



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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11th October 2022

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 11th October 2022 at 8.05p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Humphrey, Roberts, Rose and Wilson.
Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public: None

01/10/22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Coxon, Illingworth, Johnson, McQuarrie and Marshall

N. Bolton is no longer a member of the Parish Council.

02/10/22 **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 (Beechbook Park) due to having owned part of the application site

03/10/22 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2022 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/10/22 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

Cllr Galley reported that there has been discussion at ESCC regarding winter pressures and how the Government grant will be spent. Another matter being discussed is fracking despite there being no likely sites in East Sussex. Cllr Galley commented that he would be interested in parish council views. Members who attended the meeting were split between supporting fracking and feeling that fracking may not necessarily be the way forward, but it is agreed that alternative fuel sources need to be found.

Cllr Humphrey thanked Cllr Galley for assisting with chasing the Highway Steward to ensure the grass verges in FAD were cut.

Cllr Humphrey also mentioned that a residents' association formed around Millwood Lane, Five Ash Down are concerned that ESCC have put an enforcement notice on Budletts Manor to reduce/cut down trees opposite the proposed development

entrance which opens the area and gives the impression of widening the road. Also, ESCC have a traffic counter on Millwood Lane so there are now concerns a new access could be created off Millwood Lane if A272 is not considered appropriate. Cllr Galley would investigate and report back to Cllr Humphrey.

Britts Farm lights – response by ESCC Highways: the parish council finally received a response from ESCC following the submission of the results of a questionnaire of the residents of Britts Farm Road regarding the permanent switching off the streetlamps in the cut through/footpath between the High Street and Britts Farm Road. ESCC have advised that following initial comments from the Police and safety concerns they could not agree to turn off the lights and instead propose a compromise of the lights being switch off at 11pm instead of 1am. The local resident speaking on behalf of Britts Farm Road does not want to accept this response and wishes to continue to fight to have the lights switch off. Cllr Galley had tried to contact the relevant officer in ESCC to ascertain if this were a final decision but could not get hold of her. He would report back to the clerk once he has had this conversation.

05/10/22 **LIST OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24**

Full details of grant applications were circulated prior to the meeting and are available on the parish council meeting page.

A discussion took place regarding the applications and the following grants were awarded as submitted:

Buxted Art Club - £311.92

Five Ash Down Chapel - £330

(Ecclesiastical) Parish of Buxted and Hadlow Down - £2330

Buxted Methodist Church - £500

Ashdown Place (Uckfield) Residents Company Limited - £2,100. Honour the grant this year, but in the light of new developments in the parish, the Parish Council could not then extend such grants to all new developments. It would not be able to support them all. Two voted in favour of awarding this grant, one against, and one abstention.

FAD Pop In - £350

St Wilfred's Hospice - £1000

Buxted Horticultural Society - £360

Ashdown Forest Conservators - £1000

Ashdown Radio - £100

The following grants were either refused or deferred:

Wealden CAB – the clerk asked to ascertain what grants the Towns (Uckfield, Crowborough, Hailsham) provide as any grant from Buxted Parish Council should be proportional.

Tunbridge Wells & District Samaritans – no grant awarded

06/10/22 **READING ROOM PLANNING AGREEMENT/NEW HALL PROJECT – UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:** After asking for an extension of time to produce an updated Planning Agreement to release the Reading Room site from the approved hall, the clerk has again chased WDC as no further information has been received.

The clerk is also still awaiting consultancy costs from AiRS despite chasing several times.

07/10/22 **RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANS – WORKING WITH A PROJECT MANAGER TO FORM A NEW PLAN FOR THE PARISH:** At a clerks meeting Trevor Leggo

introduced the idea of parish councils without an emergency or resilience plan to work with a project manager to build up a purpose-built plan for each parish. The clerk has spoken to the project manager who charges £50 per hour, and she estimates working for 5 hours with each parish council to form a plan. Members discussed this cost and **resolved** to work with the consultant on a new plan. Cllr Humphrey agreed to review and/or add to the plan once it has been drawn up.

08/10/22 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report

Public footpaths: Nothing to report

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety: Nothing to report

Wealden Local Development Framework: Nothing to report.

Property issues:

- **The Dene, Uckfield – update:** prior to the August deadline, we received notification that Uckfield Town Council have expressed an interest in submitting a bid for The Dene. The clerks had a meeting with the clerk to Uckfield TC to discuss maintenance costs and any history of the site. Uckfield TC now have until December to submit a bid.
- **Play Equipment – consideration of quote for repairs and maintenance for swing and zip wire:**

After a long discussion which included the option of removing the equipment altogether; or trying to replace wooden with steel posts, it was agreed that the basket swing should be removed, and the maintenance carried out on the zip wire and new costs ascertained for this and annual maintenance. The Parish Council would consider replacing the swing with a different type of equipment. This item was also discussed in the following Ionides meeting who would bear the costs of maintenance and replacement as they hold the remainder of the section 106 funds, specifically held on account for such an expenditure.

- **Fingerposts – update:** the clerk has now assessed the posts which are missing or have missing fingers and ascertained what needs to be replaced (with some help of Facebook). The contractor providing a quote will do so after 17th October. It is very difficult to find contractors to carry out this work as other companies are very busy and have very long lead times, so it is likely the parish council may only have one quote to consider.
- **Allotment track – repair works update:** Works to repair the track have finally been completed with allotment holders very pleased with the quality of work. Invoices have been forwarded to SWS (60%) and Network Rail (20%) with the parish council paying the remaining 20% of costs.

The clerk also wished to remind members that the reasons three quotes were not received for this specific work is because in 2015 three quotes were sought but only WKP Sealants responded, and the PC chose them to carry out the work. They did such a great job that when it needed repairing again in 2019 it was decided use them again. It has taken since 2019 to be given the go ahead from SWS and NR to contribute towards costs, thus the delay.

Communications Matters:

- **Need to recruit more councillors for Buxted Parish Council** Clerk would start advertising on social media and noticeboards. Councillors would talk to residents when out and about.

09/10/22 **CORRESPONDENCE**

P1 ESCC – Grass Cutting Options – it was agreed to continue with grass cutting as per 2022, with ESCC to carry out two cuts and the parish council pays its own contractors for extra urban cuts and along the A272 where necessary.

10/10/22 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

None

11/10/22 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Blandford, payments totalling £20,068.74 covered by cheque numbers 4925 and 4933 were approved.
- ii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash and Investment Reconciliation. Cllr Roberts commented that on review expenditure to budget looks a little heavy on expenditure, but we have not yet had the second half of precept so this should even out spend throughout the year. No recent CIL money collected, but we are expected to receive a fair amount soon given the recent applications approved.
- iii) **Resolved** to appoint Mulberry & Co as our internal auditor for the financial year 2022-2023. Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Wilson – **agreed.**
- iv) consideration of one-off cost of living payment to clerks - in principle agree. Council agreed that the chairman and chair of finances should discuss this further with a discretionary amount of up to £400 per head. A proposal will be put forward to the next month's meeting for discussion.
- v) **Noted** of conclusion of 2021-22 Audit. Section 3 of AGAR returned without any advisories. To Note: Notice added to website and boards before deadline of 30th September 2022.

Chair of Finance proposed a Finance Committee for November. To be arranged. Cllr Roberts left the meeting at 8.16pm.

12/10/22 **OTHER MEETINGS**

No other meetings

13/10/22 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None

14/10/22 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

The meeting closed at 8.54p.m.

See below: ongoing issues reported to ESCC Highways:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
21/12/2020 ONGOING	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

			<p>light and is still on 24 hours (so worse situation)</p> <p>10/3 – apologies from ESCC for slow response. Explanation of why lamp was changed to white light. Still looking at putting timers on lights</p> <p>11/3 – Response by clerk. Crossed wires, we want the lights turned off not on timers.</p> <p>23/3 – ESCC confirm they are still looking into being able to switch off lights</p> <p>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</p> <p>19/7 – clerk chased an email sent asking for further clarification as to why lights cannot be switched off</p> <p>22/9 – clerk forwarded email to Cllr Galley to help chase</p> <p>06/10 – ESCC response explaining why lights cannot be switched off and that new lamps would be better and can be fitted with guards</p> <p>11/10 – local residents do not accept this response and still wish to have lights switched off. Clerk responded to ESCC with the suggestion of a site meeting to show that it is not a used footpath during the dark</p> <p>Jan 2022 – Highways officer offer to change lighting to reduced light and to switch off from midnight to sunrise. Residents do not agree to this and still want lamps removed or permanently switched off</p> <p>7/3/22 – Highways agreed to make investigations with a view to removing lights</p> <p>16/5/22 – Highways responded advising they require an anonymous survey of all residents of Britts Farm Road to prove it is what is wanted but they do not have the resources to carry this out. Clerk has asked exactly what format the questionnaire should be in so the PC/local residents would undertake task</p> <p>25/5 – ESCC response they do not have an anonymous survey as they have never carried one out before. Clerk to draw up a survey which will be circulated by a local resident</p> <p>9/6 – 13 anonymous letters hand delivered to 13 most affected residents</p> <p>26/6 – 9 letters returned. 61% agreeing lights should be switched off. Email to Roy Galley providing info before it is sent to Highways.</p> <p>20/9 – results of survey sent to ESCC. Notification of receipt and passed to Asset Management Team</p>
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			22/9 – Email received from Asset Management Team advising they are not therefore able to agree to completely turn off or remove the streetlights from this location. However, they are happy to reduce the lighting time from the current switch off time of 1am to 11pm to reduce the impact on residents adjacent to the path.
21/01/2021 ONGOING	00539076	Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted	25/1 – passed to officer to investigate
17/02/2022		A272/Budletts Lane is deteriorating again and needs resurfacing. It is now becoming dangerous when vehicles are trying to avoid potholes are going onto the wrong side of the carriageway. Etchingwood Lane is absolutely dreadful Millwood Lane is getting terrible towards the timber yard.	Roy Galley visited each site with Highway Steward
28/03/22	00673252	Licence application to install a dog waste bin on highway verge in Five Ash Down	28/3 – application for licence submitted to ESCC – confirmation received and passed to Licencing department 28/6 – No response received from Licencing, so a chasing email sent August 2022 – site meeting with ESCC to agree location of new bin. September 2022 – Location agreed with WDC. Clerk completing licencing forms for ESCC

Ionides Trust Update:

1. **Play equipment repairs and maintenance – cost implications to Ionides Trust:**
As discussed at the main parish council meeting. The Ionides Trust will pay for maintenance from the Section 106 funds for play equipment.
2. **Cutting back of hedge on Ionides Land** – this work was queried as an invoice has been received but the chairman does not believe the hedge has been fully cut. Clerk to arrange for the chairman to meet the contractor on site.
3. **Covid memorial Cherry Trees** – Sadly one of the trees may be dead due to the very dry summer. This would be looked at again in the spring and replaced if dead.
4. **Request by Buxted Scouts to use site for Bonfire Event Saturday 12th November** – Risk Assessment and Insurance details received: All is in order, no issues.
5. **Moving of Table Tennis table to Football Club** - FC still happy to have and Scouts happy to lose it. FC do not want to have to move it though. It was noted that the surface has been vandalised. Agreed to stay where it is at present as the Trust is not sure if it even can be moved.
6. **Football Club** – the post and rail fence between the pitch and clubhouse/carpark is falling down. It was agreed the clerk should contact the Football Club as they must be aware of this and to ask if it is to be fixed and offer to pay for materials.
7. **Buxted Scouts** – the door to the gas cylinders behind scout hut was propped open (on Sunday). James asked to talk to Scouts about making it safe as per lease