



# BUXTED

## PARISH COUNCIL

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13th March 2024

### MINUTES

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.05 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Duck, Humphrey, Rose, and Smith.  
Also present: Clerk Claudine Feltham.

**Public:** One member of public arrived at 1913 hours.

**01/03/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from ESCC Cllr Galley, WDC Cllr Shaw, and Cllrs Coxon, Marshall, Roberts, and Clerk Beccy Macklen

**02/03/24 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 Smith declared a personal interest in any matters related to allotments due to being an allotment holder.

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

Cllr Humphrey declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Five Ash Down Village Hall Committee by virtue of being the parish council representative on the committee.

**03/03/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

**04/03/24 ESCC/WDC REPORT**

In the absence of Cllrs Galley and Shaw there were no ESCC or WDC updates. Both have sent monthly updates which were circulated and uploaded to the PC website.

**05/03/24 DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – UPDATE**

The sale of the Reading Room is continuing to move forward and with solicitors now working on behalf of each party. We did receive interest from another party who was initially offering more and viewed the building with a view to build the new

houses but withdrew the offer after further consideration.

**06/03/24 SETTING DATE FOR ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

The Annual Assembly would seem to be the ideal opportunity for the parish council to gain feedback from parishioners on the Wealden Local Plan.

Initial contact has been made with Buxted Primary School to hold the event in its main hall at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday 23rd April. It will be a good opportunity to talk about local plan issues which I suspect will mainly be planning ones.

Members considered topics for the Annual Assembly and would like it to focus on the WDC Local Plan.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange posters from Signs of Style.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange refreshments.

*One member of public arrived at 1913 hours.*

**07/03/24 OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

**Mobile Phone Coverage:** Nothing to report.

**Public footpaths:** Nothing to report.

**Trees:** Nothing to report.

**Road Safety:** New traffic lights which will be installed at Coopers Green. We tried to get East Sussex Highways to include a pedestrian crossing, but this issue was the responsibility of the Safety Team, and this request was refused with the current phase of works.

**Wealden Local Development Framework - Local Plan Working Group** – due to time constraints and pressures of dealing with other matters, the Local Plan Working Group has not yet met but decided to meet prior to the Annual Assembly. The clerks and the Chair have had their hands full with the sale of the Reading Room and issues with the building of the new Scout hut, more of which in the Ionides meeting.

**Action:** Clerk to schedule a meeting of the working party prior to the Annual Assembly

**Property issues:**

**Football Club – update on pitch drainage issues and possible use of field for Bonfire Society Fete June 2024**

Following the previous meeting Cllr Humphrey has been collaborating with the Chairman of Buxted FC regards drainage issues at the site. The Chair of Buxted FC spoke again with two of the contractors. Each has advised they are inundated with work/order book fulfilment that they will not be able to address our enquiry until after Easter.

In the meantime, they have put Agrifactors, their grass maintenance contractor on stand-by to quote and schedule a goal-mouth area only rotavating & quaking programme for week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July, thus allowing the Buxted BS Fete (22<sup>nd</sup> June) & Buxted FC Fiesta of Football (on weekend of 29/30<sup>th</sup> June) to proceed.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow member of public to speak.

The Fete will be going ahead Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June on the recreation ground. They will

start to advertise this later this week and begin the arrangements.

Standing Orders were resumed.

**Communications Matters:** Noting to report.

**08/03/24 CORRESPONDENCE**

**Alan Thompson - Cuesta Consulting Limited - Natural England Case Study on Geodiversity and Nature Recovery in the High Weald:**

Reinforce the natural, geological, and cultural diversity of our local landscapes and do BPC have any, hitherto unknown information on such sites.

Basically, a mapping exercise to collate such information to provide the means to help protect the natural landscape. Deadline is tight, 27<sup>th</sup> March and mainly will consist of known facts but not necessarily gathered together. We were working together at Downlands and Mockbeggars and this study is partly a result of what was found about these sites. This will help local people to enjoy and connect with these important aspects of their natural, local environment.

If any Cllrs know of any possible sites, they will forward details to Cllr Blandford. Cllr Duck mentioned properties called Merlins and The Quarry.

**09/03/24 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Cllr Humphrey advised that he attended Five Ash Down Village Hall meeting.

**10/03/24 FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Humphrey, payments totalling £13,164.83 (BACS and Direct Debit) were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for February 2024 which were signed.
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation.
- iv) **Reading Room Insurance** - For the present time we need to renew the closed building insurance for Reading Room – this decision was made before this meeting as we would no longer have cover so can members resolve to renew the closed building insurance for the Reading Room until the time the building is sold, and the policy would be cancelled. We will get a refund.

**11/03/24 OTHER MEETINGS**

Cllr Humphrey is attending a meeting in Five Ash Down on Friday about Five Ash Down residents holding another village street party.

**12/03/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None

**13/03/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Wilson has submitted her resignation - members thanked Cllr Wilson for her contribution to the parish council and were very sorry to lose her.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

## **Ionides Trust Update 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (following Ionides Trust AGM Meeting)**

**Present:** Cllrs Smith, Duck, Rose, Humphrey, Blandford, and Clerk Claudine Feltham. There was one member of the public.

It is unusual to have both an AGM and a Trust meeting, one following the other on the same day, but it is very necessary to update members and any audience present of the facts surrounding the building of the new scout hut and serious concerns expressed over landscaping and health and safety issues.

1. Apologies – were received and accepted from Cllrs Coxon, Marshall, Roberts, and Clerk Beccy Macklen
2. Declarations of Interest; none
3. Buxted Scouts:
  - Scout Hut – License to alter and new Scout Hut build – update:

Cllr Rose had had meetings with UK Power Networks with a view to removing the pole close to the Scout hut, to a location nearer the road on the edge of the Ionides land and placing the supply to the scout hut underground and provide a connection to the new village hall site in case it should be ever needed.

Cllr Rose gave an overview of the viable solutions, and he is awaiting a quote from UK Power Network which is now due. They did not give an indication of when any work could be conducted.

Member of public spoke: queried if this would affect where the Christmas tree lights would be plugged in. Cllr Rose advised that was a lighting column and would not be affected.

The Ionides Trust were being pressurised into signing the Licence for Alterations so the Scouts could appoint their contractor so therefore, another site meeting was arranged. Cllrs Blandford, Humphrey, and Rose met with Scout representatives, their architects, and the Health and Safety Consultant Ian Anderson on site to discuss remaining concerns which mainly centred around the access track, the levels of the finished building which has a profound effect of the access track. Drainage issues were also discussed along with the suitability of the cess pit. The scouts were adamant that the cess pit was not only fit for purpose but also adequate. No landscaping plans were forthcoming from the architect and their representative seemed unaware of what the finished levels would be in relation to the new plans submitted to WDC where there had been an overall reduction in level.

Cllr. Humphrey commented that the soil report states the soil is not suitable for soakaway. Cllr Humphrey has not yet received the grass and seed specification. **Action:** Clerk to forward this to Cllr Humphrey.

The H&S consultant had discussion with the Trust on the siting of the welfare cabins, timing of working hours, site safety and access for lorries, deliveries, and parking for contractors' staff. A number of spaces have been allocated in the community car park with rules for use and safety. Access, for public to that land not being overtaken by the building site was discussed and entrance to the upper triangle will be through the hedge line to the left of the current entrance, behind the hedge behind the scout hut and on through to the recreation ground. Hoarding will be placed elsewhere to prevent ingress, by anyone unauthorised, around the site. He also insisted that an Asbestos survey be carried out before the licence was signed, which has been forthcoming and shown none on-site.

As the Scouts were keen to get the licence signed as soon as possible it was suggested that an ESCROW Legal Agreement be set up to the amount of £15,000.00 as a guarantee for the obligations of the tenant under the licence (point twelve of the licence). The licence was signed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 and the Ionides Trust had worked extremely hard to cover all aspects of the building and landscaping, being thankful for the advice of the H&S consultant, Ian Anderson.

Just today we heard that the existing cess pit 'is not fit for purpose' and will have to be replaced, which may entail connecting into mains drainage which Cllr Rose had suggested from the outset.

There was another meeting today, attended by Cllr Blandford and Claudine Feltham (Clerk), whereby the site was due to be pegged out so the extent of the building and access track could be seen. Unfortunately, the architect and construction representatives, through possible lack of communication, did not know what was to be achieved and were not prepared, thus wasting the time of the Chairman and Clerk.

**Action – points to be raised:**

- What problem has been identified with the existing cesspit and how do the Scouts/Contractor plan to resolve this? Will they be connecting to mains drainage after all?
- At the site meeting 12.3.24 the contractor laid out a blue rope to show where the hoarding would be placed. The line shown goes under the canopy of the tree and therefore over the tree root protection area. This need must be avoided, especially with fence posts being installed for the hoarding.
- Request to double check where HERAS fencing is being erected.
- The pedestrian access being created needs to be wide enough to allow the torch lit procession for the D Day Anniversary event to proceed through.
- Beacon installation – will need vehicular access to deliver materials to site, and the construction of the beacon. So, we will need an access point/gate in the HERAS fencing to allow this.
- Request for construction site to be closed on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 from 3.30 p.m. to allow D-Day event to be set up from 4.00 p.m.

- 4 Easter Egg Hunt by Nick Bolton requesting to use Ionides Land on Easter Saturday. We informed the Scouts/Architect, and their response was: *'It is probable that the contractor will be setting the site up from 18<sup>th</sup> March, or possibly a week later, pending on agreement of the hoarding location and attaining a site power supply. It would be better if you say that the land won't be available.'* We disagree and the land should be open, where possible to all comers. As the hoarding will be in place it will be quite clear which part of the land is off-limits. The architect has since retracted this statement and meant 'just the construction site' should be unavailable.

**Update from Debbie Elliott on Buxted Bonfire Society:**

- Quiz night next Friday night at Buxted Football Club and two teams left.
  - Lighting of Beacon Events 6<sup>th</sup> June on Ionides land. No joy with Royal British Legion representative yet, but still working on this.
  - Summer fete is going ahead on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 12-4 p.m. on the recreation ground.
  - Buxted WI, Horticultural society all attending. The Scouts, Cricket Club, Football Club, and other groups have been offered free stalls.
  - 30<sup>th</sup> September will be the light switch on.
  - Tree night and Santa sleigh in village is being arranged.
  - 28<sup>th</sup> Saturday Buxted Bonfire Society event. So far have been quoted approx. £12,000 – this will be for a professional licensed, pyrotechnic team, fire crew, medics, car parking at Weald Packaging for the emergency services etc. Procession route been set – same as last walked in 1979. It will start at Buxted Train Station, up the High Street to Pound Green triangle, then return down the road. Depending on the fire site, depends on where the procession will finish.
- Two business sponsors are on board so far and awaiting further businesses.

Currently writing the event management plan and risk assessment.  
May need to set up SAG meeting (Safety Advisory Group) with various partners.  
Road closures will be applied for next month – once they know where the fire site is going to be.

They have a major concern over storage, as it is currently at full capacity. May need to have another container – to be placed by football club.

**Action:** Clerk to enquire if planning permission is required for this?

Meeting closed at 2038 hours.