



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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14 April 2026

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 14 April 2026 at 7.15p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Duck, Furber, Humphrey, Mallett, Marshall, Muddle, Rose, and Smith.
Also present: Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public : 1

01/04/26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received and accepted from ESCC Cllr Galley

02/04/26 **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.

Cllrs Smith and Furber declared a personal interest in any matters related to allotments due to being allotment holders.

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.

Cllr Marshall – declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Rifle Club due to being a member.

03/04/26 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2026 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/04/26 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**
Due to the purdah pre-election period, Cllr Galley was not in attendance.

Cllr Shaw was not in attendance, but a monthly report was circulated and uploaded to the website earlier in the week.

05/04/26 **GOVERNANCE MATTERS IN PREPARATION FOR END OF YEAR AUDIT:** Updated Fixed Asset Register March 2026 – Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded Cllr Humphrey

- approved.

06/04/26 GRANT REQUEST – Buxted Rifle Club request for grant to create disabled access

A grant request for £12,618.94 has been received from the Rifle Club to provide disabled access to the Rifle Club and Range. This is one element of wider improvements to the club.

Cllr Marshall commented that the amount being requested is less than half the funds required for the wider works which will be raised via fund raising and through club fees.

Concerns were raised regarding 1. The amount of money being asked for when the building is old 2. In comparison to other parish councils, this is a large grant which would not benefit a sizeable proportion of the community 3. There is concern that although access to the building will be improved, disabled access from the car park to the entrance of the building also needs to be included in the wider project.

There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of adding a new rifle club to the basement of any new community hub, but this would double the cost of any project and therefore is likely to be unviable.

It was also confirmed that this grant could be funded through CIL money. Therefore, on reflection, given the Rifle Club are looking to match fund, the grant was agreed on the condition that any necessary work to the pathway to make it disability compliant is implemented as part of the project in conjunction/agreement with Buxted Surgery. The grant would be paid upon receipt of invoice from Buxted Rifle Club. Proposed by Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr Muddle – agreed.

07/04/26 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: see Property Issues below.

Road Safety:

➤ **SPEEDING IN BUXTED – possible location of VAS signs**

A site meeting took place between the parish council and Highways representatives at which three possible verges were identified as possible locations for a VAS sign. Although it was confirmed the verges belonged to ESCC, the clerk was advised to write to the owners of the properties closest to the verges to ascertain if there were any objections. Two objections were received ruling out one of the verges, but a third occupant agreed to the VAS being positioned on the verge outside of their home.

Two licences (£496) issued by ESCC Highways and the VAS sign (approx. £4,000) would be required and therefore a budget of up to £5,000 is **approved** by the council for the clerk to move the project forward to be paid for out of CIL money.

Wealden Local Development Framework: nothing to report.

Property issues:

➤ **BUXTED RECREATION GROUND – drainage improvements – update**

The Clerk was pleased to advise the Sports Infrastructure Grant application was submitted to WDC on 25th March. No further information has been received from WDC other than the acknowledgement of the application submission.

In between meetings, councillors did agree to carry out maintenance works on the Buxted football pitch, advised by Cllr Humphrey, totalling £360. The costs are therefore being ratified at this meeting – **approved**.

➤ **BUXTED RECREATION GROUND – consider quote for diseased Ash tree removal work**

A quote totalling £10,450 has been received from the tree surgeon. These costs are higher mainly due to the use of specialist heavy duty machinery to enable the team to remove and process the large amount of boundary Ash trees in a safe and controlled manner. The works will take approximately six working days. **Approved**

➤ **BUXTED ALLOTMENTS – deposits to be transferred to Buxted Allotment Association**

A request was received from the BAA for the deposits, currently held by the PC, to be transferred to the allotment association. This is a logical request to enable to the BAA to manage the site in its entirety instead of having to refer to the parish council for deposits to be received or returned when there is a change of allotment holder. **Approved, to be included in the next month's payment.**

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

08/04/26 **CORRESPONDENCE**
No priority correspondence

09/04/26 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

10/04/26 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Muddle seconded by Cllr. Smith, updated payments for March totalling £9,372.24 covered by direct debit or BACS payments were approved.
- ii) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr Muddle and seconded by Cllr Smith payments for April totalling £8,259£ plus annual grants 2026/27 totalling 24,681.81 Covered by direct debits or BACS payments were approved.
- iii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for March which were signed.
- iv) **Noted:** members received the RBS finance reports for the 2025-2026 financial year to 31st March 2026
- v) **Noted:** acknowledgement of FAD Village Hall broadband charges for the year of £407.88

Cllr Mallett raised a question regarding the EMR reserves for a village hall – why do we not uplift it every year in line with inflation? Whilst there has been no 'live' project for a new village hall it would have been difficult to set aside public funds. However, this can be discussed at the next Finance Committee due in Oct/Nov to plan for the next financial year.

11/04/26 **OTHER MEETINGS**
Cllr Mallett – attended the WDALC meeting at which there was a heated discussion regarding WDC assets, specifically car parks. Uckfield has several free car parks owned by WDC, which, under the unitary authority structure will transfer to the East Sussex unitary authority. The fear is there may be charges introduced to the car parks in the long term. The Chief Executive of WDC advised car parks cannot be gifted to town/parish councils as they are a public sector asset. A WDC policy on its assets is being produced in June.

At the meeting Cllr Mallet raised the question as to whether parish/town councils should merger as part of local government reorganisation. He was advised there is no policy for this.

12/04/26 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Furber asked the clerk to chase Highways to ascertain when the works to the culvert in Framfield Road will take place now we are in the new financial year.

13/04/26 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The chairman wished to announce it is Cllr Rose’s last meeting after 25 years on Buxted Parish Council. The council thanked John for the many years of dedicated hard work for the parish. He has been an incredible asset to the Parish Council over the many, many years. His local knowledge has been invaluable, and he has always gone out of his way to help the community whenever he can outside of council work.

Next Meeting – Tuesday 12th May 2026 in St Mary’s Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted

The meeting closed at 8.20p.m.

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	CLOSED

		Howbourne Lane	<p>20/10 – reported overgrown verge to 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> <p>05/03 – Highways confirmed the verge will not be decategorized as a wildflower verge as it is of high value. However, if development to Saxon Court is approved, works may take place to some of the verge.</p>
24/01/26	DGD007711	Blocked Drains Orchard Lane to Nan Tucks Lane	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>24/01 – Highways advised a Highway Steward would visit the site</p> <p>03/02 – clerk chased as no response received</p> <p>11/03 – Highways have assessed the drain and do not think work is required at the current time.</p>

Ionides Trust Update 14th April 2026:

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Ionides Trust annual insurance quote** – received from our insurance broker for a totalling £1,152.08. This is an increase in premium of £290.11 from last year, which is due to increases in employee dishonesty and playground equipment. Terrorism cover can also be included for an extra £7.26.
Approved
- 4. Village Hub – update** – Cllr Furber and Cllr Smith have contacted three architects, to discuss ideas and options for a new community hub. One was met earlier that day. They waked the land and shared information regarding the previous project and new ideas. They will repeat this with the other two architects and then will expect to receive some concept ideas for the site.

Given the amount of work to the land over the past few years, it is considered a good idea to obtain a line and levels mapping of the site. The Ionides Trust agreed this could be funded from current funds and the clerk would try and source suppliers for SF/PS to obtain quotes for consideration in between meetings.

Cllr Humphrey wished to raise an issue with the amount of stone that is now appearing on the landscaped areas following the building of the Scout Hut. The stones should be cleared as they may cause damage to the grass cutting equipment and could be a trip hazard. Clerk to report this and the raised manholes to the Scouts.

Meeting closed 8.37pm