

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 16th September 2019 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. S. Mayhew (Town Mayor)
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. D. French	Mr. A. Brunsdon
	Mr. L. Westwood Flood

IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the public
1 member of the press (recording)
County Councillor Chris Dowling and County/District Cllr Claire Dowling

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.

Councillor J. Love wished to declare a personal interest in agenda item 12.0 as a result of working for the organisation involved. Councillor P. Sparks also wished to declare a personal interest in this item.

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.51.09.19 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable a County Council and District Council update to be provided.

Councillor Claire Dowling advised that it had been a relatively quiet summer, and the ESCC Cabinet meeting due to take place at the end of August 2019 had been

cancelled. As a result of this, there was very little to update.

Councillor Chris Dowling wished to advise that he attended the SLR meeting in August 2019. 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. One of the matters discussed was the need to refresh the double yellow lines on New Road/Eastbourne Road, which was due to be carried out shortly.

Councillor H. Firth, District Councillor advised that she had attended a Wealden Strategic Partnership meeting recently, which consisted of a forum whereby all key partner agencies working in the Wealden District came together to discuss matters of shared interest. The Partnership meeting congratulated those who had been involved in the set up of the Uckfield Youth Club, it was an excellent initiative but recognised that more focus was required for the older teenagers as well. A report on the issues experienced and current services in place would be brought back to the next Wealden Strategic Partnership Meeting for discussion.

FC.52.09.19 Members thanked County and District Councillors for their updates and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors C. Macve and C. Snelgrove.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 5th August 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.53.09.19 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 5th August 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members considered the detail and asked that the following actions be removed from the list as a result of these actions being completed or being duplicated in a further action–

FC42.08.19 – Motion from Cllr P. Sparks;

FC43.08.19 – High Street Parking Controls;

FC44.08.19 – High Weald AONB's Design Guide;

FC45.08.19 – Telephone boxes at risk of being removed in Uckfield

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 19th August and 9th September 2019

FC.54.09.19 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 19th August and 9th September 2019

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 27th August 2019

FC.55.09.19 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 27th August 2019.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 12th August 2019

FC.56.09.19 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 12th August 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 preparations were underway for the Uckfield Revival – classic vehicle parade and display on Saturday 5th October. Councillor French advised that more volunteers would be welcome to assist with marshalling the event.

Members subsequently noted the report.

9.0 TO NOTE THE DECISION OF THE URGENT CONSULTATION PANEL

Members received a report to advise that a recent decision had been made by the Urgent Consultation Panel. The Urgent Consultation Panel was called on 4th September 2019 to request that a decision be made to assist with funding the purchase of a new refrigerator and freezer for Luxfords Restaurant.

Taking into account the importance of efficient cold storage of food items, members were asked if they could:

(i) consider broadening the scope of the Town Council's earmarked reserves set aside (£1,350) for the replacement of a microwave in Luxfords Restaurant, to 'Luxfords equipment,' and:

(ii) agree to purchase a new upright refrigerator and freezer for the kitchen of Luxfords Restaurant using the earmarked reserves of 'Luxfords Equipment' (£1,350).

Members of the Urgent Consultation Panel agreed to the above recommendations.

Members of Full Council noted the report.

Youth Members Mr Brunsdon and Mr Westwood Flood joined the meeting at 7.09pm.

10.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BEN COX

Members were presented with a motion from Councillor Ben Cox which focused on food poverty, the current picture in Uckfield, and in particular 'Youth Food Poverty.'

Councillor Ben Cox put forward the following motion:

Uckfield Town Council Council notes that "Youth Food Poverty is growing and that overall food poverty is growing in Uckfield. The Town Council resolves to:

- *investigate the size of youth food poverty in Uckfield primary and secondary schools and to our best endeavours try to reduce it within the life of this council;*
- *look at working with external bodies (foodcycle and chomp) to assist in tackling food poverty in young people;*
- *run an information campaign to inform the public on how to deal with food poverty using local charities and government aids. This could include advising councillors in order to enable them to spread the word;*
- *work closely with schools to see what assistance is needed to help reduce the effects of food poverty in their students (i.e. breakfast and after school clubs)"*

Members looked at the figures provided and were interested in investigating these in more detail as the figure for eligibility for free school meals in Wealden was much lower than deprived districts such as Hastings. They were also interested in understanding what action, Councillor B. Cox wished the Town Council to take.

It was acknowledged that even those who did claim free school meals during term time, were not supported during the school holidays and it was unknown whether households were struggling in these holiday periods.

One member felt that this was a public health matter, and the Town Council should therefore be encouraging the relevant local authority to take further steps as it was very difficult for the Town Council to take action at this level.

Another member noted that the Operation Yellowhammer Report reported that the price of food was going to go up by a further 10% and it was already recognised that the demand on the local food bank was increasing.

Councillor Cox clarified that there were a number of charities such as CHOMP who would be able to assist and provide support, so not necessarily at financial cost to the Town Council.

It was then proposed to accept the report and take up the recommendations, with a caveat that at this moment in time, these investigations would not cost the Town Council. Any information forthcoming would be collated and sent to the appropriate authorities.

FC.57.09.19 With eleven members voting in favour, and one abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the report from Councillor Ben Cox in relation to youth food poverty, and take up the recommendations outlined in the above motion, with a caveat that the investigations undertaken at this stage would be at no cost to the Town Council.

Any information received would be collated and sent to the relevant authorities.

11.0 TO CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Members considered a report which had been produced by Councillor A. Smith in relation to Community Land Trusts. Community Land Trusts were set up by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. Councillor A. Smith explained that there were already a number in Sussex, including East Hoathly, Hailsham and Herstmonceux.

Councillor A. Smith recognised that there was a lack of affordable housing in Uckfield and wished to ask the Town Council for support, not necessarily to do the leg work, but to invite members of the public to form a committee and start exploring this initiative.

It was highlighted by other members that one of the main issues was finding suitable land for such a project, as there was no land to spare and certain areas were protected.

As there were no initial upfront costs involved, some members felt that there was no harm in exploring the initiative.

Councillor A. Smith advised that generally, Community Land Trusts were built on agricultural land. It was suggested that as the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were working on a neighbourhood plan for the town, that perhaps it might be an opportunity for them to look at this, during the development of the plan.

FC.58.09.19 With all but one member in support (one abstained) it was **RESOLVED** to request that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group invite Councillor A. Smith to the next meeting, and incorporate the two matters to further investigate Community Land Trusts.

12.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR VICTORIA PAVILION

FC.59.09.19 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the lease agreement for Victoria Pavilion, with Sussex Support Services, and two Councillors signed and sealed the lease agreement at the meeting.

13.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENTS FOR THE FORMER CEMETERY CHAPELS

FC.60.09.19 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the lease agreements for the Former Cemetery Chapels, with Derek Tourle Memorial Masons, and two Councillors signed and sealed the lease agreements at the meeting.

14.0 TO CONSIDER WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

One member felt that they would like the polling station for residents in Manor Park to return to using the Youth Centre, as it would meet all of the requirements in terms of accessibility.

Unfortunately members were aware however that Uckfield College may utilise the Youth Centre during the building works, and therefore this could restrict availability in the near future.

One member noted that the signage needed to be improved at Foresters Hall for elections.

Members subsequently noted the report and opportunity to raise their views and feedback of their constituents.

15.0 TO CONSIDER IN DETAIL THE ROLE OF A COMMUNITY WARDEN

Members were presented with a report which summarised the history of their discussions on community wardens, along with feedback from a report produced for the Sussex & Surrey Association of Local Councils, feedback from the parishes of Crowborough, Withyham and Forest Row who currently employed a shared warden, and current interest in Wealden District, in sharing a community warden.

The Town Clerk's report also stressed the importance of the following three issues, when making any decision:

(i) what would their role be in the community – would it meet the needs of our community, and what amount of time, would we require someone to commit to the role;

(ii) being clear right from the outset and understanding what powers the Community Warden would have – their abilities and their limitations (the accreditation scheme was first referred to in the report to members in July 2016)

(iii) making sure if recruiting a Community Warden, that the person is the right person – in terms of personality, level of engagement, and suitability for an enforcement but also a frontline community role.

Members highlighted a number of points for consideration, which included:

- there were concerns with regard to lone working and safety;
- it was acknowledged that their powers would be limited and it was unlikely that the warden would be able to solve the current issues with Anti-Social Behaviour, so would the financial burden be worthwhile;
- community wardens elsewhere tend to be working in areas where civil parking enforcement was already in place;
- uncertainty as to whether the Town Council should cover these costs, until the community warden would have some form of authority or power;
- positive role which would provide a community presence, but not sure whether it was the wrong timing. If the Town Council wished to apply for Public Space Protection Orders, the Community Warden could then assist with enforcing the areas identified;
- it was suggested that despite Crowborough having a warden, there was still vandalism after dark;

FC61.09.19 Members **RESOLVED to:**

- (i) note the report with interest;
- (ii) accept that at this time, the Town Council did not wish to employ a Community Warden as a result of their limited powers and restrictions on the times of day they could patrol, but continue to work closely with Sussex Police to provide security and safety to the community of Uckfield.

16.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor wished to add that they also attended the Lion's Cream Tea Party at the Ridgewood Village Hall.

On 13th September, they attended the South East Driveability Launch at Uckfield Fire Station, which showcased vehicles for severely disabled people. The event also provided an opportunity for East Sussex Fire & Rescue to promote their Home Safety Visit Service and road safety advice. Further information was available on their website and on their Facebook page:

<https://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/safer-homes/home-safety-visits/>

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

17.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE INDEMNITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL FOR OFF SITE PLAYING SPACE CONTRIBUTION (S106)

FC.62.09.19 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the indemnity agreement and two Councillors signed and sealed the agreement.

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

None received.

19.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

No questions were received by the deadline.

20.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk wished to advise that following the retirement of the Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Christine Wheatley, the new Assistant Town Clerk, Mrs D'Alessio would be starting in her role on 7th October 2019.

It had now been over a year since the Town Crier started his role, and it was now time for the Town Council to review the role, what was working well and what needed to be re-considered. The Town Clerk planned to present a report for discussion at the next meeting of Full Council.

Feedback had been received from members of the public which related to toilet provision for the Carnival and Bonfire Procession. The Civic Centre was open most of the weekend, but had a private function on the Friday evening and was unable to let the general public in, to use the facilities. It was hoped that the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society could look into this for future years.

21.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor wished to request the help of members or their friends, colleagues to assist with marshalling on the day of the Uckfield Revival (Saturday 5th October).

Councillor S. Mayhew also wished to advise members of the recent correspondence he had with Mrs Whitestone, regarding tree planting and the forthcoming Planting Ceremony at Whitesmith, to which anyone was welcome. Members were signposted to the Facebook page 'Uckfield of Trees.'

The meeting closed at 20.30pm.