

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 5th March 2018

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Ward (Chair)	Cllr. K. Everett
Cllr. J. Love (Vice-Chair)	Cllr. H. Firth
Cllr. M. Dean	Cllr. P. Meakin
Cllr. L. Eastwood	Cllr. I. Smith
	Cllr. P. Sparks

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr. D. French
Cllr. C. Macve
Two members of the local media.
Three members of the public.

Holly Goring – Town Clerk

Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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.

Councillors K. Everett and I. Smith noted that they were representatives on the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee which related to agenda item 6.4.

Councillor D. Ward noted that she had a personal interest in agenda item 8.3 as she worked in the building.

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

Mrs Bedwell, Chairman of Ridgewood Village Hall Committee wished to make a statement in relation to item 6.4.

GP38.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable Mrs Bedwell to speak.

Mrs Bedwell advised that Ridgewood Village Hall was first built in the early 1980s and officially opened in 1989. It had been originally built through local fundraising. At the time Ridgewood had a population of around 2,600, this has since increased to in excess of 3,680, making up around a quarter of Uckfield town's population.

Following construction, the hall began to be widely used by a range of regular bookings including Deborah Lamb's Dance School, Table tennis, Mother and toddler groups and private parties. Members were provided with a list of current bookings within the hall and it was recognised that the hall now played a pivotal role within the community.

Mrs Bedwell advised members that the hall committee now had their own newsletter, had arranged successful Christmas fairs, Easter egg hunts, summer fairs and quiz nights and for the first time last year organised a firework display. The Village Hall was also about to be assessed for the Bronze Hallmark award; a national award in recognition of the efficient running and community importance of the hall.

The Village Hall Committee wished to submit plans to extend the hall. With another 1,000 homes at Ridgewood Farm, the hall needed to be brought into the 21st Century and key facilities for the local population, provided. The hall needed:

- a new kitchen that served refreshments to the new and improved recreation ground;
- a meeting room for the management committee;
- a new floor (it is currently in desperate need of replacing);
- updated toilet facilities which wouldn't have frequent plumbing issues;
- storage space;
- improved fire doors;
- improved changing facilities;
- improved security.

The Village Hall Committee have noted that they would be unable to build into the car park as this would be too costly, as the hall is built on a slope. They would only be able to extend out the back for a short distance (no more than 3 metres) as it would interfere with access to the Millennium Green and the view of properties located to the rear of the building, so this means the wall would need extending on the east wall as well.

GP39.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on the 22nd January 2018

GP40.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on the 22nd January 2018 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members considered the action list and noted the updates provided.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the report provided.

4.4 To receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 1st March 2018

Members noted the minutes taken at the recent Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 1st March 2018.

- 4.5 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 1st March 2018
Members reviewed the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee and draft Risk Management Policy (Policy no. 29).

GP41.02.18 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of Finance Sub-Committee and the updates and amendments to the Risk Management Policy (Policy no. 29) be accepted.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 5.1 To note bills paid
Members noted the bills paid.

- 5.2 To note income and expenditure
Members asked for clarification on an anomaly within the figures relating to the hub. The Town Clerk advised that this was an error and would update members tomorrow with the correct figure.

Members subsequently noted the income and expenditure reports for both General Purposes Committee and Luxfords Restaurant.

- 5.3. Bad Debts
The Chairman sought clarification as to whether the amounts owing were small amounts. The Clerk confirmed that they were.

Members subsequently noted the report.

- 5.4 To note the report of the Internal Auditor
Members reviewed the report summarising the outcomes of the recent Internal Audit inspection.

Members wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Wheatley and the staff at the Town Council for their excellent work, resulting in another sound report from the Internal Auditor. Members subsequently noted the report.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
Members reviewed the update on building maintenance and works being undertaken to the council's buildings.

Members noted the report.

- 6.2 To consider materials and costs associated with the replacement of the Signal Box steps
Members considered a report which presented members with three different materials in which the Signal Box steps could be replaced. The report set out the advantages and disadvantages of each material and associated costs.

Members discussed the materials in some detail, recognising that the wood that had been used in the past had needed to be replaced every few years. The galvanised option would provide a longer term hard wearing solution but it was recognised that although the Signal Box was not listed, it was considered a

heritage building.

To ensure a galvanised material could remain in keeping with the design and heritage of the Signal Box, the steps could be painted/powder coated in the same colour as the Signal Box building. It was noted however that this could add to the costs.

GP42.02.18

It was **RESOLVED** with seven votes in favour and one vote against, to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) request that the Town Clerk make contact with Wealden District Council's planning department to understand whether a galvanised material could be used alongside this heritage building;
- (iii) obtain costings for painting or powder coating the galvanised material.

6.3

To consider the feasibility report undertaken for West Park Pavilion

Members considered a feasibility report produced by local architects to consider alternative layouts and space reconfigurations for West Park Pavilion. Members had previously requested a study to be undertaken to understand if the space could be reconfigured and the Pavilion's usage increased.

Members noted that at present income streams from the Pavilion were relatively low. Any investment on this scale would require some return on investment and the confidence that the space would be used.

Members queried the proposal to remove the official's changing room and felt that separate changing rooms should be retained. The Town Clerk clarified that as far as she was aware the current hirers of the Pavilion who ran junior football sessions did not utilise the changing rooms so it would depend on who was hiring the facility, as to whether this was a priority.

Members noted that there was some demand within the town for additional space, but the requirements of such groups were currently unknown.

GP43.02.18

With seven votes in favour and one abstaining, members **RESOLVED** to request the Town Clerk to explore this matter further - identifying potential interest in the Pavilion, their requirements, the development of a business plan and associated costings.

6.4

To consider proposals to extend Ridgewood Village Hall

Members considered the statement made by the Chairman of the Village Hall and report presented to them.

Members recognised that the building was now limited in terms of accessibility and space, another 1,000 homes were due to be built in Ridgewood in the next five to ten years and this area would therefore be an area of growth within the town.

As there was not enough information to assess the proposals being submitted by the Village Hall, members welcomed an opportunity to review detailed plans for the Village Hall.

GP44.02.18

It was **RESOLVED** that the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee be authorised to submit plans to the local planning authority to extend Ridgewood Village Hall, for Uckfield Town Council's Plans Committee to review in detail.

7.0 POLICY

None

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on the administration of the Council

Members noted the report provided.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the results of the two audit reports provided.

8.3 To consider a contribution towards the maintenance of lighting Mill Lane

Members had been contacted by landowner, Peter Taylor Associates, who had two lights placed on the side of their property some years ago. These lights assisted to light the way for pedestrians along the lane in the darker hours and in 1997 a resolution was made for the Town Council to contribute £25 per annum towards the costs of supplying electricity to these lights. The Town Clerk had been advised that no contribution had been received for some years, and neither had the Town Council received an invoice. It was therefore requested whether this matter could be reviewed.

Members noted the importance of these lights at night but did recognise that this was a private road. Members were aware that any agreements of this nature could set a precedence but elderly and vulnerable people lived in accommodation in this road and this area was located within one of the flood risk areas.

GP45.02.18

It was **RESOLVED** for the Town Council to contribute a sum of £50 per annum towards the cost of supplying electricity to the two lights adjoined to The Mill, for the next three years, at which point a review should be undertaken.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

(i) Citizens Advice Bureau

One member thanked Cllr P. Sparks for his report and noted that they were pleased that homelessness had been mentioned within the report and to hear of the support that the Citizen's Advice Bureau were provided to local people. Members noted the report.

(ii) Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee

Members noted the report provided.

(iii) Uckfield and District Preservation Society

Nothing to report at this time.

(iv) Uckfield Volunteer Centre

Nothing to report at this time.

(v) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

(vi) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel

Nothing to report at this time.

- (vii) Wealden Works
Members noted the report provided.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor Ward reminded members of the weather the previous week which could have brought the country to a standstill. She wished to thank East Sussex Highways and in particular their staff and contractors who worked tirelessly through the day and night to grit the roads and keep the traffic moving. She thanked the carers and medical staff who continued in their daily commute or travel to reach people in need, and also gave thanks to Uckfield FM for their helpful school closure announcements.

A second councillor also noted the frequent topping up of grit bins which had been very much appreciated by the town's residents.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP46.02.18 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.

12.1 Action list (confidential business)

Members noted the action list and removed item GP21.10.17 (Quickborn Suite Lease).

12.2 To consider a report on Luxfords Restaurant

Members considered the report in detail and noted its contents.

The meeting closed at 7.59pm.