



# BUXTED

## PARISH COUNCIL

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24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 at 7.23p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Coxon, Humphrey, Marshall, Roberts, Rose, Smith, and Wilson.  
Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley, WDC Cllr. Shaw, and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

**Public:** 2

01/05/23 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**  
Proposed by Cllr. Humphrey seconded by Cllr. Coxon, Councillor Vivienne Blandford was unanimously voted to remain as Chairman to Buxted Parish Council

02/05/23 **SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE NEW CHAIRMAN**  
In accordance with Local Elections (Declaration of Acceptance of Office) Order 2001. (SI 3941 of 2001) the Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

03/05/23 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**  
Proposed by Cllr Blandford and seconded by Cllr Rose, Councillor Humphrey was unanimously voted to the position of Vice Chairman of the Council.

04/05/23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Duck

05/05/23 **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.

06/05/23 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

07/05/23 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

WDC Cllr Graham Shaw introduced himself to the Parish Council as its new WDC member representing the Green Party. He advised there is a newly formed alliance

between the Green Party and Lib Dems to run WDC. He is also the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The first Full Council meeting would be taking place the following day and includes a motion regarding the state of the roads and requesting action from ESCC. This is another motion regarding the Uckfield Leisure centre and a push for a review of the funding and holding off the decision on the future of the centre which reflects the feeling of the public.

He also referred to the Downlands Farm planning application for 450 houses which has gone to appeal, although it is not clear yet why.

Cllr Shaw reported that he intends to try and develop a regular community forum to discuss local issues. The first one is 5<sup>th</sup> July hosted by St Mary's Church Hall, Buxted. He is hoping this will be a start of positive communication within the ward.

ESCC Cllr Galley reported that ESCC met on 9<sup>th</sup> May and that he has been re-elected at Vice Chairman. The main business was a motion to digress the pension fund from all fossil fuels. Cllr Galley explained that ESCC does not own the pension fund which has 48,000 members with only approximately 6000 from ESCC. He also advised that only 1.5% of the fund is invested in fossil fuels. As the main aim of the fund is to protect the pensions for the investors, ESCC agreed to reject the motion.

Uckfield Leisure Centre – The key issue from ESCC's perspective is that the County Council owns the site, but WDC operate the leisure services. ESCC are very amenable to lengthening the lease to WDC.

Roads – Cllr Galley is still dealing some atrocious issues especially Nan Tucks Lane and Shepherd's Hill. He had a meeting with leader of the council and has shown him local hot spots and would be surprised if there is not a substantial investment programme announced in the next few weeks.

#### **08/05/23 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES**

Prior to the meeting, the clerk circulated a draft list of elections and appointment of members to committees and other bodies.

The list was agreed (see below at end of minutes)

#### **09/05/23 READING ROOM – DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – CONSIDERATION OF VALUATIONS**

As advised at the previous meeting the clerk has been gathering valuations for the Reading Room site from three local estate agents. The following information has been provided:

Richard Taylor – Vince Taylor Tofts - £300,000 to £350,000. Professional fees would be 1% of the eventual sale price plus VAT.

Michael Brooker Estate Agents – Present day market value of the plot lies in the region of £250,000. However, if the plot went on the open market at the present time a guide price of £275,000 was advised. We charge 1% of the sale price.

Rowland Gorringe - £400,000. They ask the purchaser to pay their 2% fee, not the Vendor.

Members discussed the varying amounts. Proposed by Cllr Wilson, seconded by Cllr Marshall, and agreed by all it was **resolved** that the council will work with Rowland Gorringe to market the property.

#### **10/05/23 OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

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

**Public footpaths:** Nothing to report.

**Trees:** Nothing to report.

**Road Safety:** Nothing to report.

**Wealden Local Development Framework:** No update yet as new council just formed at WDC.

**Property issues:**

➤ **Nevill Road – possible disposal – update**

Since the previous meeting, the clerk and chairman have undertaken research into where on the site the play equipment was located to be able to advise the tree consultant. This work has now been completed and a request will be made to Broad Oak Tree Consultants to review the quality of trees in the area specified.

➤ **Request to ESCC to replace ESCC Sign with Fingerpost – update**

The clerk submitted a request to ESCC Highways to ask if the metal directional signs at the Coopers Green cross road traffic lights could be changed to a fingerpost at the parish council's cost. We received the following response:

*“Unfortunately, we will not be able to replace the existing metal sign with a fingerpost, as we follow the guidance of our Road Safety team, who follow relevant legislation of safety and risks pertaining to signs on the highway. Current advice from them states that on A and B class roads, once a fingerpost is at end of life it should be replaced with a passively safe sign. A passively safe sign is designed to provide less resistance if hit, reducing the severity of any impact for the occupants of the vehicle or they are designed to absorb impact to reduce the risk of secondary crashes. Unfortunately, the oak structure of a traditional fingerpost does not do this. If the post which enters the ground is sound, and just the fingers need refreshing that can be undertaken on site.”*

➤ **Buxted Recreation Ground – request to ESCC regarding access**

In the interest of gathering all facts, the clerk contacted ESCC to ask that IF the parish council were to pursue relocation of a new hall to the recreation ground to do a joint project with the Football Club, would the existing access be acceptable. Please find below an extract from the response received:

*“The access is currently substandard for what it already serves and should be ideally at least 5m wide for the first 6m in order to accommodate two-way flow traffic. Any further intensification would not be acceptable due to conflict that would occur where the access meets the highway. Widening the access to 4.5m for the first 6m as an absolute minimum would be acceptable although 5m would be preferred. From inspection of the highway terrier, it does not appear plausible to widen the access to the required width. Along with the access widening, the track would benefit from some passing places to avoid vehicles having to reverse long distances when meeting another vehicle head on. Currently, the track cannot accommodate two-way flow for a total of 130m. These passing places should be highlighted.”*

Although not an outright “No” these requirements would be challenging to meet.

Having been provided this information, it makes it even more important to maintain access across the Ionides land through to the Recreation Ground.

**Communications Matters:** Noting to report.

**11/05/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

**P1 – St Marys Church Hall:** Request for contribution to chair feet of £53.95 - **Agreed.**  
**P2 – High Hurstwood Coronation:** Request for contribution toward Coronation event – **Agreed £100**  
**P3 – Five Ash Down Street Party -** request for contribution of £23.00. Raised £323 for British Heart Foundation was raised on the day - **Agreed.**

**12/05/23 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
None

**13/05/23 FINANCE**

- i) On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Marshall, payments totalling £17,480.42 covered by cheque numbers 5011 and 5029 and direct debits were approved.
- ii) To note CIL funds receipt £33,781.93 from WDC in April 2023 - **Noted**
- iii) To note the CIL return to WDC shows expenditure of £6,600 of CIL funds during the finance year 2022-2023 – **Noted.**
- iv) Annual Internal Audit taking place the following week - **Noted.**

**14/05/23 OTHER MEETINGS**

Cllr Smith attended the North Wealden focus group to discuss community safety and policing – he reported the meeting was informative with seven councils represented. It became apparent that all parishes suffer from same issues – nuisance youths and speeding.

He was asked to contact our PCSO to discuss any issues in the area.

**15/05/23 MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Marshall asked if the pathway between Buxted and Buxted school could be trimmed as the nettles are growing again. Clerk to contact the contractor.

**16/05/23 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Dene – Uckfield TC maintenance –** the chairman noted that Uckfield TC have now taken over the maintenance of The Dene while the sale of the land continues. Thanks to Uckfield TC who have carried out a great first cut of the season.

The meeting closed at 8.05p.m.

See below: ongoing issues reported to ESCC Highways:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
21/01/2021 <b>ONGOING</b>	00539076	Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted	25/1 – passed to officer to investigate
24/04/2023 <b>CLOSED</b>	00826817	Request to replace metal signs to fingerpost – Coopers Green traffic lights	24/04 – acknowledged by ESCC. 26/04 – Response from ESCC. Not allowed to replace the sign of safety grounds. If a fingerpost on an A or B class road is required to be replaced, it has to be replaced with a 'passively safe sign.' An oak post is not considered as such.

## Elections and Appointments on 23 May 2023

	<b>Role</b>	<b>As of 23 May 2023,</b>
1	Chairman of the Council	Cllr Blandford
2	Vice Chairman	Cllr Humphrey
3	Planning Committee	( <i>Chairman</i> ) Cllr Wilson, plus Cllrs Blandford, Coxon, Humphrey, Marshall, Roberts, Rose, and Smith
4	Finance Committee	( <i>Chairman</i> ) Cllr Roberts, plus Cllrs Blandford, Coxon, Marshall and Rose
5	Ward Chairman Buxted	All Buxted Councillors available
6	Ward Chairman High Hurstwood	Cllr Marshall
7	Ward Chairman Five Ash Down	Cllr Humphrey
8	Parish Tree Warden	Cllr Blandford
9	Parish Footpath and Roads co-ordinator	Cllr. Coxon
10	School Governor Buxted	TBA, if required (not asked for one)
11	School Governor High Hurstwood	Not required
12	Wealden District Association of Local Councils	Given more focus on Localism/Planning issues someone from Planning ought to attend – clerk to send out agendas when received to check availability
13	WDC Parish Liaison Panel	Clerks
14	Police Liaison Officer	Cllrs Smith and Wilson
15	Uckfield Rail Line Parishes Committee	-
16	High Hurstwood Village Hall Management Committee	Not required (we are not asked for one)
17	Five Ash Down Village Hall Management Committee (2 representative members)	Cllr. Humphrey
18	Buxted Pavilion Charity Management Committee	Cllr Rose
19	Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison	Cllrs Blandford & Coxon

## **Ionides Trust Update 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

- 1. Apologies – Cllr Dunk**
- 2. Declarations of Interest - none**
- 3. Proposals for new Scout Hut – four representatives from the Scouts were in attendance.**

Simon Morley representing the Scouts advised that in September 2022 the Govt. announced a Youth Investment Fund which would allow them to submit a grant to replace the Scout hut that is on its last legs. The funding is specifically aimed at 11–18-year-olds supporting construction projects. They successfully received a pre-construction grant to get from concept to planning application stage – with nearly £25,000 towards the project.

They have been working together with Vivienne and Val from the Trust. The original idea was for a larger hut with a second story. However, having heard feedback from the Trust regarding size and scale and being mindful that time was of an essence (as funding is running out and YIF was heavily oversubscribed) it was decided to redesign and scale back the size of the hut to a single storey. At the present time, the Scouts are considerably restrained by the size of the hut and a lack of storage. A larger new hall will allow group to grow, provide the required storage, and a separate meeting room. The design is in keeping with the medical centre. As well as the building, there will also be a budget for landscaping.

A compilation of images showing where the new hut would be located was shown to the Scouts. These included photographs of where the building would sit on-site and how it would bring the hut out impeding the access through the land, onwards to the Recreation land. It was therefore suggested that the hut could be moved further back into the bank and turned to be more parallel with the hedge line of Chez Nous. It is imperative that the access remains through the land across the side of the Scout Hut, which faces the surgery and public spaces.

Members agreed there is no issue with the size of the building but reorientating it slightly on the site whilst pushing it further back into the site would keep the frontage of the site and access across the land clear.

JR commented that the Parish Council has been advised the current access to the football club is substandard, therefore we need to keep the access across the Ionides to the Recreation Ground.

Scout representatives confirmed that no works would take place outside of the leased area without full consultation and agreement by the Ionides Trust and that they would ensure that any works undertaken would maintain an access across the land outside the leased area.

The scouts are within a few days of submitting altered plans to WDC that show a single storey building. Simon said there might not be enough time to redesign the location of the hut, as per the Ionides Trust requests. In which case, if this design comes before the parish council planning committee, they will comment they wish the hut to be re located before agreeing to planning permission.

**Therefore, it was agreed that the Ionides Trust/Parish Council fully support the new Scout Hut project subject to:**

- The building to be set as far back within the site as possible and building rotated as far as can be achieved.**
- Access is maintained across the land although the this may mean creating part of the access outside of the leased area.**
- The spoil from the land can be used within the site, by mutual agreement (to fill some of the dips in the land to create a flatter area), all subject to final agreement on landscaping and drainage plan which must be provided.**

4. **Buxted Bonfire Society – Request for grant towards Buxted Fete – agreed grant of £500.**
5. **Wild camping on site –** It has been noted that since the Coronation weekend, someone local has been camping on the Ionides site. This has caused quite a stir on social media. Two Police officers have visited the person who is from Buxted. Although wild camping is illegal in England the Trust is remaining understanding to the person but is clear that this cannot be a long-term arrangement. Further help and assistance through the right channels has been offered via the Police.
6. **Dead Cherry Tree –** sadly one of the COVID memorial cherry trees did not survive the winter. As this is one located in the millennium tree guards, a replacement will be ordered and re-planted in the autumn.
7. **The hedge behind the surgery** was cut by the Ionides as it is outside the leased area by the Doctors.
8. **Ruts on site –** caused by the contractors for the zip wire. Clerks still trying to find a contractor.

Meeting closed 9.00pm.