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11th March 2025

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.40p.m.

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

Public : None

01/03/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Duck, Furber, Marshall, and ESCC Cllr Galley and clerk Claudine.

02/03/25 **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 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.

03/03/25 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/03/25 **CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR**

Proposed by Cllr. Smith and seconded by Cllr. Humphrey, Brian Muddle was unanimously co-opted onto the parish council and joined the meeting. The chair welcomed Brian to the parish council and councillors introduced themselves.

05/03/25 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

ESCC – In the absence of Cllr Galley there was no ESCC update, but he had reported prior to the meeting that issues with cutting back the footpath from Pound Green Lane to Limes Lane; and the state of the road surface in Gordon Road/Framfield is still very much on his agenda.

WDC Cllr Shaw updated on the devolution proposals which will result in the

dissolving of Wealden District Council. There are no fixed plans or dates it will happen yet and no set structure at this stage. WDC have decided to focus on continuing to provide practical work and maintain services for as long as possible.

WDC have earmarked £1 million to support voluntary organisations in the local sector, with a main recipient being the Citizens Advice Bureau who play a significant role across the district.

The Wealden North Planning Committee has been adding a Grampian condition to most major planning applications that requires Southern Water to upgrade the local sewerage system (if needed) prior to the occupation of any dwelling. This has been challenged by a developer relating to a site in Horam, with the challenge being lost by the developer.

Local Plan – despite the reorganisation plans, Government has advised that local authorities should continue with local plans to ensure there is some sort of plan in place as the unitary authority is being formed. There are recognised issues with some existing allocated sites in the plan which are being re-examined, in addition to including new NPPF policies within it. There will be a further consultation period as the plan moves forward, with a new plan mid 2026 to be examined by the inspector.

06/03/25 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety:

- **BlackCat equipment use – any update:** unfortunately, despite chasing the volunteer from Wadhurst no further correspondence has been received regarding the logistics of downloading the data. It was decided to wait until the speed limits are reduced to see if this influences the traffic speeds entering/exiting the village before the parish council consider purchasing its own equipment. If, in the meantime, contact is forthcoming from the volunteer this avenue would be pursued.
- **Village Gates – update:** the Licensing and Enforcement Officer in ESCC Highways has assessed Buxted to try and establish if there are suitable positions for village gates. His response is summarised below:

“Most of the verges along the A272 (on approach at either end of Buxted) are too narrow and would not offer the correct safety clearance for a sign to be placed there.

I cannot recommend exact locations as it is subject to the Low impact Scheme Assessment and the review and decision from Traffic & Safety from the findings of the assessment.

In some cases, Parishes may not be able to signs installed if no suitable areas can be found.”

Wealden Local Development Framework: see minute 04/02/25 above.

Property issues:

- **Buxted War Memorial – update:** the Chairman advised she would be submitting

the Listed Building application.

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

07/03/25 **CORRESPONDENCE**
No priority correspondence

08/03/25 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

09/03/25 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Roberts, payments totalling £9,332.07 for March 2025 covered by direct debits and BACS were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for February 2025.
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation

10/03/25 **OTHER MEETINGS**
Cllr Humphrey has chaired a Five Ash Down Village Hall Committee – request could Lengthsman repair the Village Hall sign.

11/03/25 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**
None

12/03/25 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Areas of Responsibility – circulated prior to the meeting and all areas now covered by councillors.

Cllr Blandford wished to note an increase in litter along the sides of the roads.

The meeting closed at 8.26p.m.

Ongoing and recently resolved Highways issues:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
2003	HED000607	Overgrown hedge at Heatherwode Farm	Ongoing since 2023. Highways Enforcement have sent out notices which expired in December 2024. A further notice is to be issued week beginning 20 th January. 13/2/25 – clerk chased – was notice issued? Has it lapsed? 25/02/25 – Highways confirm hedge has still not been cut . Referred to relevant team for further action.
December 2024	CFW000627	Cracks in roadside/kerbs on A272 close to Buxted School	CLOSED 25/1/25 – notified repairs works have been completed. 28/1/25 – more broken kerbside reported at SLR meeting – Highway Steward will investigate.
06/01/25	SIG001612	Damaged sign (lost its reflectiveness) in Five Ash	ONGOING

		Down on left hand side just before the Pig & Butcher public house when you enter the village from A26. More or less outside No.70	
January 2025	SIG001602	Falling over 30mph sign in Hurstwood Road	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Highways confirmed case close after repair.</p> <p>17/01/25 – lengthsman tried to clean the sign but it has not been fixed properly into the ground. Requested further repairs are carried out.</p> <p>21/01/25 – Highways confirm case is closed. Clerks send a further email to explain the signs are not fixed into the ground and the case needs reopening!</p> <p>28/1/25 - Highways confirmed new repairs taking place that week.</p>
17/01/25	POT030898	Hurstwood Road – approx. 2 metres from the 30mph sign – on the left-hand side as you head towards Buxted Primary School, there is a large hole on the edge of the road. Our Lengthsman believes that this could cause the road to collapse in.	<p>REOPENED</p> <p>21/01/25 – Highways responded to say the pot hole does not need repairs.</p> <p>21/1/25 – after a complaint by the clerk, Highways have confirmed this would be reinvestigated.</p> <p>24/01/25 – after reinvestigation, confirmed pothole will be repaired within 28 days.</p>
17/01/25	DGD005096	Just off of Limes Lane and you go towards Nan Tucks Lane (outside of a property named Orchard House – the drain is overflowing	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>17/01/25 – Highways advise they are already aware of issue, and it should be resolved in 28 days.</p>
17/01/25	CWY004501	Someone has dumped a load of vegetation/ivy in Limes Lane. Residents have reported this to us as causing an obstruction and quote dangerous in the dark. Our Lengthsman has tried to move it in, but it needs collecting/removal	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>20/01/25 – Highways notified the matter has been passed to WDC as it would be classed as fly tipping</p>
04/02/25	THF003389	Width of footpath between Limes Lane and Pound Green Lane – request to cut back and uncover footpath	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>10/02/25 – Highway Steward has inspected and does not consider works are needed at this time but would keep an eye on it.</p> <p>14/02/25 – Raised with Cllr Galley at meeting. He is raising this issue again with Highways</p>
11/02/25	HED003887	Overgrown hedges along the alleyway between the High Street and Britts Farm Road (along the back of the	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>13/2/25 - ESCC Highways responded to advise they do not own the land, so it is not their responsibility. Clerk to carry</p>

		properties in Brits Farm Road)	out more investigations. 14/02/25 – clerks ask Lengthsman to cut the overgrown vegetation down the alleyway – completed
17/02/25	CCY000737	Broken away tarmac (50cm) in Framfield Road/Limes Lane outside KSV and bollard fallen over	REQUEST FOR REOPENING 20/02/25 – ESCC Highways do not consider work is necessary at this time but would continue to monitor – Raise again with Highways
26/02/25	DRF002053	Opposite entrance to Oast Farm, Lephams Bridge, Buxted	CLOSED – reporting of flooding opposite the entrance to Oast Farm 27/02/25 – Highway Steward checked site and reported no work is necessary

- 1. Apologies – Cllr Furber**
- 2. Declarations of Interest – none.**
- 3. Scout Hut – update**

The Licence for Alterations for the surface water drainage has now been signed by both parties.

Cllrs Blandford, Humphrey, and Smith visited the site on 26th February together with a representative of the Scouts and the site manager. Landscaping and the completing and tidying up of the site was discussed. Concern was raised regarding the completion and materials to be used for the track leading to the Recreation Ground. Ian Anderson was due to have a meeting the following day which has resulted in a response advising that the Scouts are currently in dispute as to the extent of reinstatement of the site. The Scouts propose it that the contractors complete the works to the extent of the contract and then leave site. Ian would then arrange for works to be completed to the satisfaction of the Ionides Trust.

Cllr Blandford met with the site manager on Monday afternoon and discussed the access track and agreed the track could be reinstated to the same specification as the existing Scouts entrance track. The kerb was removed from the plans.

It also needs to be made explicitly clear to the Scouts that the new pathway down to the car park is maintained at their own cost and used at their own risk, with the Ionides Trust preferring access is via the existing pathway around the site.

It was agreed that once the contractors have left site, members of the IT would attend a site meeting with the Scouts and Ian Anderson to discuss how best to complete the site to the satisfaction of the Trust.

Meeting closed 8.40pm