

THE BASIL IONIDES MEMORIAL CENTRE Framfield Road, Buxted (Charity No 305192)

AGM Minutes Tuesday 13th May 2025 – starting at 8.40p.m. St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted

Present: Vivienne Blandford (Chair), Annette Duck, Simon Furber, Chris Humphrey, David Mallett, Adrian Marshall, Brian Muddle, Peter Smith, John Rose and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

All users of the Ionides site were invited to attend. Members of the Rifle Club and Buxted Bonfire Society were in attendance. No representation from the Scouts Association.

- 1. Apologies:** James Roberts
- 2. Annual Report – by the Chair Vivienne Blandford**

Just over two years ago two Trustees had a meeting with Simon Morley and Fraser Eastwood of the Buxted Scout Group where they explained their ambitions for a new scout hut as they had applied for funding from the Youth Investment Fund. They were successful in their bid for funding and in July 2024 building started.

We have a comprehensive 'Licence for Alterations' with the Scouts which we hope has covered those aspects that concerned the Ionides Trust over safety, drainage, access whilst building works took place and repairing the surrounding landscape. The larger Scout hut now does make an impact on the landscape and somewhat dominates it.

It would be fair to say things did not quite go according to plan for the scouts as they had to deal with considerable, unforeseen, building problems, especially over the sewage systems and the architect failing to listen to advice from various parties. The contractors finally left the site in April 2025 with the re-instatement of the Ionides Land still to take place. There were numerous snagging issues, which the Scouts preferred to sort them out themselves. The Scouts are currently working very hard with professional workers and scout volunteers to remedy the situation they were left with regards to poor finishing of the land outside their lease and other matters.

However, the Ionides Trustees are not happy with the steep slopes resulting from the landscape changes. We are challenging the safety of what we would call the informal path from the car park, up the slope to the new hut. It travels over a very steep slope and the preferred route to the hut would be through the car park and round on the pavement to the Framfield Road entrance.

Although the pathway is on Ionides Land we will ask the scouts to look after the path and maintain it. Inevitably people always take the shorter route where possible.

The rather scrubby woodland was opened up by the installation of pipes from the wastewater tank which has also caused the slopes to be steeper than desired. The slopes are very steep at the far end of the scout hut going through to the recreation land, but the scouts have said they think the finished gradients are satisfactory.

We are in touch with Network Rail to improve their fencing alongside the railway line. We will wait and see how the woodland recovers to decide whether remedial work needs to be done. The same is true of the rest of the site, having rained incessantly during the building works there has been a complete absence of rain since the completion of major works and we all need to see how the land settles and grass seeding takes place.

We are also aware that the hedges along the Framfield Road will need cutting but this will probably have to wait until after the nesting season. We could not get onto the land safely whilst the construction was taking place, so this has delayed any cutting of hedges. The bonus here is that the hedges will be able to flower and fruit, thus giving more food for the birds.

The Bonfire Society held a ceremony to make the 80th anniversary of VE Day, including lighting the beacon. The event was successful and we appreciate and thank them for arranging this event. However, some damage was done to the new seeding and grass works, and we all need to work together to avoid further damage in the future but as I have just said this may take time and some innovative thinking.

We have carried out some refurbishment in the children's play area, with some new equipment, all of which continues to be very popular with younger children.

At the present time we are in contact with the police over illegal camping by persons known to the police and some anti-social behaviour from various individuals. We have asked the police to provide a presence, when they can. We ask everyone, if they see what they consider to be anti-social behaviour to report, first to the police and copy in the clerk at Buxted Parish Council.

Looking to the future we hope that the Scout Hut will be a great improvement for all the community, and we can, once again, all enjoy using the Ionides Land as a recreational and meeting space. Any thoughts on possible improvements will be gratefully considered. It is a space for all the residents of Buxted.

Vivienne Blandford, Chair of IT Trust, May 2025

3. Finance Report – by clerk Claudine Feltham

Charity Commission

The return to the Charity Commission for year ending 31.3.24 was successfully completed and there are no outstanding requests. The next return will be due at the end of 2025 or early 2026. As this process is conducted through an online system, access will only become available closer to the submission date

Summary of financial activity during the financial year (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025)

There are two accounts held with CAF – the Cash account and the Gold account. The combined opening balance on 1st April 2024 was £81,152.67.

Income: £68,623.50

Expenditure: £10,147.07

Closing balance (31.3.25); £139,629.10

There has been little activity on the Gold account since the start of the year, with £1,194.37 interest and no expenditure. However, there was a very generous donation from the estate of a parishioner towards the new hall funds of £56,000. The estate is yet to be finalised but is anticipated that a further amount, in the region of £11,000 will be received.

The funds previously received from the dissolved charity of the Buxted Community Hall Trust which amounted to £22,535.00 are held within the Gold account balance. These funds would be used towards the cost of a new hall, should that project become live again in the not-too-distant future.

The following tables show income and expenditure on both of the Cash and Gold accounts for 2024-2025

Income type	Amount
Rent from doctors' surgery	£11,372.85 ¹
Rent from rifle club	£1
Donation	£56,000
Interest	£1249.65
Total	£68,623.50
Expenditure type	Amount
Bank fees	£75.75
General maintenance (including repairs/renewals, materials, safety checks, inspection and litter picking)	£1111.19
Beacon/associated costs/install	£4320
Insurance	£812.93
Grass cutting	£2484
Dog bins emptying	£343.20
Grants	£1000
Total	£10,147.07

Anticipated expenditure in future

We have recently completed some improvement works to the play area and the invoice will be paid in May 2025 (£14,875.20).

And as we are all very aware, the reinstatement of the land following the building of the new Scouts hall is still in progress and there may be some additional works that the trust decide to take on.

Resolved: Cllr Rose proposed that the financial report was accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Blandford and reached unanimous approval.

4. Discussion of future work:

Jon Newton May and Kevin Wickson of the Buxted Rifle Club attended to introduce themselves and advise there has been a big change at the club including a new committee who have a different mindset from previous years. The club would like to integrate with the Ionides Trust more in the future. There are lots of changes to make to the club including improving accessibility. The chair advised the Trust has a meeting every month following the main parish council meeting as which the rifle club are always welcome to attend.

There was clarification that Community Infrastructure Levy money can be used to improve infrastructure in the community, so could be used in conjunction with the Rifle Club to assist with accessibility. It was suggested the club submit any plans they have for the clerk to check eligibility with the WDC CIL officer.

The rifle club representatives advised further CCTV has been installed and fencing erected to stop the unwanted visitors. The chair has asked for the Rifle Club to inform the IT if there is any antisocial behaviour as there has been some recent issues on the land.

Debbie Elliot of the Bonfire Society updated that the lighting of the beacon event took place the previous week, with no issues. The British Legion received over £100 in donations from the evening.

The Summer Fete is Saturday 21st June, Bonfire Night 27th September, and Christmas Light switch on 29th November. There may have an issue using the Scout Hut on the evening of the Christmas Light switch on as the Scouts are adamant the Hut cannot be loaned out.

There was also a suggestion of installing new picnic benches which members agreed with and also a barrier to the surgery car park to stop any unwanted high sided vehicles. Unfortunately, this is not possible as lorries and waste disposal lorries need access to the land.