



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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12th September 2023

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 7.28p.m.

Mark Pharoah introduced himself as the new Chairman of Buxted Football Club and addressed the Parish Council. The Football Club has a lot of heritage in the village since its formation in 1918. It has had a few difficult years not performing well both as a committee and the team. This is changing as two new youth teams together with a new committee has reinvigorated the club, making improvements to the grounds and clubhouse as well as being an active part of the community. Volunteers helped during the summer to improve the ground to encourage more use of the site by the community as well as the club.

The first team is now back up and running after a lack of players last season, with great local support for their first match last Saturday. Sunday morning had both junior teams playing with many positive comments and feedback.

Whilst the Football Club is the main user, it is also recognised that the site is a public recreation ground, and the communities use of the field and pavilion is encouraged.

There is still work to carry out which includes:

- Using the pavilion more as a central hub for the community
- Make further repairs to be able to use the building during the day for local groups/clubs/societies.
- Applying for grants from the Football Foundation to be able to make improvements.

There are always challenges as all members of the FC are volunteers, but they are very positively moving the Club forward.

Present: Cllrs. Blandford (Chairman), Coxon, Duck, Rose, Smith, and Wilson (7.28pm).
Also present: ESCC Cllr. Galley, WDC Cllr Shaw and Clerks Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham.

Public: 3

A Buxted resident wished to make four points:

Destination of Proceeds from selling off the Reading Room?

The Reading Room is yet to be sold, but the intention has always been that the proceeds from the sale of the Reading Room would be allocated to a new hall project.

Was it £25,000 passed to the Ionides Trust when the new hall project was put on hold?

£22,534 was transferred from the BCHT to Ionides Trust accounts when the charity folded. This money is kept in the Ionides account and is currently allocated for a new hall.

Congratulations to the Council for giving a grant to Five Ash Down Village Hall but it is slightly ironic that Buxted is the largest village in the parish but has no hall.

The chairman commented that the Parish Council is more than happy to be able to support other halls within the parish. If there is enough support from parishioners, together with a suitable location with enough parking, a hall project could still happen.

Congratulations for giving grant to Sussex Community Railway Partnership – let us hope it stays open long enough for everyone to enjoy it.

01/07/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Marshall and Humphrey and Roberts.

02/07/23 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. Rose declared a prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the land west of Church Road (Beechbook Park due to having owned part of the application site

Cllr. Duck declared a personal interest in matters relating to High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee by virtue of being a member.

Cllr Smith declared a personal interest in matters relating to the allotments by virtue of being an allotment holder.

03/07/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2023 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/07/23 ESCC/WDC REPORT

Cllr Galley reported from ESCC it has undertaken a Peer Review (which is when one county council compares itself to others and vice versa). The results were positive noting that the county and systems are well run, services delivered are good and the council is inclusive. He would agree that this is broadly correct especially referring to adult and children's social care. The only criticism being that there is not enough focus on the climate change agenda, but nothing mentioned about the state of the roads. Is this in indication that climate change is referred to in the peer review, but roads are not?

Highways issues:

Cllr Galley assured members he is keeping each issue under review. Not many issues raised have been completed but he does have a meeting with Highways officers in the next couple of weeks:

Budletts Lane potholes – on agenda to be fixed.

Framfield Road/Gordon Road – on agenda to be fixed.

FAD potholes – in the system

Road Closed Signs - taken them all down now apart from works still being carried out in Limes Lane

General State of Gordon Road – not getting any feedback from Highways on this at present

State of Road from Buxted Village to School – in the system

Lorry parking facilities as raised by Cllr Rose – Cllr Rose given Cllr Galley some information on funding from Govt. for lorry parking. He will pass this to Highways colleagues.

WDC Cllr Shaw referred to his report previously sent to the clerk which is circulated and has been uploaded to the PC website.

He reported the WDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met the previous week and grilled South East Water for over 2 hours. It was interesting and suffice to say they finally are catching up with reality on a number of issues and progress will hopefully be made. In planning terms, they are not a statutory consultee and therefore are only obliged to provide services to a new development when given notification by the developer. They do not have the powers to object or refuse to provide a service. South East Water is therefore lobbying to become a statutory consultee.

Following the water outage in July Cllr Shaw is having conversations with people with livestock and passing this on to South East Water as they should be putting in alternate water arrangements in the event of a water outage. Therefore, anyone with livestock should inform Cllr Shaw know, so they are added to the list.

The Local Plan is proceeding at pace, although it is not likely to be published until next year to accord with the Local Development Framework timescales. He suggested it would be useful to work with the parish council on a planned consultation process for when it is published. Several parish councils are working towards a local neighbourhood plan which can then be filtered into the local plan process. Some resources are available to assist with this.

His next community forum is on 18th October in St Marys Hall.

AUDIT 2022/23 AND AUDIT 2023/24

1. The Parish Council received the engagement letter from Mulberry & Co for them to be the internal auditor for 2023-2024. Proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Rose - **approved**.
2. Conclusion of audit for year ending 31.3.23 by PKF Littlejohn:
 - The Parish Council acknowledged the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was placed on the parish council website on 30th August 2023.
 - The Parish Council acknowledged that the certified Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR) Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 were published on the parish council website on 30th August 2023.
 - The Parish Council members acknowledged that there were no advisories or notices from PKF Littlejohn. Thanks to Claudine for all her hard work.

05/07/23 READING ROOM – DISPOSAL OF READING ROOM – UPDATE

Since the July meeting, interest in the Reading Room has not increased and therefore the estate agent acting on behalf of the parish council has suggested that as the market is so quiet at present would it be better to advertise the property online via various platforms?

Members discussed this option and agreed that the site should be placed on the open market at the current amount of £400,000. The clerk will also contact the

previous interested party who had shown an interest.

06/07/23 **COSTS TO RENEW LEASE FOR BUXTED FOOTBALL PAVILION**

Following the last meeting, the clerk circulated a document to the members of the working party, with proposed points for the new lease. This was also circulated with the agenda including any suggestions made.

Members discussed the document and agreed to include a point with regards what would happen if the lease were not adhered too, and in the event of a dispute that a Dispute Resolution Services be appointed.

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Humphrey also suggested that all electrical/fire/food safety information/insurance documents be kept together in one place in order that it could be provided to the parish council on request.

It was noted that the old lease restricted the use of the pavilion for sports clubs only, but the new lease should be more flexible allowing local groups/clubs/societies to use the venue. All agreed that it is a great idea to be able to use the pavilion for other uses other than sport.

Agreed to send the document to be sent to the solicitor for initial feedback.

08/07/23 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: None

Public footpaths: (see correspondence P2)

Trees: None

Road Safety: None

Wealden Local Development Framework: None

Property issues:

The Dene – update on sale: The final transfer document has been received and circulated to all council members in preparation for signing at this meeting. Proposed by Cllr Blandford and seconded by Rose it was **resolved** to sign the transfer document to sell the land to Uckfield Town Council for a cost of £5001. Cllrs Smith and Wilson signed the transfer document.

Buxted Recreation Ground – Buxted Football Club: any update following presentation by the Chairman of the FC: None – see item 06/09/23 above.

Communications Matters: None

09/07/23 **CORRESPONDENCE**

P1 – WDC: Dog Fouling PSPO Extension 2023 – agree but noted that no fines were issued in the last year. However, it was agreed to create some signs highlighting that dog fouling is an offence and to request people use the bins provided.

P2 – High Hurstwood Residents – reopening of the Vanguard Way. A petition initiated by the Ramblers Association to reopen the footpath has over three hundred signatures. It is hoped that ESCC will be holding a hearing soon to listen to the campaigners. The bridge on the footpath collapsed approximately 14 years ago and due to a land ownership dispute, it has never been reinstated. The footpath ideally

needs to be rediverted, or the bridge repaired. The Parish Council are happy to send a letter of support. Cllr Roy Galley offered to investigate the fact it had been said that the footpath would re-open by March 2024.

10/07/23 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

11/07/23 **FINANCE**

(i) On the proposal of Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Coxon payments totalling £9,054.32 covered by BACS payments and direct debits were approved for September 2023.

(ii) June 2023 finances: To receive the current bank reconciliations for June 2023.

(iii) July 2023 finances: To receive the current bank reconciliations for July 2023

(iv) August 2023 finances: To receive the current bank reconciliations for August 2023

(v) To receive the RBS reports for June, July & August 2023: Trial balance, summary receipts and payments, Ear Marked Reserves, Cash, and Investment reconciliations.

Proposed Cllr Wilson, seconded by Cllr Coxon – **approved.**

12/07/23 **OTHER MEETINGS**
None

13/07/23 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**
None

14/07/23 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Should we contribute to the Buxted Messenger? Yes. Clerk to ascertain when the deadline is each month.

The meeting closed at 8.35p.m.

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
21/01/2021 ONGOING	00539076	Blocked drain outside St Mary's Church, Church Road, Buxted	25/1 – passed to officer to investigate
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

Ionides Trust Update 12th September 2023

- 1. Apologies – Cllrs Marshall, Humphrey, and Roberts**
- 2. Declarations of Interest - None**
- 3. Proposals for new Scout Hut – update – The Trust is still awaiting notification as to the success of the funding bid.**

The Ionides Trust wish it to be noted that it is disappointed with the WDC response to the Parish Councils consultation response regarding the Scout Hut proposal. The Parish Council being cognisant of the requirement to keep the access open asked for the Scout Hut to be set back into the land, and this was agreed by the Scouts Association. However, WDC were more concerned of the impact of the residents of the new houses behind, being built in the back gardens of two neighbouring properties, which are not yet completely built, (the PC had objected to the new houses) rather than the impact of a large new Scout Hut sitting further forward into the Ionides site.

- 4. New barrier for car park – Prior to the meeting the clerk circulated two quotes for a new manual barrier for the Ionides car park. The quotes range from £2375 to £3352 (both + VAT). Cllr Coxon also suggested a solar run electric barrier could be the solution and get around the need for someone to open/close the barrier. A quote has been received at a cost of £6,200. However, there is some concern that a solar worked barrier may fail if there is not enough sun and would need a back-up.**

Cllr Rose mentioned that Beechbrook Park has a private parking company. The clerk would investigate and report back before any decision is made.

- 5. Ionides Grant Awards - on hold as other pressing needs on funds**
- 6. DOG Bin notices already discussed – See PC meeting minute 09/07/23 above.**

Meeting closed 9.00pm