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14th June 2023

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 7.50p.m.

Prior to the meeting, Buxted Bonfire Society addressed the council in relation to future of BBS with regards to bringing an annual bonfire procession and bonfire/fireworks back to the village. They advised that since 2017 they have had a successful walking group but would now like to host an event. They would need to find a fire site and would like to work with the PC to aim to get the event back to the village by 2025.

One councillor asked if there are any conditions the society must work with?

Yes, vehicle access/site big enough to house a fire site and emergency services/not too near buildings. They would also need to consider any potential ground works to ensure ground is reinstated following an event. Ideally, they need approx. 3 potential sites to present to relevant authorities to decide which is the best. One possible site would be the Buxted Recreation Ground, but the train line needs to be taken into consideration.

The Bonfire Society were asked to write a specification to the PC with any recommended sites for further discussions.

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

Public : 9

01/06/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Humphrey, Rose, Wilson and WDC Cllr Shaw.

02/06/23 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.

03/06/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/06/23 ESCC REPORT

Cllr Galley reported that he has sent his monthly update to the clerk who has circulated and uploaded it to the website. He also wished to report sadly there have been two ESCC councillor deaths in the last few weeks. He also reported that he

has had a meeting with Highways with his main concern being the drainage issues at Coopers Green traffic lights. He is hoping to have a date for the works soon. He is also investigating the ongoing issues in Nan Tucks Lane and Shepherds Hill.

Cllr Marshall asked if there are any plans to deal with the surface of A272 between Buxted and Buxted School as the road is gradually disintegrating.

In answer to a question, Cllr Galley reported that Balfour Beaty (new ESCC contractors) are being more proactive and hopefully using local contractors. Progress is being made and Cllr Galley expects further investment in roads soon.

It was reported the owners of the hedge at Heatherwode Farm have allowed to hedge to overgrow the pathway again despite ESCC dealing with this last year.

05/06/23 FOR MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL TO CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THE FOLLOWING END OF YEAR (31.3.23) RBS REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

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 by Cllr Roberts, seconded Cllr Smith – all in agreement.

06/06/23 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITORS (MULBERRY & CO) SIGNED PAGE OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2022/2023

The parish council acknowledge receipt of the Annual Governance and Accountability return for 2022/23.

07/06/23 TO RECEIVE THE FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FROM MULBERRY & CO FOR YEAR ENDING 31.3.23

The parish council acknowledge receipt of the internal auditor's report.

Recommendation: that all councillors continue to use their official email accounts for all council business. There were no Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward

08/06/23 FOR MEMBERS TO APPROVE SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/2023 AND FOR THE CLERK AND CHAIR TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT

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 GOVERNANCE Statement for the year ended 2023. This was proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Coxon, all Cllrs in agreement. The Clerk and Chair signed the document.

09/06/23 FOR MEMBERS TO APPROVE SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/2023 AND FOR THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT, AS PREPARED AND SIGNED BY THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Marshall, and reached unanimous approval, section 2 - Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023-2023 was approved and signed by the Chair.

10/06/23 REVIEW OF BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS; FINANCE REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Prior to the meeting the clerk circulated Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Policies and Procedures without any amendments since the last review. Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Coxon - Members acknowledged all documents and recommended no changes.

11/06/23 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PROTOCOL ON CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH DEVELOPERS, PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS AND MEETINGS DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Prior to the meeting the clerk circulated a draft protocol which is based on a model used by other councils. Proposed by Cllr Blandford, seconded by Cllr Smith the protocol was adopted.

12/06/23 READING ROOM – DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – UPDATE

Since the previous meeting, Rowland Gorrige were instructed to act on behalf of the parish council to sell the Reading Room. The following update was received on Thursday:

"It's been a busy week with enquires which will be followed up on Monday and Tuesday next week.

I thought I was going to be contacting you with an offer earlier this week, although the developer has said they are having a few issues with their funding.

Jo returns from her holiday on Monday, and we will continue to push and promote. Although early days, I am pleased with the enquires to date."

13/06/23 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: Works to Parish Council owned trees have now been completed – thank you to Simon Young for his excellent work. The clerk is currently awaiting a quote from Simon regarding an overhanging tree at 49 Nevill Road, Uckfield that is also caught up in a BT phone line, which is located within our Nevill Road site.

Road Safety: Nothing to report.

Wealden Local Development Framework: Nothing to report.

Property issues:

- **The Dene – review of contract of sale and overage clause** – The clerk has received and circulated the draft contract of sale received by our representing solicitor. The draft made some changes which members agreed with and commented that the address is shown as 'Buxted' which needs to be amended to 'Uckfield'. Members were happy with the wording of the contract, so the clerk would advise the solicitor to progress with the sale.
- **Buxted Recreation Grounds and Bins** – our groundsman (and a member of the public) are reporting the bin on the recreation ground and Ionides Trust sites are always full. The clerk has attached a temporary sign to the bins asking that if they are full, please take your rubbish home with you and inform the clerk, however the clerk is requesting funds to create some more formal/permanent signs (approx. £10 each) **Agreed**. The chairman also mentioned that she and the clerk are meeting the new Football Club

chairman on Thursday.

- **Reading Room – potential return of Japanese Knotweed** – The vice chair received a call from the owner of the property next door to the Reading Room who was worried the Japanese Knotweed had returned to her garden. The chairman visited the Reading Room and neighbouring garden and could see no trace of the knotweed onsite. Therefore, since the receipt of the final eradication certificate it would appear the knotweed has not returned on our land.
- **Nevill Road – possible disposal update** – no update

Communications Matters:

- **Consideration of quote for IT support services for Parish Council** – for some time the clerks have not felt the support being provided by the current IT company has been good value for money (£156 per month). Therefore, the clerk sought advice and recommendations from other Parish Councils and two companies were clear front runners. Quotes from both companies were circulated to members with a recommendation to choose SME as the support services are more inclusive. Members discussed the quotes and **resolved** to change contractors to SME Solutions. Proposed by Cllr Roberts seconded by Cllr Marshall, agreed by all.

14/06/23	CORRESPONDENCE <i>No priority correspondence</i>
15/06/23	COMMITTEE MEETINGS None
16/06/23	FINANCE i) Payments: On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Smith, payments totalling £14,697 covered by cheque numbers 5033 and 5049 were approved. ii) Request from FAD Village Hall Committee for support towards annual insurance costs - approved
17/06/23	OTHER MEETINGS No other meetings
18/06/23	MEMBERS QUESTIONS Cllr Roberts – suggested a Finance Committee be arranged to review the Risk Register. RFO to arrange.
19/06/23	ANNOUNCEMENTS Cllr Blandford sadly reported that James Adler the CEO of Ashdown Forest Commission died suddenly very recently. The parish council sends condolences to his family for their loss.

The meeting closed at 8.16p.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	HED000077#	Overgrown Hedge - Upper Heatherwode Farm to Redbrook House on Pound	30/5 – acknowledged by ESCC and referred to an officer

- 1. Apologies – Cllrs Humphrey, Rose, and Wilson**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Proposals for new Scout Hut – update – The planning application for a new Scout Hut was discussed at the Parish Council Planning meeting earlier in the evening. It is expected the plans will be amended and returned to parish council.**
- 4. Consideration of quotes to repair ruts on site – prior to the meeting the clerk circulated a quote for the repair of the ruts on site after the swing seat was removed. Members agreed to have the works completed.**
- 5. Ionides Grant Awards – chairman will circulate the scheme again – to be discussed at the next meeting.**
- 6. Wild camping – our wild camper is still living on site. Cllr Smith is due to meet with our PCSO later in the week and he has been asked if the PCSO could visit the person in the tent to advise that wild camping is illegal and to ask he leave the site. Although not a ‘Police’ matter, the PCSO’s help would be much appreciated.**

8.19pm

Bonfire Society wished to draw members attention to the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on 6th June 2024. The Bonfire Society would like the Ionides Trust’s support in finding a location and purchasing a Beacon to be lit at the event. Members thought this was a good idea and suggested the Bonfire Society might wish to ask the local Royal British Legion group if they wish to be involved. This would be on the agenda for next month.