

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 14th January 2019 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Mayhew (Town Mayor)	Cllr. D. French
Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. P. Meakin
Cllr. M. Dean	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. K. Everett	Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. H. Firth	

IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the Press
1 County Councillor – Councillor Chris Dowling

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Christine Wheatley – Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

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.

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor P. Sparks in relation to agenda item 12.0. Councillor Sparks advised that he was the Town Council's representative on the Stakeholder Board for Wealden Works.

A declaration of personal interest was received from the Mayor, Councillor S. Mayhew which related to agenda item 19.0 due to the support he provided to St. Philip's Catholic school on residential trips or events.

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

None received.

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

FC.83.01.19 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders the County Councillor to speak.

Councillor Chris Dowling provided an update on matters within his constituency.

Lewes Road – Cllr Dowling advised that a meeting had taken place towards the end of last year with the numerous partner agencies involved, to discuss the options that had been previously considered to reduce the speed of traffic along Lewes Road near to the entrances of the new development. Further speed monitoring was undertaken just before Christmas and a further meeting would be arranged in the next few weeks to bring the planning stage of this work to a conclusion.

SLR meetings – SLR meetings are partnership meetings held with the County Council/East Sussex Highways. A meeting had taken place that morning where Cllr Dowling raised the concerns of residents in his constituency which included fallen leaves and how the double yellow lines in New Road were less visible as a result of this and general wear and tear.

Budget setting - Cabinet papers were due to be published that day for the East Sussex County Council's budget setting procedures. They would be proposing a 2.99% increase in council tax. Revenue spend in 2019/20 would still be in the region of £375million, with one off payments from central government for specific projects around winter health/care as an example.

One member noted that the gullies had been emptied in London Road but the debris from the cleaning had been left either side. With any heavy rain, it was inevitable that the debris would wash back in. Councillor Dowling advised that unfortunately they are not required to take the debris away.

Two further queries were raised which related to Wealden District Council's draft Corporate Plan and budget papers. The Town Clerk advised that she would pass these comments on.

FC.84.01.19 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Eastwood and I. Smith. Apologies had also been received from District and County Councillor Claire Dowling.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 3rd December 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

FC.85.01.19 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council of the 3rd December 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor (as they chaired the meeting).

5.2 Action list

Members considered the action list and requested that the following actions be removed from the table as no further action was required at this time:

- FC62.10.18 – Safe Haven Scheme
- FC75.12.18 - Grant application for funding in 2019/20
- FC76.12.18 - North Wealden Community Transport Partnership
- FC77.12.18 - Financial contribution to set up of Parkrun
- FC78.12.18 – East Sussex County Council’s Core Offer

One member noted that a response had still not been received from MP Nus Ghani to the Town Council’s letter, which had been sent over three months ago.

7.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

FC.86.01.19

(a) Plans Committees – 10th December 2018 and 2nd January 2019
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 10th December 2018 and 2nd January 2019.

(b) Environment and Leisure Committee
No meeting has been held since the last meeting of Full Council.

FC.87.01.19

(c) General Purposes Committee – 7th January 2019
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 7th January 2019.

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
Nothing to report at this time.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Nothing to report at this time.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group
Nothing to report at this time.

9.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group
Nothing to report at this time.

(ii) Uckfield Events Working Group (Celebrate Uckfield)
Nothing to report at this time.

(iii) Dementia Friendly Working Group – Uckfield Dementia Forum
Nothing to report at this time.

10.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WEALDEN PARISH REMUNERATION PANEL ON TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES FOR 2019-20

Members considered a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel which recommended a 2% increase in member allowances for Town Councillors at Uckfield Town Council, in 2019/20. This equated to an increase of £25 (per annum) for the basic allowance and an increase of £35 (per annum) for the

Chairman's allowance.

There were mixed views from members. Some felt it was the wrong time to accept an increase.

Some members felt that it would create issues later on, if the gradual increase that had been recommended was not taken now, as it could result in higher percentage increases needing to be considered further down the line.

A proposal was put forward to accept this allowance and the recommended increase of 2%. Four members voted in favour, and five members voted against. As this proposal failed, members continued discussions before a second proposal was placed on the table, which recommended refusing the proposed increase for 2019/20.

FC.88.01.19 The matter was taken to a vote. With six members voting in favour and two members voting against out of 13 members present, it was **RESOLVED** to refuse the recommended 2% increase in allowances and retain the same figures as the 2018/19 annual basic allowance (£1,261) and Chairman's allowance (£1,741).

11.0 TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CORPORATE PLAN (2019-23), DRAFT BUDGET (2019/20) AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members considered the questions put forward within Wealden District Council's consultation survey and the accompanying draft documents.

Comments from members included:

Draft Corporate Plan 2019-23

- The draft Corporate Plan was positively worded, and presented a positive attitude towards the journey ahead for Wealden DC but a little more detail was required in places about how they planned to make these positive changes;
- There was often mention of creating housing options for older people, but realistically older people would prefer to downsize to bungalows for improved accessibility and space, rather than small sheltered units. There was never any reference or mention of this type of housing being built;
- It was noted that Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire & Rescue were also under pressure, and it was important for local authorities to reflect this in their plans and ensure we all maintain support for these important agencies;
- Members supported the initiative to explore the provision of more electric vehicle charging points in Wealden District;

Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

- Paragraph 2 of the 2019/20 Budget Committee report was unclear and further clarification was required to explain what this paragraph was describing;
- There appeared to be no funds set aside in 2023/24 for the next round of Wealden District Council elections;

- The General Fund Summary on page 85 of the Committee report didn't appear to reflect any increase on rents received from investment property. It was thought that over a six-year period, that some level of increase would be anticipated;

Members noted the feedback provided and the Town Clerk advised that she would report these comments to Wealden District Council.

12.0 TO CONSIDER PROVIDING A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE RUNNING OF WEALDEN WORKS

The Town Council provided a financial contribution to Wealden Works in April 2017 to assist with the running of the programme when news was received that Tomorrow's People were going to pull the funding of rural based projects. This would affect the projects running in Hailsham and Heathfield. The Town Council's contribution supported the newly established Wealden Works and has remained engaged with their work which supports young people aged 16 – 24 years in Wealden who are not in education, employment or training.

A member represented the Town Council at their stakeholder board and this report sought to understand whether members would consider providing a further contribution to the project either now or in 2019/20. The Responsible Financial Officer reminded members that the budget setting process was almost complete for 2019/20 and any funds provided would have to come from general reserves.

The member representative updated Town Councillors on the work of the project, and explained that a good relationship had now been built with Uckfield College and Lewes Job Centre, who were both making referrals. There were nine young people attending the current 10 week course, of which two were from Uckfield.

The queries raised by members included:

- who else was contributing to the delivery of the project;
- cuts to rural bus services had reduced services between Uckfield and Heathfield, how were the young people from Uckfield getting to Wealden Works?;
- had they considered partnering up with The Prince's Trust?;
- if a request was considered through the community grants programme, key information would be required including a copy of the annual accounts and information on their current situation.

FC.89.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to request that the Town Clerk make contact with Wealden Works to obtain further information, and report back to Full Council in February 2019.

13.0 TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THE 'UCKFIELD CARD'

Members considered a report which provided details of the 'Uckfield Card' which encouraged people to 'buy local' by enabling businesses to sign up to the scheme, and attract customers with small discounts or offers. The card was already in existence but to date, had not been promoted widely within the town.

Members understood the concept but were unable to gauge how popular the card would be in Uckfield. They felt that it could be beneficial for Luxfords Restaurant in terms of attracting custom, but were uncertain about investing in the scheme itself, as if the cards didn't sell well, they would have invested with minimal return. The Town Council would not be prepared to take this risk with public money.

FC.90.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to propose at this moment in time, that the Town Council should review and support the scheme, but not in a financial way. However the Town Council would maintain a watching brief on the scheme as it goes forward.

14.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019/24
Members considered the comments received in relation to the draft Strategic Plan 2019/24, which set out the priorities of the organisation over the next five years.

Members noted that the feedback received was positive. It was noted that a suggestion had been put forward for the Town Council to create and adopt a Pesticides Minimisation Policy, which could be phased in over the next two to three years. Members felt that this suggestion should be considered by Environment and Leisure Committee at a future meeting.

FC.91.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Strategic Plan 2019/24 for Uckfield Town Council.

15.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2019/20
Members considered the draft Annual Plan for 2019/20 which set out the priorities of the Town Council over the next financial year.

FC.92.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Plan 2019/20 for Uckfield Town Council.

16.0 TO FORMALLY SET THE ANNUAL BUDGET (PRECEPT) FOR 2019/20
Members considered the budget papers for 2019/20. Taking on board the resolution to refuse an increase in member allowances, the amount allocated within the budget for member allowances was reduced for 2019/20. This created a draft budget which proposed an increase of 2.63% per Council Band D property per annum (increasing the amount by £4.12).

FC.93.01.19 With 12 votes in favour, out of 13 members present, members **RESOLVED** to adopt the annual budget for 2019/20 and precept of £909,545.

17.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2019/24
Members reviewed the refreshed version of the Asset Management Plan for 2019/24.

FC.94.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Asset Management Plan for 2019/24.

- 18.0 TO CONSIDER APPOINTING A DIRECTOR TO THE PARKRUN INITIATIVE**
Members considered a report which sought to appoint a Town Council representative on the Parkrun Board, a Run Director, who would represent the Town Council but also assist with Parkruns on at least four Saturdays a year.

FC.95.01.19 Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor S. Mayhew to become a 'Parkrun Run Director' and Town Council representative on the Uckfield Parkrun Board.

- 19.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE ACCESS AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. PHILIP'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**
Members reviewed a report and copy of the access agreement between St. Philip's Catholic School and Uckfield Town Council, that had been drawn up by legal professionals.

FC.96.01.19 The matter was taken to a vote. With 12 members in favour, and one member (Councillor H. Firth) being recorded as voting against, members **RESOLVED** to sign and seal the Licence for Access between Uckfield Town Council and The Arundel and Brighton Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation Limited.

- 20.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE SOURCE**
The Mayor advised that unfortunately this item had to be deferred to the next meeting, as a result of the papers not being ready.

- 21.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**
Members noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements.

- 22.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**

Seven grants of deeds of burial had been received:

FC.97.01.19 It was **RESOLVED** to sign the certificate for the following:

Keith Soult and Amanda Slade

Mary Williams (two plots)

Tracy Taylor

Sylvia Rosalind Jenner

The Secretary of State for Defence

Mrs Nicola Francis Fribbens

- 23.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

- 24.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

- 25.0 CHAIRMAN'S (TOWN MAYOR'S) ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor, Councillor S. Mayhew announced that he would be hosting a Charity Ball in honour of the Uckfield Lions and District Club on Saturday 2nd March 2019 in the Weald Hall of the Civic Centre, Uckfield. Dress would be Black Tie and information had been published that day on the Civic Centre's website and via a press release.

The meeting finished at 8.31pm.