



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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10th September 2024

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 7.15p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Coxon, Duck, Furber, Humphrey, Mallett, Marshall and Rose.
Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public : 4

The chairman of Buxted Bonfire Society advised the parish council that the Buxted Bonfire night will be taking place Saturday 28th September with a full road closure being approved in coordination with WDC and the emergency authorities. Letters will be posted to properties in Buxted, and road closure boards have been made to be erected this week. Fifteen advertising estate agent boards will be erected in the next day or so. Programmes have been printed and will be on sale. Advertising banners will be erected at the Buxted Inn and Weald Packaging alongside posters.

The road closure starts at 6.30pm to 11.00pm from Buxted Primary School and Pound Green Triangle. This is a full closure and covers the A272, Gordon Road, Higgles Close, Framfield Road, Queenstock Lane, Broad Oak, Britts Farm Road, Littlewood Lane, Eights Bells Close, Plovers Barrows, Redbrook Lane, Nursery Field, Park View, St Mary's Garth, and Limes Lane Triangle. Diversion signs will be in place.

The bonfire site is near opposite Park View on private land in Church Road. The station car park is closed and being used for the event. The Bonfire Society will erect diversion signs. WDC advised diversions must be an alternative A road, so this will be to the Boship roundabout outside Hailsham and back through Horam and to the A264 and A272 east of Buxted.

Visiting societies will use the train station car park. A request has been sent to the landowner of the fishery (land north of station road) as to whether the field could be used for parking, no response yet. As an alternative, vehicles can park on any of the roads in the village that are not closed and back roads used to exit the village.

01/09/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Roberts and Smith and WDC Cllr Shaw.

02/09/24 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL, PREJUDICIAL, AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND UPDATES TO MEMBERS' REGISTER OF 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 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.

03/09/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/09/24 ESCC/WDC REPORT

ESCC - Any update on pedestrian crossing costs and cutting back of overgrown pathway on A272.

Since the previous meeting in July the sidings works to the footpath have now been completed, however, the Parish Council are not happy with the works as in some parts the footpath have not been completely uncovered. It as also been advised that shoring up of the newly uncovered bank is not 'value for money.' The Parish Council disputes this given this is the only walking route to school and should be maintained to the best standard. Cllr Galley as a meeting with Highways in two weeks' time and after looking at the completed work agrees the hedges are already creeping back onto the footway so he will keep pursuing this issue.

Cllr Galley also referred to the responses from ESCC with regards the mini-roundabout (see minute 07/09/24 below) and improvements to the zebra crossing which advised that the suggestions do not meet the road safety criteria and resources are limited.

Cllr Galley wished to ask if the parish council are aware of the PCSO assigned to the parish. The clerks confirmed yes, but we rarely see them.

Cllr Furber asked if attention can be given to the footpaths on the east side of Buxted village too which are rapidly getting narrower which is becoming a safety concern. This is also on Cllr Galley's list for his meeting.

Cllr Furber also raised a question with regards finances spent on highway improvements/repairs for the parish and if it this work is considered good value for money. Is there a specification for the standard of works? Cllr Galley advised there is a standard of work expected and if he asked Highways, he would be advised the works meet the standard.

Cllr Duck asked Cllr Galley about speed limits on rural roads – is there any way they could be reduced? Cllr Galley advised the prioritized places are where there have been accidents. Reducing speed limits is only implemented where there is a proven need as it requires a Traffic Regulation Order which is timely and costly.

05/09/24 Buxted Bonfire Night – Any questions to be answered by the chairman of the bonfire society who will be in attendance (see the 'public' minute above)

To consider grant to support 2024 bonfire night.

Members considered the grant application for £1000 requested from the Bonfire Society towards the inaugural bonfire event in the village since 1979. Councillors voted six in favour and therefore **agreed** to award the grant.

The chairman suspended standing order to allow the chairman of the bonfire

society to speak:

There have been three queries so far from the public, which have been answered and the bonfire society are willing to work as far as possible to accommodate members of the public's specific needs if they are given enough notice.

Standing orders reinstated.

06/09/24 Consideration of grant applications for financial year 2025-2026

Prior to the meeting the responsible financial officer circulated a list of all grant requests for the financial year 2025/26. The grants requests are submitted prior to setting a budget in November.

A list of the grant application is appended to these minutes.

A discussion took place regarding the applications and the following grants. were awarded:

Buxted Art Club - £911.97

Five Ash Down Chapel - £330

Parish of Buxted and Hadlow Down (St Marys and St Margarets Church) - £2222.50

Buxted Methodist Church - £330

Five Ash Down Pop-In - £400

St Wilfreds Hospice - £1000

Buxted Horticultural Society - £458.15

Ashdown Forest Conservators - £1000

Wealden CAB - £850

Buxted Bonfire Society - £1000. This was granted on the caveat that we have satisfactory feedback, from the bonfire society and public, on the upcoming event on the 28th of September 2024. We have requested that the Bonfire Society gives the Parish Council a report including, what went well, what might be changed.

Five Ash Down Village Event - 500

Cllr Marshall retired from the meeting at 8.09pm

07/09/24 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety:

➤ **Safety of mini roundabout in Buxted – response from ESCC:**

Following the July meeting at which this matter was discussed, the parish council received a response. It was advised that budgets have been reduced and new projects are funded based on crash record data. Please see extracts below from the response received:

“The issues raised will be assessed by an experienced officer, who will examine the suggestions against clear criteria drawn up to help us prioritise the numerous requests we receive for improvements. We are committed to taking forward as many viable road safety schemes as possible. However, due to significant reduction in our budget since 2010, we have very limited resources available for road safety and we need to ensure that we target our resources to

those schemes which will be of greatest benefit to our local communities.

Each year we identify sites that have the most crashes that result in injury and put in place a programme of works to reduce the number of casualties on these roads. We do acknowledge that many residents wish to see preventative rather than reactive measures put in place, however, we have to prioritise sites where people have been killed or seriously injured. These decisions are based upon national guidelines provided by the Department for Transport. The County Council receives around 5,000 pieces of correspondence each year relating to requests for road safety measures and generally under 5% of requests meet the criteria for further assessment to be considered for inclusion within the road safety programme.”

Sadly therefore, Members are not hopeful that this will meet the required criteria for a reassessment of the safest road layout.

➤ **Verge cutting – Howbourne Lane to Pound Green Lane**

The Parish Council received a request to cut the verge either side of the pathway from Howbourne Lane to Pound Green Lane which is very overgrown. The clerk has reported this to ESCC, and we are still awaiting a response as to whether this will be added as an extra cut. ESCC have confirmed however they will write to the owners of the overgrowing hedge asking for it to be cut back off the pathway.

Looking forward to next year and the parish council’s grass cutting contract with Countrymans, members are being asked if this area should be included within the schedule? Cllrs agreed that this verge will be added to the regular grass cutting schedule for 2025.

Wealden Local Development Framework: Local Plan update: Provided by WDC Cllr Graham Shaw in his monthly update to the parish and uploaded to the website.

Property issues:

➤ **Buxted Recreation Ground – break-in at Buxted Football Club**

Sadly, towards the end of July the Football Club advised the parish council that it was the victim of a break-in during which the garage door was severely damaged, and the mower and strimmer were stolen. The padlock on the barrier at the top of the track had been cut off giving access down to the pavilion. The incident was reported to the Police but so far no one has been apprehended. The following update was received from the chairman of the football club:

- *Barrier lock plate was temporarily welded back on whilst not a full proof or a fully secure solution it is doing a temporary job*
- *Side Garage door was fixed by Sussex Garage Doors - working again*
- *4 x strong locks on the container which now houses all valuable equipment.*
- *Following a reasonably successful "go fund me page" the FC has secured a new (second hand - very limited hours on the clock , so almost brand new) ride on mower and strimmer - so back up and running over the past 3 weeks.*
- *We are in the process of upgrading CCTV across the buildings, with remote access & viewing.*

The Parish Council are now being asked to consider providing extra security along the entrance track by either a second barrier or a dropped bollard at the bottom of the track as well as replacing the existing barrier at the top with a stronger, more secure solution.

Members agreed that the parish council would replace the existing barrier if it were not fit for purpose, however it did not feel any extra barriers are necessary as if

someone wants to break in, they will simply cut through them a barrier or could drive across the Ionides land.

Communications Matters: Noting to report.

08/09/24 CORRESPONDENCE

P1 Local Resident - Request for country roads through High Hurstwood to have a reduced speed limit (Chillies Lane/Hurstwood Road): As Cllr Galley has advised, reducing speed limits is costly and only aimed at areas where there has been a record of accidents. However, the clerk would write to Highways to ask how/if a speed restriction could be placed on Chillies Lane and Hurstwood Road.

P2 Framfield PC – invitation to attend a meeting with PC/TC’s to discuss issues with service – Claudes has volunteered to attend this meeting.

WDALC AGM – Cllrs Furber and Mallett to attend on behalf of Buxted Parish Council

09/09/24 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

None

10/09/24 FINANCE

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Blandford seconded by Cllr. Coxon, payments totalling £10,337 for July, £13,286.34 August and £5277.27 for September by direct debits were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for July and August which were signed
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) To consider and approve the terms of engagement with Mulberry & Co for the interim and end of year audit for financial year 2024-2025 and sign in for three-year option for no price increase – proposed by Cllr Blandford, seconded by Cllr Duck – **Agreed**
- v) **Noted** – the external auditors have not yet returned our annual return which is due by 30th September to meet financial regulation deadlines.

11/09/24 OTHER MEETINGS

No other meetings

12/09/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Mallett – should we have a council WhatsApp group? - yes, it would be helpful for clerks to communicate essential information (review in six months)

Footpath Parish Map for Buxted Station – The Community Railway Partnership is looking for something to go into one of the station windows. We would provide her with the map and add the website address.

13/09/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Humphrey advised he would go and look at the completed drainage/seeding works carried out to the football pitch.

The meeting closed at 8.37p.m.

Ionides Trust Update 10th September 2024:

1. **Apologies – Cllrs Roberts, Smith, and Marshall**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Scout Hut – update** – The projects health and safety consultant and main contact for the Trust does not believe the new hut and associated works will be completed until the New Year. The Trust have the following comment and questions to be answered by the designer/Scouts:
 - The Trust still do not understand why they did not connect to mains drainage.
 - Cllr Humphrey has had a few discussions regarding surface water drainage but has had no answers. Where is the surface water going? And what are the results of the percolation tests if they have been done?
 - Have Building Control been signing off the work – when was the last visit?
 - Has the existing septic tank been emptied and decommissioned before it is removed.
 - Fixed priced project – is there a penalty clause for not completion on time?
 - Ask Scouts representatives to attend the October meeting.
 - When will the land be usable – what state will it be in by 30th November Christmas light switch on.

A representative of Buxted Bonfire Society would visit the site with Cllr Rose to try and find an alternative site for a Christmas tree and the Trust would request the builders install a new tree socket and provide an electricity supply if the existing site is not available on time.

4. **Repair/Replacement of play small children's play equipment** – In July, the Trust received the playground inspection report carried out by Play Inspection Company which recommended some remedial work to some equipment but also some major works to one of the swing frames as the wood is rotting. The Trust could look at replacing just this one piece of equipment like for like or it could look at replacing the swing and broken balance beam with something new. It was agreed to ask the company that conducted the repairs to the zip line to look at the space and make three or four suggestions. The parish council would then carry out a consultation with the relevant age group and parents.
5. **Consideration of grant request of £1000 from Buxted Bonfire Society for Bonfire Night 2024 - agreed.**
6. **Request from Bonfire Society to use Ionides land to hold event for the commemoration of 80 years of VE Day on 8th May 2025 (beacon lighting) – agreed.**

Meeting closed 9.12pm

Buxted Parish Council Grant Application Summary for the 2025-2026 financial year

Organisation	Description	Amount	Answer/amount agreed by the Parish Council October 2023
Buxted Art Club	In the absence of a community hall the art club use St Marys Hall for the annual exhibition. The lack of space could be resolved by the purchase of a 6 x 3 m gazebo for the provision of teas, therefore freeing space up in the hall for the art exhibition display and visitors.	£911.97	£911.97
Five Ash Down Chapel	General upkeep of grounds and gardens at Five Ash Down Chapel	£330	£330
Parish of Buxted and Hadlow Down (two churches – St Marys and St Margarets)	<p>Applying for £4445 of overall costs of £4895.</p> <p>Breakdown: £1155 maintenance of the community garden, the church hall garden and Garden of reflection at St Marys.</p> <p>£936 cutting of hedge on permitter of church road and permitter of community garden. £420 strimming upper grave area.</p> <p>£1134 payment for monthly assistance in maintaining new grave area at St Margarets.</p> <p>£350 purchased of 70 hedge plants to replace dead bob hedging.</p> <p>£450 first stage of preservation of historic Gell Box Tomb.</p>	£4445	£2222.50 (half of the fund requested)
Buxted Methodist Church	Upkeep of gardens	£500	£330 (in line with grant awarded to FAD Chapel)
FAD Pop In	For FAD Pop In Help pay for hall hire and events that the group run for the community and attendees.	£400	£400
St Wilfreds Hospice	Awaiting application - Last year £1000	£1000 of total project costs of £19,600	£1000
Buxted Horticultural Society (BHS)	<p>The grant is requested for day to day running costs of the society and current project to include more new and established people living in the parish to become involved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Storage of all society and show items at St Mary's church hall replacing reading room storage- £240 2. New website hosting charge £127.30 3. Printing of publicity material, 	£458.15	£458.15

	show schedules £90.85		
Ashdown Forest Conservators	To contribute toward the ongoing costs towards access and ride repairs, car park repairs, bridge repairs, flytipping and providing 24 hour response, particularly within the South Chase area which includes the area of Buxted	£1000	£1000
Holy Trinity Church, High Hurstwood	<i>No application received this year or the previous 2 years.</i>		
Wealden CAB	To contribute to the running costs of the service for Buxted residents, which can be accessed via phone, email, text or appointments at one of our 3 sites - Crowborough, Hailsham or Uckfield. Although our service is mainly staffed by volunteers we still require staff to supervise, train and manage the service. We need to maintain our IT system for effective record keeping and to enable us to communicate effectively with and on behalf of our clients. We also need to cover day to day costs such as postage, photocopying, cleaning, publicity and insurance.	£850	£850
Buxted Bonfire Society (for 2025-2026)	Request grant of £1,000 for next years (Autumn 2025) bonfire event. To help with the costs of a traditional torchlit procession and bonfire within Buxted. Monies collected during the procession will be donated to two local charities.	£1,000	£1,000
Five Ash Down Village Event	<p>‘For the last few of years, we have organised a street party for the village in Court Lane, Five Ash Down. In 2022 it was the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and in 2023 it was King Charles III coronation. In 2024, without a Royal event to hang our hat on, we chose to run a Village Day comprising a picnic in Court Lane.</p> <p>Past events have been well attended (a headcount halfway through the day this year came in at 125 people) and feedback shows that attendees were glad to be able to meet neighbours and friends they may not have had a chance to talk to in their everyday busy lives. The Parish Council have helped us with funding, and we have, where possible, used those funds to buy long term assets (e.g. bunting, banners etc.) for use by us in future years, and also for use by anyone else in the village who has a village event to run.</p> <p>We hope to run a similar event in 2025</p>	£500	£500

	<p>and are asking for the support of the Parish Council once again. The objective is for the villagers to have a great day out and mingle with others in the community making Five Ash Down an even better place to live.</p> <p>Sadly, the founder member of the 2022 event died suddenly in 2023 and so, in 2023, we included a collection in favour of the British Heart Foundation which raised £323.65. The 2024 event has raised £557.56 for the charity’.</p>		
<p>Buxted Bowls Club</p>	<p>Installation of 3 seating/perching benches for all four sides of the bowling green (12 in total) each bench will serve 2 rinks thus enabling bowlers to rest whilst waiting for others to bowl. The benches will also enable us to fit a bracket at the back of each bench for them to fit a bracket for securing their parasols to protect bowlers from heat/sun.</p>	<p>£986.35</p>	<p>£986.35</p>