



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

Clerks: Beccy Macklen & Claudine Feltham
PO Box 202, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 1BN
t: 01435 515219 e: clerk@buxted-pc.gov.uk w: buxtedvillage.org.uk

28th May 2024

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 28th May 2024 at 7.40p.m.

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

Public : 4

01/05/24 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**
Proposed by Cllr. Humphrey seconded by Cllr. Smith, Councillor Vivienne Blandford was unanimously voted to remain as Chairman to Buxted Parish Council

02/05/24 **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.

03/05/24 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**
Proposed by Cllr Blandford and seconded by Cllr Smith, Councillor Humphrey was unanimously voted to the position of Vice Chairman of the Council.

04/05/24 **TO RECEIVE ALL COUNCILLORS ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE & DECLARATION OF INTEREST (IF AMENDED)**
Cllrs were reminded to complete a new Declaration of Interest forms in the change of circumstances.

06/05/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received and accepted from WDC Cllr Shaw.

07/05/24 **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 him being the Chairman of the Buxted Allotment Society.

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 and Chair of the committee.

08/05/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

09/05/24 ESCC REPORT

Cllr Galley, the new Chairman of East Sussex County Council reported that there are still some insurance issues relating to works to **Footpath No. 24 High Hurstwood** which are preventing ESCC to conducting the necessary repairs. It is hoped that the weather improves, and the work can begin in the Summer into September.

He noted we have been advised of **drainage works from Buxted Station to Buxted School** to alleviate flooding issues. Cllr Galley will also raise the issue of the pot holes in this area once the work has been completed.

Clearance of pedestrian footpath between Buxted and Buxted School at the same time would be advantageous. We are currently waiting to hear from Highways if this work can also be included at the same time as the drainage works.

Pedestrian Crossing, Buxted School, A272 – ESCC has advised this does not meet the criteria. Cllr Galley has asked for a list of other crossings in the area given permission and the costs involved. He is waiting to find out the requested information.

Cllr Coxon, before the meeting, circulated some information with regards the costs of crossings and asked Cllr Galley when he visited the site to view the issue as it is not felt it is appreciated how dangerous crossing the road is. He stated the best solution would be to have a car park on the school site and failing that a crossing to assist those who choose to park in Buxted park and cross the A272. Information circulated in the link sent from ESCC showed that a crossing could cost approx. £25,000 whereas ESCC have quoted nearer £190,000. There seems to be a big disconnect between what a crossing could cost and what ESCC have advised. He also commented that one of the criteria is the number of fatalities. Surely, we do not need to have a fatality at this site to meet criteria. More information on where crossings have been installed and the criteria that Buxted apparently failed are due to be posted on ESCC Highways website. When we have gained more information BPC may feel it necessary to open the dialogue with Highways once again.

Further information is awaiting from ESCC.

Members commented that they are pleased at the new surface in Budletts and the traffic lights at Coopers Green are working very well.

Cllr Blandford did wish to mention that the potholes in Shepherds Hill were due to be filled in January and when not done then, March. Signs were put up, but no works were carried out. Cllr Galley would chase.

10/05/24 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

Members discussed council positions and agreed to continue as per the previous year.

It was also mentioned that if/when new councillors are appointed, they are welcome to join any of the committees or take on any positions they are interested in.

11/05/24 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Agenda item 9.1: Members noted that the recommendation from the interim audit had been actioned (increase in emergency expenditure amount).

Agenda item 9.2: Members received the end of year Annual Internal Audit Report from Mulberry & Co following the audit conducted 9th May 2024

Agenda item 9.3: Members noted no recommendations or actions from the end of year Annual Internal Audit Report from Mulberry & Co

Cllr Roberts thanked Claudine for all her hard work on the audit and for gaining a clean bill of health with no further recommendations.

12/05/24 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (AGS) SECTION 1 OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**

Agenda item 10.1: Members noted no matters were raised on the external auditor report for the previous financial year (year ending 31.3.23)

Agenda item 10.2: Resolved: All members of Buxted Parish Council acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the GOVERNANCE Statement for the year ended 2024. This was proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Smith, all Cllrs in agreement.

Agenda item 10.3 Members approved the signing of Annual Governance Statement by the Chair of the meeting and the Clerk. The Chair and Clerks signed the document.

13/05/24 **ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS – SECTION 2 OF AGAR**

Agenda items 11.1, 11.2 & 11.3 **Resolved:** as proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Smith, and reached unanimous approval, section 2 - Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023-2024 was approved and signed by the Chair.

14/05/24 **MEMBERS TO APPROVE THE NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN** accounts for the year ending 31.3.24, with the period being 3rd June to 12th July 2024.

Proposed by Cllr. Roberts and seconded by Cllr Smith member **approved** the Notice of Public Right and Publication of unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

15/05/24 **SALE OF READING ROOM, CLEARING AND STORAGE**

The parish council has now received the Contract and Deed of Transfer for signing by the council, both of which have been circulated to all members of the council.

The sale remains ongoing with the purchaser requesting an EPC which the clerk is arranging.

Proposed by Cllr Marshall and seconded by Cllr Rose, **resolved** the Transfer Deed be signed by two councillors and the clerk, and the Contract be signed by the Chairman.

16/05/24 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: QUOTE FOR TREE WORKS AT NEVILL ROAD, UCKFIELD - Following a query from a resident in Nevill Road, Uckfield a tree consultant has provided the parish council with a quote for works on trees (which includes the removal and reinstatement of the BT line). The work is broken down into three parts – work to oak tree to the rear of 49 Nevill Road £320; reduce oak limbs situated over outbuildings/property gardens of 49 Nevill Road £960 (inc estimated BT Line removal = £380); Nevill Rd Woodland Area - diseased Ash dieback work £2,880.

The clerk has asked that prior to carrying out any approved works the tree consultant has been asked to apply to WDC for approval for works to trees covered by TPO.

Members resolved this work is required and agreed for the works to go ahead.

Road Safety: BUXTED PRIMARY SCHOOL – REQUEST FOR CROSSING ASSESSMENT – RESPONSE FROM ESCC – Following the previous meeting the clerk has received a response from Highways with regards a request to reassess for a permanent crossing outside of Buxted School.

A permanent crossing does not meet the required criteria. Highways have however commented that they understand that their priorities may not match with local priorities so the PC could look at funding the project itself. According to Highway rules, they will not match fund any project over a total amount of £120,000.

In information received in relation to Community Match funding, a puffin crossing (which we would need as opposed to a simple zebra crossing) is listed at a cost of approx. £190,000. Therefore, it would need to be self-funded entirely by the PC. I would not just be the crossing itself that is self-funded; the parish council would be required to find the contractor and implement all safety audits creating further costs.

On circulation of this information, members were shocked at the cost of such a project but were also reminded by the clerk that the council is not legally allowed to fund schools. Although the crossing would not be in the school, it could be argued that it would predominately be used by those at the school and therefore could be a potentially legally grey area.

The ESCC response has been discussed with the Head Teacher who will consider advertising again for a lollipop person, having been advised this is a school responsibility, not ESCC, which the Head teacher was unaware of.

If a permanent crossing is not an option, the parish council would refocus ESCC attention on improving the pathway between Buxted village and Buxted Primary School to make it safer for those from the village to walk to school. Also noted the Parish Council would be willing to have the nettles sprayed by a licenced person to at least kill them off while we are awaiting a response from Highways.

Wealden Local Development Framework: LOCAL PLAN UPDATE – Following the Annual Parish Assembly, feedback was gathered and a response to the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation was submitted to WDC. *See full response as an appendix to the minutes.*

Cllr Blandford mentioned correspondence she has had with Ian Tysh referring to green burial sites and a lack of aspiration of one in the plan. It is understood they cannot specify a site, however, surely it must be possible to wish for a green burial site in the plan. The Parish Council agreed to respond again to the correspondence and challenge the logic behind not including this in the plan.

Property issues:

BUXTED RECREATION GROUND – container for storage (Buxted Parish Council/Buxted Football Club): Following the previous meeting, the clerk contacted the Football Club in relation to a container arranged to be installed behind the existing container on site for the purposes of storage. It was confirmed that the container would be for storage for both the Football Club in relation to maintaining the recreation ground and for Buxted Parish Council.

Zip Wire – over the bank holiday weekend, one of the zip wires has become unravelled and the wire and seat is now sitting on the ground. The clerk has contacted the contractor to ascertain why this would have happened when the equipment was only serviced last September and when they would be available to fix it, and should any work be carried out immediately.

Communications Matters: nothing to report.

17/05/24 CORRESPONDENCE

ESCC – enquiring as to whether Buxted PC would be willing to take on the maintenance of a bus stop when installed in Buxted, and which bus stop it would prefer.

Councillors did not feel that a bus shelter in this location is necessarily justified for a bus service that runs five times a week. It feels that a shelter in this location would be a rather imposing piece of street furniture in limited space, and would therefore ask if it is possible for a bench to be installed instead which is less imposing and could be used by all?

The Parish Council has no objection of course to the bus stop signs, but just feels that a shelter is unnecessary. If, however, ESCC do install a shelter in this location, the council would request a wooden shelter without any glass panels which would be fitting for the rural location. Are the occupants of the house at the location of the installation of the bus stop consulted in anyway?

18/05/24 COMMITTEE MEETINGS None

19/05/24 FINANCE

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Rose, payments totalling £8,461.79.29 covered by Bank Transfer and Direct Debit for May and an updated payments list for April 2024 were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for April 2024 which were signed.
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) **consideration of quote for Parish Council annual insurance – approved.**
- v) **consideration of grant application of £680 for Five Ash Down Village Day – proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Duck - approved.**
- vi) **consideration of grant application of £850 for new fence posts at allotments – Propose by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Humphrey - approved.**

20/05/24 OTHER MEETINGS No other meetings

21/05/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Referring back to bus stops, Cllr Humphrey mentioned the bus shelter in Five Ash Down needs some attendance. The Parish Council owns this stop so a survey would

be undertaken.

Cllr Humphrey has also noticed the wording on the sign for the defib in St Margarets Church on the gate, has worn off and it is not clear where in the church it is. Clerk Claudine would query this with the PCC.

Cllr Smith advised he will be attending the lighting of the Beacon on 6th June and looks forward to seeing other councillors there.

22/05/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Date of next meeting – no meeting in June. Next meeting 9 July 2024

The meeting closed at 8.36p.m.

Ionides Trust Update 28th May 2024:

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Scout Hut – update – email from Ian Anderson (Health and Safety consultant)
Correspondence has been received from the Health and Safety consultant working for the Scouts, who has also taken on more of a project management role, in which the Ionides Trust are asked the following question:

As an ESCROW could cost up to £6K to put in place, is the Ionides Trust willing to accept details of Scouts accounts to ensure monies have been kept aside to make good the land (if required) following the completion of works?

Members discussed various options, and it was suggested that we hold the £15,000k in trust until the completion of the project. Our solicitor could draw up a legal document to this effect.

Within the email, the Trust was also advised that a provisional start date of 17th June is now being advised and that drainage and surface water provision details are still being arranged. The Trust would make it clear as it has previously stated that no drainage/surface water run off works should take place outside the leased area without the prior permission of the Ionides Trust and in agreement with the Health and Safety Consultant.

Cllr Humphrey has met with Ian Anderson to discuss the surface water drainage issues.

4. Ionides Trust Annual Insurance – prior to the meeting the clerk circulated details of this year's annual insurance for the Trust land totalling £812.93. **Approved.**
5. D-Day Commemoration 6th June 2024 – Advertising is now on social media for the event which will include 40's music, fish and chips from the Buxted Inn, Ice cream van, tombola all culminating in the lighting of the beacon at 9.15pm by a local Buxted Veteran.
6. Adrian Marshall mentioned that there is a new enthusiastic committee at the rifle club with works being carried out both inside and out of the building.

Meeting closed 8.45pm