



# BUXTED

## PARISH COUNCIL

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12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### MINUTES

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.45p.m.**

Cllr Coxon (Asian Hornet Action Team) spoke to the council regarding Asian Hornets. Contrary to widespread belief, they are not just a problem for bee keepers. There is now a huge increase in the population in the UK. Much like wasps, the queen nests over winter and raises 30/40 hornets. Following this, a secondary nest is created producing 1000's of hornets. If you disturb the nest, they will defend aggressively and they are dangerous. There have been upwards of 50 fatalities in France to date. They have a huge impact on honey bees, wasps, and most insect populations as they are prey to hornets which, will inevitably have a knock-on effect to bird populations. Come autumn, the queen starts to produce more queens, which hibernate and could lead to 200 queens the following season. Year on year the population will increase. Fortunately, they do not all survive, but 10% are thought to survive each year. It is therefore important to raise public awareness. Defra have destroyed every nest they have been notified of in the last year with 75 nests destroyed in the south east. Strong easterly winds in late spring would have assisted the flight across the channel as well as hitch hiking on vehicles. Therefore, it is particularly important that they are reported if spotted.

There is an app to report the hornets or a link on the Sussex Bee Keeping, British Bee Keeping Association website and Defra. Unless everyone is aware this will become a much bigger problem.

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

**Public :** None

01/12/23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies received and accepted from WDC Cllr Shaw

02/12/23 **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.

**03/12/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

**04/12/23 ESCC REPORT**

Cllr Galley updated the following from ESCC:

**Flexibus** – overall the system working well but we have a resident of High Hurstwood who has queried how it works alongside the existing CTLA service. This item is on the agenda under correspondence.

**Transport Links** – the parish council received an email from a resident of Buxted regarding how Buxted links into other towns and villages. The clerk forwarded this to Cllr Galley who will respond once information has been received from the relevant officer.

**Footpath in High Hurstwood (Vanguard Way)** – a site meeting was held with the Rights of Way Team and campaigners. ESCC officers are optimistic they will be able to reinstate the path sometime next year. However, there is a new issue relating to reinstating the bridge, but they believe this can be resolved. There is a further meeting at the end of January to discuss the matter further and secure a plan. The petition from the campaigner's is still going ahead to ensure pressure remains to resolve the issue which will be heard by ESCC in February

There will be targeted patch repairs in **Rocks Lane** in early January.

**Gullies at Coopers Green** – Highway Steward has said gullies have been cleared but the local resident believes he is looking at the wrong gullies. A further site visit is recommended. There will be further work on Coopers Green drainage at the beginning of next year.

**FAD Verges** – ESCC and Cllr Humphrey have a meeting the following Thursday.

**Underhill Bridge** – any update? Cllr Galley advised this work will be completed in the Spring as agreed with the residents.

**Gun Hill Bridge?** – has now been closed for a year. Cllr Galley was asked to find out when this will be repaired.

**Gordon Road repairs/resurfacing** – the Highway Steward has marked areas for repair and has requested the Asset Management Team visit the site to ascertain if they agree – awaiting to hear if it is to be repaired. Cllr Smith suggested that whilst repairing could they widen the road at the bottom outside Buxted Court as the bus and delivery vehicles regularly have to mount the grass verge to get around the corner.

**05/12/23 DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – UPDATE**

Following the previous meeting, the clerk has had two further viewings for the Reading Room, one of them resulting in an unconditional offer of £280,000 and the other an offer of £300,000 based on obtaining further planning permission.

Proposed by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Coxon, the Parish Council unanimously **resolved** to sell the property for £280,00 based on a quick, unconditional sale.

**06/12/23 OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

**Mobile Phone Coverage:** Nothing to report.

**Public footpaths:** Nothing to report.

**Trees:** Noting to report

**Road Safety:**

- **VAS – FIVE ASH DOWN – UPDATE** – at the request of a local Five Ash Down resident and the parish council, the clerk contact ESCC to ask if the evidence of speeding ascertained in a traffic survey 2018 is enough to warrant a VAS sign. The Head of Traffic and Safety has responded to advise the criteria changed in 2020 and there is now less of a requirement to prove there is a speeding issue. He has offered for the clerk to have a site meeting with a member of the traffic and safety team and licencing team to look at sites and the viability of signs in Five Ash Down. The clerk was requested to set up the meeting.

**Cllr Humphrey** – requested the clerk highlight to ESCC the pending freezing weather and standing water which is highly likely to form into ice near the entrance to Oast Farm.

**Wealden Local Development Framework:** Nothing to report. The new Local Plan is still expected in February 2024.

**Property issues:** Noting to report.

**Communications Matters:** Nothing to report.

**07/12/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

**P1 – Resident of Gordon Road – request for a dog waste bin on verge on corner of Gordon Road/High Street next to existing rubbish bin**

As there is currently a litter in situ (in which you are allowed to dispose of dog waste) which is not regularly full it is not considered necessary to add more street furniture in this location at the present time.

**P2 – High Hurstwood Resident - Querying use of Flexibus on days CTLA bus is running. It should be available on same day as CTLA which only runs once per day – clerk to write in support of the Flexibus being more ‘flexible’ on the days that the CTLA also runs.**

**08/12/23 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

None

**09/12/23 FINANCE**

- i) Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Roberts seconded by Cllr. Rose, payments and direct debits were approved.
- ii) Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for November which were signed.
- iii) Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) members to formally approve transfer of £85,000 from Natwest account to Unity Trust account - approved.**
- v) High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee – request for s £200 contribution to pay for Christmas Tree at village hall – agreed to pay 50%**

### Internal Audit – November 2023

- For members to confirm receipt of the interim internal audit report from Mulberry & Co – **confirmed received, circulated, and noted.**
- For member to consider the recommendation of increasing the Clerks emergency spending from £500 to at least £1,000 – **resolved to increase the emergency spending to £1,000.**

#### 10/12/23 OTHER MEETINGS

Cllr Duck attended the photo wall event at Buxted Station attended by approx. 15 people.

#### 11/12/23 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Coxon asked for an update on the Ionides car park enforcement – although an Ionides responsibility the clerk advised the contract has been signed and signs paid for at this evening's meeting so enforcement should begin in the new year.

#### 12/12/23 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Wilson as representative of the Royal British legion announced £3,219 was raised by the local Royal British Legion poppy appeal.

The meeting closed at 8.35p.m.

See below: ongoing issues reported to ESCC Highways:

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
03/07/2023 ONGOING	GRC000971	Overgrown grass verge corner of Court Lane/Five Ash Down road	03/07 – reported to ESCC Highways Highways claim verge has been cut – it has not been cut since last Autumn. 29/08 – clerk has requested a site meeting and sent photographs to Highways as proof. 25/9 – Highways cut FAD verges after Cllr Humphrey chased ESCC a number of times. 30/9 – Cllr Humphrey continues to chase Highways to ascertain when verges will be cut. October 2023 – continued communication between Cllr Humphrey, ESCC and Cllr Galley 3/11 – ESCC advise verges are rural and will only receive two cuts per year (despite the Highway Steward advising different at a site meeting) 21/11 – email from ESCC confirming verges are rural. Cllr Humphrey replied to advise this would only apply to one verge in 40mph zone, not all other verges in 30mph zones. Also emailed Cllr Galley to request what has happened to formal complaint. Again, offering a site visit 4/12 – following more email ESCC have agreed to a site meeting

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Buxted Scouts:

### **Scout Hut – License to alter and Landscaping information.**

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December Vivienne and John had a site meeting with the Buxted Scout Leader and architect for the new Scout Hut project to discuss information received relating to the satisfying of planning conditions. Members reported that they were extremely disappointed at the lack of detail submitted prior to the meeting. The drainage plan showed no more than was submitted with the planning application and the landscaping was a coloured version of the block plan with some enhanced details showing tree protection and a new pathway across the site.

At the site meeting the architect did not think it was necessary to provide a full landscape or drainage plan and could not advise where or how materials would be stored on site.

Discussion also took place regarding the electricity pole as the Trust had previously suggested that a new pole might be necessary or there could be shared costs to install an underground line from the road. The architect advised this was not part of the plans and they would be happy to use the existing pole.

There was also some discussion regarding the aesthetics of the site when completed and ideas to replace the sleepers (outside of the leased area). This could all be included in a full landscape plan for consideration by the Trust.

Therefore, the Ionides Trust requirements remain the same as was made very clear before and on the approval of planning permission:

1. A full landscape plan showing where and how the spoil is to be located in the new position to create a new access (how is it proposed to keep the soil in place). Landscape plan to also show finished site proposals.
2. Full drainage plan showing all proposed foul and surface water drainage schemes. The new building will create far more water run-off. The Trust needs to be assured this will not have a detrimental affect on the lower ground which houses the children's play area and new car park, or flooding on land outside leased area.
3. Where will construction materials be housed? How will this be secured? This is a public site, and we need to always ensure public safety, including when construction is not taking place.
4. Cross sections of the site showing built up land.
5. Point fifteen of the licence states: *“The Tenant will arrange for a Schedule of Condition of the Landscape, prior to work commencing, and to the review of the Landlord and will reinstate to suit the condition noted prior to commencement on like-for like basis”*. The Trust requires the landscaping scheme to be submitted prior to signing of the licence and it is noted that the land cannot be reinstated on a 'like for like' basis as the land will have changed. Instead, the licence should state that the land be completed to the satisfaction of the Trust following an agreed landscaping plan.

In conclusion the Trust will not be signing the licence until the above has been satisfied as has been made clear since the submission of planning permission. The Trust is not requesting any more information than will be required by either WDC to satisfy conditions or a contractor to be able to cost the works and therefore it is not unreasonable to expect the plans to be available. The Ionides land is public land, and the Trust must be fully informed and assured of how the new hut will be built, how public safety will be maintained and how the site will look following completion of the project.

**Update on the new Beacon – the company proving the timber post and implementing groundworks are now in liaison with the contractor building the basket and have advised the beacon should be installed at the end of March/early April 2024.**