

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. C. Snelgrove
Cllr. D. French	Cllr. P. Sparks
	Cllr. D. Ward
	Mr. A. Brunsdon

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

2 members of the public  
1 member of the press (recording)

Holly Goring            Town Clerk

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.

None were forthcoming.

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

One member of the public wished to speak in relation to agenda items 8.0 (iii) and 9.0.

**FC.36.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable Mrs Frost to speak.

In regards to agenda item 8.0(iii) Mrs Frost wished to thank Uckfield Town Council for organising Weald on the Field on Saturday 3rd August. From a local resident's point of view, it was enjoyed immensely from the time they arrived to when they went home.

Regarding agenda item 9.0 – Mrs Frost rather hoped that the Town Council did not adopt the Climate Change approach being taken forward by Wealden District

Council. This approach was linked to Extinction Rebellion and their recent campaigning was holding up business in London.

**FC.37.08.19** Members thanked Mrs Frost for her comments and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

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

In the absence of County Councillor Chris Dowling, the Town Clerk read out an update received by email.

Councillor Chris Dowling wished to advise that he would be attending an SLR meeting on Wednesday morning of that week, where he would be discussing matters recently raised within New Town and Ridgewood. The SLR meeting was a six monthly liaison meeting between Uckfield Town Council and East Sussex County Council/East Sussex Highways. The meeting helped to address issues which had not previously been resolved.

Councillor Chris Dowling has been keeping up to date with the highway matters relating to the Ridgewood Farm development in Lewes Road. He was also dealing with a number of matters on behalf of local residents, including speeding, road safety, parking, highway and verge maintenance. He also wished to advise that he is always pleased to hear from Town Councillors and residents on any matters relating to East Sussex County Council which were of concern. He would do his best to obtain answers and information.

Councillor P. Sparks, District Councillor for Uckfield East advised that Wealden District Council were working on becoming carbon neutral by 2050. They had hoped the timescales could be reduced to 2030 but this was not possible. A working party was being set up to look into this and they would seek the support of key partners.

He attended the official opening of Grants Hill Court in Uckfield. He had also recently spoken with some of the residents at Streatfeild House. They were happy with the new facilities on offer but felt it had taken a long time to complete.

At a recent planning training course, Councillor Sparks heard that Wealden District Council's planning department was one of the top five planning authorities in the UK, for the number of planning applications they received (1700-2000 per year). Lewes, in contrast only received in the region of 400.

### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Youth Member Mr Lewis Westwood Flood.

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Chris Dowling and County/District Councillor Claire Dowling.

## 5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

**FC.38.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

## 5.2 Action List

Members considered the detail and asked that the following action be removed from the list, as this was repeated in a further action – FC32.06.19.

FC81.01.18: To review community safety

Members subsequently noted the report.

## 6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**FC.39.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**FC.40.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

**FC.41.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

## 7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Members noted the report.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

## 8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Members noted the report.

(iii) Uckfield Events Working Group - Celebrate

Councillor D. French advised that a report on the Weald on the Field event which took place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019, would be prepared for the next meeting of Full Council. It was a very good day, and lucky with the weather.

Members also wished to thank the Town Clerk, and wider members of the working group involved in organising the event.

Members subsequently noted the report.

## **9.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL SPARKS**

Councillor P. Sparks informed members that scientific evidence was now fairly clear in suggesting that we were experiencing global warming. Last month was the warmest month in some years, and something had to be done to slow the speed of warming. Some may argue that we have left it too late.

Wealden District Council had recently passed a motion to become carbon neutral by 2050 and they felt that parish and town councils could play a key role. In the motion it mentioned electric vehicles but he understood that it may not be possible for this to happen at this time. A comment had also been put forward on social media to suggest the planting of more trees in the town. Councillor P. Sparks suggested that a working party be set up within the Town Council to address these issues.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it would not be possible to look at electric vehicles at present, as the infrastructure would need to be in place such as electric charging points, to enable the grounds staff to move freely around the town. The Town Clerk also noted that working parties were not always effective and low interest led to office staff delivering the majority of the work. She therefore advised that this should be re-considered.

A lengthy debate took place whilst all members put their views forward. In summary the comments included:

- the need to find out what Wealden DC planned to do, before we commenced work;
- often members felt that there were double standards – i.e. Wealden DC signing up to a Climate Emergency but enabling a large number of trees to be felled as part of a development in Crowborough;
- electric vehicles were expensive, so for now when purchasing new vehicles we should make sure they were the most efficient and do a bit more research when purchasing items;
- some felt ‘emergency’ was too strong a phrase, some felt that it was an understatement;
- questioned whether Wealden District Council had considered placing solar panels on their new builds and were they going to help parishes with funding towards the campaign?
- reference was made to the previous campaign Agenda 21 – act global, think local – the importance of leading from the grass roots
- if a working group was set up – to keep things small, realistic and achievable, and most importantly take account of what people can afford in this area;
- a suggestion was made that the tree planting could be linked to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE day in 2020 to plant a tree for every soldier from Uckfield;
- by supporting the motion more pressure could be placed on Wealden DC;
- need to consider resources local to Uckfield. There were three water mills along the River Uck (two in Uckfield, one in Isfield), these could be reburbished to generate power.

Further to the debate, an amendment was proposed to the existing motion to include the proposal to set up a working party.

The new motion with amendment read “*Uckfield Town Council will support the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden District Council and will examine measures to reduce emissions including replacing motorised vehicles with electric powered ones wherever possible, through the setting up of a working party.*”

**FC.42.08.19** With eleven votes out of 15 in favour of the amended motion, and two members abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the motion “to support the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden District Council and examine measures to reduce emissions including replacing motorised vehicles with electric powered ones wherever possible, through the setting up of a working party.”

**10.0 TO COMMENT ON EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL’S CONSULATTION AND FORMAL REVIEW OF THE HIGH STREET’S PARKING CONTROLS**

Members were reminded that East Sussex Highways had altered the parking and waiting restrictions in Uckfield High Street, as part of the improvement works in 2016. There was now a formal six month consultation on the experimental traffic order in place, to formalise these proposed changes. Members of the public had until 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019 to make representations. Elected members were asked whether they wished to provide a response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council.

Comments put forward included:

- there was no mention of how these restrictions would be enforced (although the Town Clerk advised that this was not the purpose of the consultation);
- the signage and markings were not very clear leading towards the disabled parking bay towards the bottom of the High Street and needed more prominent marking;
- it was also very hard to park in the disabled bay and lower bays, and there was no dropped kerb to assist those in a wheelchair to gain access to their vehicle.

**FC.43.08.19** Members **RESOLVED** to:  
(i) note the report;  
(ii) ask the Town Clerk to submit the feedback and comments made by members at the Full Council meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

**11.0 TO CONSIDER THE HIGH WEALD AONB’S DESIGN GUIDE FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Members considered the draft design guide which had been created by the High Weald AONB Partnership for new housing development in the High Weald. The guide would give succinct, practical and consistent advice on design expectations for new housing development within the AONB.

**FC.44.08.19** Members **RESOLVED** to respond and state that Uckfield Town Council absolutely supported the High Weald’s AONB Design Guide for housing development – ‘Building for the High Weald,’ and would urge Wealden District Council to do everything in their power to make this happen.

**12.0 TO CONSIDER BRITISH TELECOM'S LIST OF TELEPHONE BOXES WHICH ARE AT RISK OF BEING REMOVED IN UCKFIELD**

Members were informed that British Telecom were once again carrying out a review of all telephone boxes and their usage, and were consulting on a list within the Wealden District which had recorded low usage in the past 12 months and were therefore highlighted for removal. There were two telephone boxes within Uckfield – outside the shops in Brown's Lane and on the corner of Manor Way/Crown Close. Both telephone boxes recorded five or less telephone calls in the past 12 months.

Members felt that the local residents' associations should be consulted to understand their views – Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association and Churchcoombe Residents' Association. Members advised that they both had meetings that week. The local media had circulated articles on this matter, but not much response had been received and it was thought that the large dependency on smartphones, had reduced the need for these. One member questioned whether the telephone boxes could be maintained and used as noticeboards, but it has since been advised that noticeboards are already situated in both locations near to the telephone boxes.

**FC45.08.19** With eight votes in favour, and six members abstaining, members **RESOLVED** to support the removal of the telephone boxes at the JCN of Brown's Lane/Brown's Close and JCN Manor Way/Crown Close unless objection was received from the residents' associations and valid reasons were given for them to stay.

**13.0 TO REPORT BACK TO FULL COUNCIL ON PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS**

Members were provided with an update on the legislation relating to public space protection orders. This followed support for a motion put forward by Councillor Spike Mayhew at the meeting of Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June, where the Town Clerk was asked to explore these powers.

Public Space Protection Orders were brought in via the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The legislation introduced a number of new tools and powers for the Police and partner agencies to address anti-social behaviour.

The Town Clerk advised that the only PSPO currently in place in Wealden District related to dog fouling, whereas Rother District Council had introduced PSPOs around anti-social behaviour. One member asked how well these power were working in Rother District. The Town Clerk would investigate.

**FC46.08.19** Members **RESOLVED** to ask the Town Clerk to arrange a meeting with Sussex Police and Wealden District Council.

**14.0 TO CONSIDER IN DETAIL THE ROLE OF A COMMUNITY WARDEN**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of Full Council in September 2019.

**15.0 TO CONSIDER A REVISED VERSION OF THE CO-OPTION POLICY**

At the meeting of the Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019, members agreed that they wished to make amendments to the Town Council's Co-option Policy – Policy No. 44. The Town Clerk had undertaken research into model policies and policies used elsewhere and put forward proposed changes to the existing policy in line with previous feedback.

Members discussed whether two minutes was long enough for potential candidates to provide information on themselves and their manifestos but the majority felt that this was sufficient.

**FC47.08.19** Members **RESOLVED** to accept the changes in the revised co-option policy and adopt these changes, going forward.

**16.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT INDEMNITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL RELATING TO A PAYMENT OF THE OFF SITE PLAY SPACE CONTRIBUTION (S106)**

**FC48.08.19** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the content of the draft indemnity agreement between Wealden District Council and Uckfield Town Council relating to a payment of an Off Site Play Space Contribution (S106 monies).

**17.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR (Q1) 2019-20**

Members noted the report.

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

The Deputy Mayor wished to add that they also attended:

20<sup>th</sup> July – Uckfield Singer's Concert

Members subsequently noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements.

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

Two grants of deeds of burial had been received:

Brenda Bonnett

Simon Joliffe and Andrew Joliffe

**FC.49.08.19** It was **RESOLVED** to sign the two certificates.

**20.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

No questions were received by the deadline.

**21.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk wished to advise that the Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Christine Wheatley would be leaving the Town Council at the end of August. Mrs Wheatley had worked for the Town Council for just over thirty years and provided a great deal of dedication and hard work to both the organisation and the town. She would be very much missed and her departure, a big loss to the Town Council in terms of her knowledge and experience. The Town Clerk asked that all members join her in wishing her well in her next adventure and her retirement.

## 22.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Cllr S. Mayhew expressed how excellent, the Weald on the Field event was on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019. He had seen positive comments on social media. He wished to thank all those involved in organising the event and their hard work on the day. Uckfield Festival was fantastic again this year, and the Uckfield Bonfire Procession and Carnival would be the next big event for the town. It was great to see the town so engaged and such a busy calendar of events throughout the year.

## 23.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

### FC50.08.19

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 from Civic Centre Working Group

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 20.31pm.