



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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10th December 2024

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in St Marys Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 7.10p.m.

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

Public : None

01/12/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Marshall, Roberts, ESCC Cllr Galley and WDC Cllr Shaw.

02/12/24 **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.

03/12/24 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/12/24 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

In the absence of Cllr Galley there was no ESCC update.

In the absence of Cllr Shaw, there was no WDC update.

05/12/24 **FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

FOR MEMBERS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD 26.11.24

Proposed by Cllr Coxon and seconded by Cllr Rose the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 26th November 2024 were **approved** as a correct record of the meeting.

06/12/24 **BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING
FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR 2024-2025 AND
APPROVE THE PRECEPT TO BE REQUESTED**

In the absence of the chairman of the finance committee, the RFO advised members of the current expenditure versus budget for 2024-2025 which was largely on target.

The budget spreadsheet for 2025-2026 had been circulated to full council prior to the meeting and no questions were raised. Considering the estimated expenditure, the Finance Committee was recommending to Full Council an increase of 5% on last year's precept and request a precept of £129,786.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Rose, seconded by Cllr Coxon, and reached unanimous **approval**, members agreed that upon receipt of the 2025-2026 precept forms from WDC, they would be completed by the Clerk/RFO for the amount of £129,786 and signed by the Chairman and Clerk and returned to WDC.

07/12/24 **COMPLETION OF PRECEPT FORM**

Proposed by Cllr Coxon and seconded by Cllr Humphrey - **Resolved** when received from WDC, the precept forms should be completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

08/12/24 **INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT YEAR END 31.04.25 – NOVEMBER 2024**

For members to confirm receipt of the interim internal audit report from Mulberry & Co – **confirmed received, circulated, and noted.**

09/12/24 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Following work carried out by the ESCC Rights of Way team to clear streams and the river Uck, Cllrs Furber and Mallett wished to recognise this work and the team who have been very responsive have kept the Parish Council up to date with works implemented.

Trees: Nothing to report

Road Safety:

- **Update on A272 pathway – update provided by Cllr Galley prior to the meeting**

Following the previous meeting Cllr Galley has referred the matter back to Highways officers and has updated with the following information:

"I met the highways supervisor on site, and he said that Balfour Beatty had completed the job they were asked to do. Whilst he accepted the earth and leaves had again obscured the pavement, that was inevitable at this time of year. He did say there was some debris that would be cleared just as there had been some clearance near Station Road and Totease House.

I understand the Farmer has agreed to cut the hedge. He may already have done so.

We are still pursuing the possibility of putting in some mesh to hold back the banks. This is an ongoing discussion."

Cllr Smith confirmed the hedge at 1 Station Cottage has been cut back, presumably by the owners, and therefore there is a significant improvement to walking the pathway in this location.

Cllr Mallet asked who would be responsible for removing a fallen tree on a highway and who's tree is it? The Police can arrange for the tree to be removed, or Highways will attend to remove the tree. There is currently a cut up tree on the road close to Oast Farm which fell during storm Darrah, and the cuttings are now blocking the footpath. **Action:** Clerk to report to Highways. With regards to who's tree it is, it would depend on which side of a boundary it sits as to whether it is highways or an adjoining land owner.

- **Speedwatch – possible new volunteers' update**
After sending out a further advert looking for volunteers, only four members of the community have come forward which would not be enough to restart the Speed Watch initiative.
- **Should Buxted Parish Council consider a VAS in Buxted?**
Should Speed Watch not re-start it has been suggested by a member of the public that the Parish Council invest in a VAS sign for Buxted. It was suggested by the clerk that Wadhurst PC has a Blackcat which is a piece of equipment which can be mounted to a lamppost and will record the speed of vehicles passing. It was suggested that if Wadhurst were willing, Buxted PC could loan the equipment to allow evidence to be gathered as to the speeds of vehicles which would then better inform the council and its parishioners if there is a speeding issue (or not) for the council to then make an informed decision as to what action is required.
Action: Claudine to ask Wadhurst PC regarding the Blackcat equipment.

Wealden Local Development Framework: Nothing to report.

Property issues:

- **Buxted Recreation Ground – break-in at Buxted Football Club – further update on insurance requirements:** No further updated received from the Football Club
- **Quote for grass cutting for Buxted Rec for 2025 (& Ionides) – update**
Following the previous meeting the clerk ask the existing contractor if there was any movement in the price quoted for next year. No further correspondence was received and therefore the council **resolved** to award the grass cutting contract including the Ionides/Recreation ground to Countrymans. **Action:** Clerk to discuss reduced cutting on Ionides until the ground has been reinstated.
- **Possible disposal of Nevill Road, Uckfield site**
As requested, the clerk circulated details of the history of the Nevill Road site. Cllrs commented that it is a shame there is no authority who is willing to take the land off the Parish Council i.e. Woodland Trust, Uckfield TC.
Cllr Blandford commented that the site is classed as ancient woodland and therefore a difficult piece of land to build on.
Action: clerk to contact WDC again to investigate the removal of the Tree Preservation Order

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

10/12/24 **CORRESPONDENCE**

P1 Five Ash Down resident – Southern Water's wastewater service in Five Ash Down – This matter is being dealt with direct with Southern Water and ESCC Cllr Roy Galley. An update will be provided when responses are received.

11/12/24 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Finance Committee was held on 26th November 2024. See minute referring to finance above.

12/12/24 FINANCE

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Rose seconded by Cllr. Coxon, payments totalling £13,865 covered by BACS 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) **Recommendation from Finance Committee:** funds to be moved from the current account to the reserve account and have a limit of approximately £40,000 in the current account at any one time – Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Humphrey - **agreed**. The council delegating permission to CF for movement of funds between the current account and savings account (Natwest) to ensure sufficient funds of approx. £40k in current, and majority in the savings account.
- v) **Agreement to suspend Financial Regulations in relation to costs of grass cutting contract for 2025 to remove the requirement for three quotes – Resolved to suspend Standing Orders**

13/12/24 OTHER MEETINGS

Cllr Duck attended the WDC Climate Day and reported it was interesting to hear how various parts of the council are making changes, together with parish council initiatives; and how ecology and biodiversity is improving on Ashdown Forest. It was also reported that there will be a new hospital on land in Bexhill which will be built environmentally friendly.

14/12/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Coxon commented on the Wealden mapping is not always reliable and slow.
Action: clerk to report to WDC to ask if this is a general issue.

Cllr Smith wished to praise the Lengthsman for the work carried out on A272 from Buxted to Five Ash Down.

15/12/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

The meeting closed at 8.03p.m.

Ionides Trust Update 10th December 2024:

1. **Apologies – Cllr Roberts and Marshall**
2. **Declarations of Interest: None**
3. **Scout Hut – update – Surface Water – Cllr Humphrey reported that Moody Sewerage have conducted a survey and discovered a culvert distributing into the River Uck. The proposal is to install an attenuation tank which will attach to a 110mm pipe from the attenuation tank through to the culvert. After months of uncertainty Councillor Humphrey has advised this is likely to be the best solution. However, the Ionides Trust need to ensure the works are completed to the following requirements and the Licence for Alteration is amended to reflect these points:**
 - There must be Building Control approval prior to any works.
 - A site plan showing all services to be provided to the Ionides Trust (BT/electricity/gas/water) before work commences.
 - The pipe should be non-perforated
 - The Scouts remain responsible for the pipework and maintenance of it.
 - The land is reinstated to the satisfaction of the Ionides Trust, and any settlement is made good for a period of three years from completion
 - The Ionides Trust has a right to access the drainage system for future modification and adaption for the landlord's purpose. The Ionides Trust reserve the right to adopt part of the drainage system for future parish projects.

The clerk to contact the Ionides Trust solicitor to make an addendum to the Licence for Alteration. We might need to change the lease to add in a clause as per last point above

4. **Repair/Replacement of play small children's play equipment – update – Quotes for replacement play equipment are still awaited.**
5. **Quote for grass cutting for 2025 (as PC minute above) – Agreed the appoint Countryman as the contractor for the Ionides site in 2025.**
6. **Boundary issues with new development – update – The chairman and clerk met with representative from Mid Sussex Homes and the builder to discuss the boundary and hedge issue. The contractor stated the hedgerow had not been cut down, as it should have been before the fence was installed, because not only there might have been birds nesting in it but WDC would have said it was providing screening. To fulfil both objectives the hedge should have been cut back to allow it to fill out and grow properly It was agreed that as the Holm Oak is now within the boundary of the new property, they will have responsibility for it. It was also agreed a new land registry plan would be drawn up to represent the new boundary line and the developer builder would cut the barbed wire off the old boundary fence where it is now exposed. **Action:** Clerk to confirm agreed actions in writing with Mid Sussex Homes including the new resident being responsible for the Holm Oak and hedgerow on their private side of the fence. This area falls within the scout leased land and future maintenance will have to be agreed with the scouts.**

Meeting closed 8.25pm