



# **BUXTED**

## PARISH COUNCIL

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8<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **MINUTES**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall, Five Ash Down on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7.13p.m.**

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

**Public :** None

01/04/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Mallett

02/04/25 **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.

03/04/25 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/04/25 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

**ESCC - Cllr Galley reported:**

**Drainage Coopers Green** – clearing the drains is near to completion after Highways became aware that some drains thought to be on private land are public drains.

**Gordon Road/Framfield Road** – the pot holes are not bad enough for any repair according to Highways.

**Heatherwode Farm Hedge** – notification from Highways the hedge will be cut within

28 days, and the owner will be charged for the work.

**Howbourne Lane** – there are drainage issue in Howbourne lane with water appearing from underneath the road. Highways will investigate in July which will involve a road closure.

Cllr Humphrey – **Underhill bridge, Underhill**. The road has now been closed for nearly three years. Are ESCC going to repair the bridge as closing the road has worked very well cutting out a rat run? Cllr Galley has advised the public highway cannot be permanently shut and the bridge will be repaired and road reopened.

Cllr Humphrey wished it to be officially record in the minutes that it is against the residents wishes that the road should be reopened and instead wish it to remain closed permanently. *Clerk to write to Carl Taylor, Operations Director to request permanently closure.*

**Framfield Road/Limes Lane Culvert** - Cllr Furber has a meeting with a Highways project manager the following Thursday to discuss the broken culvert in Framfield Road/Limes Lane. So far, engagement with the Parish Council has been good.

Cllr Galley has chased the filling of the two pot holes which remain outside of Buxted school after one was filled and the other two left.

***Thank you to Buxted Together and Brighter Uckfield Volunteers for the footpath work carried out on A272.***

05/04/25 **Proposed changes to procurement points in Financial Regulations & Review of Asset Register March 2025 in preparation for end of year audit**

Prior to the meeting, the clerk circulated the Financial Regulations showing recommended changes to procurement procedures reflecting Government regulations, together with an up-to-date Asset Register. The proposed changes were unanimously **adopted** by the parish council and the Asset Register was **reviewed and noted** with an amendment to remove the Coopers Green Bus Shelter.

06/04/25 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

**Public footpaths:** Footpath 59a in Buxted Park is missing a bridge with the public using a fallen log to cross the stream – *clerk to report to the Rights of Way Team.*

**Trees:** Not on the agenda but for information, we have received notification of a proposed TPO on land at The Walled Garden to protect three Oak trees, one Norway Maple and 10 Hornbeam.

**Road Safety:** nothing to report.

**Wealden Local Development Framework:** nothing to report.

**Property issues:**

- **Replacement bus shelter, Coopers Green**  
The bus shelter has had to be removed following its collapse. This was carried out by the Lengthsman. Highway improvement works are due to take place on the corner of the crossing in connection with the development opposite, and therefore councillors decided to wait until the highway works have been completed then decide if a new shelter is still needed.

**Communications Matters:** Cllr Furber mentioned a few out-of-date pages on the website. He would refer some pages to the clerk.

**P1 - WDALC - Reorganisation of local government in East Sussex – Cllr Duck** attended the WDALC meeting the previous week which focused on devolution and set out the Mayoral structure, with a new Mayor being elected in 2026, who will appoint a Deputy Mayor. The new Unitary Authority will comprise representatives from East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove city council. The mayor will then feed directly into government which, in turn, will feed back to the unitary authority. There will also be non-constituency members representing transport/NHS/and those from the currently existing District/Borough councils.

The responsibilities of the unitary authority will be transport and local infrastructure; public safety; health wellbeing and public service reform; environment and climate change; economic development and regeneration; housing and strategic planning; and skills and employment support. The unitary authorities within this umbrella e.g. East Sussex Unitary Authority (if approved) will provide housing; planning; waste disposal etc.

The organisation and changeover is to be paid for by the existing councils, with Government supplying the funding for a 30-year investment fund to drive economic growth and a consolidated funding pot for local growth, housing/regeneration, adult skills, and local transport. The unitary authority can also raise funds through the precept and by imposing a Mayoral Community Levy to help deliver local infrastructure.

The assumption is that there will be less flexibility on planning as local growth allocations will be decided via a formula set by Government with local communities having less consultation.

Cllr Duck added that she is very much in favour of a unitary authority having lived for 40 years in Manchester before a unitary authority was created in the 1990's which provided an excellent tram/transport system, connecting the whole of Manchester which in turn has drawn in economic investment with the city being transformed.

Cllrs are concerned that elections by next May does not give residents enough time to get to know the prospective candidates before having to vote for one. There is also a fear money will be directed towards deprived areas, with more affluent pockets left underfunded. There is another fear that planning will become centralised with even less localised input.

**P2 - Nus Ghani - You are Invited to a Q&A Session with Nusrat Ghani MP 28 April 4pm – does anyone want to attend – no volunteers.**

**P3 – Police Rural Crime Team – launch of Street Surgery initiative. Would the PC like to host an event? – Yes, and use Ionides Car Park.**

08/04/25 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
None

09/04/25 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Rose, payments in March totalling £11,280.04 and April £18,328.37 9 (including agreed annual grants) Paid by bank transfer or direct debit were approved.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations to the financial year end 31.3.25 were noted.**
- iii) **The financial year end 31.3.25 RBS reports: Trial balance, ear marked reserves, summary receipts and payment, cash and investment**

reconciliations were noted.

*The chairman suspended the meeting and completed above after the Ionides Trust meeting.*

iv) **Cllr Roberts - feedback from clerks' appraisals: review of salary** - appraisals were carried out on 18th March 2025 both for Claudine Feltham and for Beccy Macklen, by Vivienne Blandford, chair of Buxted parish council and James Roberts, Finance Chairman. Both Claudine and Beccy felt they had achieved the competencies relating to legal and statutory duties, preparation of papers and attending and advising the council, as well as representing them in the community and with other stakeholders. Both Vivienne and James agreed with this assessment and commended both on providing excellent service to both the chair and the council throughout the year under review. Both Claudine, with eleven years' service, and Beccy, with almost 17 years' service, are highly experienced and retain enthusiasm. Cllrs Roberts and Blandford met separately to conclude their assessment and to agree on a recommendation to the full council on an appropriate grading for the year ahead. Salaries were reviewed and agreed by full council with Claudine rising to benchmark 34 and Beccy rising to benchmark 38 on the NALC pay scales.

**10/04/25 OTHER MEETINGS**

Cllr Duck reported back from the High Hurstwood village Hall Committee meeting that a nursery now occupies the hall every weekday having relocated from Uckfield.

**11/04/25 MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Smith – would like to put a question to the public to try and find suitable location for the parish council to purchase a new piece of land in Buxted in addition to the Recreation Ground.

Cllr Marshall – can we re-look at disposing of the Nevill Road site? It was agreed that with the forthcoming changes in governance and planning regulations, it may be available for development in the future, so for the time being the parish council should keep hold of the land.

**12/04/25 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

The meeting closed at 9.20p.m.

Copy to ESCC Cllr R Galley, WDC Cllr Shaw

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 <sup>th</sup> 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.
November 2024	EA007FRAMFIELD	Culvert, Framfield Road, Buxted	ONGOING Collapsed drainage leading to culvert. Reported sometime ago. Highway advised works need planning and extensive repair. 19/3 – Highways contacted PC to advise Structural Team will contact PC to arrange a site meeting likely to be in April.
December 2024	CFW000627	Cracks in roadside/kerbs on A272 close to Buxted School	ONGOING 25/1/25 – notified repairs works have been completed. 28/1/25 – more broken kerbside reported at SLR meeting – Highway Steward will investigate.
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	CLOSED 17/01/25 – Highways advise they are already aware of issue, and it should be resolved in 28 days. Superseded by a previous issue and should now be resolved.
04/02/25	THF003389	Width of footpath between Limes Lane and Pound Green Lane – request to cut back and uncover footpath	CLOSED 10/02/25 – Highway Steward has inspected and does not consider works are needed at this time but would keep an eye on it. 14/02/25 – Raised with Cllr Galley at meeting. He is raising this issue again with Highways. March 25 - Issue now CLOSED after work carried out by Cllr Furber
17/02/25	CCY000737	Broken away tarmac (50cm) in Framfield Road/Limes Lane outside KSV and bollard fallen over	REOPENED 20/02/25 – ESCC Highways do not consider work is necessary at this time but would continue to monitor – <b>Raise again with Highways.</b> 17/3 – Highway Steward revisited. Road still does not meet criteria, but bollard will be replaced.
01/04/25	SIG001838 SIG001838	Outside of 4 Cherry Garden Cottages, Royal Oak Lane, High Hurstwood	ONGOING 30mph signs One fallen into the hedge One twisted

1. **Apologies – David Mallet**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Scout Hut – update** (*Two members of the Scout Association were in attendance*)

Since the previous meeting, the contractors have now left the site. Cllr Blandford, together with a landscape consultant visited the site to assess the state of the land and to highlight issues that will need resolving. A note was circulated to all. In response, an email was received from the Health and Safety Manager for the site reassuring the Ionides Trust that all aspects are still very much on the agenda for resolution.

Cllr Furber queried the soakaway pipe and asked if it should be further into the culvert and not be in place with sandbags discharging before the ditch and not directly into the culvert. The Scouts would investigate this further.

Simon Morley stated the Scouts are not happy with the way the contractor has left the land, and this will not be the final state of the land. The original tender suggested that all works would take place within the Scouts lease site, which would have been impossible, and therefore site huts, storage of materials, vehicle movements, parking of works vehicles, etc. took place outside the Scout leased area on Ionides land. This is notwithstanding the necessary changes to the landscape having built a much bigger scout hut. The contractor is now querying that the original tender only applies to the leased area and not the surrounding land. Legal advice is being sought. Scouts have carried out some remedial work, but they are clear the works are not finished. Funds are in place to complete the work; but the Scouts will pursue the contractor before having to complete the work using the remaining funds.

Cllr Blandford raised concerns regarding the steep slope of the path leading from the Scout Hut down to the car park and its surface. There is also concern regarding the tree at the bottom of the slope and how this can be made safe.

The Scouts wished to minute that the Health and Safety Manager, Ian Anderson has been invaluable in getting the project finished.

The chairman reiterated this is public land and we need to protect any public using the site and as owners of the land the Ionides Trust is responsible for those using it.

It is clear that the contractors have taken machinery into the woodland area, beyond the post and rail fence and the embankment and railway line are now extremely visible. Clerk to advise Network Rail the fence is unsuitable now the land has opened further following the installation of the surface water drainage system. The IT will continue to monitor this area.

4. **Scouts request for a Scout Hut opening party Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July 4-9pm** – yes, subject to the land being safe for use by the public.

Cllr Blandford asked if other outside bodies could use the hall. The Scouts advised that they are querying the use of the hall for commercial purposes due to it being zero rated for VAT purposes. This is being investigated further.

5. **Annual Insurance Quote**

A renewal quote was received from our insurance broker for a total of £827.15 for the year which is an increase of £15 from the previous year. **Members resolved to agree** to the new premium.

6. **Any feedback from installation of new play equipment** – works almost completed and look great however, some complaints have been received it would not be open by the Easter Holidays.

## **7. Notification of Basil Ionides Memorial Trust AGM 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Closed 8.50pm**