



# BUXTED

## PARISH COUNCIL

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**MINUTES OF THE BUXTED ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** held on **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May at 7.30pm** in **Buxted Primary School, Buxted**

**Members in Attendance:** Cllrs Blandford (Chairman), Coxon, Humphrey, Johnson, Marshall, Roberts, and Wilson

**Public in Attendance: 37**

The Chairman and Councillors Coxon and Roberts gave a presentation to all in attendance on the history of the new hall, why do we need one and details about financing the project. The presentation can be seen as an appendix to the minutes.

Vivienne reinstated the need for extra help and enthusiasm from parishioners to move this project forwards now that some of the stumbling blocks have been removed.

Following the presentation questions were taken from those in attendance.

**What size will the new hall be?** It was explained where the site is to new members of the community. It was explained in a small amount of detail that we couldn't get a larger hall at the time of applying for planning permission, so we were limited as to the size of the approved hall. This could change now that planning restrictions have been relaxed more, but we are still limited to space on the site.

**How are we going to canvas the community? Any speculative sum of money listed?** A build cost of 1 million was previously mentioned but some groundworks have been completed and that sum was not costed. We would need to cost up the existing plan, can we afford this? Do we need another spec to reduce costs? We have had a reasonable turn out for the Annual Assembly and having previously had a 3% response to a questionnaire regarding renovating the Reading Room we would welcome ideas of how best to communicate to the wider public and how to capture ideas.

**There are other venues in the village (St Mary's, Cricket Club) why do we need this one?** The other venues are small and not central to the village. A hall on the Ionides site would not only create a new venue but would provide a hub to the village based around the village green.

**Is it a project Buxted PC want to move forward or the community to move forward?** If it is a stand-alone committee there would be more funding opportunities that not available to parish councils to apply. Ideally a committee/charity would be formed outside of the parish council to lead the project with parish council representation.

**Buxted Players? They have had to go outside the village to find new facilities.** The issues with Reading Room is a lack of parking and spending £200k on an old building to raise to modern standards would not be a good use of money and there would be no increase in parking.

**Comment - It would be nice to have a hub in Buxted and still use the other community hall to bring people to the parish and hold local events in a local village to benefit everyone.**

**Horrified when I found it would cost so much to renovate the Reading Room, so why wasn't it renovated and what assurances will there be that the same won't happen with a new building?** The Reading Room was built in 1906 and extended in the 70's and since the turn of the century we have been aiming to build a new hall to minimal upkeep has been maintained. Following a comprehensive survey, it was established that it is an old building that wasn't built very well and needed a lot of modernisation. It is easier to create a new build sometimes, rather than trying to modernise a very old building.

**Can we have an annual village week if the new hall is built?** Great idea. There is no reason why we can't have another group working alongside the parish council.

**Is the village is behind this?** Previous forms went out during COVID so may have been missed. The way to get people's views is to talk to them. It won't happen straight away, but Buxted is a larger village now so all views are welcome.

**Michelle Warner commented that she was involved in the original project and question is in order to gauge the sentiment of the community and go to grant funding opportunities the next logical step would be a neighbourhood plan.** Michelle has said she would be willing to produce a neighbourhood plan. If you had AiRS involved, you could produce a Neighbourhood Plan in 2-3 years.

**Parking is full in the evening with cars parked along the road? We need to give people an idea of how big the hall will be and what are we getting?** Before establishing an exact size and design, we would first need to know there is a desire in the village for a new hall.

**Younger people within the community would very much like a new venue in the village and would have been here this evening but they have young families.** How do we engage with the younger members of the village? **Social media and through schools. This person was surprised at the negativity in the room.**

**Comment - Chair of Buxted bonfire Society said its aim is to bring the village together but biggest issue is not having a suitable venue within the village. We need a community hub. Debbie putting herself forwards to lead the project with the help of Kayleigh who also volunteered.**

**Have we been in contact with AiRS** yes and they have a dedicated person to help.

**Regular events to get the message out there and a few more meetings within the community would help.**

Show of hands at the meeting of those in favour (almost unanimous) and no hands against (possibly abstaining)

Thank you to everyone who has come please stay and have a drink and a chat to councillors.