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8th September 2026

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Five Ash Down Village Hall on Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.20p.m.

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

Public : Member of the public wished to draw attention to the upcoming works to culvert in Framfield Road and diversion which he believes is unsuitable and dangerous. Cllr Mallett volunteered to email to ESCC Cllr Coleman to explain the issue and suggest alternatives.

01/09/26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Duck & Muddle and WDC Cllr Shaw.

02/09/26 **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.

Cllrs Smith and Furber declared a personal interest in any matters related to allotments due to being allotment holders.

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.

Cllr Humphrey declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Five Ash Down Village Committee due to being a member of committee.

03/09/26 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2026 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

04/09/26 **ESCC/WDC REPORT**

ESCC Cllr Coleman reported the following from East Sussex County Council:

- The Right of Way team have completed the surface improvements to footpath No.29;
- Road improvements on A22 which have previously been postponed are to be completed on 19th September.
- Cllr Coleman has received a lot of emails regarding dangerous driving and

anti-social behaviour. This covers a large area and so it is not immediately obvious where to focus attention. She has made contact with the Police and is due to meet with the ESCC Highway Safety Officer to discuss the issue and see how they can work proactively with the Police.

- Recently, days have been dominated with national news, especially Local Government Reorganisation which has changed again, as of yesterday. ESCC elections will take place in 2029 with WDC elections taking place in 2027 now that the reorganisation process is being reviewed.
- The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is in effect which will have an impact on the WDC Draft Local Plan. Of particular concern is the concept of limited infill; in addition to taking away powers from local authorities and decisions being taken away from planning committees.
- Cllr Coleman has had a meeting with Wilder Wealden which is a partnership with the Sussex Wildlife Trust to reconnect habitats and support wildlife recovery across the district. Any further sites should be suggested to Cllr Shaw and Cllr Coleman.
- Events – there is a peoples emergency briefing evening in Danehill on 24th September; Fletching music and arts festival is 23-26th September.

Cllr Coleman confirmed the election of the mayor of Sussex is still planned to go ahead to create a mayoral strategic authority which will contain all County, District and Borough councils.

Finally, Cllr Shaw still has £1000 left in his ward budget that is available until April 2027.

05/09/26 **FINANCE – AUDIT 2025-26**

Members to receive the audit docs from the external auditor PKF Littlejohn year end 31.03.26 and decide upon any actions required if any – No recommendations or advisories made by the external auditor.

Members to consider and approve an amount of time for the Notice of Conclusion of Audit to be published – suggested time of one month which is an extension of time from previously required two weeks – Resolved a publication time of one month.

06/09/26 **FINANCE – AUDIT 2026-27**

For members to receive the documents: Internal Audit Services for Town and Parish Councils and the engagement letter from Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd. Members need to consider the independence and competence of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd to ensure that there is an effective internal audit to evaluate the risk management, control and governance process.

Please note the requirement from the Practitioners Guide 2025 (Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel): Internal audit - The authority needs to appoint an independent and competent person to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes considering internal auditing guidance for smaller authorities. The internal auditor must be able to demonstrate independence from the authority's financial decision making. The Clerk, RFO or members (or close associates such as family members of those individuals) are not considered independent from the authority's financial decision making. Provision of information - The authority needs to ensure it has taken all necessary steps to facilitate the work of those conducting the internal audit, including making available all relevant documents and records and supplying any information or explanations required. The internal auditor is expected to inspect all documentation which should be supplied by the authority on request from the auditor.

Members resolved to approve Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd to conduct the internal audits for financial year 2026-2027

07/09/26 CONSIDERATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR 2027-28 (list circulated prior to the meeting)

Prior to the meeting the responsible financial officer circulated a list of all grants requests for the financial year 2027/28. The grants requests are submitted prior to setting a budget in November.

A discussion took place regarding the applications and the following grants. were awarded:

Buxted Art Club - £350
Five Ash Down Chapel - £350
Ecclesiastical Parish of Buxted and Hadlow Down (2 x 2 churches) - £2,000
Buxted Methodist Church - £350
FAD Pop In - £550
St Wilfred's Hospice - £1,000
Buxted Horticultural Society (BHS) - £500
Conservators of Ashdown Forest - £1,000
Holy Trinity Church, High Hurstwood - £700
Wealden Citizens Advice Bureau - £950
Five Ash Down Village Event - £450
Buxted Bowls Club - £1,000
High Hurstwood Bonfire Society - £1,000
Buxted Allotment Association - £750
Five Ash Down Village Hall - £1,500

08/09/26 OUTSTANDING MATTERS

Public footpaths: Improvement to path No.29 finished.

Trees: Nothing to report.

Road Safety:

- **Speeding in Buxted – update on VAS sign – consideration of installation quote**
– the clerk made contact with the clerk at Ringmer PC who have just gone through the process of appointing a contractor to fit two VAS signs. After obtaining quotes from three companies, they chose Hailsham Roadways due to cost and proximity of the company being local.
A quote was sourced from Hailsham Roadways to fit the sign in Buxted which totalled £4,206.56. This is far more than expected but £2909.70 of this quote consists of traffic management; licencing; permits; lane closure required by ESCC Highways. Cllr Coleman was equally as surprised at this cost and asked for the clerk to send the costs to her to review. It was agreed that the parish council should not be so heavily charged when it is installing road safety equipment. Defer to October meeting.

The clerk was asked to ascertain from ESCC Highways, how much have parish councils been charged for road closures/permits/licences in the last financial year.

Wealden Local Development Framework: The latest version of the Local Development Framework is due for consideration at WDC Full Council on 18th September and publication is expected soon after.

Property issues:

- **Buxted Recreation Ground – update on WDC Sports Infrastructure Grant application** – the clerk was very pleased to advise the grant for the football pitch drainage was approved and the Grant Funding Agreement has been signed and verified.
- **Buxted Recreation Ground – consideration of quote to re-seed football pitch** – now the drainage has been completed, a quote to reseed the pitch was received totalling £3,556.97. Members approved this funding from CIL money and therefore is ratified at this meeting. **Approved**
- **Repair works to play equipment in High Hurstwood** – consideration of quote – following the receipt of the annual plan inspection report for the High Hurstwood and Buxted Recreation Ground play areas, a quote has been received for repair works to High Hurstwood play area totalling £2,451.00. **Approved and agreed to use CIL money to finance work.**
- **Nevill Road site – possible disposal of site – update** – Uckfield Town Council have expressed an interest in the land but would first need a valuation of the site. The clerk has contacted the government Valuation Office Agency who we have been advised by the estate agent would need to be instructed to carry out a formal valuation.
- **BT Box: Tanyards Cottages, Framfield Road** – consideration of traffic management costs – The parish council had previously budgeted £1,000 for the renovation of each BT box. Both boxes in Five Ash Down and High Hurstwood have been completed but the Lengthsman could not carry out the work on the empty box at Tanyards Cottages without some traffic management as it is very close to a 60mph road. Having asked ESCC Highways for a quote for traffic management, one was received at a total cost of £2,469.50. As per the VAS sign, the quote will be referred to Cllr Coleman to query the costs.

Cllr Humphry to obtain costs to move the BT Box.

Communications Matters: Nothing to report.

09/09/26 **CORRESPONDENCE**

P1 – Sussex 1550 - Celebrating the 1550th Anniversary of Sussex – would Buxted wish to hold a Beacon Lighting Event? – clerk to ask the Bonfire Society if they would like to host an event.

10/09/26 **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Set date for Finance working party in November - To include an item on the Buxted Parish Council Grants procedure. 3rd November 2026 – clerks to confirm location.

11/09/26 **FINANCE**

- i) **Payments:** On the proposal of Cllr. Humphrey seconded by Cllr. Smith, the updated payments list for July 2026 was approved.
- ii) **Payments** On the proposal of Cllr. Humphrey seconded by Cllr Smith payments totalling £18,333.93 covered by direct debit or BACS payments for August and £11,674.87 for September 2026 were approved.
- iii) **Bank reconciliations:** The clerk had circulated completed reconciliations for July and August which were signed
- iv) **Noted:** RBS reports for May: Ear marked reserves, Trial Balance, Receipts and Payments, Cash and Investment Reconciliation
- v) **Consideration of Local government services pay agreement 2026/27** – proposed by Cllr Humphrey and seconded by Cllr Smith - approved

vi) to note the return of the Five Ash Down Village Street Party grant of £350 as the event did not go ahead - noted

12/09/26 OTHER MEETINGS

Cllr Smith, in his role as the Chair of the parish council was a judge for the Scarecrow competition.

13/09/26 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None

14/09/26 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Date of next meeting – Next meeting 13th October 2026 St Marys Church Hall, Buxted – Cllr Smith is apologies for that meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.58p.m.

DATE RAISED	CASE NO	DESCRIPTION	OPEN/CLOSED RESOLUTION
November 2024	EA007FRAMFIELD	Culvert, Framfield Road, Buxted	ONGOING Collapsed drainage leading to culvert. Reported some time ago. Highway advised works need planning and extensive repair. 19/3 – Highways contacted PC to advise Structural Team will contact PC to arrange a site meeting likely to be in April. May – Cllr Furber attended meeting with ESCC/Balfour Beatty. Agreed work from culvert to KSV would be carried out. Design for culvert currently being designed. Work to be carried out in next financial year. 10/06 – clerk to ask Highway if any remedial works will take place to stop the road falling away while a design is being drawn up. 17/06/26 – update from Highways. Work will commence on 1st September 2026 20/08 – notification from Highways repairs to culvert will commence on Mon 21/9 – Fri 13/11 with a road closure in place on Framfield Road between the junctions of Limes Lane and Orchard Lane.
17/02/25	CCY000737	Broken away tarmac (50cm) in Framfield Road/Limes Lane outside KSV and bollard fallen over	REOPENED 20/02/25 – ESCC Highways do not consider work is necessary at this time but would continue to monitor – Raise again with Highways. 17/3 – Highway Steward revisited. Road still does not meet criteria, but bollard will be replaced. May – work should be carried out in conjunction with culvert repair works (as above EA007FRAMFIELD)

			24/8 – notified by Highways the repairs to the broken tarmac are now NOT included in the works to the culvert.
27/05/26	CCY001221/CWY009219	State of road and Highway verge roadside of High Hurstwood Village Hall Car Park/Field gate	ONGONG Current state of the road and dip in the highway verge to entrances of HHVH car park and field entrance. Cars bottom out entering car park. Cars cannot access the field gate due to drop in land on verge. 27/05 – Highways have instructed Steward to assess. Highway Steward could not find the tree despite the W3W and photo. Steward asked to reassess 11/06/26 – confirmation from Highways repairs will take place Repairs to entrance to Village Hall have taken place.

Ionides Trust Update 8th September 2026 following the parish council meeting:

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Request from Buxted Surgery owners for two amendments to the current lease – response from leaseholder – all agreed not to extend the lease.**
- 4. Consideration of quote to repair play equipment – the annual safety report has highlighted work required to the play equipment totalling £1868.00. Agreed**
- 5. Finances – to receive the bank statements and transaction spreadsheets for the CAF Cash and CAF Gold (Ionides) accounts to 31.7.2026 – Noted and to be circulated quarterly unless there are any specific large payments.**
- 6. Village Hub - Proposal for concept stage – Cllrs Smith and Furber met with the architect who came up with three feasibility studies of the site. After consideration of all concepts, one was considered the best option which provided a focal meeting point at the entrance to the site with the building flowing into the land. The site is focused on the existing levels with a clear flow through to the woodland.**

Comments were that the play space is much reduced – which was agreed and can be included in the new plan. This is stage one of a four stage project. The next stage would be community engagement and working with WDC planning for pre-application advice and an estimation of costs.

Cllr Blandford retired from the meeting at 21.36pm

Meeting closed 22:04