

Chair report Ionides AGM 9th June 2026 registered charity no 305192

Since I became involved with the Ionides Trust in 2009 I have seen many changes in the landscape of the Ionides Trust. It has been transformed from an overgrown field, inaccessible in places to a well-used piece of open land in the heart of the village. The old Boys Club was demolished, and the Surgery built, complete with bat tower. The regular income from the rented land provided the Ionides Trust the means to carry out the improvements and maintenance much needed. Some changes were forced upon us like the bunds formed from the excess material from the surgery build but a deal was struck with the developers and so some of the land between the Ionides land and the parish council recreation ground was flattened and an overgrown hedgerow removed, thus opening out the land to flow seamlessly as a more open and accessible space. The biggest cost comes from regular mowing, litter and dog waste bin emptying. We also have the luxury of our very own park keeper who carries out regular checks and odd jobs. We carry out a tree survey regularly and then undertake, with experts, any necessary remedial work

In 2016 we began the process of changing the status of the Ionides Trust to giving the responsibility of running the Ionides Trust to the Parish Council as Managing Trustees. With the increased responsibilities and subsequent liabilities of opening the land, having a regular income and more play equipment, responsibility for a car park, not enough Trustees from the village were willing to take on the work. This has been very successful with the clerks efficiently carrying out the work necessary. The Ionides Trust meetings are carried out completely separately, and after the parish council meeting. Anyone can attend but we rarely have anyone attending, unless they have a specific request to be heard.

In 2017 the adult exercise equipment, table tennis table and zip wires were installed after public consultation. We continue renew or repair aspects of the enclosed, smaller children's playground which is very popular and well used.

The Buxted Hall Trust was wound up in 2019, and they did not see that we finally managed to get the Scouts to sign a lease giving everyone the right to build on their leased land. Sadly, we did not see the building of a new village hall, although the foundations were laid in 2018, thus keeping the hard-won planning application alive. Part of the community hall car park was built, laying down a better, long-lasting surface whilst providing better drainage to the car park and children's playground. This was finally completed in October 2020.

The new Scout Hut has been finished for over a year but the grass and finishing touches to the Ionides Trust still need finishing. It is a shame that such a dominant building can only be used for one group.

It has been a quiet year, and the long overdue cut of the hedges was able to take place. We had missed the previous year because of the Scout hut construction making it unsafe to cut hedges, but the contractors did a good job. We unfortunately had another incident of illegal camping and when the tent was obviously abandoned, and unsure of contents and we asked Wealden District Council waste to remove it.

The cherry trees, both those planted by the surgery contractor and the parish council within the COVID memorial blossomed beautifully this year, although one had died and was replaced.

Basil Ionides left the land to residents of Buxted for their spiritual and mental welfare, and we hope that the residents of Buxted appreciate how the land is how looked after.

Vivienne Blandford May 2026