



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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12th November 2024

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 7.13p.m.

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

Public : 3

The owner of Feagans Farm addressed the parish council regarding the Pick Your Own Pumpkin signs which fell short of the legal requirements for positioning. Having contacted Highways, the owner was advised the signs were not removed by officers and therefore the parish council was asked if it knew who did remove them. They also questioned the enforcement of the guidelines by Highways, which seem to be inconsistent. She appealed to councillors to support local events being held by local farms and businesses. Feagans Farm will be selling Christmas Trees this year and would request the support of the council in this venture.

A local farmer raised the issue of the footpath along the A272 adjoining land he farms (between Harrock Lodge and the river Uck). He has received a letter from ESCC Highways requesting the hedge be cut back within 14 days otherwise further action would be taken. He referred to the October minutes within which Cllr Galley stated the footpath was clear. The gentleman circulated photographs of the footpath. He does not understand why the hedges are being requested to be cut back when he considers the work is not necessary. He asked that the Parish Council understand the pressure of workload faced by farmers and when he has the time, he would cut the hedge back as he has done in the last 40 years (once a year). For safety reasons it would be carried out on a Sunday morning when it is quieter, weather permitting.

See further discussion below in minutes 04/11/24 & 05/11/24

A local resident wished to add to this subject and to include that at night, with overhanging branches it makes it very difficult to see when a car is heading towards you when headlights are shining.

The resident also wished to raise an issue regarding flooding outside of Tanyards, Framfield Road and a pothole that has developed and been repaired and is already breaking up. Why is the quality of pot hole filling of such low quality that holes need filling again in only a matter of months?

01/11/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Coxon, Roberts, Rose and WDC Cllr Shaw.

02/11/24 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL, PREJUDICIAL, AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND UPDATES TO MEMBERS' REGISTER OF 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.

03/11/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/11/24 ESCC/WDC REPORT

ESCC UPDATE

Update on cutting back and shoring up of overgrown pathway on A272

Cllr Galley updated that he had walked the length of the pavement from Buxted Village through to Coopers Green with a collection of local parents (following the previous meeting) and highlighted to Highways officers further work to the bank and vegetation that requires cutting back. Highway officers visited the site on 1st November and carried out further sidings work taking away debris previously cut back and left on the bank on some parts of the footpath but not all of it. Cllr Galley reported that Balfour Beaty has advised they have reviewed works completed on 1st November from Station Entrance to Buxted primary school. The works supervisor has confirmed the works are to a satisfactory standard. A sweep of the leaves will be carried out by WDC and has been requested by Highways. Cllr Galley does agree however, that some further debris needs cutting back and Cllr Smith confirmed the Balfour Beaty only cut back the earth from the Buxted Station to Totease Farm and no further.

With regards the removal of the Pumpkin Picking advertising boards in Coopers Green, Cllr Galley confirmed this was carried out by ESCC Highways.

Cllr Marshall commented that the hedge all the way along the A272 is overgrown and it is still not suitable to walk along. He also pointed out the 40mph sign along the road is covered by a tree branch.

Cllr Blandford commented that further on in the agenda there is a discussion on contracting a lengthsman for work such as this.

Cllr Marshall – issues with ESCC Highways online reporting system:

Cllr Marshall wishes to raise an issue with the online reporting system and that if you report the full extent of a problem the system decides it's an emergency and will not let you finish the report online. It then requires you to report the issue by

telephone which is not necessarily possible and could result in dangerous situations not being reported.

Cllr Galley also reported he will be visiting Gordon Road with the Highway Steward next week to assess the potholes.

Cllr Mallet wished to thank ESCC via Cllr Galley regarding important improvements to our local footpaths in the form of three replacement bridges over the Uck on the path from Church Lane to Fowley Lane; the path from Redbrook Lane to Fowley Lane; and a new bridge over the brook at the bottom of Redbrook Lane. **Action:** clerk to write thanks to the Rights of Way Team at ESCC. The improvements to Maresfield High Street have also been noted.

Cllr Furber wished to ask Cllr Galley that in the process of creating/repairing bridges, the waterways tend to get clogged up if debris is not removed. Whose responsibility is it to clear the trees/debris that falls into the waterway? Members believe it would be the responsibility of the Environment Agency overall, but Cllr Galley would check back with the Rights of Way Team.

Cllr Blandford wished to refer to the proposals to create a booking system for Waste Disposal Sites for the county and wished to raise the point that parish councils have not been consulted directly, only finding out about the consultation on social media. The wording of the questions in the 'consultation', tends to lead the answers to approve a booking system, therefore, does not make it unbiased; and many/most are very unhappy with the proposals stating amongst many points that a booking system is not required as queuing really is not an issue and that it would increase fly-tipping.

WDC Cllr Shaw gave his apologies but sent the following update on the Local Plan:

The Local Plan process is somewhat in abeyance whilst we await the outcomes of the consultation on the NPPF. We understand that the final version will be published by government in mid-December, though this seems to shift. Obviously, we need to see what implications it has before proceeding further, not least how to manage the gap between proposed housing numbers and what we can realistically deliver, given the constraints we face. Previous comments on the Plan made during the consultation period are still being processed and will be available in the near future.

05/11/24 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report

Public footpaths: Nothing to report

Trees: (see Property Issues below)

Road Safety:

UPDATE ON A272 PATHWAY (as ESCC report above)

PROPOSAL FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL TO ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF A LENGTHSMAN –

Following the previous meeting clerk Claudine circulated details of the lengthsman contracted in Wadhurst who is insured up to £10 million public liability insurance and has all the necessary experience to work roadside and who carries out work such as clearing drains, clearing footpaths of vegetation, cleaning signs, fingerpost repairs etc and years of experience. Budgeting at Wadhurst started at £10,000 per annum but has subsequently increased.

Cllr Humphrey proposed, seconded by Cllr Smith the parish council take on a lengthsman as soon as possible for jobs required now, and that this is budgeted for within the 2025/26 budget. **Resolved** to contract Rueben Anderson from 1st December and review in a year. The costs will be per job and details will be kept of each job done and the cost incurred. As this is a specific service tailored to suit the parish council requirements it was **resolved to suspend financial regulations** so as to not need three quotes as the parish council is not aware of any other person who provides this service.

FLYPOSTING – RULES RECEIVED FROM ESCC AND WHERE PC WOULD CONSIDER ACCEPTABLE FOR THE FUTURE –

After discussions at the October meeting, clerk Claudine established the guidelines directly from ESCC Highways as to what is acceptable when flyposting (appended to the minutes).

Members were asked to look at the guidelines and suggest acceptable places within the parish that are allowed and acceptable should the parish council be asked by organisers of an event.

Cllr Blandford asked if there are different rules for road closures signs as there is for fly posters. Cllr Humphrey confirmed road closure signs fall under different legislation.

Cllr Humphrey wished to address the comments made earlier making clear it is illegal to put a sign on a public highway. The residents of Coopers Green have been trying to improve the area and do not like flyposting on any verges in the village. The parish council pay for the grass to be cut and there are new traffic lights making the area now look tidy. As soon as a fly post has been erected Cllr Humphrey is inundated with residents' complaints. He then reports this to ESCC who remove the advertising. ESCC have a tolerance of the law and have set out rules (see appendix) which make it very clear that no advertising should be within 60m of a junction, therefore negating any verge within Five Ash Down.

Cllr Duck wished to comment that the High Hurstwood bonfire signs were removed from Hendall Farm but does not know who did this and it would seem ESCC Highways officers are advising residents they do not remove them when they clearly do.

Cllr Blandford suggested that no signs be put on verges in Five Ash Down (especially at the Coopers Green traffic lights) as it is not legal and locally is not accepted. She also asked if anyone knows of any places that signs could be accepted? Laybys on A272 and on A26, Pound Green Triangle, Toll Farm Triangle were all suggested. The Parish Council is also having an SLR meeting with Highways in January and it will be asked if they can be tolerant of signs erected in these locations.

Cllr Furber wished to be supportive of local businesses whilst being mindful of the legal stance. Private land is acceptable and if the parish council can find suitable locations within the parish, then we are able to guide organisations as to where the advertising can be positioned.

SPEEDWATCH – POSSIBLE NEW VOLUNTEERS UPDATE –

The clerk uploaded a post to social media looking for volunteers to restart the Speedwatch initiative. Only one person has come forward to date (a previous volunteer) but on the proviso any new Speedwatch team is supported directly by

Sussex Police presence and there is an installation of speed display signs in Buxted advising drivers of their speeds.

Unfortunately, three volunteers are not enough to form a new group. **Action:** The social media post will be reposted, and notices be put in noticeboards to garner some further possible interest.

Wealden Local Development Framework: see minute 04/11/24 above.

Property issues:

BUXTED RECREATION GROUND – BREAK-IN AT BUXTED FOOTBALL CLUB – FURTHER UPDATE ON INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS –

The chairman of the football club has confirmed it is still awaiting requirements from their insurance company and will advise once these are received. Further suspicious activity was also reported on Saturday night, but no damage occurred.

QUOTE FOR GRASS CUTTING FOR BUXTED REC FOR 2025 (& IONIDES) –

In the process of budget setting for 2025/26 the clerk requested grass cutting costs from our main grass cutting contractor to cut the grass at Buxted Recreation Ground and the Ionides land. This area is currently cut by Dan Saunders who carries out an excellent job. Countryman have quoted £244 per cut. Dan Saunders currently charges £360 per cut. **Action:** The clerk was asked to contact the existing contractor to ascertain if there is any room to revise current costs.

TREE WORKS TO NEVILL ROAD, UCKFIELD –

The Parish Council has received a quote for priority works to trees on its land in Nevill Road, Uckfield. The trees (oak and ash) are overhanging a neighbouring garden, and the Ash is suffering with Ash Dieback and is considered dangerous. The works will require the removal and reinstatement of three BT lines and will require a cherry picker. The total cost of works is £4220.00. As these works are considered a priority and the quote is from a trusted tree surgeon, the parish council suspended financial regulations (requirement of three quotes) in order that the work can commence as soon as possible. Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Blandford, **resolved** to agree to the works at a cost of £4220.00.

Action: Cllrs requested the Nevill Road site be put on the December agenda to discuss disposing of the land. Clerk to circulate background information.

ANY FEEDBACK FROM HIGH HURSTWOOD BONFIRE NIGHT FROM CLLR DUCK – it was a successful well attended evening even though it was not possible to build the bonfire until the Thursday before due to the wet ground. The ground was cleared the following week, and it was also checked with a metal detector and would be done again.

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

06/11/24 **CORRESPONDENCE**
No priority correspondence

07/11/24 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
None

08/11/24 **FINANCE**
i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Marshall seconded by Cllr. Humphrey, payments totalling £9,509.00 covered by BACS and Direct Debits payment

were approved.

- ii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for October which were signed
- iii) **Noted:** RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) **Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Marshall:** Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023-24 has been agreed and will be implemented via the Payroll Officer
- v) **Noted:** Receipt of CIL money
- vi) **Noted:** Interim Audit to take place on 21st November
- vii) **Confirmation:** Finance Committee date set for 26th November 2024 7.30pm.

09/11/24 **OTHER MEETINGS**

Cllr Smith attended WDC Cllr Shaw's Community Forum and reported that Government housing targets are for permissions given rather than dwellings built. The parish survey was also mentioned with some suggestions put forward at the forum evening including improved youth facilities, footpaths and mobile telephone coverage. Local parishioners are being encouraged to complete the survey which can be viewed in news section of parish council website: [buxted Parish council](#)

10/11/24 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

No questions

11/11/24 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The chairman asked councillors if they wished to have a small gathering following the December meeting? Yes. Please reply to the clerks.

The chairman advised there would be an extra Planning Committee on 26th November to consider application WD/2024/2481/MAO for 80 dwellings on Land North of Buxted Road, Coopers Green, Five Ash Down. This precedes the already planned finance meeting which will now follow the planning meeting.

No main parish council meeting in January.

The meeting closed at 8.34p.m.

See appendix below

Appendix:

EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS GUIDELINES AND ACCEPTANCE OF PLACEMENT OF ADVERTISING POSTERS UPON THE HIGHWAY WITHIN A RURAL ENVIRONMENT

We will **tolerate** these provided they are charitable or community events, or seasonal produce (e.g. cherries, strawberries)
(Community = amateur dramatics/carnival/bonfire/parish events/seasonal produce)

Maximum of **two** signs on each approach road to the event.

Signs to be placed at the **back** of the verge.

Signs are **not** permitted on street furniture.

Signs **not** to be placed within **60m** of a junction.

Signs **not** to be erected more than **7** days before the event.

Signs to be **removed** within 24 hours of the event.

Signs not to exceed **0.6** square metre in area. (Approx 2 feet by 2 feet.)

Enquirers placing signs do so at their **own risk** and should be advised that they may wish to take out public liability insurance recommended five million pounds.

NO COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

NO METAL POSTS

SIGNS PLACED OUT NOT COMPLYING WITH THESE GUIDELINES MAY BE SUBJECT TO REMOVAL WITHOUT NOTICE.

The poster policy was always aimed at rural locations, within towns there are shop windows and other locations that can be used, in rural areas the availability of locations and opportunity to draw the event to the attention of people is restricted.

1. Apologies – Cllrs Rose, Roberts and Coxon

2. Declarations of Interest - None

3. Scout Hut – update

The Scout Leader updated the roof is now on and progress is being made albeit frustratedly as the project was supposed to have been finished by now. Current best finish estimate is February with Scouts to move in during the summer term. He thanked Ian as the Health and Safety consultant for keeping the project on track.

The Health and Safety consultant for the Hut project attended the meeting and confirmed what the Trust has already been told that the percolation tests for the surface water drainage have failed so an alternative solution needs to be found. The architect is currently favouring an attenuation tank and hydro brake resolution. The Scout leader advised he shares the IT frustrations as to why it has taken 10 months to address the issue of surface water drainage which should have been part of the initial designs submitted as part of the planning application.

Members questioned if an attenuation tank could be situated within the leased land, and then subsequently would the surface water drain onto IT land? Ian advised the size of the attenuation tank will be 1.4m in diameter and would go alongside the cesspool within the leased area. It is hoped to discharge the surface water into a 6-inch surface water drain by the Rifle Club, but this would require a survey to ascertain where this discharges into, and what permissions would be required. Otherwise, the water would need to be pumped up to the road. The chairman requested to be kept informed of the progress and/or any further proposals.

Unfortunately, the barrier fencing must remain in place for the time being as the land is still saturated. The area of land to access through to the recreation ground will remain quite a slope even when the work is complete, so this will have to be looked at to ensure safe access through to both sites. It was suggested there is an existing overgrown access through to near the zip wire which the Scouts have volunteered to trim back.

The site hut has been moved to make space for the Christmas Tree.

4. Repair/Replacement of play small children's play equipment – update

The clerk met with the owner of Safe Playgrounds on site to discuss the options for replacing the broken/worn out pieces of equipment in the play area. Various options were discussed, and two quotes have been received and circulated. It was also suggested that the matting be extended to cover inside the gates of the site. **Action:** Clerk to obtain three quotes to comply with financial regulations.

5. Quote for grass cutting for 2025 – see Parish Council minute 05/11/24 above

6. Repair of Ionides car park barrier – Wait to see what recommendations are required to the Recreation Ground barrier prior to deciding on any required works to the Ionides barrier.

7. Boundary issues with new development – update

Following the previous meeting the chairman/clerk wrote to the owners of both properties (Abbey House & Grasmere) to which a response was received advising the land has been sold and the letter needs to be directed to Mid Sussex Homes. This was done and has been acknowledged. A formal response has not yet been received.

Meeting closed 9.05pm