



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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8th March 2022

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7.51p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Bolton, Coxon, Humphrey, Illingworth (WDC), McQuarrie, Marshall, Moss, Roberts (7.53), and Wilson.
Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public: 4

A member of the public wished to mention the recently promoted Great British Spring Clean. He would be speaking to the person in the village that normally leads an event with a view to setting a date for a Buxted litter pick on the 9th of April. The clerk will source some more bags and Cllr. Bolton would provide coffee at the start of the session at the Buxted Inn.

High Hurstwood litter pick will take place on 2nd April.

01/03/22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Moss, Johnson, and Rose and ESCC Cllr Galley

The chairman wished Cllr Rose well and a speedy recovery from all the parish council.

02/03/22 **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.

03/03/22 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2022 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/03/22 **WDC REPORT**

Cllr Illingworth reported no update on the Local Plan as WDC is waiting for Government to publish a revised planning framework which was promised for the end of February.

We are all aware of seismic international changes recently. Cllr Illingworth circulated a message on social media looking for volunteers to house any refugees that may arrive in the country. He was pleased to advise that 55 spaces have been offered locally for Ukrainian refugees when Government eases the visa scheme.

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Nothing to report.

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety:

Confirmation of Countryman for grass cutting on A272 for 2022 – The clerk had previously circulated a quote from Countrymans for the cutting of the verge from The Buxted Inn to the Coopers Green traffic lights. The quote for £1206 (£1183 in 2021) for four cuts per year was **approved**.

Wealden Local Development Framework: See above.

Property issues:

Reading Room –

- **consideration of quote for closed buildings insurance** – Following the previous meeting at which it was agreed to close the Reading Room permanently the clerk was asked to establish costs for insuring a closed building. A quote from our insurance broker for £3,183.76 was received. Members agreed that the building needs this insurance and therefore proposed by Cllr Marshall, seconded by Cllr Bolton the quote was accepted and **approved**
- **report from working party** – Cllr Roberts reported that due to illness it was a rather decimated working party. However, it was established and subsequently circulated to all that we need to look again as the fundamental question of ‘Does the village want a new village hall?.’ This decision needs to be made prior to making any decisions on the existing Reading Room removal. We therefore need ask the public again and it would seem logical to ask this question in spring at the Annual Parish Meeting. If the answer is ‘yes’ the next question to ask ourselves is if the parish council take on the responsibility of the hall or can a community group be formed to take the project forward. However, at the same time we should be mindful that the Scouts are looking to increase the size of their hut to something bigger. It would seem foolish to press ahead on the same site with two projects that might have dissimilar aesthetics when we could possibly have a joint project. This may not be possible, but it seems sensible to find out if there is a possibility of a dual approach. If, after consideration, we wished to press ahead **without** the Scouts, we could appoint an architect to redesign the hall to a more affordable project and at that point we could look at the disposal of the RR. If it is resolved in the near future to build a new hall, the feeling of the working party would be to dispose of the RR as soon as possible to secure funds. All the above comes with a lot of uncertainties and therefore it would seem sensible to have sketched out what to do if there is no appetite for a new hall. We therefore ought to have a shadow plan B for what can we do that would most benefit the parish, whether it be highway improvements (that we are allowed to fund) or supporting other halls within the parish (if financial restrictions allow).

Cllr Illingworth mentioned that he is very pro a new hall but at the time

he fears that it does not necessarily have the support of the village. He understands the logic of a joint project with the Scouts, and we should explore this, but it would come with some significant hurdles. His final thought is that when putting all this information to parishioners it would be important to outline what the alternatives are in comparison with the hall.

In response to one of the points, Cllr Roberts commented that since the hall/facility was given planning permission there has been a demographic change which could provide a more enthusiastic and positive parish response. We can also better promote the project as a heart to the village (as per the original concept many years ago) and not just a 'village hall' but a community facility offering space to many groups/clubs/societies as well as a meeting or events space.

It was agreed that the working party should meet again prior to the next PC meeting to work on a concept to promote on social media/all platforms as well as local magazines etc prior to the Annual Parish Assembly. Members are also welcome to visit other successful village facilities. Action - clerk to circulate dates for a meeting.

- **request to locate a small textile recycling bank for Children's Air Ambulance** – the parish council has been approached by the Children's Air Ambulance charity to ask if a textile bank could be located in the parish. The most obvious location would be the Reading Room car park. Members discussed if this location would be appropriate and agreed.
- **Redundancy of caretaker** – following the decision to close the Reading Room it is now unfortunately necessary to cease the employment of the caretaker. Having contacted our payroll officer, all entitlements and redundancy pay has been calculated. Proposed by Cllr Illingworth and seconded by Cllr Humphrey the council **approved** the decision to make the caretaker redundant and follow all necessary procedures and honour any redundancy payments (approx. £750).

Buxted Recreation Ground

- **Unregistered footpath to the rear of Buxted Football Club and ideas for improving boundary line behind Buxted Football Club – update** – This matter will have to be postponed as the landowners is currently unavailable to discuss this matter further. It is hoped this situation will change toward the end of March.

Allotments

- **Repair of track – update** – a revised quote for the repair of the track has been received and is £13,075 In comparison to the quote of £11,389 In 2020. It was agreed at the last meeting that if there is no more of an increase of £4000 in costs, the parish council would cover the 20% that will not be covered by the landowner. The difference is £2,585 Therefore the clerk will contact Southern Water Services to secure a 60% voluntary contribution and Network Rail for the contracted 20% contribution with a view to carrying out the work as soon as these amounts are confirmed. When the track was originally repaired back in 2015, three quotes were sought but the parish council was only successful in receiving one, which was WPK Sealants. We have used this company and worked well with them on repairs since then and therefore it was agreed that this company should continue to be used.

Platinum Jubilee arrangements –

- **report from newly formed village Platinum Jubilee Committee – Cllrs Bolton and Illingworth played a presentation promoting the proposed Jubilee celebrations, what it could include; its key principles; and cost implications. They are requesting funding of £19,350, which they have calculated to equate to £4.30 per parishioner.**

In answer to the question regarding fireworks it was advised that the fireworks will be set off from a private garden. Some members considered that the firework element should be removed as they are notoriously unpopular in a rural setting and would save the £3,000 on costs.

Some members raised concerns that nearly £20,000 for a one-day event is a huge amount of money. Cllr. Bolton suggested that it could set a legacy for the future years and any excess monies can be saved for future years events. Although it was commented it would be better to concentrate on the upcoming, rather than future events.

Have any businesses sponsored the event? Cllr. Bolton advised that no sponsorship has been received and it is probably too late to ask for sponsorship as they need to make bookings now (the stage needed to be booked the following day) so they need the finances guaranteed at this point. Any sponsorship raised from this point would fund the legacy.

It was commented that Uckfield has organised a large event, made possible through sponsorship and local group efforts without the guaranteed funding from the town council. Wadhurst have applied for £6k from the parish council with a policy that invoices are direct to the parish council and any profits go back to the parish council.

Is there a way costs could be cut to make slightly less? Cllr. Bolton advised that apart from the removal of fireworks there is no way to make any other large scale cost savings and that the group would like to provide all elements listed on the presentation to ensure a good event. It was suggested that funding would be given for necessary costs such as insurance, toilets, first aid etc. but this was deemed as not workable by the presenters. Costs were higher given the late decision to put on this event.

Standing orders were suspended to allow Rick Burton to address the parish council and clarify some of the larger costs – sound system alone £1,400; lighting £400, crew £600, transport £100, PA system £100, stage £2500. Three bands for the evening, children's entertainer all day. Standing orders reinstated.

Cllr. Roberts raised three points; do we want the Jubilee celebration – yes; if we do, do we want to do it properly? – yes; how do we fund it? and should we? There was a suggestion that the PC/Ionides fund the basics i.e., stage, toilets, insurance and then sponsorship is sought for the rest. Cllr Bolton advised that it would be unlikely to go ahead on this basis as there is no guarantee the remaining funds could be sourced.

The question was asked as to whether the Parish Council is the appropriate source for the funding and if our financial regulations allow such a large amount of funding through either the grants system or via another responsibility. Given the short notice from asking for

funding for this event, it was said that the usual rigorous checks for spending public money could not be applied. Based on the above considerations it was decided that the Ionides Trust would be the preferred source of funding given the amount being requested from public funds. The matter was therefore referred to the Ionides Trust meeting (following this meeting for further discussion). This had already been added to the Ionides Agenda in anticipation of these issues needing to be discussed separately.

- **purchase of celebratory signage, bunting and flags** – councillors agreed that it would be good to display some celebratory signage in the villages. Platinum Jubilee Lamp Post Signs are £4.99 each, Platinum Jubilee Bunting £12.99 per 5m; and Platinum Jubilee Large Flag £15.99. A budget of £500 was agreed.

Dog Waste Bin – proposal to site a dog waste bin on Highway verge north end of FAD – Cllr Humphrey requested the parish council provide a new dog waste bin to be situated at the north end of FAD on the highway verge. Proposed by Cllr Roberts seconded by Cllr McQuarrie - agreed

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

06/03/22 CORRESPONDENCE

P1 – Local Resident – Request for investigation into the zebra crossing outside shop to be converted to a puffin crossing. The clerk contacted ESCC Highways to be advised that any costs should be based on that of a new crossing which is estimated between £120k and £200k even though a zebra crossing already exists in this location. The only way to obtain full costs and the viability of the project would be to pay for ESCC to conduct a viability assessment of the site at a cost of £500. Given that this is an ESCC responsibility and that there is a lot of concern regarding the safety of the crossing, Highways should be asked to consider conducting this work.

07/03/22 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Set date for Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 3rd May. Request if Buxted School is available.

08/03/22 FINANCE

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Coxon, payments totalling £13,490.73 covered by cheque numbers 4800 and 4811 were approved plus direct debits. Claudine explained the variance in what appears to be duplicate payments on the list.
- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for February which were signed
- iii) To note the following RBS reports: Earmarked reserves; Summary receipts and payments.
- iv) cash and Investment reconciliation
- v) Consideration of National Pay Award April 2021 based on National Joint Council for Local Government Services advice
- vi) Thanks to Simon Goacher as payroll officer for Buxted PC for 11 years. Agreed to send a gift from the PC to the value of £50

09/03/22 OTHER MEETINGS
No other meetings

10/03/22 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No questions

11/03/22 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
No announcements

The meeting closed at 9.20p.m.

Ongoing issues reported to ESCC Highways:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
21/12/2020 ONGOING	00527587	Switching off of streetlamps in Britts Farm alleyway, or at least switching off one on 24 hours	21/12 – passed to officers 26/1 – still being discussed by officers 22/2 – resident advised that the orange light has now changed to a bright white light and is still on 24 hours (so worse situation) 10/3 – apologies from ESCC for slow response. Explanation of why lamp was changed to white light. Still looking at putting timers on lights 11/3 – Response by clerk. Crossed wires, we want the lights turned off not on timers. 23/3 – ESCC confirm they are still looking into being able to switch off lights 15/4 – ESCC confirmation that lights cannot be switched off for safety reasons but will be replaced with different bulbs and will not be on all night. Works will take place late summer 19/7 – clerk chased an email sent asking for further clarification as to why lights cannot be switched off 22/9 – clerk forwarded email to Cllr Galley to help chase 06/10 – ESCC response explaining why lights cannot be switched off and that new lamps would be better and can be fitted with guards 11/10 – local residents do not accept this response and still wish to have lights switched off. Clerk responded to ESCC with the suggestion of a site meeting to show that it is not a used footpath during the dark Jan 2022 – Highways officer offer to change lighting to reduced light and to switch off from midnight to sunrise. Residents do not agree to this and still want lamps removed or permanently switched off 7/3/22 – Highways agreed to make investigations with a view to removing lights
21/01/2021 ONGOING	00539076	Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted	25/1 – passed to officer to investigate
27/01/2021 ONGOING (HEDGE ISSUE)	00541323	Width of pavement between St Raphaels and Toll Farm Triangle, Buxted	27/1 – passed to officers. 9/2 – officers could not identify location they need a better description! Email

			<p>response sent.</p> <p>31/3 – after more correspondence between Cllr Galley, ESCC Officer Johnson and Local Resident, Cllr Galley has confirmed this matter cannot be pursued any further. Pavement is a fair width, and the hedge has been recently cut back. Engineering works and cameras will not be installed by ESCC on this section of road.</p> <p>20/4 – Cllr Galley confirmed hedge and width of pavement will be investigated by Highway Steward</p> <p>30/4 – Highway report that one owner of the hedge is disputing that it is their responsibility to cut the hedge. Passed to Enforcement. Until hedge cut back Highway Steward cannot ascertain if siding works are required.</p> <p>May 2021 – edged of overgrown pathway cut back along with some of the hedges alongside the road. Other hedges remain overgrown.</p> <p>July 2021 – ESCC Enforcement writing to all owners of overgrown hedges</p> <p>January 2022 – ESCC confirmed private hedges now cut back. Highways hedges will be cut by ESCC</p>
13/12/21 CASE CLOSED?	00640939	Drains between White Hart and Buxted School	<p>Blocked drains and unsafe walk to school</p> <p>31/12 – email from ESCC - ongoing drainage issues on the A272, Buxted being discussed with Drainage Manager</p> <p>22/2 - Our engineer has advised there is no issue with our drainage here in normal rain fall. For your information, localised flooding maybe caused during periods of heavy rainfall. The rainwater will not be able to flow through the drainage system as the system maybe full to capacity. Excess water may take up to 3 hours to dissipate after the rain has stopped.</p>
17/02/2022		<p>A272/Budletts Lane is deteriorating again and needs resurfacing. It is now becoming dangerous when vehicles are trying to avoid potholes are going onto the wrong side of the carriageway.</p> <p>Etchingwood Lane is absolutely dreadful</p> <p>Millwood Lane is getting terrible towards the timber yard.</p>	<p>Roy Galley visited each site with Highway Steward</p>

Ionides Trust Update:

- 1. Insurance** – consideration of broker insurance quote – postponed.
- 2. Discussion with Scouts – possible joint hall project?** No feedback from the Scouts to work on a joint project as yet.
- 3. Platinum Jubilee Celebrations** – Following on from the discussion during the parish council meeting, Cllr Roberts commented that the Trust has received the back payment rent of £11,000 which could be put towards the project. He then suggested that given the back rent situation and taking on board the point of providing a legacy for the village; if the Ionides Trust were to prepared to offer funding of £15,000 would the Jubilee group be able to put on the event and perhaps fund raising for the remaining £1,600? The answer was that if fireworks were removed from the plan, then yes. Any surplus funds, if made, would come back to the Ionides Trust to help fund future events.

Some members again suggested a possible scaling down of the event to reduce costs. The presenters re-iterated that a decision was needed this evening as invoices had to be paid the following day to secure hire. It was felt that members were not given sufficient time at all to fully consider such a large-scale proposal.

Following further discussion, it was finally **agreed** that the Ionides Trust will fund the event to up to the amount of £15,000 (no fireworks) with invoices direct to the Trust where possible or reimbursed. Cheques could be signed in between meetings if required. Health & safety/risk assessments need to be provided to the Ionides Trust well prior to the event to ensure it can take place. Surplus funds, if any, to come back to the Ionides Trust for safe keeping.

Meeting finished 9.42pm