

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)            Cllr. C. Macve  
                 Cllr. J. Beesley                                    Cllr. D. Manvell  
                 Cllr. D. Bennett                                    Cllr. P. Meakin  
                 Cllr. K. Everett                                    Cllr. I. Smith  
                 Cllr. H. Firth                                        Cllr. P. Sparks  
                 Cllr. D. French

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Two members of the press (*recorded the meeting*)  
Councillor Chris Dowling (East Sussex County Council)  
Councillor Claire Dowling (East Sussex County Council/Wealden District Council)  
Two members of the public

Holly Goring                    Town Clerk  
Christine Wheatley    Assistant Town Clerk and RFO

Minutes taken by Holly Goring.

## **1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent.

However, no such declarations were forthcoming.

## **2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION**

Mr Lunn advised that he wished to speak on agenda item 9.0.

**FC.69.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable Mr Lunn to speak.

Mr Lunn felt that any form of domestic abuse was unacceptable. He had recently read the article in Uckfield News relating to the grant application from HomeStart. HomeStart were a small charity who were in the main supporting young children and their mothers. Those working on the projects were not necessarily trained professionals, and little to no support was provided to the fathers.

Mr Lunn informed members that domestic abuse had no boundaries, it could affect anyone at any time. He advised that he had been a victim of domestic abuse for over a decade and there was no support for male victims.

The 12-week Freedom programme referred to in agenda item 9.0, was feminist, and biased against men. West Sussex County Council recently withdrew all of their funding, and the scheme was currently under investigation. There were multiple refuges for women in Sussex, but no support for men. If any contribution is provided by Uckfield Town Council, 50% should also be provided to a scheme supporting male victims.

In East Sussex, there is The Portal, which is supported by Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council and Sussex Police, which supports all victims.

Therefore Mr Lunn wished to ask members to reject the application and seek other means of supporting those in need.

### **3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Councillor C. Dowling updated members on East Sussex County Council matters. He informed members that a meeting of the various partner agencies including East Sussex Highways, local bus companies and Sussex Police had taken place last month. A number of issues were raised with the schemes which had been previously considered for Lewes Road, in Ridgewood. It had been requested that further data be gathered to understand the full details and behaviour of drivers in this area, and detailed speed monitoring would be carried out to collect this.

Clarity was also provided to explain that the proposed dual roundabout on the A22 Uckfield By-Pass would be full size, similar to that of Little Horsted roundabout.

Councillor C. Dowling was aware that the County Council's Core Offer survey was due to be discussed later on the agenda.

Councillor P. Sparks asked whether there was any update on whether East Sussex County Council would be withdrawing funding from Ashdown Forest. Cllr Dowling was uncertain but would find out.

Councillor D. French noted that there had been some displeasure with the Core Offer survey from residents online. Residents had found the survey challenging and on a number of occasions, given up early on in the start of the survey.

The Town Clerk advised that the second question was challenging, with only two options available – 23% increase on council tax, or a reduction in services. For someone who was a resident but had also worked in local government for 15 years, even the Clerk had found the question direct and difficult to answer. It was advised that the Town Council send these concerns to the East Sussex County Council.

Councillor D. Manvell noted that the Core Offer was coming in, in 2020/21, but it was in 2022/23 that the government grant would be disappearing altogether. What was the County Council's plan going forward?

Councillor Cl. Dowling advised that the Core Offer would not stand still, and would currently provide a further £12million savings. East Sussex had a population of 500,000, but greater health and social care needs than other areas. They had been lobbying for years to request adequate funds for adult social care, and were currently waiting for the Adult Social Care Green Paper which had been delayed.

Councillor Cl. Dowling advised that Wealden District Council had a Cabinet meeting next week, with the agenda papers due to be published on 4<sup>th</sup> December. Their draft budget would be placed out for consultation, and it was hoped that the awarding of a new joint waste contract, would be discussed at this Cabinet meeting.

**FC.70.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors M. Dean, L. Eastwood, S. Mayhew and D. Ward, and District Councillor Peter Waldock.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

**FC.71.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Full Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

#### 5.2 Action List

Members considered the action list and agreed to remove the following items which had been completed or appeared elsewhere on the agenda;-

FC37.07.18 - End of year statement of Community Infrastructure Levy

FC63.10.18 - Motion submitted by Councillor D. Ward

FC64.10.18 - Review of 2018/19 proposals – grass verge cutting contract

FC66.10.18 - Signing of contract with Tikspac

It was requested that the MP, Nus Ghani be chased with regard to the letter sent on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (FC51.09.18).

#### **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

(a) Plans Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**FC.72.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 29<sup>th</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

(b) Environment and Leisure Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**FC.73.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment and Leisure Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

- FC.74.12.18** (c) General Purposes Committee of the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

**7.0 TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Members referred to the discussions relating to Gatwick Airport and their plans to increase capacity. Councillor C. Macve advised that further details were available in the Draft Masterplan which was currently out for consultation.

Members subsequently noted the report.

**8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS**

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield Events Working Group - Celebrate

Members noted the report and advised that they would consider funding during the discussions on the draft budget in agenda item 15.0.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Councillor P. Sparks wished to highlight the dementia friendly Christmas Event taking place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at the Luxfords Centre at 2.30pm, with tea, cake, and a screening of Andre Rieu's Christmas Concert. All were welcome. Members subsequently noted the report.

**9.0 TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FOR FUNDING IN 2019/20**

Members reviewed the information which had been provided in relation to the Freedom programme. Although the previous points regarding gender equality had been taken on board by members, and queries raised, the main concern related to the qualifications and expertise of those running the programme.

It was noted that the Town Council could only take a decision based on the information received and this year, the Town Council had received a high number of applications for grant funding.

- FC.75.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** that Uckfield Town Council would not support the provision of funding to HomeStart on this occasion for their grant application for 2019/20.

**10.0 TO CONSIDER FUNDING FOR THE NORTH WEALDEN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP SATURDAY BUS SERVICE IN 2019/20**

Uckfield Town Council currently provide funding towards the Saturday 262 bus service. The North Wealden Community Transport Partnership had contacted all relevant parishes to inform them of the contribution amounts for 2019/20 to ensure the service continued to run.

One member noted that in paragraph 1.6, it stated that there had been an increase in passenger numbers from 795 to 926. This was incorrect, with the accurate figure recorded in the table in paragraph 1.8, which stated 826. They also noted that the costs had increased so it was very difficult to compare year to year or make an informed decision based on the information available.

Despite these anomalies, members wished to support local public transport, in order to reduce the amount of traffic on the road, enable people in the rural areas to reach the towns of Heathfield and Uckfield, as well as enable people to visit the beautiful scenery of Ashdown Forest.

It was suggested that a press release be issued to promote the bus service and its calling points.

**FC.76.12.18** It was **RESOLVED** for Uckfield Town Council to allocate a total of £3,900 within the 2019/20 budget to contribute towards the cost of running the Saturday 262 Bus Service.

**11.0 TO CONSIDER PROVIDING A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SET UP COSTS OF AN UCKFIELD PARKRUN**

The Town Clerk informed members that Uckfield College had been exploring a number of potential funding opportunities to assist with the set up of a Parkrun initiative, with an application recently submitted for the Tesco Bags of Help scheme and an announcement being made at the recent Uckfield Chamber of Commerce meeting.

All parties were involved, with plans for the route to start and end at Uckfield Rugby Club and the 5k route to travel around Buxted Park.

Members sought clarity on the set-up costs, to which the Town Clerk advised that it was a one-off cost and the purpose of the paper, was to ascertain whether the Town Council wished to make any financial contribution of any kind towards the initiative. Members recognised that the initiative aligned with their priorities around health and wellbeing and it would be positive for the town. The only concerns were matters that had already been raised at the Parkrun meeting the previous week; parking and winter weather affecting ground conditions.

**FC.77.12.18** Members **RESOLVED** to make a financial contribution of £1,000 towards the set-up costs of an Uckfield Parkrun and to fund this contribution from general reserves.

**12.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON THEIR CORE OFFER**

At East Sussex County Council's Cabinet meeting in July 2018, they agreed to create a 'Core Offer' which would articulate what officers felt were the minimum outcomes a competent and efficient Council could expect to be able to provide by 2020/21. A 'Core Offer' has been developed and a survey recently placed out for public consultation to understand the views of residents.

Members had discussed the matter previously during agenda item 2.0. Based on the difficulties previously raised with completing the survey, members had mixed views on whether it would be valuable to complete the survey. One member felt

that it was particularly important for residents to fill it in, particularly those who were vulnerable or needed support from health and social care type services, to ensure that their views were heard.

The Town Clerk also advised that she would feed back the concerns with regard to the survey, to East Sussex County Council.

**FC.78.12.18** With nine votes in favour and one abstaining (Cllr. French), members **RESOLVED** to make every effort through various channels of communication to promote the 'Core Offer' survey to residents and encourage them to take part.

**13.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2019/24**

Members reviewed the first draft of objectives which would build the Strategic Plan for 2019/24. The Strategic Plan was a five-year plan setting out the vision, key aims and medium-term priorities for the Town Council during that period. The plan was refreshed on an annual basis alongside the draft annual plan, draft budget and draft asset management plan. It would be placed out for consultation after the Full Council meeting until Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

A couple of typo's were noted, but otherwise members were satisfied with the content, and noted the report.

**14.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2019/20**

Members reviewed the draft annual plan for 2019/20 which set out the list of priorities they wished to achieve in that financial year.

Members sought clarity on a couple of points, before noting the report.

**15.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ANNUAL BUDGET FOR 2019/20**

Members had been provided with full draft budget papers as part of the agenda pack. It had been suggested prior to the meeting, that the street lights which required upgrading could be funded using Community Infrastructure Levy funding. The £6k required for these works had therefore been removed from the new initiatives within the budget papers for this reason.

Members were advised by the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO that based on last year's tax base, an additional £1k in sport income which had been picked up by officers, and the required increase of £400 on the proposed contribution for the Saturday 262 bus service, this currently created a percentage increase of 3.33% per Council tax band D household.

One member felt that the Town Council couldn't stand still, and it was sad that some items had been reduced or removed within the draft budget to cover the costs of services which had typically been the responsibility of higher authorities.

It was noted that there were genuine reasons for the increase. The Town Clerk advised that officers had worked on the budget papers for at least four weeks prior to the meeting to work through every cost code and reduce and make savings where possible on expenditure. Unfortunately increases were to be expected on utility costs and salary costs as result of external forces, such as utility company price rises and the annual changes to minimum wage which were affecting the NJC pay scales.

Members considered whether funds from earmarked reserves could be re-allocated or used to reduce the council tax increase in 2019/20. Members were reminded that Uckfield Town Council had a large portfolio of assets but a lower population than some of the other towns in Wealden District, so unfortunately the cost of maintaining these buildings and open spaces, had an impact. Despite these discussions no decisions were taken, and members subsequently noted the report.

**16.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2019/24**

Members felt that the draft asset management plan was an important document and was a crucial component within the annual priority and budget setting process, to enable members to reconsider the maintenance works required on council-owned buildings, the spaces and properties owned by the council, and to consider their future.

Members noted the report.

**FC.79.12.18 17.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE SIGNAL BOX**

Members **RESOLVED** for two councillors to sign and seal the lease agreement for the Signal Box, on behalf of Uckfield Town Council.

**18.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor J. Love noted that the Mayor, Councillor S. Mayhew had also attended the UTC Calendar Competition Presentation on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

Councillor C. Macve remarked that there were a wonderful range of events listed on the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements and he wished to record his thanks for their tremendous commitment.

Members subsequently noted the report.

**19.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEED OF GRANT**

One deed of grant had been received.

**FC.80.12.18 Members **RESOLVED** to sign the grave certificate for the following:  
Pauline Osborne and Rix & Kay Solicitors**

**20.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

**21.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**22.0 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor J. Love wished to remind everyone about the fantastic line-up of festive activities taking place this week, with the Holy Cross Christmas Tree lighting event taking place on Thursday, the Late-Night Shopping event on Friday evening and the Festival of Trees in Holy Cross Church at the weekend.

Councillor H. Firth also wished to record, the Town Council's gratitude to Mr R. Thorne who provided the Christmas Tree every year in the town. This was much appreciated.

**23.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**FC81.12.18**

It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

23.1 Update report of the Civic Centre Working Group

Members wished to record their thanks to the Facilities Manager for his hard work during the refurbishment of the restaurant, particularly for completing the project in the timeframe available.

**FC82.12.18**

It was **RESOLVED** for works to proceed on re-flooring the bar and Civic Centre corridors, and for improvements to be made to the directional signage within the Civic Centre.

23.2 To consider providing support to the Pubwatch programme

Members noted the report and requested that the Town Clerk make contact with Pubwatch to discuss further.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.