



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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12th July 2023

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 11th July 2023 at 8.00p.m.

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

Public : None

01/07/23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received and accepted from WDC Cllr Shaw

02/07/23 **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

Cllr. Duck declared a personal interest in matters relating to High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee by virtue of being a member.

03/07/23 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/07/23 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**
Cllr Galley reported that ESCC has extended the lease to Uckfield Leisure Centre for a further 19 years. It is now over to WDC to find funding.

He also reported there is a meeting the following week at ESCC regarding the extra funding for highways improvements. The following highways issues in the parish were noted:

Potholes at Etchingwood Lane have supposedly been completed but he had not checked them yet.

The road surface from Buxted School to Buxted Village, and Shepherds Hill to Nan Tucks Lane as well as the cutting of the hedge around Heatherwode Farm are logged and ongoing.

Councillors queried the following issues:

Budletts Lane potholes – has been logged but not on list so will chase.

The state of the corner of Framfield Road/Gordon Road which collapsed after water works. The road has dropped over 8 inches and dangerous – Cllr Galley to report.

Pot Holes in Centre of Five Ash Down have had white markings since before Coronation and works have not completed – Cllr Galley to chase.

Cllr Rose had noticed that at the top of Millbrook Hill outside Nutley the layby used by lorries has been significantly altered so far so that lorries can no longer use it as a rest stop. He has also noticed that the layby outside of Buxted towards Hadlow Down has been filled in and therefore there are less facilities for long distance drivers. Cllr Galley did mention that there are some very large laybys in the area.

Cllr Coxon mentioned the Highways Act 1980 Section 56 which is when a notice can be served on the highway authority requiring the respondent to state whether he admits that the way or bridge is a highway and that he is liable to maintain it. Cllr Galley knows the Highways Act 1980 but is not familiar with Section 56 while others suggested that a notice would likely have to be carried out legally which would take some time.

The Chairman requested that Cllr Galey please ask the contractors to remove the road closed signs, at both ends of road closures, when the work is completed. The signs at Sharland's corner were left after work had been completed on Pounsley Hill, causing a considerable detour.

05/07/23 **READING ROOM – DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – UPDATE**

In the last week, an initial offer for the Reading Room as been received. There is come confusion regarding the CIL payment which would mean the agent believed would not be required as the existing building could be offset against the size of the new dwellings.

An offer of £343,000 was received via an informal email which has since been reduced to £200,000 due to the size of the existing building to be removed and the CIL costs. Members agreed that the site is worth more than this amount and would continue to market the site.

06/07/23 **COSTS TO RENEW LEASE FOR BUXTED FOOTBALL PAVILION**

Following a meeting with the new chairman of the football club, the clerk was asked to review the existing lease from 1972. It was decided that this lease is now out of date and a new lease should be created. The clerk has obtained two quotes both resulting in costs approximately around £900. It was **resolved** to work with Robert Mosley as it was felt that his approach to a new lease was in line with the thinking of the Parish Council. As he said *“The most cost-effective way to deal with something like this is to have a list of terms the Council wish to include, and we can then use a new word.doc precedent to put a lease together for you. I have found trying to work of old leases, with old language and clauses, can be very time consuming. A new lease if over 7 years will need prescribed clauses for Land Registry.”*

Proposed by Cllr Blandford and seconded by Cllr Smith, **resolved** to work with Robert Mosley to create a new lease for the Buxted Pavilion.

The chairman asked for volunteers to join a working party to work through clauses for the lease. Cllrs Rose, Coxon, Blandford and Marshall agreed to form the working party.

07/07/23 PROPOSED COST FOR A BEACON TO BE LOCATED ON THE IONIDES TRUST LAND
At the last meeting, the Buxted Bonfire Society asked if the Parish Council would support the purchase and location of a Beacon in preparation for to the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on 6th June 2024. The clerk, Claudine has recently purchased and installed a Beacon in Wadhurst and therefore contacted the same supplier. The basket is £2,300 and we would also need to purchase the oak support, therefore a budget of £5,000 is requested – **approved**. The location of the Beacon would be on the top section of the Ionides site behind the benches but away from the trees in the corner.

08/07/23 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Mobile Phone Coverage: None

Public footpaths: None

Trees: None

Road Safety: None

Wealden Local Development Framework: None

Property issues:

The Dene – update on sale: Our solicitor acknowledged our response to the draft purchase documents. He has amended and returned to the buyer’s solicitor.

Buxted Recreation Ground

- **request for a memorial bench to be located behind the goal –** The Parish Council was approached by the Football Club as they have been asked if a memorial bench could be installed behind the goal. The Parish Council support this proposal but would ask that the bench is movable when required for maintenance purposes. **Approved**
- **request from the Football Club to install a new container on land behind existing garage/container. Request to close barrier. Aware of Crusader parking deal with football club –** The Football Club have asked if a container could be placed behind the existing one to store the goal posts which are currently left outside. The area that the container would be stored is currently scrub land and near another container there so will not be out of place. **No objections, agreed.**

Barrier – we have asked the Football Club to close the barrier at the top of the track – this will be chased as it should be regularly closed to stop any unwanted visitors.

High Hurstwood Recreation Ground: replacement of wooden fence post – The parish council was made aware the previous week of a rotten large fence post at the entrance to the recreation ground. The contractor has quoted £200 for removal and replacement of the post - **agreed.**

Nevill Road – possible disposal – update – no update.

Communications Matters:

Purchase of new laptop for clerk at a cost of £655 – The clerk has had her laptop since 2017 and it is getting gradually slower and more frustrating. The purchase of a new laptop was **agreed.**

09/07/23 **CORRESPONDENCE**

High Hurstwood Resident – Request that parish council owned hedges are not cut between the month of March and August in line with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to protect nesting birds.

Cllr Duck updated members that she had spoken to the contractor who has cut the hedge at this time of the year for the last 10 years. It is cut by handheld machinery, and he had been ensured by the Fete Committee that the hedge had been checked for nesting birds.

The hedge is given a tractor cut in Spring and Autumn.

Although it is not illegal to cut the hedge between March and August if it has been checked for nesting birds, it was decided to inform the HHVHC not to cut the hedge during this time and just have it cut in the spring and autumn – Cllr Duck to advise the HHVH Committee.

10/07/23 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

None

11/07/23 **FINANCE**

(i) On the proposal of Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Rose payments totalling £9131.43 covered by BACS payments and direct debits were approved.

(ii) April finances: To receive the current bank reconciliation for April 2023; To receive the RBS reports for April 2023: Trial balance, summary receipts and payments, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash, and Investment reconciliations - **Noted**

(iii) May 2023 finances: To receive the current bank reconciliation for May 2023 To receive the RBS reports for April 2023: Trial balance, summary receipts and payments, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash, and Investment reconciliations - **Noted**.

(iv) June 2023 finances: To receive the current bank reconciliation for May 2023 To receive the RBS reports for April 2023: Trial balance, summary receipts and payments, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash, and Investment reconciliations - **Noted**.

(v) to formally approve and amend Financial Regulations for two signatories to sign the invoice and the Clerk to then administer the BACS payment once authorised. Proposed Cllr Wilson, seconded by Cllr Rose – **approved**.

(In emergency then the Clerk can obtain email consent from two signatories to make a BACS payment and then retrospectively have the invoice signed)

12/07/23 **OTHER MEETINGS**

Cllr Humphrey had attended a FAD Village Hall Committee meeting at which the caretaker Jenny Dennison has decided to take a step back and is taking on less responsibilities after volunteering at the hall since 1981. Cllr Humphrey is to be the main point of contact for FAD Village Hall for the parish council.

13/07/23 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None

14/07/23 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

It was questioned by a member of the public that no members of the parish council had attended the community meeting run by WDC Cllr Shaw, and should we have a presence in the future? Members commented that this was a 'community' forum led by a Wealden District Councillor (not the parish). Councillors could have attended as residents, but we were not asked for parish council representation at the forum. The Parish Council has established a good working relationship with Cllr Shaw who we are sure will report back to the parish council in his monthly updates if there are

any matters we could be addressing.

The meeting closed at 8.44p.m.

| DATE RAISED | CASE NO | DESCRIPTION | OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION |
|------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| 21/01/2021 ONGOING | 00539076 | Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted | 25/1 – passed to officer to investigate |
| 26/05/2023 CLOSED | HED000077# | Overgrown Hedge - Upper Heatherwode Farm to Redbrook House on Pound Green Road, Buxted | 30/5 – acknowledged by ESCC and referred to an officer. 26/6 – confirmed hedge has been cut |
| 03/07/2023 ONGOING | GRC000971 | Overgrown grass verge corner of Court Lane/Five Ash Down road | 03/07 – reported to ESCC Highways |

1. **Apologies - None**

2. **Declarations of Interest - None**

3. **Proposals for new Scout Hut – update**

The Parish Council considered the revised plans for the new Scout Hut application at the planning committee earlier that evening and recommended approval subject to conditions. From a trust perspective, we would like to see the landscaping plan preferably prior to any decision, but if this is not provided, we would expect the Scouts to provide the plan direct to the Trust either prior to or at the same time as submission to WDC.

4. **Wild camping – update**

Since the last meeting there was an incident on site and one of the residents is no longer there. The Police have advised they have no concerns regarding the remaining resident following a welfare check and therefore this remains a civil matter. The Police also advised that they believe the tent is now unoccupied, but we have no proof of this. The chairman visited the site yesterday and politely asked if anyone was at home. The second tent was open and filled with rubbish, cool box, suitcase, magazine, and the pushchair I had seen outside on a previous visit. Previously outside the blue tent had been a deflated mattress, cooking pans, the tent was closed yesterday, but several solar lights were arranged outside, not previously noticed. A couple of councillors had regularly visited the site in the previous weeks but had seen nobody there. It, therefore, appears that the ‘resident’ has abandoned the gear in situ.

The Ionides Trust has sought legal advice and it could be very costly to have the person removed. These details had been circulated to all councillors.

Advice from the Police is to remove the belongings and store in a safe place for future collection leaving a note as to whom to contact to do this. The chairman asked for volunteers. Three councillors and the clerk and her husband have made themselves available to carry out this task.

Should this plan not work, it was **agreed** to take legal action to remove him from the land.

The clerk to check with the solicitor as to whether we can put on order on the land to prevent ‘persons unknown camping there’ and same goes for recreation land.

After the meeting, it was discovered that the person has now left the site leaving one tent full of rubbish. The Parish Council has arranged for the rubbish to be removed.

5. **Leaky pipe - update as now fixed.**

A water leak was reported to the Scouts as it must have been coming from the water supply to the Scout Hut. We have been advised the leak has now been fixed.

6. **New barrier for car park – costs, height restricted?**

In the process of having the gully cleaned in the Ionides car park it was discovered that the barrier is broken and can no longer be locked down. Therefore, costs for a new barrier would be approx. £700 for the barrier plus fitting. It was also suggested to have a height restriction barrier together with a new lowering barrier – **agreed to investigate and circulate costs.**

7. **Ionides Grant Awards - on hold as other pressing needs on funds**

8. **Removal of Table Tennis table - likely this would be carried out as part of the works for a new Scout Hut.**

Meeting closed 9.12pm