correspondence.** To receive any urgent correspondence.

- a. **Middlehill House** – letter received from solicitors for owners. A reasonable request from the Council was met with a hostile response. There was a discussion on next steps. It was agreed that the OSS would be requested to advise.
- b. **Cubs football at the Recreation Ground** – 6th June. Approval was given for this event but the Clerk would remind the Cubs reference car parking.

13. **Forward Plan.** The latest Forward Plan, including the Policy matrix and Risk Assessments was noted and would be updated post meeting.

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

- a. Work Party on Sun 19th at the Rec.
- b. Lime tree area on Rec – investigate the no guard on the tree.
- c. F&G item. Financial Regs to be updated as a priority.
- d. Bronze plaques for benches need to be ordered (Cllr BW).

15. **Date of next meeting** – 7pm on Monday 20th July 2026. The Committee ended at 9.25pm.

Signed and dated by Chair.....