



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

13th May 2025

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7.45p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chair), Duck, Furber, Humphrey, Mallett, Marshall, Muddle, Rose and Smith.

Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley, and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public : 4. A Representative of Little Firefighters' Nursery at High Hurstwood Village Hall asked if the nursery could erect a fence running from the back of the hall up the field to the boundary, to create a safe play area for the children. At the moment the nursery is using temporary fencing which is not safe. This matter is discussed in item 12/05/25 on the agenda.

Graham Midmer wished to record a vote of thanks to the chair for representing the parish council and parishioners as the appeal hearing for the land north of the A272.

- 01/05/25 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**
Proposed by Cllr. Humphrey seconded by Cllr. Rose, Councillor Blandford was unanimously voted to remain as Chairman to Buxted Parish Council . She was willing to stand for another year as this is a time of change with the coming devolution, and we will work towards the best outcome to represent Buxted Parish in the new order. This may not be the case next year as councillors may change.
- 02/05/25 **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.
- 03/05/25 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**
It was agreed there would be a rotating vice chair as required.
- 04/05/25 **TO RECEIVE ALL COUNCILLORS ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE & DECLARATION OF INTEREST (IF AMENDED)**
Members were reminded to complete the acceptance of office a declaration of interest forms if needed.
- 05/05/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Roberts and WDC Cllr Shaw
- 06/05/25 **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 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.

07/05/25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2025 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

08/05/25 ESCC/WDC REPORT

Cllr Galley updated on **local government reorganisation**. ESCC together with District Councils within East Sussex have launched a consultation regarding the shape of the unitary authorities. The proposal is to form a Unitary Authority made up of ESCC together with the District Councils that sit within East Sussex. This area contains the required number of residents. If, as individuals or a council you could support this proposal, it would be helpful.

West Sussex has a few ideas including staying as single authority (too many residents); or taking a portion of West Sussex out of their area and giving it to Brighton and Hove. Crawley has requested to join Surrey. Government is expected to respond to these proposals around September.

Cllr Blandford completed the questionnaire and responded that East Sussex should be unitary authority but what else can Parish Council's do? Cllr Galley suggested a response could include that parish councils request to be very much involved in any discussions, as there is some discussion that parish councils may join to form larger more effective authorities.

Cllr Mallet commented that if Crawley join Surrey, there could be a loss of viewpoint from Sussex as Gatwick airport would then be out of the area which could affect any influence Sussex has on airport expansion and flight movements, despite being directly under flight paths.

Clearance of drains on A272 from Buxted through to Coopers Green: With one exception, all drains around Coopers Green have been cleared. Works are programmed in Station Road in June. In June the work will also start at Gatehouse Bridge in Millwood Road. Cllr Humphrey would again like to register that residents do not wish the work to be carried out on the bridge, or the road reopened.

Cllr Furber asked, what are the programme of works for the High Street? Cllr Galley was under the impression they have now all been cleared.

Cllr Furber reported back following his meeting regarding the damaged culvert. He had a positive meeting with Balfour Beatty/ESCC when it was agreed to carry out works from the collapsed culvert to outside KSV (in one programme of works). ESCC are currently conducting a capacity study of culvert. Once results are back, work would begin on a design. However, Cllr Furber was advised the work would not be implemented until the next financial year. He was also advised that work scheduled elsewhere across both Counties (East and West) would determine when the work could be scheduled. Cllr Galley was asked why this needs to be the case. Cllr Galley

to investigate.

09/05/25

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.

Cllr Muddle agreed to join the Finance committee, and Cllrs Furber and Smith would like to start a Village Hall Committee.

Cllrs Furber and Mallet agreed to take the role of the Footpaths co-ordinator.

The clerk would investigate if the Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee still require a representative from the parish council, as Cllr Mallet may be interested in attending.

10/05/25

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

10.1. To receive the internal audit report for financial year ending 31.3.25 from Mulberry Local Authority Services.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Muddle, seconded by Cllr Rose and reached unanimous approval, the internal audit report for financial year ending 31.3.25 from Mulberry Local Authority Services was received as no questions were raised.

10.2 For members to note that there were no recommendations or points to carry forward from the internal audit examination/report (for financial year ending 31.3.25 from Mulberry Local Authority Services).

Members noted there were no recommendations or points to carry forward.

10.3 For members to receive the signed Annual Internal Audit Report 2024-2025 (page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 for Local Councils) from Mulberry Local Authority Services.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Rose, seconded by Cllr Muddle and reached unanimous approval, the signed Annual Internal Audit Report 2024-2025 (page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 for Local Councils) from Mulberry Local Authority Services was received as no questions were raised.

10.4 For members to receive: Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Resolved: To note the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return was received.

10.5. Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025:

Resolved: Members acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. Members reviewed and approved the assertions (page 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) and agreed for the Chair and Clerk to sign the form. Proposed by Cllr Muddle, seconded by Cllr Rose and reached unanimous approval.

10.6 Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024-2025:

Proposed by Cllr. Marshall and seconded by Cllr Rose – **approved. Resolved:** Members received and approved the signed (income and expenditure) Accounting Statements from the Responsible Financial Officer and approved for the Chair to

sign the form (page 5 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return).

Action: RFO to submit all the required documentation to the external auditor PKF Littlejohn.

Action: Clerk to add all the required documentation to the parish council website by 21st May 2025.

11/05/25

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AMENDED NALC STANDING ORDERS

Members reviewed the recommended amendments to the NALC Standing Orders and unanimously approved the changes. Proposed by Cllr Blandford and seconded by Cllr Smith, the Standing Orders, as amended, dated 13th May 2025 were **adopted**.

12/05/25

OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Public footpaths: Nothing to report

Trees: Nothing to report

Road Safety: Nothing to report

Wealden Local Development Framework: Nothing to report

Property issues:

Buxted Recreation Ground – Cllr Humphrey reported that Buxted Parish Council carry out basic maintenance of the Buxted Recreation Ground with Buxted Football Club topping this up to ensure the football pitch and surrounding area is at a standard required by the Football Association. They have carried out some excellent work but unfortunately have missed many games (and revenue) this season due to the pitch being too wet to play on. There is a primary draining system which has not been adequately maintained over the years but still works. Cllr Humphrey met with a drainage engineer to provide a quote to install secondary drainage at a cost of approximately £21,000, with an annual maintenance cost of around £4,500. No discussion on the quote has taken place with the football club yet.

Councillors agreed the football club is a good use of the land and would make the field usable for everyone, but would it be possible for the club to apply for funding to assist with costs? WDC do have some grants available.

It was agreed in principle that the parish council would assist with the funding if the football club could actively seek a contribution towards it. It would also be clear that if the works are carried out, the land could be used for other purposes as long as the land is not damaged.

High Hurstwood Recreation Ground – Members considered extending the current groundsman duties to cover High Hurstwood Recreation Ground on a fortnightly basis. **Agreed**.

High Hurstwood Recreation Ground – permission by nursery to erect a permanent low fence to the rear of the hall.

Agreed, as long as the fence is removed if nursery leaves the hall. Nursery to discuss design of the fence with the Hall Committee (Cllr Duck)

Communications Matters: Nothing to report

13/05/25

CORRESPONDENCE

P1 – Ashdown Place Residents Association – request to remove and change small children's play equipment

P2 – Buxted Station – request for new station platform planters. Agree to join the Station Partnership Group to be eligible for a grant and ask Uckfield Men in Sheds to provide planters.

14/05/25 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

15/05/25 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Smith seconded by Cllr. Rose, payments totalling £21,056.07 covered by direct debits and bank transfers were approved. Within these payments are CCTV cameras for Buxted School and Play Equipment for the Ionides site, which are being funded by CIL contributions.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for April which were signed
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash and Investment Reconciliation for April 2025
- iv) consideration of annual Parish Council insurance quote – **agreed to three-year long-term agreement option totalling £5,033.05 per annum. Approved payment to be made in May prior to insurance starting in June.**
- v) To note the continued subscription for 2025-2026 to ESALC, NALC and SLCC - approved

16/05/25 **OTHER MEETINGS**
No other meetings

17/05/25 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Lengthsman to clear the path between Buxted School & Coopers Green – clerk to chase.

Cllr Humphrey commented on the previously raised issue of the path in Buxted Park. The Rights of Way Team have advised this is a cut through and is not an official footpath and therefore they would not be installing a bridge. Cllr Humphrey is requesting we ask Buxted Park if they could install a bridge instead. Our new footpath co-ordinators would investigate this further. Clerk to pass across previous information received.

18/05/25 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Date of next meeting – Next meeting 10 June 2025 Five Ash Down Village Hall

The meeting closed at 8.40p.m.

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. 03/04/25 – Confirmation from Highways, hedge will be cut in 28 working days (16 th May)

November 2024	EA007FRAMFIELD	Culvert, Framfield Road, Buxted	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Collapsed drainage leading to culvert. Reported some time ago. Highway advised works need planning and extensive repair.</p> <p>19/3 – Highways contacted PC to advise Structural Team will contact PC to arrange a site meeting likely to be in April.</p> <p>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.</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> <p>March 25 - Issue now CLOSED after work carried out by Cllr Furber</p> <p>01/04/25 – Highways confirmed job is now scheduled!</p>
17/02/25	CCY000737	Broken away tarmac (50cm) in Framfield Road/Limes Lane outside KSV and bollard fallen over	<p>REOPENED</p> <p>20/02/25 – ESCC Highways do not consider work is necessary at this time but would continue to monitor – Raise again with Highways.</p> <p>17/3 – Highway Steward revisited. Road still does not meet criteria, but bollard will be replaced.</p> <p>May – work should be carried out in conjunction with culvert repair woks (as above EA007FRAMFIELD)</p>
01/04/25	SIG001838 SIG001838	Outside of 4 Cherry Garden Cottages, Royal Oak Lane, High Hurstwood	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>30mph signs</p> <p>One fallen into the hedge</p> <p>One twisted</p> <p>29/04/25 – confirmation from Highways this work has now been completed.</p>
10/04/25	GEN013743	7 Millwood Lane - sewerage leak coming from a domestic sewerage plant believed to be contaminating ditch and highway	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>10/04/25 – Highways commented the sewerage is the responsibility of Southern Water</p> <p>14/05/25 – PC disputed this as Under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980. They can and should take action on someone allowing water to be discharged on to the public highway</p> <p>16/05/25 - Highway Steward has attended site and raised for ditch culverts to be unblocked; the works</p>

			are scheduled to take place the following day.
24/05/25	SLO000572	Blocked drains on Buxted High Street	ONGOING 29/04/25 - Highway Steward has identified the blockages and has scheduled a job to remove water and any excess debris. Additionally, we will conduct a CCTV inspection to check for any breaks or blockages in the pipelines and will use jetting if necessary.
25/04/25	DGD005639	Drains on the A272 between the end of the houses (from Buxted) and Buxted Primary School on the A272 Parish Council has walked this stretch and has noted 4 drains in a row that appear to be blocked	CLOSED 28/4/25 – Highway Steward inspected No works required
28/05/25	DGD005645	This blocked gully pot is 60m west of Coopers Green traffic lights on A272.	ONGOING 30/04/25 – Highway Steward inspected. No works required. Later informed this is due to be cleared!
02/05/25	HED004155	Overgrown hedge, Middlefield House, Gordon Rd, Buxted	Highway Steward inspecting 08/05/25 – Letter written to owner to cut back hedge

Ionides Trust Update 13th May 2024 following Ionides AGM:

1. Apologies – Cllr Roberts
2. Declarations of Interest - None
3. Scout Hut:

- Pathway from Scout Hut to car park – no change in pathway – surfacing has not been carried out. Cllr Humphrey commented that concrete or plastic is not suitable for this area as it is too rigid and would not work with the undulating land. It would also become slippery in wet and icy weather. Cllr Humphrey suggested stones or rubber and Cllr Marshall commented the pathway should have steps and should not be that steep. The chair commented this was not our design and not our responsibility. The preferred access remains along the existing pavement of Framfield Road.

The pathway going out from the back of the Scout hut through to the Recreation Ground - once the grass is established elsewhere, the fencing can be moved sideways and the present access made good.

The Ionides Trust will need to look at the provision of a pathway up to the area where the Beacon is located, as the current access (as on beacon lighting night) is not particularly user friendly.

Cllr Humphrey commented that any works to the football pitch would have to be via the Ionides land, so the access needs to remain accessible.

- Landscaping – the grass seed has taken remarkably well so it must be being watered. We will have to leave the land for the moment to see how it all settles before deciding what further work is required.

Bonfire Society Christmas tree paving slab – needs to be replaced and sunken back in as previously installed.

- Possible CCTV for Scout Hut? Maybe suggest to Scouts as CCTV is helping at Rifle Club. Perhaps they have already installed some security measures which can be shared, if and when necessary.
- Scout Hut use by others – chasing our own source to establish what restrictions may be in place.

4. Illegal Campers – still waiting for Police to update before taking action.
5. Still waiting for Network Rail to respond with regards fencing.
6. Hedge on Framfield road on Ionides Land – could not access the hedge during Scout Hut construction and should not cut the hedges in nesting season. So will ensure it is cut in the early Autumn. Back on July agenda and look at replacement the cherry tree in the memorial area.

Action Points:

1. Next meeting report back on above
2. Order new tree for cherry guard (Chair to check original planting plans and order it for the autumn (would the lengthsman plant it?))
3. Organise hedge cutting for Autumn or late July? Chair will check best time to do work
4. New seating, type, cost, where. The scouts have three benches with seats with ownership plaques, do we do the same?
5. Talk to contractor about safe mowing, and where not might be mown?

Meeting closed: 21.10pm