

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 7.00pm

## **PRESENT:**

Cllr. L. Eastwood (Town Mayor)	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. D. Bennett	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
Cllr. J. Love	Mr D. Manvell (Youth Member)

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

1 member of the Press  
2 members of the Public  
Cllr Chris Dowling  
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 interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

None were received.

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

Mrs Frost wished to speak on agenda item 7.0(i). Although there was no report circulated for this item, the Town Clerk advised that Mrs Frost could continue.

Mrs Frost referred to the recent wet weather and heavy rain and noted that whilst works were undertaken to improve the High Street in 2016, it had been advised that one of the main benefits of the new design would be the tree pits, and their ability to assist with the prevention of flooding at the bottom of the High Street. Mrs Frost wished to remind the Council that residents had, at that time, pointed out that the tree pits were unlikely to work, but work continued and they were planted. The recent heavy downpours on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 however had resulted in shops in the lower part (the 'bowl') of the High Street being flooded.

Mrs Frost subsequently requested that an emergency meeting of the Town Centre Regeneration Committee be convened to enable a public apology to be made.

The Town Mayor thanked Mrs Frost for her comments and informed the Council that the Town Clerk had advised that works were still ongoing in regards to the High Street which included works to drainage.

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

Councillor Chris Dowling was in attendance and provided an update in respect of matters relating to East Sussex County Council and his constituency.

Ridgewood:

- East Sussex County Council had now adopted the roads at Fernley Park;
- work was underway with Ridgewood Town Councillors to look into the possibility of introducing community speedwatch in this area;

Newtown: concerns were raised relating to the condition of Mill Lane and vehicle movement by the neighbouring garage. The resident has since met with the neighbouring garage and suggestions were put forward to help reduce congestion in this area.

A member asked what was happening in relation to education, in particular to funding levels. Many of the local schools were now at capacity and didn't have the resources, required.

Councillor Claire Dowling explained that she met with UCTC on a regular basis, and was in contact with the local Education Authority. Councillor Claire Dowling agreed that the current situation was not good enough and the resources available were not enough.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Eastwood added that she had previously had a discussion with MP Nusrat Ghani regarding these concerns. Cllr Eastwood felt that sitting back was not an option and wished to make contact with both East Sussex County Council and Central Government in regards to the current situation.

A youth member also noted that they had not received an update on the Youth Centre located near to UCTC. This facility was used by a number of other groups and an important resource for the community.

Councillor Claire Dowling provided an update on matters relating to her constituency and Wealden District Council.

Two speed surveys had now been undertaken in Ringles Cross to assess the speed of traffic. The results were being analysed and a meeting would be arranged shortly with the local resident previously involved and East Sussex Highways officers.

Wealden District Council had obtained £100,000 grant funding, to support 200 properties across the district who suffered on a regular basis from flooding. Part of the initiative offered these residential properties a free survey. To date, 34 properties had come forward and 13 had taken up the initiative.

Health and Wellbeing continued to be an important topic for the District Council with the launch of the recent Walking festival and WealdenDoSussexWalks website. Eight mile circular walks were now being advertised for members of the public to follow.

The Wealden Dementia Action Alliance was still going strong. They were working closely with the Uckfield Dementia Forum, which would be celebrating its one year anniversary in November 2017.

The Wealden Free Activity Day at West Park Recreation Ground would be taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> August; a great day for all the family.

Councillor. M. Dean left the meeting at 7.20pm

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Anderson.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

- 5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor

#### **FC.34.07.17**

The Town Clerk advised members that the record of attendance of the meeting was incorrect and the draft minutes as they stood omitted Councillor J. Love.

It was subsequently **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, subject to the addition of Councillor J. Love in the record of attendance.

#### **FC.35.07.17**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 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 agreed to remove the following items which had been completed or appeared elsewhere on the agenda:

FC.21.06.17 – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
FC.22.06.17 – Annual Governance Statement  
FC.23.06.17 – Annual Governance Statement  
FC.26.06.17 – Wealden Works Executive Committee  
FC.27.06.17 – East Sussex Against Scams Partnership  
FC.28.06.17 – Request for financial support (UCTC)

## **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

### **FC.36.07.17**

- (a) Plans Committees – 3<sup>rd</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

### **FC.37.07.17**

- (b) Environment and Leisure Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment and Leisure Committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

### **FC.38.07.17**

- (c) General Purposes Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

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

## **8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group  
The report would be reviewed under confidential business.
- (ii) Dementia Friendly Working Group  
Members noted the report.
- (iii) Uckfield Events Working Group  
Members noted the report.

## **9.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2017-18**

Members referred to the first quarterly update produced which provided a brief summary of the progress that the Town Council was making with its partner agencies towards the priorities set out for 2017-18.

Progress was presented in a simple template and at this early stage in the year, progress was already underway and on schedule for over three quarters of the priorities.

One member asked about the priority to improve signage. The Town Clerk advised that information had been received on potential locations and work would be undertaken to place up new noticeboards.

A member also noted that they liked the traffic light system and suggested that it would be helpful to include details of the lead officer, once the Council was fully staffed.

Members subsequently noted the report.

## **10.0 TO CONSIDER WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-20**

Members reviewed the draft Housing Strategy produced by Wealden District Council and put forward their comments:

- There was mention of affordable housing on a number of occasions within the draft strategy, but little clarification on the definition of affordable housing;
- Members felt that young people within the Uckfield area had very little opportunity to get onto the property ladder;
- Members felt that it was an excellent paper which was well written, and very clear on the issues affecting Wealden District;
- Pg. 6 - concerns were raised that the legislation to extend Right to Buy would further impact on Wealden District Council's housing stock and potentially reduce the number of four or five bed properties. They were 1,012 people on the Housing Register and single people who were homeless were often provided with accommodation outside of the county. This should not continue;
- Pg. 11 - a solution to assist with meeting the needs of an ageing population would be to build bungalows or alternative types of accessible housing but it was questioned how many of these were likely to be built at the new Ridgewood Farm development?
- If we were serious about encouraging downsizing, something was needed to attract the over 60s to alternative housing;
- Pg. 12 - The draft strategy recommended increasing the level of affordable housing from 30% to 35%- members thought it was already at 35% but would support this figure going forward;
- Disappointment was expressed with the percentage of affordable agreed for the new Ridgewood Farm development at 15%;
- Pg. 7 - Within the strategic vision, there was no mention of infrastructure and the importance of this in supporting housing growth – it was suggested that this be referenced more within the draft strategy and reference made to public transport and key transport links;
- Members were interested to know what proportion of the Wealden population commuted to London each day for work;
- Pg. 11 - the draft strategy frequently mentioned the challenges of an ageing population but less reference was made to the young;
- Pg. 12 - concerns were raised at the costs involved in buying back ex council properties;
- Uckfield Town Council did not feel that there was public opposition to the development of affordable housing in Uckfield (as noted on page 10), as there was a high demand in this area;
- Overall members felt that the draft strategy was very good, but didn't apply to the situation in Uckfield, and needs of Uckfield residents;

- Members also discussed whether restrictions could be placed on the size of properties (extensions etc) but recognised that many young people were now continuing to remain in their family home as a result struggling to afford to rent or buy their own home.

**FC.39.07.17**

Members **RESOLVED** for the Town Clerk to pass the above comments back to Wealden District Council as part of their consultation process on the draft Housing Strategy 2017-20 on behalf of Uckfield Town Council.

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

Members noted the Mayor's engagements.

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

One grave certificate had been received.

**FC.40.07.17**

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the grave certificate(s) for the following:  
Mr Derek Nicholls

**13.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

**14.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**15.0 CHAIRMAN'S (TOWN MAYOR'S) ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor wished to remind attendees about the Weald on the Field event taking place on Saturday 5th August 2017. This was a day festival with local produce, street food, drink and a fantastic line up of music from 12noon to 8pm. The event would help to support the town's economy by attracting visitors to Uckfield.

The Mayor referred to the matter raised previously by Mrs Frost and the concerns raised by residents and shop owners in relation to the recent flooding at the bottom of the High Street. Some residents had thought that the kerbs had been lowered in the re-design of the High Street but that was not thought to be the case. However flood water was still rushing down the High Street during heavy downpours and would need to be looked into further.

The main concern of the Mayor focused on the recent funding cuts to local schools. The Mayor was aware of the changes that had recently been made at UCTC, and the money that parents were having to pay to assist their children's wellbeing whilst at school. She was also concerned that the proposed 1,000 homes due to be built in Ridgewood would have a large impact on the local schools, which were already at capacity.

The Mayor had noted in the local press that MP Maria Caulfield had gained additional funding for schools in Lewes. It would be helpful if the same could happen in Wealden District. The Mayor suggested that the Town Council send a letter to the Education Secretary, MP Nus Ghani, East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council, to explain the concerns of the Town Council.

It was suggested by members in the room, and County Councillor Claire Dowling that contact be made with Councillor Bob Standley as the Lead Member at ESCC for schools and MP Nus Ghani, to arrange a meeting with the Town Council.

**FC.41.07.17**

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to make contact with both Councillor Standley at East Sussex County Council and MP Nus Ghani to arrange an informal meeting regarding education.

**16.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**FC.42.07.17**

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.

**FC.43.07.17**

16.1 Update from Civic Centre Working Group

Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to approve the use of general reserves up to the amount of £5,000, if required, towards rebuilding a new Civic Centre website.

**FC.44.07.17**

16.2 Update on the installation of a new CCTV system

Members noted the report and update from BT Redcare and the Sussex Police CCTV Partnership. Members subsequently **RESOLVED** to authorise the use of general reserves up to the amount of £12,000, if required, to cover any additional costs incurred by the installation and setting up of the new CCTV system.

The meeting finished at 8.22pm.