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22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

## MINUTES

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 7.04 p.m. at The Reading Room, Church Road, Buxted**

**Present:** Cllrs. Blandford (Parish Council Chairman), Cllr Rose (Planning Chairman), Bolton, Coxon, Humphrey, Illingworth (19.16), McQuarrie, Marshall, Moss (19.14) and Roberts

Also present: ESCC Galley, Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

**Public:** 4 members of the public were present.

The Chairman added: *In the light of the forthcoming agenda item on the Reading Room, if required, Standing Orders will be suspended, at the chair's discretion, if members of the public wish to speak on this matter.*

### 01/06/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Cox and Johnson

### 02/06/21 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

All councillors declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Ionides Trust by virtue of the parish council being managing agents of the site.

Cllr. Rose declared a prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the land west of Church Road (Beechbrook Park due to having owned part of the application site

Cllr. Illingworth declared a personal interest in any matters related to the St Margaret's and St Mary's Churches by virtue of being a member of the PCC.

Cllr Bolton declared an interest in matters relating to the Pizza Van (Ionides Trust) due to owning a food preparation business close to the site.

### 03/06/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the REMOTE meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and Planning Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were signed by Cllr McQuarrie and Cllr Roberts as a correct record of the meetings.

04/06/21 **Planning applications considered: None.**

**Applications received following the publication of the agenda:**

Application: [WD/2021/1345/F](#)

Expiry date for comments: 7 July 2021

Location: FOXWOOD HOUSE, BUXTED WOOD LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4QE

Description: PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION

**No objection – recommend approval** subject to any comments received following a site notice being displayed.

05/06/21

**Responses Submitted to Wealden District Council**

Application: [WD/2021/0989/F](#)

Expiry date for response to WDC: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Location: MERLINS, BURNT OAK ROAD, HIGH HURSTWOOD, BUXTED, TN22 4AE

Description: Change of use of land to extend residential curtilage and the construction of a new garage and machine store.

Response from Buxted Parish Council: the parish council request that a condition is applied to tie the garage to the dwelling and have no objections.

Application: [WD/2021/1062/FA](#)

Expiry date for response to WDC: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Location: LAND AT QUEENSTOCK LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4AR

Description: Minor material amendment to WD/2020/0970/RM (reserved matters pursuant to outline application WD/2019/1114/O (outline application for the erection of up to 9 no. dwellings, access, and other associated infrastructure) involving variation of conditions 2, 4 and 7 to enable changes to external materials, alterations to doors, porches and size of windows, and changes to boundary treatment.

Response from Buxted Parish Council: no objections, recommend approval. (Cllr Rose declared a personal interest)

06/06/21

**Update on applications previously considered by the parish council, and determined by the district council:**

Application: [WD/2021/0780/F](#)

Location: KILWORTH HOUSE, LONDON ROAD, BUDLETTS COMMON, UCKFIELD, TN22 2ED

Description: Proposed single storey extension to side of property to form bedroom 1 and en-suite

Update: approved

Application: [WD/2021/0710/F](#)

Location: 14 ST MARYS GARTH, BUXTED, TN22 4LY

Description: Replacement of conservatory with single extension at rear and first storey extension over garage.

Update: approved

Application: [WD/2020/2641/F](#)

Location: 59 GORDON ROAD, BUXTED, TN22 4LJ

Description: Erection of single storey extensions to the front and side, and a part single, part two storey extension to the rear

Update: approved

Application: [WD/2021/0509/F](#)

Location: SPINDLES, HOWBOURNE LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4QB

Description: Erection of two detached dwellings and one detached garage to include access onto the A272 with pedestrian crossing point.

Update: refused

Application: WD/2021/0254/F  
Location: Hopes Cottage, 43 Hurstwood Road, Buxted, TN22 4BB  
Description: Small rear extension  
Update: approved

Application: WD/2020/2115/FR  
Location: WOODSIDE FARM, A26, HERONS GHYLL, UCKFIELD, TN22 4BU  
Description: Retrospective application for the retention of various poultry/agricultural sheds and container.  
Update: Approved

Application: WD/2020/2689/F  
Location: 16 BRITTS FARM ROAD, BUXTED, TN22 4LZ  
Description: 1ST floor timber extension.  
Update: Approved

Application: WD/2021/0196/F  
Location: COXBROOK, HURSTWOOD ROAD, HIGH HURSTWOOD, BUXTED, TN22 4BJ  
Description: Demolition of garage and detached store. Erection of garage.  
Update: Approved

Application: [WD/2021/0357/FR](#)  
Location: SILVER BIRCHES, BUXTED WOOD LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4QE  
Description: Part retrospective application for the change use of land to residential garden. A second storey extension over the existing single storey side extension, two storey extension to rear, new dormer window to side, replacement carport, new front porch and new garden office building.  
Update: Approved

Application: [WD/2021/0500/F](#)  
Location: WINSFORD, BUXTED WOOD LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4QE  
Description: Alterations and first floor bathroom addition  
Update: Approved

Application: [WD/2020/2048/F](#)  
Location: HAVEN COURT, ETCHINGWOOD LANE, BUXTED, TN22 4PT  
Description: To change the use of land from agricultural to mixed agricultural and private equestrian. to construct a stable block and manege for private use only.  
Update: Approved

*19.09 hours – Cllr Rose finished chairing the planning part of the meeting, Cllr Blandford took over to Chair the parish council.*

07/06/21

## **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

Cllr Galley reported that ESCC are currently focusing on funding following COVID. Holiday activities/food programme is available to those children on free school meals for 4 weeks during the summer holidays. One of the sites at which these are being held is at High Hurstwood. The programme is being funded by central Government. Children that are not on free school meals are also able to pay to join the programme.

In the longer term the level up fund has received an application from WDC to assist with the Hailsham regeneration project and improvements. Hailsham falls within a priority 2 area due to less deprivation than other areas such as Hastings who fall within priority 1.

A new Tourism strategy is being launched next week to boost tourism in the district.

Cllr Blandford commented on illogical diversion signs in minor lanes especially in relation to recent work by BT Openreach through Etchingwood. This included a closed road from Framfield Road through Nan Tucks when Nan Tucks Crossroad was open through to Framfield/Blackboys but with no diversion road closed signs if coming from Framfield/Blackboys. There was a comment on social media 'now you see it, now you don't'. Please could Cllr Galley ask ESCC to have a little more thought to road sign diversion. This has been requested before when diverting traffic along the A272.

08/06/21

## **END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT**

For all members of the parish council to acknowledge receipt of the end of year finance documentation as emailed by the clerk and responsible financial officer (RFO) Claudine Feltham.

Cllr. Roberts as chairman of Finance commented that all reports had been reviewed and were properly prepared in a way that councillors are able approve all systems and accounts reports. The parish council thanked Claudine for all her hard work producing an excellent set of accounts for the year. Proposed Cllr Coxon, seconded Cllr Roberts seconded – **all in agreement**.

Prior to the parish council meeting, the following list of reports were circulated:

- Bank reconciliation for current account to 31st March 2021
- Bank reconciliation for off-site play equipment account to 31st March 2021
- Bank reconciliation for hall account to 31st March 2021
- Bank reconciliation for youth council account to 31st March 2021
- Bank reconciliation for reserves account to 31st March 2021
- Cash and investment reconciliation to 31st March 2021
- Ear marked reserves to 31st March 2021
- Summary receipts and payments to 31st March 2021
- Detailed receipts and payments to 31st March 2021
- Trial balance to 31st March 2021
- Annual return detail to 31st March 2021
- Previous years internal audit report
- Unsigned AGAR documents for year 2020-2021

09/06/21

## **ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT FOR 2020-2021**

The parish council acknowledge receipt of the internal auditor's report and note the actions recommended. These will be considered at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Cllr Roberts commented that our auditors would like the PC to have a three-year forecast which is fine for general income and expenditure, this becomes slightly more difficult when considering CIL and EMR monies. However, we are carrying out more a more comprehensive statement when dealing with EMR.

10/06/21

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT: To review the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

Resolved: All members of Buxted Parish Council acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements for the year ended 2021. This was proposed by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Roberts, all Cllrs in agreement.

11/06/21

## **ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

For full parish council to consider the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the 2020-2021 Annual Governance and Accountability Return – considered and acknowledged. Resolve that full parish council approve the Accounting Statements:

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Marshall the Accounting Statements be approved, all Cllrs in agreement.

12/06/21

## **FOR THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS (SECTION 2 OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2019-2020)**

Page 5 of Annual Return was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk/RFO

13/06/21

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

Noted and will displayed on website and noticeboards on required date.

14/06/21

## **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

**Mobile phone coverage:** Nothing to report.

**Public footpaths:** Nothing to report.

### **Road Safety:**

**Noted improvement to pathway east of Buxted – Redbrook Lane to Toll Farm and thanks to Cllr. Galley for his assistance; acknowledge commencement of parish council grass cutting** – Councillors were pleased to see that hedges had been cut back and debris covering the pathway have been removed. The council thanked Cllr. Galley for his assistance with this matter. The width of the pavement outside Heatherwode Farm has been impeded by the overgrown hedge at that location. Cllr Gale thought that the owner had been asked to cut back the hedge and this was an ongoing matter which he will further investigate with the requisite authority.

It was also noted that parish council funded grass cutting has commenced. The verge between The White Hart and Coopers Green will continue to be cut when required.

**Update of ‘village gates’** – Having received advise from a contact in Piltdown, the clerk has now contacted East Sussex Highways to start the process of installing village gates at either end of Buxted Village. This took Piltdown 5 years to achieve, but we are hoping we can work through the various requirements quicker than that.

**Speedwatch demise and follow up action by PC** – Sadly the Buxted Speedwatch Team have decided to disband. Not through lack of volunteers this time, but unfortunately because they feel completely unsupported by Sussex Police. An extract from a document received from the Buxted co-ordinator of speed watch provides further information as to why the group felt that they could not continue:

*“As a result of the failure of the police to establish anything resembling a ‘partnership’ approach to tackling the “speeding epidemic” (their words) in Sussex, the Buxted Speedwatch Group has ceased to operate. The past two years has seen a series of broken promises by Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, culminating in abysmal failures to establish any of the measures previously promised by Sgt Kara Tombling on 1st March 2021. Group members cannot see any point in continuing to waste their time on Speedwatch.*

*Councillors may recall a previous report in the Autumn of last year highlighting our concerns about how the Speedwatch scheme was operating and the use of false statistical information to claim success for the scheme. This continues, despite acknowledgement that the claims made for the success of Speedwatch were, to be polite, misleading.*

*We were invited to a zoom meeting where it was said that PS Kara Tombling was in charge of the police activity in relation to Speedwatch. It appears that PS Tombling has since been redeployed as she does not respond to emails; we were not advised that this was taking place.*

*On 1st March we were told that “PS Hendy is reviewing the way we publish our data, and that context is provided around them. He is currently developing the next newsletter”. This has not happened. PS Hendy has not responded to requests for clarification. Emails to him go unanswered.*

*PS Tombling specified 5 areas of immediate action on 1st March. It appears that none of these have been achieved.*

- 1) Further meeting to be set up in 3 months. – PS Tombling to set date.*
- 2) PS Hendy to review statistical information and how this is presented and shared.*
- 3) PS Hendy to include the new Stage 3 roll out in newsletter to groups.*
- 4) Set up stakeholders meeting – PS Tombling to develop opportunities.*
- 5) PS Hendy to review a new process to sharing Police activity with CSW groups.*

*We were assured by PS Tombling that Buxted would be invited to participate in a stakeholders meeting; we have heard nothing.”*

ESALC are due to hold the bi-annual meeting with the Chief Constable of Sussex Police and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner on 5<sup>th</sup> July and Parish Councils are asked if we wish to raise any queries of a strategic or unresolved matter. It is therefore **agreed** that the clerk would submit this issue for further discussion and explanation of why matters and promises were not followed through.

Cllr Galley has sent the document from Speed Watch to the Police and Crime Commissioner who will be visiting Fairwarp in August. He will raise this matter again with Katie ?? again in person.

**Fingerpost renovations** – The clerk was advised that unfortunately the council’s regular contractor is currently incapacitated, although some work appears to have been carried out in the last few days. The clerk would investigate and if necessary, source a new contractor.

**Wealden Local Development Framework:** Nothing to report.

*(Cllr. Galley left the meeting at 19.30)*

**Property issues:**

**Reading Room renovation – Fire Safety Assessment Report** - the full fire safety assessment report was received after several weeks which was circulated to all and forwarded to the building surveyor working with the parish council on renovations plans for the Reading Room. He assessed the report and provided councillors with costs which included all items raised by the fire assessment together with the already listed improvements the parish council and users of the hall would wish to achieve. Total costs would in the region of £200,000.

Following the receipt of this information the Reading Room Working Party discussed the estimated costs of work to comply with fire and electrical regulations and make the necessary structural improvements and those requested by user groups and the wider survey.

The working party discussed if 'some' of the works could be carried out to make the hall safe to use, but this could still amount to some £80,000 initially. It was considered, from a business perspective, this simply is not worth the money. Mr Bysh did say that there a 'minimal' works that could be done but this would only be for the very short term in the hope that our insurance company agreed to continue to insure the building until the end of the insurance year. To keep it running longer term, at the very least the hall would need a complete rewire not to mention the requirements to satisfy the fire regulations. On top of this we are looking at a maximum of 5 years before the roof would need renewing at a cost of approx. £30K. This makes renovating the hall in the long term simply uneconomical.

Therefore, the working party discussed a way forward and put the following before the entire council:

1. Obtain an up-to-date electrical wire assessment of the whole building (quote received and agreed).
2. Write to our insurance company with both the electrical and fire assessments and advise we can make small changes to make the building as safe as possible in the short term. Establish if they are prepared to continue to insure the building?
3. If yes, we give the current users one year's notice to close the RR and carry out minimal works.
4. If no, we will have to close the RR immediately as we are liable for any risk given that we are now aware of the dangers.
5. We sell the site with planning permission and wait to see if there is a desire for a new hall – approx. 2 or 3 years. This would also give the PC time to accumulate funds from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)
6. If there is a desire, the PC would have to decide if it wished to take on a new hall project, but this is in the future. The surveyor has studied the costs for the 'New Hall' building and commented that it was an expensive 'green build' and could be altered and built for less than the 1.2 m estimate.
7. In the meantime, the PC would help rehome existing users by opening a dialogue with the other hall groups to see what their availability could be and offer to contribute to their upkeep as a gesture of goodwill from closing the RR.

Cllr Marshall commented that would £300k provide all the changes and improvements requested? Yes, but we could not increase the parking which will always be an issue.

Cllr. McQuarrie commented that fund from the sale of the Reading Room together with the costs which could be spent on it and CIL money, would it be better invested into a new hall?

It was noted that the parish council are lucky to have planning permission to redevelop the hall as if we were to look at selling the hall as is, it would not even be worth £200K due to the work required on it.

The chairman of the Finance Committee, Cllr Roberts advised that although there is no desire to close the hall the parish council must be minded that councillors are personally liable if the hall was not insured and that that was not a feasible position for councillors to take, and there simply is no business case to keep the hall open long term.

*Suspend standing orders to allow members of the public to speak:*

*A representative from the Buxted Players asked that if the parish council cannot afford to spend £200K on a total refurbishment of the existing hall, how are we going to fund a new hall? Can we not apply for grants for the refurbishment?*

Answer: There is no promise to build a new hall at the present time. If there a desire from the community to build a new hall, this is something that the parish council would then have to consider and investigate funding. However, the parish council cannot justify committing £200k to an old hall that will only ever have limited usage due to its size, layout, and lack of parking.

*A representative of the Buxted Art Club commented that spending this money on the hall would ultimately be a waste of money and that the hall has come to its natural end and it would not be fit for purpose.*

*Standing Order were reinstated.*

It was **agreed** to move forward with points 1 and 2 of the list above and depending on the outcome of our Insurers comments will depend on how the parish council moves forward.

**Buxted Football Club – replacement of vandalised defibrillator:** The parish council were as disappointed as everyone to see the vandalism to the defibrillator and are pleased that one of the culprits has been arrested. The Parish Council has contacted the Football Club with a view to replacing the equipment, but very kindly it has been inundated with such offers.

**Communications Matters:** Nothing to report.

**BT Box –** A local carpenter has been asked to carry out the work. He has been slightly busy but has promised the work will be carried out very soon.

15/06/21

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

**P1 – Local Resident –** Request for a litter bin to be installed at St Margaret's Church, Buxted – Proposed by Cllr. Bolton and seconded by Cllr Marshall - **agreed**

**P2 – Uckfield TC/HPS –** Uckfield TC notification of ending sanitising of play equipment and costs for if Buxted PC wish to continue (£255 a month increase) – **agreed to discontinue sanitising.**

16/06/21

## **FINANCE**

- i) to agree to approve the payment list for April, May & June 2021, cheque numbers 4651 to 4697 plus direct debits, via email as all payments not received in time for meeting – Proposed by Cllr. Rose and seconded by Cllr. McQuarrie – approved.
- ii) to approve the bank reconciliations for April/May 2021 - approved
- iii) to receive the RBS reports: EMR, Cash & Investment Reconciliation, Receipts, and payments to date - noted
- iv) Account's summary – circulated separately to councillors, to be attached to minutes - noted.

17/06/21

## **OTHER MEETINGS**

No other meetings

18/06/21

## **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Illingworth wished to raise a question with regards mobile phone receptions and if there are any parties interested in providing a mast in the parish. The clerk advised that the company carrying out work at Popeswood Reservoir were asked



but are currently not looking for any new sites in the parish.

19/06/21

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The chairman advised that the back room and kitchen of the Reading Room were cleared by the chairman, and clerks and we managed to fill a skip with years' worth of belongings. The Art Group and WI were thanked for their input into helping in clearing/rationalising some of their property.

The meeting closed at 20.08 hours.

## **East Sussex County Council Ongoing Matters:**

<b>DATE RAISED</b>	<b>CASE NO</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION</b>
21/12/2020 <b>ONGOING</b>	00529461	Britts Farm Alleyway – access through difficult due to blocking by vegetation and fallen fence	21/12 – passed to officers. 31/3 – map received by clerk showing part of alleyway in ownership of Highways and part Rights of Way Team. Clerk written to Rights of Way Team to ask those trees on their part (footpath 67) be assessed. 31/3 Rights of Way Team confirm the trees are on ESCC land however could be the responsibility of the landowner which ESCC are not. I wait to be advised.
21/12/2020 <b>ISSUE CLOSED</b>	00527587	Switching off streetlamps in Britts Farm alleyway, or at least switching off one on 24 hours	21/12 – passed to officers. 26/1 – still being discussed by officers. 22/2 – resident advised that the orange light has now changed to a bright white light and is still on 24 hours (so worse situation) 10/3 – apologies from ESCC for slow response. Explanation of why lamp was changed to white light. Still looking at putting timers on lights 11/3 – Response by clerk. Crossed wires, we want the lights turned off not on timers. 23/3 – ESCC confirm they are still looking into being able to switch off lights. 15/4 – ESCC confirmation that lights cannot be switched off for safety reasons but will be replaced with different bulbs and will not be on all night. Works will take place late summer. <b>ISSUE CLOSED (for now)</b>
21/01/2021 <b>ONGOING</b>	00539076	Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted	25/1 – passed to officer to investigate
27/01/2021 <b>ISSUE CLOSED</b>	00541323	Width of pavement between St Raphaels and Toll Farm Triangle, Buxted	27/1 – passed to officers. 9/2 – officers could not identify location they need a better description! Email response sent. 31/3 – after more correspondence between Cllr Galley, ESCC Officer Johnson and Local Resident, Cllr Galley has confirmed this matter cannot be pursued any further. Pavement is a fair width, and the hedge has been recently cut back. Engineering works and cameras will not be installed by ESCC

			<p>on this section of road.</p> <p>20/4 – Cllr Galley confirmed hedge and width of pavement will be investigated by Highway Steward.</p> <p>30/4 – Highway report that one owner of the hedge is disputing that it is their responsibility to cut the hedge. Passed to Enforcement. Until hedge cut back Highway Steward cannot ascertain if siding works are required.</p> <p>May 2021 – edged of overgrown pathway cut back along with hedges alongside the road.</p>
09/06/2021	00585063	Junction of Howbourne Lane/A272, Buxted	Overgrown verge making visibility dangerous. Reported to Highways

Ionides Trust Update – see below.

## **Basil Ionides Memorial Trust – Updates – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021**

1. Tipple & Toppings: Request to position Pizza Van in Ionides Carpark fortnightly on a Tuesday – Yes, for a trial period of 3 months during summer on the condition of no litter and the Trust receive a copy of their food hygiene certificate and insurance.

2. Search for groundsman for site – update

The chairman and clerk are due to meet two contractors on site next Monday and Tuesday.

3. CLOSED SESSION - to discuss issues pertaining to financial matters