

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 27th January 2020 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)	
Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. C. Snelgrove
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. P. Sparks

IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the press (recorded the meeting)
Three members of the public

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Mark Francis – Estates & Facilities Manager

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.

None received.

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

GP33.01.20

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable one member of the public to speak in relation to agenda item 6.2 (statement from Chair of Ridgewood Village Hall).

A resident of Ridgewood wished to make a statement for members to consider whilst reviewing the statement from the Chair of Ridgewood Village Hall. The resident noted that a number of points that the Town Clerk had highlighted in a one-page report (circulated at the meeting), dealt with a number of points he also wished to raise.

It was disappointing that the grant funding for the improvements to the village hall were so difficult to obtain. The Ridgewood Village Hall Committee were advised by potential grant bodies that alternative, smaller/visionary plans should be considered whilst aiming for the longer-term vision.

The resident highlighted that there was a need to encourage more sports activities on Ridgewood Recreation Ground. They had pointed this out in 2015, that cricket, stoolball and football used to occur there. They did not accept that the recreation ground was a wasted space, but felt it was underused at present.

With the recent decision on Wealden District Council's Local Plan, and the 1,000 homes already being developed in Ridgewood, there may be longer term requirements for Ridgewood Village Hall and Ridgewood recreation ground, the resident felt it may therefore be prudent for all funds to be held in abeyance until further information and understanding on the needs of the local area, were confirmed.

GP34.01.20 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A. Smith. Councillor H. Firth had been unwell but not sent her apologies for the meeting. It was therefore thought that Councillor H. Firth had missed the meeting due to being unwell.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on the 16th December 2019

GP35.01.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on the 16th December 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members noted the action list.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the project list.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

5.2 To note the income and expenditure reports for 2019/20

Members noted the reports.

5.3. Bad Debts

Members noted the current bad debts recorded and reasons for this.

6.0 BUILDINGS

6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings

Members reviewed the regular update on works and repairs within the Town Council's buildings.

One member raised their concerns with the vandalism that had now occurred on more than one occasion at Victoria Pleasure Ground, and in particular to the toilets. It was such a shame that the Town Council had worked hard to look at opening times and provide a more useful facility, to then have the 24 hour access taken away due to vandalism. They would now only be open during the day.

Members subsequently noted the report.

6.2 To consider a statement made by the Chair of the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee

Members reviewed the full written statement from the Chair of the Ridgewood Village Hall, which had been read out at the previous Full Council meeting on 20th January 2020.

The Town Clerk circulated a one page report on the evening of General Purposes Committee, which highlighted some key points for consideration by both the members and Ridgewood Village Hall Committee. This included:

- clarification on filling committee vacancies;
- the need to review the number of committee seats prior to the next AGM;
- to review the workload of the booking officer and process for managing bookings and invoicing hall hire;
- a request for the full details of hall usage (regular hirers), grant funding received and breakdown of refurbishment works by the Town Council;

One member questioned the financial implications of transferring the Ridgewood Village Hall back to the Town Council, as it was not yet clear how much income Ridgewood Village Hall Committee generated from their hall hire. The Town Council would also need to consider whether it could currently manage the building and associated workload within existing staffing levels. They felt that there were quite a few unknowns and perhaps the matter should wait until after the AGM in October 2020, by which time there would be better understanding of the funding.

A second member was concerned that there was currently limited information upon which to make an informed decision. It was also noted that the Town Clerk should seek legal advice on whether there would be any legal ramifications if the lease were relinquished.

Based on the limited information available, and points that both the Town Council and Ridgewood Village Hall Committee needed to consider, further work was required.

GP36.01.20 After some discussion, members **RESOLVED** to ensure continued dialogue between Uckfield Town Council and the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee and for updates to be provided to each General Purposes Committee over the coming months as more information becomes available.

7.0 POLICY
None.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council
Members reviewed the report circulated and noted the contents.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports
None received.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

- (i) Citizens Advice Bureau
Members noted the report.
- (ii) East Sussex Association of Local Councils AGM
Nothing to report at this time.
- (iii) Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- (iv) Uckfield & District Housing Association Ltd Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- (v) Uckfield & District Preservation Society
Nothing to report at this time.
- (vi) Uckfield Volunteer Centre
Nothing to report at this time.
- (vii) Wealden Works
Nothing to report at this time.
- (viii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- (ix) 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

GP37.01.20

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 requested that GP27.11.17 be removed from the action list, and subsequently noted the contents of the report.

12.2 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm.