



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

Clerks: Beccy Macklen & Claudine Feltham
PO Box 202, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 1BN
t: 01435 812798 e: clerk@buxted-pc.gov.uk w: buxtedvillage.org.uk

14th March 2023

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 7.38p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Coxon, Humphrey and Rose.
Also present: Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public: One

01/03/23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Illingworth, McQuarrie, Marshall, Roberts, Wilson and ESCC Cllr Galley

02/03/23 **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)

03/03/23 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/03/23 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

Outcome of meeting with ESCC, Cllr Galley and local resident regarding Coopers Green cross roads – in the absence of ESCC Cllr Galley, Cllr Humphrey reported that he and Cllr Galley, and local resident Graham Midmer had a useful meeting with the head of the ESCC drainage team. He is quite definitely 'on the ball'. They discussed various interlinked drainage problems which ESCC have assured will be fixed. A full report is awaited.

Challenging ESCC charge for bunting for Kings Coronation – Cllr Galley was not aware of this issue discovered by the clerk, Claudine. She has ascertained that ESCC wanted to charge Parish and Town Councils/charities/community groups for erecting bunting for the Kings Coronation at a cost of £60.81 per licence with each licence consisting of 10 items. This was queried by Claudine who felt this is not in the 'spirit' of the celebrations. The previous day an email was received to confirm that all charges have been removed.

On March 22nd Cllr Galley is holding a Village meeting at the White Hart from 6.30 to

8.00p.m. The idea is that people can pop in to raise any local issues. Parish councillors and public are very welcome.

In the absence of WDC Cllr Illingworth, there was no WDC update.

05/03/23 **Reading Room and New Hall Project:**

Reading Room –

1 & 2. Planning Permission and Sale of the Reading Room – following the signing of the Section 106 Agreement at the last meeting, the WDC decision notice to approve planning permission at the Reading Room has now been issued.

This being the case, Members discussed the next stage which would be to dispose of the Reading Room. It was therefore **resolved** that the Reading Room should now be disposed for best value and be put on the market for sale with planning permission for two semi-detached houses. The clerk to ascertain costs from solicitors and estate agents and reconsult the parish council.

3. Closed building and car park insurance update – In between parish council meetings, the council's insurance broker contacted the parish council with a best quote for closed buildings insurance for the Reading Room. The due date for the insurance was 10th March. It was therefore **resolved** to go ahead with the recommended insurance with ERGO UK Specialty Ltd at a cost of £3,489.09 per annum.

The chairman commented that trees and vegetation overhanging the fences around the Reading Room would need cutting back because the excess weight of the vegetation could bring down the fences. Most of the vegetation does not belong to the parish council, if the land isn't sold, we would have to negotiate with the neighbouring properties to carry out work.

New Hall – AiRS quote update

Following the previous meeting, one member came forward to form a group to look in depth at the AiRS quote. Two members at the meeting did not feel the need to carry out a questionnaire as they felt this had been carried out previously as part of the existing hall permission.

The chairman commented that we seem to be doomed by inertia, partly that of the parish council but mainly from public response. If, the village got anywhere near a desire for a hall (how you reach that decision remains to be determined) that would be where AIRs could be very useful in the setting up the mechanism that runs a hall and a Business Plan(Stages 3-5). Although a comprehensive Business Plan was drawn up beforehand. That said this kind of help would be invaluable and save time.

Other things to consider:

- We have removed the final hurdle and have agreed to market the Reading Room
- We must find a new home for all the records, sorting it out will be time consuming.
- We are awaiting the Scout alteration designs, this may impact on the Ionides Site (see Ionides agenda item)

It was agreed that with the general lack of inertia and forthcoming elections which could bring new councillors with fresh ideas, it doesn't seem appropriate to continue with a questionnaire at this time.

06/03/23 Emergency Plan – update following receipt of documents, and request for volunteers – Following the previous meeting a poster was created and circulated in noticeboards and on all social media/website.

A small number of people have come forward to volunteer help in an emergency. The clerks are collating the list which will then enable the plan to be completed and circulated. Cllr Humphrey has volunteered to look through the plan and provide some feedback. This project is ongoing.

Elections 2023 – nomination forms, new councillors – West Sussex Association of Local Councils has produced a video which interviews councillors about why they are councillors and why they enjoy the role. This has been uploaded to the council's social media and website pages with a request for more councillors for Buxted Parish.

Buxted Parish Council has 15 spaces on the council, 9 for the village of Buxted, 5 for High Hurstwood and 1 for Coopers Green. There are currently 9 councillors in place, with two stepping down in May therefore new members are needed.

07/03/23 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

- **Trees: Consideration of quotes for tree works to council owned trees** – a quote for works required to council owned trees has now been received and circulated. The works cover two sites, Nevill Road, Uckfield (£2,400) and Buxted Recreation Ground (£2,970). Although expenditure of this amount (in total) would normally require three quotes, each site is less than the three-quote threshold of £5,000 and the tree surgeon who has provided the quotes is very familiar with the sites having worked at them before. It was therefore **resolved** to accept the quotes from Simon Young. The clerk would inform the owners of the properties that are affected by the Ash Die Back.

Road Safety: Nothing to report.

Wealden Local Development Framework: Nothing to report.

Property issues:

- **High Hurstwood Village Noticeboard** – Following the previous meeting the clerk circulated an email received by the chairman of the HHVHC and provided members with some background information. The clerk has also spoken to the contractor who has advised that to move the noticeboard will cost approximately £300 due to the need to dig it out of concrete, move it, and most likely purchase two new poles. Councillors also visited the site to look at the CCTV, and agreed that it would be simpler to move the CCTV camera than the noticeboard. Therefore, it was **agreed** that the parish council would not be moving the noticeboard. It was also noted that as the CCTV overlooks a children's playground, it needs to be registered with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner, which is the responsibility of the High Hurstwood village Hall Committee who owns and installed the CCTV.
- **The Dene, Uckfield – update** – following the previous meeting the clerk has sought a solicitor to work on behalf of the parish council on the sale of the land. He has quoted £750 for a basic sale. The overage clause could be 1-2 hours of time if very simple or longer if more involved at a cost of £300 per hour. As the parish council is keen to complete this sale, it was **resolved** use

Robert Moseley of Berry & Lamberts LLP.

- **Nevill Road – fencing** – a quote to repair the fencing on the road frontage of Nevill Road has been received, at a cost of £1,091. In the interest of tidying up the site and getting the work completed it was **resolved** to accept the quote and not look for alternatives.
- **Fingerpost Renovation – update** – Jakks are working hard on the renovations/repairs of the fingerposts in the parish with eight of the 17 having been completed.

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

08/03/23

CORRESPONDENCE

P1 – Hadlow Down Parish Council - request for councils to work together on joint discussions with ESCC regarding ongoing conditions of highways and the ESCC maintenance strategy – **agree** to work collaboratively as we share frustrations regarding the state of the roads, however the parish council do not agree with all the wording in the letter specifically targeting individuals.

P2 – High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee – Requesting the Parish Councils permission, as freeholder, to implement the veranda element of planning permission obtained in 2013. **Agree**, but now that the storage unit has been implemented the changing rooms should be opened for a wider use.

P3 – Uckfield TC – The Future of Uckfield Leisure Centre – information from and Uckfield Town Councillor regarding the background to a forthcoming public consultation on the future of Uckfield Leisure Centre – **agree** that we support the continued opening especially in light the new houses being built, and to decrease the amount of the traffic that would be generated travelling to use facilities in Crowborough and the new proposed site in Hailsham. The parish council would urge everyone to sign the petition being circulated on Facebook.

09/03/23

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

None

10/03/23

FINANCE

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Coxon, payments totalling £17,447.28 covered by cheque numbers 4982 and 4996 plus Direct Debits were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for February which were signed.
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) **Clerks Remuneration** - in the light of the appraisals carried out in mid-January by two councillors it was agreed clerks should be awarded a 10% pay rise.

11/03/23

OTHER MEETINGS

Cllr Humphrey attended the FAD Village Hall meeting and would like to pass thanks to the PC for the new cooker and Wi-Fi. On behalf of the FAD Hall Committee, he requested a contribution of up to £250 towards a fridge for the kitchen – **agreed to provide funds of £200.**

Cllr Humphrey is due to attend a meeting regarding a street party in Court Lane, FAD for the Kings Coronation.

12/03/23

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None

13/03/23 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Emergency contact details for councillors/clerks – councillors agreed to provide clerks with a telephone numbers and email for a next of kin for each councillor.

The meeting closed at 8.45p.m.

East Sussex County Council Highways Issues:

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
17/02/2022 CLOSED		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 Feb 23 – ESCC responded that the road does not meet the criteria for any works at present.

Apologies: Cllrs Illingworth, McQuarrie, Marshall, Roberts, Wilson

Interests: None

1. Consideration of quote for works to trees

Whilst quoting for works to Council owned trees, Simon Young also provided a quote for works required to the two oaks on the Ionides land. The quote is £2700 which includes BT lineage removal and Cobra Tree Bracing apparatus to enable tree surgery work. It was resolved that Simon Young be asked to carry out this work. **Agreed.**

2. Initial Scout proposals for a new Scout Hut

Prior to the meeting Cllrs Blandford and Wilson met with Scout representatives, Fraser Eastwood, and Simon Morley, who presented draft proposals for a new Scout Hut. The drawings show a two-story building larger than that presently on site. It had previously been advised that the Scouts would be presenting the plans to WDC at a pre-application discussion meeting before the end of the month which would have allowed time for any concerns the Trust have to be addressed prior to formal submission.

However, on the afternoon of this meeting the Trust was advised that due to time limitations associated with grant funding, a full and formal application will be submitted to WDC before the end of the month. The Ionides Trust were asked for their initial feedback on the plans as currently proposed.

The Ionides Trust are in support of a new Scout Hut on the site, and recognise the need, but it is concerned at the short timescale in which the Trust is being asked to decide on such a large-scale proposal. It has the following major concerns:

- The design and scale of the building is too large for this site.
- The proposals impede the access track which is specified in the lease to be kept clear. To move the access track would mean works outside of the leased area.
- There is a need to look at the impact of a new Scout Hut in reference to the approved new hall site.
- A larger hut would mean increased parking need. The Scouts do not have any provision of their own for parking. A larger hut would put more pressure on existing shared parking spaces with the Ionides Trust and doctors surgery.

However, given time the Trust would willingly work with the Scouts to negotiate a suitable building; possibly amending the lease if needed to provide a building of the correct scale and design for the landscape and one which is a suitable size for the community it serves. Time is also needed to address the impact on the surrounding landscape which includes the potential spoil from the building works which would inevitably need to be deposited on Ionides land, outside any present or future Scout leased area.

If a longer-term consultation had taken place with the Trust, we are sure issues could have been resolved/negotiated prior to formal application stage.

Therefore, at this time, the Ionides Trust cannot support or give permission for the hut as currently proposed.