



BUXTED

PARISH COUNCIL

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9th July 2024

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall, on Tuesday 9th July 2024 at 7.15p.m.

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

Public : 2

01/07/24 TO RECEIVE ALL COUNCILLORS ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE & DECLARATION OF INTEREST (IF AMENDED)

Cllrs were reminded to complete a new Declaration of Interest forms in the change of circumstances.

02/07/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Duck & Roberts

The chairman wished both councillors a speedy recovery.

03/07/24 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 him being the Chairman of the Buxted Allotment Society.

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 and Chair of the committee.

04/07/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2024 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

05/07/24 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLORS

Prior to the meeting, the clerk circulated personal statements for Simon Furber and David Mallet to all councillors.

Proposed by Cllr. Humphrey and seconded by Cllr. Coxon, both were unanimously co-opted onto the parish council and joined the meeting. The chair welcomed David and Simon to the parish council and councillors introduced themselves.

06/07/24 ESCC REPORT

Cllr Galley updated the following:

ESCC - Update on pedestrian crossing costs and cutting back of overgrown pathway on A272 – just prior to the start of the meeting Cllr Galley forwarded information regarding methodology and costs associated with a pedestrian crossing which the clerk will circulate.

Works to the pathway is due to start on 29th July until 8th August and consists of footway siding work and cutting back of vegetation to ensure a safer walk to school. Cllr Smith commented that this work was approved at the beginning of this year with the date now being moved further into the month which is rather frustrating given that it took the clerks to tell highways that works had not started on 8th July as previously advised.

Underhill Bridge – works still pending.

Gun Hill Road – still closed (nearly two years)

Cllr Galley reported that he had chaired priorities for the coming year, making the best of resources and looking after vulnerable people. Financial position is not great so there are some difficult times ahead. Eight written questions, all on highways.

Mini Roundabout in Buxted – (see correspondence minute below) members wished to draw Cllr Galley's attention to the correspondence received. The roundabout is badly positioned on the brow of the hill which no one uses properly. Cllr Rose believes there should be no roundabout in that position and the A272 should be the main route with Queenstock Lane/Framfield Road being side roads.

07/07/24 SALE OF READING ROOM, CLEARING AND STORAGE OF BOXES

The chairman confirmed that on Friday 28th June the Reading Room was sold and funds transferred.

There were approximately six large boxes of paperwork removed from the hall which requires to be kept (some paperwork can be transferred to The Keep). The clerks are actively looking for storage for these boxes as they cannot remain where they are currently indefinitely. Thanks to the clerks for ensuring a smooth transition and clearing of the building.

Cllr Humphrey will ask the FAD Hall Committee if the remainder of the boxes could be stored in the village hall. Non paper-work, such as litter picking equipment, will be stored in a container on the Recreation Ground.

08/07/24 CONSIDER APPOINTING CSS – ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONTRACT PROVISION

CSS is owned by Ian Anderson, a health and safety consultant who has helped the Parish Council previously by carrying out the annual fire checks at the football pavilion for the last two years as well as assisting the Ionides Trust from a landlord perspective in relation to the new Scout Hut.

His company is now formally approaching all parish councils to offer a H&S package. This could provide all H&S needs, not just the annual check of the football pavilion, such as any issues we may encounter. e.g. a new hall project, or if we had an issue with any playground equipment or issues with grass cutting or allotments.

The company is offering a package of £750 for 1-year subscription, or £600 for a three-year subscription. Members **resolved** to appoint CSS on a three-year contract basis.

09/07/24 **OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

Mobile Phone Coverage: Nothing to report.

Public footpaths: Footway sidings work and cutting back of vegetation on A272 between White Hart and Buxted Primary School – For many months and especially since a crossing at the school was unsupported by ESCC the clerk has been lobbying ESCC to make footpath improvements from Buxted village to the primary school. ESCC have confirmed footway siding works are taking place week beginning 29th July and the work will be completed in three sections – From the station entrance to the entrance of the water treatment works; between Yew Tree Cottage and Harrock House Lodge; and between Harrock House Lodge and Buxted Primary School.

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety: Noting to report.

Wealden Local Development Framework: LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: No update.

Property issues:

BUXTED RECREATION GROUND – ground maintenance phase 1 quote:

Following the previous meeting Cllr Humphrey met with the Football Club chairman and discussed works carried out so far and future drainage options. The Parish Council is being asked to fund the seeding and fertilising worked carried out with a view to also assisting with drainage cost as part of Phase 2.

Cllr Humphrey provided some history to the leasing of the land to the Buxted Football Club and the issues with drainage of the pitch. Major drainage works will be costly and will not happen this year, so short term drainage and pitch works are proposed. The Football Club advised that unfortunately, due to the wet weather last year the club played very few matches so did not gain any revenue and therefore the PC are being asked to pay £3,708 for seeding and fertilising. Cllr Humphrey is concerned that the costs are very high going through a contractor and far beyond the FA recommended costs.

It was **resolved** to suspend Financial Regulations in this case, not requiring three quotes due to the fact the work has already taken place, to pay this invoice from CIL monies under 'improvements to infrastructure'. However, the parish council will make it very clear to the football club that, in future, that the parish council must see all quotes prior to any works taking place. Members also wished to reiterate to the football club that, whilst it appreciates all the hard work and improvements made to the ground, this site is a public recreation ground and must be open to all. The chairman and vice chair would ask the football club chairman for a meeting to discuss how to best move forward.

Cllr Furber retired from the meeting at 9.59pm.

ZIP WIRE – broken zip wire update: After receiving a quote for over £2,000 for Touchwood to mend the zip wire, the clerk found an alternative more local company who have quoted £568 to repair the equipment, which has now been completed.

BUXTED BONFIRE SOCIETY - approach to Parish Council for green space

Following the recent Buxted Fete, the organisers, Buxted Bonfire, were asked to return to the site the day after to complete an extra clear up as some straw had been left on the pitch area and the pitch had been damaged. This has led to the Bonfire Society having a meeting with Cllrs Blandford and Smith to request that a new piece of land is sourced and purchased by the parish council that could be used by all for various events. Members agreed that this is something that could be investigated.

FENCE AT POUND GREEN TRIANGLE – quote for broken fence post: The fence surrounding the Pound Green Triangle is broken and a quote for £2508 which would be a complete replacement of the fencing and gate. Clerk was asked to check the materials to be used to replace the fencing and ask for the costs for oak posts and chestnut rails. Can the old fencing be donated to the Bonfire Society?

DOG BIN BUXTED PARK – replacement: Since November 2023 the clerk has been asking Buxted Park to replace the lost/stolen(!) dog waste bin situated outside the church in Buxted Park. After initially assuring this would be done, and despite many chasing emails the bin still has not been replaced. The clerk is therefore asking the PC to fund the replacement of the bin as the adjacent litter bin is increasingly full of dog waste which has been pointed out by WDC. **Resolved** to purchase and fit the new bin. Clerk to ask WDC to do this.

Communications Matters: nothing to report.

10/07/24 **CORRESPONDENCE**

ESCC – further information to consider in regard to whether Buxted PC would be willing to take on the maintenance of a bus stop when installed in Buxted, and which bus stop it would prefer: since the previous meeting, further information regarding maintenance costs for a new bus shelter have been received and ESCC have surveyed residents who live along the High Street and would be move affected by a new bus shelter. No objections were received by residents, and it was established that there are 17 bus movements a week and the maintenance of a shelter would be approx. £300 a year. Members **resolved** that they would not maintain a bus stop should it be installed.

WDC – request from WDC for parish to store sandbags (now gel filled) and distributed to those properties in need by the Parish Council: It was agreed that the clerk would advise WDC that it has no storage facilities and would it acceptable for the bags to go direct to those residents who are likely to need them.

Local Resident – concerns regarding mini roundabout in Buxted following car accident: This matter has been referred to Cllr Galley who will request a response from ESCC Highway officers. The clerk has explained to the resident that at the time of the planning application for the Queenstock Lane development the parish council appointed its own consultant to advise the best solution to traffic control at the entrance to the new estate. Despite the conclusion that traffic lights would be the better solution, ESCC still chose a mini roundabout which subsequently passed all safety audits. As a safety measure, the Parish Council will be asking Highways to review the suitability of the roundabout with a view to potentially removing it and having stop signs on Queenstock Lane and Framfield Road.

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

12/07/24 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Smith seconded by Cllr. Rose, payments totalling £10,337 covered by Bank Transfer and Direct Debit for July 2024; and on the proposal of Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Smith, payments

totalling £14,317 covered by Bank Transfer and Direct Debit for June 2024 were approved.

- ii) Bank reconciliations: The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for May and June 2024 which were signed.
- iii) Noted: RBS reports: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash, and Investment Reconciliation
- iv) **Five Ash Down Village Hall insurance reimbursement - agreed**
- v) **Recognition of Claudine achieving CiLCA qualification and gaining an additional salary point – agreed**
- vi) **consider splitting total balances over the three banks to minimise risk following FSCS advice – Cllr Marshall suggested that there is less risk in having money mostly in Natwest as it is highly unlikely to go bankrupt and consider depositing village hall monies in a higher interest account. Cllr Marshall to investigate rates.**

13/07/24 OTHER MEETINGS
No other meetings

14/07/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Smith attended planning training on preapplication discussions with developers. This is considered a positive initiative, but councils should not expect any promises to be fulfilled.

Cllr Blandford met with the owners of the Old Mill and Harrock House in relation to a possible appeal for the proposals land north of A272. The site visit re-enforced the parish council's objection to the development.

Cllr Marshall asked that when war memorial was cleaned – did the contractor make any suggestions on repairs? The clerk has asked councillors to take some photographs and we could ask the contractors if they had any comments.

15/07/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Humphrey would like to remind members that Sunday is the FAD Picnic 1pm - 7pm with all residents of FAD and councillors invited. There will be live music and a bar with everyone bringing a picnic.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10th September as the council takes a break in August.

The meeting closed at 8.46p.m.

Ionides Trust Update 9th July 2024:

- 1. Apologies – Cllrs Duck and Roberts**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Scout Hut – update – work have now started**

The hut has been demolished and earth is being moved. The site fencing has been moved so access is available through to the recreation ground for the time being. There doesn't seem to be any retaining wall for the new access track yet and still no surface water drainage plans have been received. An updated programme of works has been requested. The Trust is also still awaiting a confirmation letter from the Scouts with details of their bank account to assure that there is money aside for any remedial works to the land once the construction is completed.

Members agreed that the clerk should chase previous requests and hope the health and safety consultant for the project may be returning to some level of work soon. However, it would be made clear to the Scouts that the Trust is not happy with the lack of requested information and communication from the architect.

Meeting closed 8.58pm