

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre on Monday 9th January 2017 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. D Bennett (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. J. Anderson	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. J. Beckford	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. M. Dean	Cllr. P. Meakin
Cllr. K. Everett	Cllr. I. Smith
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. D. French	Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the Press
3 members of the Public

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Christine Wheatley – Assistant 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 interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

None were forthcoming.

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

Mr Gibbens wished to speak.

FC.83.01.17

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow Mr Gibbens to speak.

Mr Gibbens wished to speak on Item 10.0 (To formally adopt the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2022). Mr Gibbens was disappointed to see a small response to this document from members of the public. As a result, Mr Gibbens set up a poll online on Uckfield Talk (a Facebook account) to gather the views of local residents. Mr Gibbens talked through the feedback received, which included:

- Residents were concerned about petty criminality and anti-social behaviour and felt that CCTV was an important priority for the Town;
- A suggestion was put forward to set up 'parkruns' which were now popular around the country. Mr Gibbens thought that the initial set up costs would be around £5,000 but would be great initiative to improve health and wellbeing. A small group of volunteers could set the initiative up and approach the Town Council for a grant;
- Mr Gibbens felt work to the Cardale Memorial should not go ahead at cost to the taxpayer as a result of the alleged negative associations with the memorial. However he felt that it would be nice to see more done with the town's historical assets.

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

The Town Clerk advised that unfortunately due to sickness and work commitments, District and County Councillors were unable to make the meeting.

County Councillor Chris Dowling had provided an update which the Town Clerk relayed to attendees. Councillor Dowling would be meeting with Councillor Smith to look at issues in Eastbourne Road. He was maintaining a watch on matters in Fernley Park and ES Highways. Councillor Dowling also advised that the County Council would be reviewing their budget for 2017/18 at Full Council on 7th February 2017.

FC.84.01.17 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Town Mayor, Councillor L. Eastwood.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 5th December 2016 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor

FC.85.01.17 The Town Clerk advised that an amendment was required to the minutes of Item 16.0 (FC.77.12.16), in particular the names of members appointed to the working group. Councillor Meakin's name should be replaced by Councillor Bennett.

Subject to this amendment, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the 5th December 2016 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;-

- To consider a review of the terms of reference for the Council's committees, sub-committees, Urgent Consultation Panel and Editorial Panel.

FC.32.07.16 – To consider a refresh of the Business Plan 2015-2020

- FC.74.12.16 – To consider British Telecom consultation on the removal of specific Telephone boxes in Wealden District
- FC.75.12.16 - To consider whether to join Maresfield Parish in a joint approach to improve A22 road safety
- FC.77.12.16 - To consider the formation of a Working Group to support the arrangement of key events in Uckfield
- FC.79.12.16 - Mayor's Announcements
- FC.81.12.16 - Civic Centre Working Group

Councillor Macve referred to FC.58.10.16 and questioned whether any progress had been made with the re-use of the double height brick kerbs. The Town Clerk advised that at present, little progress had been made.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

FC.86.01.17

- (a) Plans Committees – 12th December 2016 and 3rd January 2017
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 12th December 2016 and 3rd January 2017.

FC.87.01.17

- (b) Environment and Leisure Committee – 19th December 2016
Councillor Smith referred to Item 2.0 of the minutes whereby a member of the public felt that local councillors were not adequately dealing with the issues raised by residents in relation to the Ridgewood Recreation Ground. Councillor Smith considered this to be inaccurate and wished this to be recorded.

Subject to this comment, it was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment and Leisure Committee of the 19th December 2016.

- (c) General Purposes Committee – Nothing to report
The minutes of the last meeting were approved by Full Council on 5th December 2016.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
Nothing to report at this time. The next meeting would take place on 27th January 2017.
- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Nothing to report at this time. The next meeting would take place on 26th January 2017.
- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group
Nothing to report at this time.

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group
Nothing to report at this time. The next meeting would take place on 18th January 2017.

- (ii) Dementia Friendly Working Group
Nothing to report at this time. The next meeting of the Uckfield Dementia Forum would take place on 11th January 2017.
- (iii) Uckfield Events Working Group
Members noted the report.

9.0 **TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2017-22) AND BUDGET (2017-18) FOR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Members considered the draft budget report from Wealden District Council and consultation questions provided as part of their agenda papers. A number of members discussed their thoughts on the consultation document and put their views forward:

- Members felt that information was limited in places which made it difficult to provide a clear response to questions such as where should WDC spend more or less money;
- Members queried some of the changes within the estimated figures provided in General Funds on page four of the WDC consultation document;
- One member felt that the increase of 2.8% was not unreasonable whilst public services were facing ongoing financial pressures, and felt that WDC should spend more money on grants to voluntary organisations and the provision of local authority housing at affordable rents together with provision for homeless people. They felt that UTC should support the proposal to utilise New Homes Bonus funding for use on capital projects. They noted that there was no mention of the Council Tax collection rate and were concerned that the revaluation of Business Rates may place additional pressures on smaller businesses;
- One member noted that the figures presented in the General Funds Summary did not demonstrate commitment to reducing costs. Savings could be seen further down but the high level figures presented did not indicate that savings would be made year on year;
- One member noted that funds within the General Funds summary suggested that Wealden DC could be funding SANGS in the district (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces) which were thought to be funded from developer contributions;
- One member noted that financial estimates for ICT equipment following the district elections rose rapidly. They were surprised these costs were not funded out of member allowances.

FC.88.01.17

Members subsequently **RESOLVED** to thank Wealden District Council for the opportunity to comment on their draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-22 and draft budget 2017-18. Members noted the proposals put forward for the District Council in the next financial year and beyond, supported the use of New Homes Bonus funding but wished to request clarification on the above points noted within the General Funds Summary.

10.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-22

Members reviewed the draft Strategic Plan 2017-22 and comments received during the consultation period.

The Town Clerk highlighted the points made within the responses received and informed members page by page of the proposed amendments that had been made to the draft. This included the addition of a Mayor's foreword, adding in the ward names of Town Councillors, making changes to the challenges and opportunities noted on page four, amending a typo on page seven, adding in an objective focused on supporting the development of the Neighbourhood Plan on page eight, referencing the Town Council's work on the Joint Town Centre Regeneration Committee and referring to phase three of the improvements works on page 10, where improvements would be made to the Bus Station area in 2017.

There were some areas however which members would need to consider further:

- Cardale Memorial;
- parkrun;
- Sale of Town Council property;
- Public footpaths.

The Deputy Mayor explained the research that he had undertaken into the history of Reverend Cardale and advised that there was no evidence to say there was any negative link or associations with this individual, and would not at any point suggest that the Town Council move forward if he had concerns. Another member advised that the Town Council had already agreed to undertake the works and members of Environment and Leisure Committee had recently reviewed the current status of the project.

The Assistant Town Clerk informed Full Council that a meeting would be arranged with ESCC to review suitable locations for the Cardale Memorial and the Environment and Leisure Committee would not order the stone until a suitable location had been found. Members suggested potential locations including Elizabeth Gardens, Town Hall Square and the Bus Station area (as part of the works for phase three).

Members suggested that the parkrun initiative be taken to the next Environment and Leisure Committee, to which the Chairman agreed.

Members discussed the need to improve the twittens and footpaths around the town but difficulties in ownership and the cost of improvements had halted works in the past. One member noted that Shoreham had a map of all twittens in the town to encourage people to walk and improve their health and wellbeing. The condition of twittens and footpaths varied quite substantially. The Town Clerk advised that an objective had been included within the Strategic Plan on page 10 to reflect the need to support improvements to footpaths and twittens in the town.

FC.89.01.17 Subject to the amendments made, members subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the Strategic Plan 2017-22 for delivery.

11.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2017-18

Members reviewed the draft annual plan which had received two amendments in response to the feedback received from members of the public.

FC.90.01.17 Subject to these amendments, members subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Plan 2017-18 for delivery.

12.0 TO FORMALLY SET THE ANNUAL BUDGET (PRECEPT) FOR 2017-18

The Assistant Town Clerk presented the draft budget figures for 2017-18 which had resulted in an overall increase of £3.83 for the full year in 2017-18 per Council Tax Band D property. This equated to 32p a month or around 1p a day. In percentage terms it would mean an increase of approximately 2.55% on the current financial year.

FC.91.01.17 Members **RESOLVED** to agree and adopt the Annual Budget for 2017-18.

13.0 TO REVIEW UPDATE ON PROPOSED WAY FORWARD FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Members considered the proposed approach for engaging young people in Uckfield Town Council's decision-making process. Two students from UCTC had expressed an interest in attending the Town Council's committee meetings. If interested, these students would need to be appointed as non-voting co-opted members of the Town Council.

FC.92.01.17 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to this method of youth engagement; enabling young people to participate in Town Council discussions at public meetings and discussions about the town.

14.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the Mayor's engagements.

15.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

None were received.

16.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

17.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

18.0 CHAIRMAN'S (DEPUTY MAYOR'S) ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

19.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC.93.01.17 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.

19.1 Progress update on CCTV options for Uckfield Town Centre
Members noted the update provided by the Town Clerk.

FC.94.01.17 19.2 Update report on parking issues within Uckfield Town Centre
Members discussed the current issues facing the Town Centre and **RESOLVED**
for the Town Clerk to continue discussions with Sussex Police and Wealden
District Council.

The meeting finished at 8.38pm.