

BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Property and Recreation Grounds Committee held in The Pavilion, Buxted at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 7th June 2011

Present: Cllrs. Rose (Chairman), Crowe, Arabizadeh, Pearson, Treacher and Warner
Also present: Malcolm Wilson, Acting Clerk

Before the meeting began the Chairman reported the sad death of James Chalmers, parish councillor for 24 years and Chairman for 10 of these. It was noted that a formal tribute will be paid at the Parish Council on 14th June 2011.

Public: 3 – D Docker; Mr & Mrs Barlow

Mrs Barlow expressed concerns over the proposed allotments in High Hurstwood, reiterating the points made in correspondence about parking, road speed, visibility and the need to drive rather than walk to the site. Mr Docker felt the application for allotments spoke for itself but he said the amount of car parking (4 spaces) had been reduced to keep costs as low as possible. He felt that if the PC needed more evidence that there was a core of volunteer support to administer an allotment society then this was available. There was no desire behind the application to upset neighbours at the site.

1. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs M Hall and V Blandford (Cllr Warner acted as a substitute for Cllr Blandford as allowed under Standing Order 15)

2. Declarations of Members Interests:

Cllr Treacher declared a prejudicial interest in matters relating to the High Hurstwood allotment field by virtue of being a neighbour.

Personal interests were declared by Cllr Rose in any matters relating to Buxted FC and Cllr Warner re High Hurstwood children's play area

3 Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2010 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting. It was agreed that rather than wait a year for the minutes to be signed it would be better for them to be signed at the next parish council meeting while the discussions were still fresh in people's minds.

4. High Hurstwood allotment proposal:

Having declared a prejudicial interest Cllr Treacher left the meeting.

A paper prepared by the Clerk dated 29th March 2011 and updated on 2nd June 2011 summarised the key points and had been circulated in advance and formed the basis for a wide ranging discussion of this proposal. The key points raised were:

- previous experience had shown that without the parish council running the administration of the allotments and controlling plot allocations, shed construction etc a state of virtual anarchy can exist
- if the parish council took on the site itself it was unlikely to get Lottery funding as it can raise funds from the Precept
- the costs of the conversion would be high and the council would need to consider what was 'best practice'
- the existing tenants pay a higher rent than the parish council would get from allotments and look after the field well
- there were doubts that advice received from Wealden DC was entirely correct about the use of permitted development rights in the AONB
- the proposal was for 20 sites, but even after the recent recruitment campaign there were only 12 on the waiting list
- there are only three names on the active waiting list at Buxted and the Clerk felt these might all get plots shortly as some additional turnover is anticipated as not all existing tenants have yet renewed
- the parish council has fulfilled its statutory obligation to provide allotments for the parish
- there is scope to create additional plots in Buxted and split up larger plots when these become available. It was felt this would be a more effective use of resources if additional capacity was required
- if there was a local need within the specific environs of High Hurstwood then landowners might make allotment gardens available, but this was not a matter for the parish council

It was agreed that the Committee would recommend that the parish council did not support the development of the field as allotments and that quotes should be obtained by the Clerk to clear and expand the current site

in Buxted, within the margins of the existing fencing.

5. Annual Review of Risk Assessment of the Council's physical assets:

Cllr Treacher rejoined the meeting

Councillors reviewed the Fire Risk Assessment for the Reading Room (see appendix 1 to these minutes) and noted the Clerk had refreshed the evacuation procedures notice. Councillors then reviewed the Physical Assets update report prepared by the Clerk (appendix 2). Actions required:

- Littlewood Lane – tree inspection required this year, Clerk to arrange.

Reading Room – Clerk to investigate to see if PAT testing is required

- Nevill Road – a member of the public had reported today an overhanging tree at 59 Nevill Road. The trees were inspected a year ago and suggested maintenance was undertaken in October 2010. The Clerk is to visit the site on Thursday 9th June – it may well be a Woodland Trust tree – if so the Clerk to advise the Trust.

- Buxted allotments – in view of the potential expansion noted in 4 above the request by tenants to take one of the long term “unused” sites for a compost area was declined

- property titles – it was agreed the Clerk should pursue the registration of titles of the High Hurstwood field and the Buxted Recreation Ground access track. It was suggested that Wilsons LLP be approached as one of the largest firms specializing in rural matters. The Clerk will seek an estimate of costs

- war memorial – the Clerk has asked the regular contractors for a quote for repairs to the base; he is also seeing a quote from the stonework contractors about to start work on St Margarets Church. The Clerk will also check to see if it is now formally “listed”.

- white fingerposts – it was requested these be added to the list for future years, given ESCC was likely to stop contributing to repairs. Another contractor might be required given the frequent absences of our current contractor – the clerk to review options

Councillors **noted and approved** the report

6. Annual Review of Parish Council's Risk Assessment:

The Clerk had reviewed the assessment, as had the internal auditor, and felt it identified the risks and provided appropriate countermeasures.

Councillors **noted and approved** the report

7. Members Questions:

None this meeting

8. Announcements:

None this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

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FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT 2011

SITE: Reading Room, Buxted

REVIEW DATE: 2ND June 2011

1. Significant potential hazards	2. Likelihood High/medium/low risk	3. Severity High/medium/low risk
Sources of ignition: electric cooker, 3 electric water heaters, electric boiler, Electric radiant wall heater, gas boiler	Low	High
Inflammable materials (paper/wood in store room)	Low	High
Inflammable materials (fabric, wood, paper in basement)	Low	High
Smoking	Low	High

4. People at risk
Hall users – maximum 90
Staff – 3
Contractors - occasional

5. Current control measures	
Caretaking and minimisation of inflammable materials	Caretaker/clerk
Weekly inspection of premises and appliances	Clerk/caretaker
Annual maintenance and inspection of electrical appliances	tba
Annual maintenance and inspection of gas boiler	Paynes Heating – Feb 2011
Fire control equipment and emergency exits and signage	Clerk
Strict “no smoking” policy	Caretaker/clerk
Annual inspection of fire extinguishers and other equipment	Chubb October 2010
Annual fire inspection and risk assessment	2 nd June 2011 – Acting clerk
5 Yearly inspection of electrical wiring	November 2009 - EDF

6. Are risks controlled: Yes No

7. Planned action if risks not controlled
Electrical appliances – Clerk to arrange for PAT testing to be undertaken asap to update inspection

Reviewed by:

**Malcolm Wilson
Acting Clerk to Buxted Parish Council, 2nd June 2011**

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Buxted Parish Council – Physical Assets Update from June 2010 until June 2011

Reading Room:

- Please see attached Fire Assessment report detailing all annual checks of equipment. I have revised the evacuation procedures to remove the suggestion that the fire alarm be activated because there is no fire alarm as far as I am aware.
- Performing Rights Licence has been renewed in May
- General maintenance and repairs carried out when necessary by Mr Steve Holmes including works to leaking kitchen roof – policy is to minimise expenditure in advance of new community hall coming on stream

High Hurstwood Children's Play Area:

- RoSPA inspection annually- last inspection believed dated June 2010 – no actions required. Advised 2011 inspection to take place in June.
- Work will be needed to playground surfacing within next few years, or when RoSPA recommends
- Weekly inspection of equipment by Clerk in addition to ad hoc inspections and reports from High Hurstwood based councillors
- General maintenance work carried out by Kim Woodley/Graham Weller as appropriate e.g. broken posts/gate latch

High Hurstwood Recreation Ground:

- Jon Avery cuts play area and strip of grass field side of fence between field and hall
- Weald contractors carry out hedge cutting once annually
- Denzel Fears cuts recreation ground grass 12 times per year during spring/summer months
- Clerk carries out general inspection of field on a weekly basis
- Any hirers have to give 6 weeks notice, provide insurance documents and agree to clear up afterwards

Buxted Recreation Ground/Buxted Pavilion:

- Maintained on a regular basis by Buxted Football Club who update Parish Council regularly on proposed changes to pavilion and any works requiring council attention on the recreation ground
- Football Club still intend to submit planning application to WDC for viewing area to Pavilion and new shed/storage building. Plans to be submitted to Parish Council before formal submission to WDC

Nevill Road:

- Tree survey carried out tri-annually. Tim Laddiman of Broad Oak Tree consultants inspected summer 2010 and Simon Young carried out remedial works as recommended in October 2010. Any recommendations for works will have to be approved by WDC in the event that trees are covered with existing TPO
- Repairs to fence carried out by Graham Weller
- Clerk carries out bi-annual inspection of area

The Dene:

- Grass cutting carried out six times per year by Barcombe Landscapes
- Clerk carries out bi-annual inspection of area

Littlewood Lane Triangle:

- Inspection of TPO'd trees carried out every two years. Last inspection 2009 by Tim Laddiman of Broad Oak Tree Consultants who did not recommend any works. Need to consider visit in 2011.

Allotment Grounds:**Buxted**

- Waiting list consists of 13 with a breakdown of the following preferences:
 - 1 – Buxted or High Hurstwood
 - 8 – High Hurstwood only
 - 3 – Buxted (not aware that High Hurstwood exists)
 - 1 – would like a second plot in Buxted
- The Allotment Management Group is still in existence but mostly consists of Graham Spencer sharing information via email to other allotment holders
- A good rapport has built up between everyone at the allotments and they all appear to be working well together.
- Pigs arrived on site this year at the end of May
- New annual tenancy agreements issued on 1st May 2011. Only one complaint over the increase in rents. Still 5 outstanding – 2 chased by e mail, other three have been written to. It may be that 2 Or 3 will not renew which will almost eliminate waiting list in Buxted.
- A request has been received from existing allotment holders (Mr & Mrs de Bolla) to possibly rent one of the four “unusable” plots (28,29,33,34) for a shed and composting to free up more cultivatable space on their main plot – could this be allowed at a reduced rent - £10 or £15?
- There is an open water “tank” in the woods between the car parking areas. A metal grill had been fixed over the top but this has been stolen. Graham Weller has been instructed to re-cover and fence the “tank” (which is 12 feet by 4 feet, and the water is about 4 feet deep).

High Hurstwood

- Rented from the Parish Council on an annual basis. Rent increased to £520 per year as resolved at the Finance and Policy Committee in October 2009
- Tenancy agreement renewed annually in September. Payments requested in two parts.

- Request to establish allotments on the site is a separate agenda item.
- The title to this land is not registered, and the title documents have been noted as “lost” for 30 years. I propose to instruct solicitors (Rix and Kay (?) who have been give the background in the past, although no action was taken) to claim and register the parish council’s title

Bus Shelters:

- Coopers Green and High Hurstwood maintained by the Parish Council. Very little works required.

Buxted War Memorial:

- Bi-annual cleaning by Burlite – last done in October 2009. Company has been asked to inspect and quote to repair cracks to stonework at the base, ideally before next winter – they will quote after next visit to the area.

Malcolm Wilson
Acting Clerk
June 2011