



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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10th February 2026

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7.12p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Duck, Furber, Humphrey, Mallett, Muddle, Rose, and Smith.

Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public : 5

A resident of Coopers Green wished to refer to the recent WDC Local Plan Regulation 18 Zoom briefing hosted by WDC Cllrs Ian Tysh and Graham Shaw. He felt as though there was an underlying tone of “you will agree to the plan to meet housing targets”. There seems to be a great reliance on the development of the Owlsbury site in Maresfield as it immediately provides 1500 dwellings. The maps displayed showed the planning department in a poor light due to the errors; and it is hoped the maps will be improved in time for the local consultation sessions. It almost feels like some sites (some previously rejected) have now been re-submitted just to meet targets. There is real concern that local views will not be taken into consideration, and we just must accept development.

Durrants Field – after obtaining planning permission, he thought Greymoor were developing the site, but it transpires the site has been sold and will be developed by Sussex Weald Homes which is owned by Wealden District Council. Surely this must be a conflict of interest.

A resident of The Walled Garden wished to refer to the site allocation at The Walled Garden of up to eighteen dwellings. He does not understand how the planning department can refuse permission due to the urbanisation of the plot, adjacent to a listed building; but the site is still included in the Local Plan. Access is an issue both through The Walled Garden or the A272 and this has not been resolved. Speaking in relation to the Local Plan as a whole, he feels the four main towns in Wealden are being suffocated with development without the facilities to absorb the extra people. Wealden needs a new town rather than scatter the development on already over developed towns. It very much feels like having any comments is a waste of time.

The owner of Coopers Cross House referred to the proposed allocation at The Walled Garden. The penultimate application for thirty-nine dwellings (dropped to 33) was refused and subsequently turned down by an appeal inspector, which proposed an access through The Walled Garden. The site reappeared in first local plan for twenty houses. A developer has recently had a further application refused for eighteen houses with the access off the A272. This has now gone to appeal. When the site was originally put forward in the first draft it did not include the

access onto the A272, but it now does. This site has therefore been refused both with access through The Walled Garden and off the A272 due to the impact on the setting of a listed building. Why then is it still included in the Local Plan?

A resident of Buxted commented that he has concerns that infrastructure is not in place, specifically drainage, to warrant the extra houses proposed.

He also wished to refer to Gordon Road where there has been some improvement to the pot holes, but the cut through which was closed for works has been repaired in the wrong place. Oil has been used to seal the tarmac, but the work was needed on the other side of the road where it has collapsed. Also, residents were asked not to park on Gordon Road as works were scheduled, but early the next day the parking exclusion signs were removed with no work carried out. Communication seems to break down somewhere within Highways.

01/02/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Marshall.

WDC Cllr Shaw was not in attendance.

02/02/26 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.

03/02/26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2025 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/02/26 ESCC/WDC REPORT

Cllr Galley – provided an update on a number of issues:

ESCC met this morning. Council tax will rise by 4.99%. There is still a huge shortfall in funding so Government will be asked if £70m can be borrowed to help fund adult services which is very costly.

Devolution – we now fund ourselves in a bizarre situation where Mayoral elections are being postponed until 2028, so a Combined Mayoral Authority is being formed to take over some functions prior to a mayor being appointed in two years' time. This has no impact on Local Government Reform which is subject to a government update expected in March.

Water outages – no issues in Buxted, but compensation is available to those who did lose their water supply.

FAD Post Office – now open. Thanks to Cllr Mims Davies who worked with Cllr Galley to try and ensure the earliest possible opening.

Roads – a continuing problem. Etchingwood Lane has been visited with the Highway Steward and work planned.

Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation – the Local Plan should be resisted in its current form. To be fair to WDC, government is forcing housing target up on them, but the allocations are in the wrong areas. Cllr Galley would like to preserve the villages within his area - Buxted, Five Ash Down, Fairwarp, Maresfield, Nutley. Unfortunately protecting the Ashdown Forest in the last Local Plan was not supported by government, but what is happening now is what he was trying to avoid with the previous 7km rule. He believes development is in the wrong place and should be outside Eastbourne, Polegate and Hailsham where there are better roads and scope to expand the railway line. The vision of a 'greater Uckfield' is not the only option and should be resisted. We have huge problems with water, drainage, and sewerage and all we are doing is exacerbating these problems.

Cllr Galley feels like we are in a place where councillors can challenge application less and less as the method of determining planning applications is so process driven. Decisions are increasingly being made by officers who are out of touch with residents and out of touch with reality. There is no connection with the Local Plan and what residents want.

Wealden Homes – as far as Cllr Galley is aware, the housing company was set up to make a modest amount of money for the WDC whilst providing social and affordable housing. He does not know any further details.

05/02/26 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: Nothing to report

Road Safety:

- **Speeding in Buxted – any update**
Following the previous meeting, the clerk has received a response from the Traffic Safety Officer at ESCC and is awaiting dates for a site meeting to discuss areas suggested for a VAS sign on the east side of Buxted.
- **Accident at mini roundabout in Buxted – action taken by PC**
Following a road traffic accident at the mini roundabout in Buxted the previous week, the clerk has written to ESCC to advise of another accident at this site and to request all signs and road markings are assessed to ascertain if they could be enhanced or extra signage added.

Wealden Local Development Framework:

- **WDC Draft 'Focused' Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation**

Again, our WDC councillor is not in attendance, which is disappointing especially when such an important item is on the agenda.

The 'Focused' Draft Local Plan consultation looks ahead to 2042. The Draft Local Plan focuses on a long-term spatial strategy for growth, including proposed locations for development and it provides a range of draft strategic policies for housing, the economy, town centres and Gypsy and Traveller provision. The Draft Local Plan also provides updates to the affordable housing policy, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) policy and a new policy on Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs). It does not present a full Local Plan draft at this stage.

A report was circulated to members which highlighted all aspect of the plan that focus on Buxted parish including its listed amenities and amended/new proposed development sites.

Members discussed the implications of objecting to the plan in its current form. If the plan is rejected, will government impose development on the district? In addition to this, would developers then submit applications on land that is not allocated for development?

However, it was also argued that this has already been happening as there has been no effective Local Plan in the district since 1998. It was also commented that sites allocated in the plan are not suitable for development, but resident comments and local knowledge are not taken into consideration, and the sites are still included.

Members broadly agreed with the sentiment of Cllr Galley that focusing so much development in the north, specifically the Owlsbury development would put pressure on existing, insufficient infrastructure.

*Members considered the report and based on resident's comments; the parish council **reject** the local plan in its current form. It agrees a plan is vital, but the vast majority of development should be focused in the south of the district where it is better supported by roads; rail; sewerage and services including hospitals.*

Additionally, the plan contradicts its own assessment by including land which has previously been refused permission and rejected by government appeal inspectors but is now included.

The clerk to draft a consultation response be circulated to members via email for comments/amendment. This will include a rejection of the plan in its current form but still commenting on the individual allocated sites.

Property issues:

- **Consideration of grass cutting quotes for 2026-2028**
Quotes and a report were circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors considered all costs and agreed that all quotes are in budget. Therefore, as Ace Landscapes have been reliable and responsive since taking over the contract in 2025 it was proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Humphrey, it was **resolved** Ace Landscapes would be awarded the contract for two years +1.
- **Buxted Recreation Ground – drainage improvements – update**
The parish council are still awaiting an amended Pitch Power FA report to be able to submit the grant application. WDC are being kept up to date.
- **Tree Work to Council owned trees – consideration of quote**
Following the Bi-annual tree assessments, the councils preferred tree consultant has provided quotes for the works to each site which were circulated prior to the meeting totalling £6,138 + VAT. Proposed by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Mallett, the quotes were **approved**. Members agreed there would be no requirement for three quotes due to the contractor being dependable and responsive and the quote falling under the financial regulation threshold of requiring three quotes.

The tree surgeon has also requested a site visit with a council representative to discuss extra works he would recommend to Ash trees on the boundary of

Buxted Recreation ground. Cllr Smith volunteered to attend a site meeting with Cllr Blandford. Clerk to arrange.

- **Allotment Shed – update** . Being installed soon, base ordered. Parish Council will arrange the insurance once it has been erected.
- **Bus Shelter Five Ash Down – update**
Is now in situ and very well received. There is an issue with flooding at the entrance and a slight step up into the shelter. Clerks discussing this with the supplier to provide a ramp.
- **High Hurstwood Defibrillator – update**
Now installed and fully up and running. The defib is situated next to the entrance of Holy Trinity Church, High Hurstwood on Chillies Lane.

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

06/02/26 **CORRESPONDENCE**
No priority correspondence

07/02/26 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

08/02/26 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Humphrey, payments for December 2025 totalling £13,865.79 covered by direct debit or BACS payments were approved.
- ii) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Smith seconded by Cllr. Rose payments for January 2026 totalling £14,493.86 Covered by direct debit or BACS payments were approved
- iii) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Humphrey Seconded by Cllr. Smith payments for February 2026 totalling £8,232,28 Covered by direct debit or BACS payments were approved
- iv) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for December 2025 and January 2026 which were signed
- v) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash and Investment Reconciliation for December 2025 and January 2026
- vi) **Grant request from Parish of Buxted & Hadlow Down for £1,740 for 2025/2026 financial year and Grant request of £2,500 for 2026/27 for maintenance of St Marys Church Hall – clerk advised we cannot comment to a grant further forward than a year-by-year basis. It was also confirmed the rules for financially supporting churches has recently changed to allow parish councils to do this. Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Duck – approved.**

09/02/26 **OTHER MEETINGS**

Local Plan Briefing by WDC Cllr Tysh – online briefing attended by Cllrs Duck and Blandford (see minute above)

Cllr Humphrey reported back on the public meeting session hosted at Five Ash Down Village Hall by the developer of Durrants Field. It was very well attended.

10/02/26 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None

11/02/26 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next meeting St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted – 10th March 2026

Suspend Standing Orders – A resident of Buxted commented on the road west of A272 near the entrance to Buxted Park where there is a huge pot hole. He watched an episode of Panorama in late November on potholes. Blackpool City Town Council were interviewed as they have overcome the problem of reoccurring potholes by obtaining the material with a guarantee of 10 years. It was suggested this is reported by the resident back to Cllr Galley who had already left the meeting.
Standing Orders reinstated

12/02/26 CLOSED SESSION – BUXTED PAVILION – FIRE & SAFETY REPORT

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business transacted.

The meeting closed at 8.47p.m.

Ongoing Highway Issues:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
November 2024	EA007FRAMFIELD	Culvert, Framfield Road, Buxted	ONGOING Collapsed drainage leading to culvert. Reported some time ago. Highway advised works need planning and extensive repair. 19/3 – Highways contacted PC to advise Structural Team will contact PC to arrange a site meeting likely to be in April. May – Cllr Furber attended meeting with ESCC/Balfour Beatty. Agreed work from culver to KSV would be carried out. Design for culvert currently being designed. Work to be carried out in next financial year. 10/06 – clerk to ask Highway if any remedial works will take place to stop the road falling away while a design is being drawn up.
17/02/25	CCY000737	Broken away tarmac (50cm) in Framfield Road/Limes Lane outside KSV and bollard fallen over	REOPENED 20/02/25 – ESCC Highways do not consider work is necessary at this time but would continue to monitor – Raise again with Highways. 17/3 – Highway Steward revisited. Road still does not meet criteria, but bollard will be replaced. May – work should be carried out in conjunction with culvert repair woks (as above EA007FRAMFIELD)
20/10/25	HED005343	Verge/hedge opposite Howbourne Lane	ONGOING 20/10 – reported overgrown verge to

			<p>Highways. It is a wildflower verge so cannot be cut. Also requested wildflower status is removed.</p> <p>27/10 – Highways advised no overgrown verges/hedges, just fallen leaves which is WDC responsibility. Clerk to ask Lengthsman to clear leaves.</p> <p>Highways consulting internally on wildflower status</p> <p>25/11 – Lengthsman cleared pathway. Still waiting for a response from Highways on classification as a wildflower verge. Further information from local resident passed to Highways.</p>
10/11/25	HED005411	Hedge overgrown lamppost junction Britts Farm Road/High Street, Buxted	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>10/11 – reported overgrown hedge over lamppost</p> <p>17/11 – Highway Steward inspected, does not need cutting back. Clerk queried who owns hedge as if not Highways, clerk would write to the owner to ask them to cut back.</p> <p>25/11 – chased response from Highways</p> <p>03/12 – Highways advised the issue would be dealt with within 28 days</p> <p>Jan 26 – confirmed hedge has now been cut by owner</p>
01/02/26	SLO003137/ THF005214/ THF005215	Damaged verges, Five Ash Down following road closures	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>01/02 – Cllr Humphrey reported state of verges to Highways</p> <p>02/02 – Highways confirmed this would be looked into</p> <p>03/02 – Highways confirmed they cannot take any action against utilities. Issue passed on to Highway Steward to inspect.</p> <p>05/02 – confirmed that no safety issue so no action will be taken. Cllr Humphrey referred to Cllr Galley for help with this issue</p> <p>08/02 – Cllr Galley responded to advise there is simply no money in the pot to make such repairs as it would fall on ESCC to pay for</p>
24/01/26	DGD007711	Blocked Drains Orchard Lane to Nan Tucks Lane	<p>ONGONG</p> <p>24/01 – Highways advised a Highway Steward would visit the site</p> <p>03/02 – clerk chased as no response received</p>

Ionides Trust Update 10th February 2026:

- 1. Apologies – Cllr Marshall**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Consideration of quote for tree works – a quote received from Simon Young for works to Ionides Trust owned trees totalling £520 +VAT was approved.**
- 4. Rifle Club grant request – at the request of the Rifle Club, this matter is deferred for a future meeting at which an amended grant application will be submitted for consideration.**
- 5. Friends of St Margaret The Queen, Buxted grant request for £2016 – Agree to fund £1,000 towards the costs would request any profits be direct towards local parish (not national) charities.**
- 6. Registration of Land as a Village Green – update – no update**
- 7. Members Questions:**

Network Rail fence – for some months, the clerk has been chasing Network Rail for a response as to whether the existing fencing is sufficient. A response has finally been received which advised the current post and wire fencing is sufficient and the orange netting was attached by someone other than Network Rail. They also suggested that if the Ionides Trust wish to enhance the fencing, they would advise what we could install. It was agreed the IT should not be responsible for this as the Trust would then be liable for it. However, it was agreed to reply to Network Rail to disagree the fencing is sufficient given it is next to a public space, and provide other examples of more enhanced fencing installed by Network Rail.

Simon Furber and Peter Smith: Would like to ask for some help with new village hub and ideas they have to develop a masterplan and outline design proposal for the site. It was agreed they could source a professional to quote for works to create a masterplan for the site. Costs to be presented to the Ionides Trust. Clerk to ask Hadlow Down who they used to design their new village hall.

Meeting closed 9.04pm