

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 20th November 2017

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr. C. Macve
One member of local media.

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.

Councillor K. Everett noted that he had a personal interest in agenda item 12.3 as he was a patient at the clinic.

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

No statements were received.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor L. Eastwood.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on the 9th October 2017

GP23.11.17 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on the 9th October 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members considered the action list and agreed to remove the following items which had either been completed or appeared elsewhere on the agenda:-

GP17.10.17– Current position with the council buildings

- 4.3 Project list
Members requested clarification on the timescales for the snagging work, and noted the updated project list.

5.0 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

- 5.2 To note income and expenditure
Members raised a couple of queries in relation to insurance payments and Civic Centre running costs. It was also noted that the rates were still incorporated within the budgets for Luxfords restaurant.

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

- 5.3. Bad Debts
None to report.

- 5.4 To note the report of the Internal Auditor (October 2017)
Members wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for all her hard work to ensure that the council's finances remained sound and the Town Council continued to receive a good audit.

Members subsequently noted the report.

- 5.5 To agree the draft fees and charges for 2018/19
The Chair, Councillor D. Ward provided members with an overview of the report and referred them to the key points which they were asked to discuss (*room hire charges at the Civic Centre, room hire charges at Foresters Hall, room hire charges for West Park and Victoria Pavilions, incorporating key facilities such as the screen and projector into the hire charges, and introductory offers or rewards*).

Members felt the introduction of a change in rate for Civic Centre room hire at 8pm would be inconvenient for hirers and confusing for those who booked rooms for meetings between 7 and 9pm. Members therefore felt that this needed to be reconsidered, with one member suggesting that it might be easier to create a day and evening rate for the larger rooms.

Members discussed the introduction of a reward system to reward loyal hirers and regular bookings.

GP24.11.17 Members **RESOLVED that:**

- (i) the Town Clerk should review the room hire charges for the Civic Centre and bring this matter back to Full Council on 4th December prior to budgetary discussions;
- (ii) the proposed room hire charges for Foresters Hall in 2018/19 be agreed;
- (iii) the proposed hire charges for West Park and Victoria Pavilions be agreed;
- (iv) the projector/screen be incorporated within room hire costs in the Civic Centre;
- (v) office staff look into a reward or loyalty system for long term hirers.

5.6 To consider funding for the North Wealden Community Transport Partnership Saturday Bus Service in 2018/19

Members reviewed the report which provided background on the service to date and the potential costs of running the service in 2018/19.

The Transport Partnership had estimated that the Saturday service from Forest Row to Heathfield would cost in the region of £10k to run in 2018/19. If the four parishes continued to contribute to the service based on their council tax base, and expected return from concessionary fares, Uckfield Town Council would need to contribute around £3k in 2018/19.

Members noted that use of the service remained steady but felt the service could be better advertised. Members were also aware that there were risks in continuing to fund local bus service connections which bus companies ceased to run; placing greater pressure on the town council's own finances.

Members were however aware that the service not only assisted local people to reach the nearby towns of Heathfield and Uckfield, but also encouraged visitors to Ashdown Forest.

It was also noted that if a greater number of fares were concessionary, this would reduce the costs to the local parishes.

GP25.11.17 It was **RESOLVED** to contribute to the funding of the 262 Saturday bus service in 2018/19 within the Town Council's 2018/19 revenue budget, and to look into ways of promoting the service more fully.

5.7 To review the draft committee budgets for 2018/19

Members reviewed the draft budgets which had been prepared to initiate discussion and consider initiatives for the following year.

One member requested that the funds allocated for community grant funding under the General Power of Competence be increased from £22k to £25k.

The Town Clerk noted that further clarification was required to confirm the figures for building maintenance in 2018/19.

Members subsequently noted the draft papers which would be updated in preparation for Full Council on 4th December 2017.

5.8 To note the procedure for obtaining Community Infrastructure Levy Payments

Members considered the procedures for obtaining Community Infrastructure payments and how payments would be processed from developments within Uckfield.

One member questioned whether contributing towards the Saturday bus service would meet the requirements around funding infrastructure for example.

Members were also informed that good progress was being made on the Neighbourhood Plan. Once this was in place, it would help to increase the CIL payments received from development in Uckfield Town.

Members subsequently noted the procedures and requested that the Town Clerk seek further clarification from Wealden District Council on how the funds could be spent.

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, in addition to the works proposed in Foresters Hall and 2A Vernon Road.

GP26.11.17 Members **RESOLVED to**

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) agreed for redecoration works to take place in the main hall of Foresters Hall, using funds within earmarked reserves;
- (iii) agreed for redecoration and minor works to be undertaken within 2A Vernon Road using funds within earmarked reserves.

7.0 POLICY

None.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on the administration of the Council

Members noted the update provided.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the report provided.

8.3 To consider the potential impact of the National Minimum Wage rates increase

GP27.11.17 Members considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the report and arrange for a Personnel Sub-Committee meeting to take place to consider this matter in more detail.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

(i) Citizens Advice Bureau

Members noted the report and wished to thank the Citizen's Advice Bureau for the comprehensive update highlighting the positive work undertaken.

(ii) Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

(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.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP28.11.17 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.

12.1 Action list (confidential business)

Members considered the action list and agreed to remove the following items which had either been completed or appeared elsewhere on the agenda:-

GP19.10.17– Consider the recommendations of Personnel Sub-Committee

GP20.10.17- To undertake a rent review on Victoria Pavilion

12.2 To consider a report on Luxfords Restaurant

Members considered the report in detail and noted its contents.

12.3 To consider update on lease arrangements for the Quickborn Suite

Members considered the valuation report produced by the commercial estate agent instructed to review the premises on behalf of the Town Council.

GP29.11.17 It was **RESOLVED** to accept the proposed rental figure recommended by the commercial estate agent and for the renewal process to commence.

12.4 To review update on additional pension payments

Members considered the update provided and

GP30.11.17 **RESOLVED** to pay the additional pension payment by one single payment using general reserves.

The meeting closed at 8.36pm.