

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 26th February 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. L Eastwood (Town Mayor)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. D. Bennett (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. M. Dean	Cllr. I. Smith
Cllr. K. Everett	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. D. French	Mr D. Manvell (Youth Member)

IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the Press
1 member of the Public

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 interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

Cllr Beesley declared an interest in agenda item 9.0, as Chairman of the Uckfield Performance Ensemble, they rent storage space from the Town Council.

Cllr Sparks declared an interest in agenda item 12.0 as a relative was Secretary of the Millennium Green Trust.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Anderson and P. Meakin.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 15th January 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC.91.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council of the 15th January 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

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:

FC 82.01.18 – Wealden Parish Renumeration Panel

FC 83.01.18 - Wealden District Council's Draft MTFS & Budget 2018/19

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

FC.92.02.18 (a) Plans Committees – 29th January and 19th February 2018
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 29th January and 19th February 2018.

FC.93.02.18 (b) Environment and Leisure Committee – 12th February 2018
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment and Leisure Committee of the 12th February 2018.

FC.94.02.18 (c) General Purposes Committee – 22nd January 2018
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment and Leisure Committee of the 22nd January 2018.

7.0 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
Members noted the report.

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

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group
A report is due to be considered under confidential business.

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

(iii) Dementia Friendly Working Group – Uckfield Dementia Forum
Members noted the report.

9.0 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2018/23

Members reviewed the report and accompanying draft Asset Management Plan. One member noted that bus shelters and bins were not included in the summary at the back of the draft plan. The Town Clerk confirmed that the full asset register had these recorded but the asset management plan focused more on physical assets such as buildings and space.

FC.95.02.18

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) note the contents of the draft Asset Management Plan;
- (b) adopt the Asset Management Plan as a key strategic document which sits alongside the Budget and Strategic Plan;
- (c) give authorisation for the Town Clerk to proceed with the recommended next steps listed in 1.6 and obtain external support from Pyxis Consulting to help with developing a key procedure for declaring assets surplus.

10.0 TO CONSIDER WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (2018/23)

Members considered the draft homelessness strategy produced by Wealden District Council which took into account the forthcoming changes from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Members listened to an update from District and Town Councillor Firth who advised that the new legislation provided authorities with longer timeframes within which to assist people with finding accommodation. The difficulty was however, that there was a limited supply of temporary housing. There was a ceiling on how much young people could earn to be supported by Wealden DC and property prices in the district were high (rental and ownership). It was suggested that perhaps Wealden DC could buy or supply a suitable building for temporary accommodation. It was also suggested that if Uckfield had village status, that a greater proportion of future development could be allocated to people with a local connection.

One member considered the report well-written but felt the situation was quite alarming. The only realistic way of finding accommodation in this area was through the private rented sector, which saw high rents, and this could then potentially create a cycle if tenants were unable to maintain living costs. Demands on local bed and breakfast accommodation for use as temporary accommodation resulted in a number of people being placed in East Kent. It was noted that this could cause further difficulties if the person/family had childcare or work commitments to travel to. Members accepted that Wealden DC were doing their best but felt change was needed and a longer-term solution was required to reduce dependence on the private rented sector.

One member quoted the proportion of affordable homes in the Ridgewood Farm development (phases 1A and 1B) and the small percentage of properties which were 1 bed.

FC.96.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** to request the Town Clerk to provide feedback to Wealden District Council in response to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council, and for members to respond to the consultation by Friday 9th March 2018.

11.0 TO REVIEW AND RESPOND TO THE REVISED PROPOSALS FOR HIGHWAYS WORKS LINKED TO PHASES 1A & 1B OF DEVELOPMENT AT RIDGEWOOD FARM

Members considered the revised proposals for traffic calming in Lewes Road:

Members supported the proposal to extend the 30mph limit to just north of Little Horsted roundabout and the addition of a gateway feature, but highlighted their concerns with the proposal to introduce speed cushions in Lewes Road.

Members felt that the introduction of speed cushions:

- would be of concern as they understood that central government had set a national policy to have these removed by 2040;
- could suggest that the introduction of such traffic calming measures would provide a temporary measure, only;
- could see an increase in vehicle emissions;
- were limited and alternative methods may be more effective such as the introduction of a Speed Camera similar to that used in Halland;

FC.97.02.18 Members **RESOLVED** to ask the Town Clerk to report back these comments to East Sussex Highways in response to their consultation.

12.0 TO SIGN A LICENCE TO CREATE A GATED ACCESS BETWEEN RIDGEWOOD RECREATION GROUND AND THE UCKFIELD MILLENNIUM TRUST

The Town Clerk clarified that this licence agreement had been created subject to discussions at Environment and Leisure Committee to move forward with a licence agreement for creating a gated access on the boundary between Ridgewood Recreation Ground and the Millennium Green.

FC.98.02.18 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the licence agreement between Uckfield Town Council and the Millennium Green Trust, with two members signing and sealing the document.

13.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE QUICKBORN SUITE

Members were informed that the lease agreement being renewed matched that previously reviewed by General Purposes Committee. The tenant had signed the papers and two members were asked to sign and seal two copies of the lease agreement alongside the Town Clerk.

FC.99.02.18 Members **RESOLVED** to sign and seal the lease agreement for the renewal of an existing lease for the Quickborn Suite.

14.0 TO REVIEW THE DECISION OF EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ON THEIR GRASS VERGE CUTTING CONTRACT

Members considered the recent decision made by East Sussex County Council in respect of grass verge cutting and their plans to reduce the number of cuts undertaken per annum from five or six, to two in the urban area.

Members highlighted their concerns and dissatisfaction with the announcement, along with the timing of this decision. The Town Council's budget for 2018/19 was adopted in January 2018, which meant any additional funding allocated would have to be taken from reserves.

Members recognised that public services were under increasing pressure to do more with less, but felt greater pressure was being placed on parish/town councils as a result of these financial restraints.

Members were asked to consider if they wished to explore taking on the contract altogether, or to pay a sum of £6,009 per annum to maintain current service levels. Views were polarised and members struggled with the desire to maintain a green and tidy town, and take on responsibility for services which were within the remit of another authority.

- FC.100.02.18** Members subsequently took the matter to a vote to consider the three options:
- (i) For Uckfield Town Council to take on the full contract for grass verge cutting in Uckfield Town – *four votes in favour, and seven votes against*;
 - (ii) For Uckfield Town Council to pay a fee of £6,009 to maintain the current standard of five to six cuts along the urban grass verges;
- *one vote in favour and nine votes against*;
 - (iii) To retain the status quo – with responsibility for grass verge cutting remaining the responsibility of East Sussex County Council –
nine votes in favour and three votes against.

With the above results, it was **RESOLVED** to maintain status quo, and for East Sussex County Council to maintain responsibility for grass verge cutting during 2018/19.

15.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the Mayor's engagements.

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

One grant of deed of burial had been received:

- FC.101.02.18** It was **RESOLVED** to sign the certificates for the following:
- Valerie West and Stephen West
 - Amanda Simpson
 - James Spurgeon
 - Rosemary Jones
 - Anthony West

17.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

18.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk provided an update on Hughes Way Play Area. Work had been progressing well and it was hoped subject to weather this week, that the project would be completed on schedule.

19.0 CHAIRMAN'S (TOWN MAYOR'S) ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor attended the Uckfield & District Lions International Weekend, and met people from France and Germany, to name just a few countries in attendance. The Mayor advised that the Uckfield Lions did a tremendous job in the town. On behalf of the Governor, Jackie Robinson, the Mayor had been handed a gift, which included a flag and a paperweight. Members of Full Council welcomed these gifts and announced that these would be placed in their cabinets in the Council Chambers of the Civic Centre.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Eastwood had recently received a letter from Her Majesty, the Queen to thank her for her hard work in Uckfield. The Town Mayor wrote back to the Queen to thank her for her kind words but most importantly to send a message to highlight the hard work of the Lions, and say thank you for all they do in the town. At their 49th Centenary, the Mayor presented them with a letter from Her Majesty, the Queen, which was very well received. Cllr Macve confirmed that the Town Mayor's gift had been very well received and they had enjoyed her company.

On 7th April 2018, the Lions would be running an event to encourage males to attend prostate screening. The event would take place at the Belmont Centre from 10am onwards and males aged between 45 and 75 were invited to attend. This event was an important priority and the Mayor encouraged those present, their friends and relatives to take part.

Cllr Eastwood also noted the recent increase in anti-social behaviour in the town and incidents that had taken place at the weekend. The Town Clerk had been working with Sussex Police to understand what action was being taken. The Mayor also wished to urge residents not to organise their own vigilante groups. There was police presence and the Police were handling the issues that were occurring.

20.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC102.02.18 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.

20.1 Update on CCTV Installation (confidential business)

Members noted the update provided.

20.2 Report of the Civic Centre Working Group

Members noted the update provided.

The meeting finished at 8.33pm.