

# **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

Council Offices, Civic Centre Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE

Tel: (01825) 762774 Fax: (01825) 765757

e-mail: townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk

**Town Clerk – Holly Goring** 

# YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

## TRIAL REMOTE MEETING (VIA ZOOM) on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 7.00pm

### **AGENDA**

### 1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Should any Member consider that they require a dispensation in relation to any prejudicial interest that they may have, they are asked to make a written application to the Clerk well in advance of the meeting.

Notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration. The nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

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

### 3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 4.0 MINUTES

4.1 The minutes of the Full Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 can only be approved as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed at a meeting held in person. These will therefore be taken to the next physical meeting.

### 5.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 5.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-
  - (a) Plans Committees- 16<sup>th</sup> March and observations 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020
  - (b) Environment and Leisure Committee

Cancelled

(c) General Purposes Committee

9th March 2020

- 6.0 TO CONSIDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (REGULATIONS 2020) AND ASSOCIATED IMPACT ON:
  - Annual Town Meeting for electors 21st April 2020;
  - Annual Statutory meeting of the Council 11th May 2020;
  - Standing Committee meetings;
  - Scheme of delegation where required; (Attached)
- 7.0 TO NOTE UPDATE ON ANNUAL AUDIT, ACCOUNTS AND GOVERNANCE STATEMENT TIMESCALES (Attached)
- 8.0 TO NOTE THE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q4 2019/20) (Attached)
- 9.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

Approval to be given for three Councillors to sign the grave certificates.

- 10.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 11.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

To consider whether to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted:-

12.1 To note the decision of the Urgent Consultation Panel – signing of lease agreement (Attached)

**Town Clerk** 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### **Meeting of Full Council**

### Tuesday 14th April 2020

Agenda Item No. 6.0

TO CONSIDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (REGULATIONS 2020) AND ASSOCIATED IMPACT ON:

- Annual Town Meeting for electors 21st April 2020;
- Annual Statutory meeting of the Council 11th May 2020;
- Standing Committee meetings;
- Scheme of delegation where required;

### 1.0 Advice from NALC and SLCC

- 1.1 Both NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) are advising local councils to stop holding any physical meetings or gatherings during this time. This includes full council, committee meetings, annual parish or council meetings of electors, as the health and safety of staff, councillors and local communities are considered everyone's first concern.
- 1.2 This was the schedule of meetings for the next six to eight weeks:

# APRIL 6th - Plans - CANCELLED 14th - Full Council (Tues) - REMOTE 20th - General Purposes 21st - Annual Town (Tues) - POSTPONED 27th - Plans MAY 4th - Environment & Leisure 11th - Full Council (Annual Stat) 18th - Plans

2.0 Annual Town Meeting for electors

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 1972 states that 'for every parish there shall be a Parish Meeting for the purpose of discussing parish affairs..."
- 2.2 The parish meeting of a parish shall assemble annually on some day between 1st March and 1st June, both inclusive, in every year
- 2.3 The Annual Parish Meeting is not a council meeting but a meeting of electors, it is only by convention that it is organised by the parish council, it could be organised by electors (residents) themselves and in the general of order of issues at the moment it is probably not critical. A Parish Meeting can be called by six electors at any time during the year.

- 2.4 There is also no effective sanction should the Parish/Town Council not set a date and time for this to occur or if the Chairman does not convene the meeting.
- 2.5 There are therefore three options available to the Town Council: Options:
- (A) Cancel the Annual Town Council meeting for electors altogether for 2020;
- (B) Postpone the Annual Town Council meeting for electors, and seek to hold a remote version of the meeting between now and June 2020 (although please note normal attendance for the meeting can range between 30-50 so it could be difficult to manage a meeting remotely);
- (C) Postpone the Annual Town Council meeting for electors, and seek to rearrange in the autumn months of 2020. It could be held in tandem with the Allotment Conference for example.
- 3.0 Annual Statutory meeting of the Council 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- 3.1 All local authorities run to a municipal year, which starts in May each year.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to hold an annual statutory meeting of the Council. In an election year this annual meeting must take place on the day when the councillors take office, or within 14 days thereafter. In any other year, it may take place on any day in May.
- 3.3 For Uckfield, this meeting sees the Town Council elect its Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the year ahead, plus appoint members to the council's committees and working groups. We appoint members as representatives to outside bodies and in the past couple of years, have also appointed youth members to sit on the Town Council as non-voting co-opted members.
- 3.4 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into force on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April. They enable local councils to hold remote meetings for a specified period until May 2021. They also remove the requirement to hold an annual (statutory) meeting of the council.
- 3.5 The Regulations stipulate:
  - Regulation 4 (2)
  - (2) Where an appointment would otherwise be made or require to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority, such appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine.
- 3.6 This means that there is now the flexibility to continue with current arrangements until next May (2021).
- 3.7 The Town Council's standing orders stipulate the following in regards to both the Mayoral positions and Chairmen of Committees:
  - 15.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not serve longer than three complete consecutive municipal years in their respective offices.

    (The current Mayor and Deputy Mayor have served two years)

- 15.3 Chairmen of committees and sub-committees should not serve as Chairmen longer than three consecutive years. Nor should any member of the Council be Chairman of more than one committee or sub-committee at any one time.
- (The Chairman of Environment & Leisure Committee Cllr J Beesley has served two years, the remaining Chairmen have only served one year)
- 3.8 In regards to committee membership and appointments, members undertake a process each year prior to the meeting to advise the Town Clerk of their preferences in priority order. The Town Council saw six new elected members join the council in May 2019. These members have now been on the Town Council for one year and with experience, may have more knowledge or expertise in certain areas or wish to step down from committees which they can no longer commit to. The annual process of appointing members to committees and outside bodies, does therefore provide an opportunity for members to review their interests and commitment.
- 3.9 There are therefore two options available to the Town Council: **Options:**
- (A) Cancel the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council altogether and continue to run with the existing appointment of Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor, as well as committee membership and outside body representation;
- (B) Hold the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May as planned, but hold the meeting remotely. The Town Clerk will undertake preparations as she would normally do prior to the meeting and consider methods for signed ballot voting (voting in private) for the meeting if required at any stage.

### 4.0 Standing committee meetings

4.1 The regulations enable meetings to continue but with more flexibility:

### Regulation 4(1)

- (1) Local Authorities have flexibility to hold meetings at a time, day and frequency to suit their own needs, without requirement for further notice.
- 4.2 This means that it permits authorities to make changes to their meeting arrangements with immediate effect. However if a meeting is called, the same advance notice and publication of reports is required. Therefore the usual three working days is required for notification (agenda publication) of parish/town council meetings.
- 4.3 If the trial of holding the meeting remotely works well on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020, then there is scope to continue to hold standing committee meetings in this way. Consideration should be given however to the length of the agenda, whether items being discussed are considered to be urgent business and when discussing confidential items, to have awareness that some of the remote meeting platforms may not be entirely secure i.e. privacy.
- 4.4 Planning applications can continued to be reviewed using the method we use over Christmas or when applications come in that have deadlines for response, outside of our planning meeting cycle timetable.

i.e. virtually with plans committee members and place our application lists on our website.

4.5 The forward plan for our next standing committee meetings (*subject to some potential additions relating to the outbreak of Coronavirus, and closure of Town Council buildings*):

General Purposes	Agenda items				
Committee	Any further update on RVH Committee/car park				
20 <sup>th</sup> April	Any further update on financial regulations/BACs				
	To write off small under and over payments on the Town Council accounts				
	To note the end of year statement for Community Infrastructure Levy fund				
	Standing items				
	Income and expenditure reports (GP Committee and Luxfords)				
	Bad Debts				
	Buildings update				
	Health & safety update				
	Luxfords report (Confidential)				
Environment and	Agenda items				
Leisure	Update on community fridge/initiative				
Committee	Electric car charging				
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Update on Luxfords Play Area				
	Climate Emergency Greening Campaign				
	Re-use of oak trees at Mallards Drive development				
	Draft SLR Minutes				
	Update on Allotment Competition/Conference and any further suggestions				
	Standing items				
	Estates Update				
	Income and expenditure report (E&L)				
	Marketing Programme Update (Confidential)				
Full Council	Agenda items				
Annual Statutory	Carry forward of unspent revenue budget from 2019-20				
Council	Standing items				
11 <sup>th</sup> May	Election of Mayor/Deputy Mayor – manage nominations				
	Co-option of Youth Members				
	Committee appointments				
	Outside Body representation				
	Appointing members to Civic Centre Working Group				
	Member Audits Schedule for 2020/21				
	Mayor's Engagements				

- 4.6 There are therefore two options available to the Town Council: Options:
- (A) Cancel all standing committee meetings to the end of May 2020 and review at that point;
- (B) Seek to hold the next planned committee meetings (General Purposes Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> April and Environment & Leisure Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> May) remotely via zoom.

### 5.0 Scheme of delegation

- 5.1 Some of the parish councils are having to review their scheme of delegation and associated terms of reference for the council's standing committees, to enable decisions to be made, more effectively during the current circumstances.
- 5.2 Being a Town Council, the Town Clerk and management team, already have greater powers than some of the smaller parishes. The introduction of these new regulations and ability to hold the meetings remotely, also assists the Town Clerk to obtain decisions from Full Council or the relevant standing committee.
- 5.3 The Town Clerk will review the Town Council's terms of reference for the standing committees and financial regulations, and report to General Purposes Committee or future Full Council meeting if these need amending, to assist with the day to day running of the Town Council.

### 6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are asked to consider the options put forward for each matter that requires a decision, and advise the Clerk accordingly.
  - (i) Annual Town meeting for electors
  - (ii) Annual Statutory meeting of the Council
  - (iii) Standing committees

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

### Meeting of Full Council

### Tuesday 14th April 2020

Agenda Item No. 7.0

# TO NOTE UPDATE ON ANNUAL AUDIT, ACCOUNTS AND GOVERNANCE STATEMENT TIMESCALES

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Each year, the Town Council has to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in line with the requirements of the 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (practitioner's guidance)' and 'Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.' This process reviews our systems of internal control, and ensures we follow the correct procedures with regards to our accounts.
- 1.2 The annual return has three key components, and is signed by an internal auditor, the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Town Council, before a process is undertaken of public inspection/examination, and reviewed by external auditors:
  - (i) Annual Internal Audit report
  - (ii) Annual Governance Statement
  - (iii) Accounting statements
- 1.3 Being a larger 'smaller authority' within parish and town councils, the Town Council also prepares full financial statements and accompanying information for the financial year which set out the Town Council's income, earmarked reserves and statement of financial position. All of these documents are presented to Full Council in June in order to meet the timescales for public inspection and review by the external auditors. The whole process normally runs from 1st April to 30th September.

### 2.0 Impact of Covid-19 on Year End and Annual Return

- 2.1 Following NALC's (National Association of Local Councils) engagement with central government around local council audit timeframes, final regulations were published on 7<sup>th</sup> April and will come into force on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020. These regulations look to extend the statutory audit deadlines for end of financial year 2019/20.
- 2.2 The regulations extend the final publication date for final, audited, accounts for local councils to the end of November 2020 (30<sup>th</sup> November) from the current end of September deadline.
- 2.3 To give local councils more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of July has been removed. Instead, local councils must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020.

- 2.4 Draft accounts therefore need to be approved by 31st August 2020 at the latest or maybe approved earlier where possible.
- 2.5 The Town Council would normally prepare all necessary documentation as detailed for a June meeting of Full Council in order to meet the July requirements of public inspection. The next Full Council meeting scheduled into the Town Council's calendar of meetings is Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. It would therefore be wise for the Town Council to aim to present all of the above documentation to Full Council on that date.
- 2.6 Local authorities will still be required to publish the dates of their public inspection period this year, and the government recommends that they provide public notices on their websites (where available) when the public inspection period would normally commence, explaining why they are departing from normal practice for 2020.

### 3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring/Sarah D'Alessio

### **Meeting of Full Council**

### Tuesday 14th April 2020

### Agenda item 8.0

# QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR (Q4) 2019-20

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a quarterly update on the Town Council's priorities for 2019-20 and the progress that had been made by the end of the fourth quarter (end of March 2020).
- 1.2 The priorities identified for delivery in 2019-20 consist of initiatives which are often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but demonstrate by working together with colleagues and partner agencies, we can achieve a great deal for the town and its residents.
- 1.3 Organisations often spend time producing plans or lists of priorities, but do not review progress until the end of the year.
- 1.4 With this paper, the Town Clerk provides an update to members to explain the progress being made to deliver these priorities.

### 2.0 Quarter 4 – 2019-20 (January - March) – Progress Update

2.1 Of the 12 priorities, three are already complete, six are on schedule for completion and three are slightly behind schedule but making some progress.

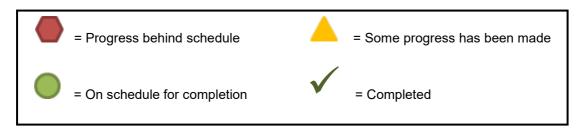
### 3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to review this progress report, and note the work undertaken to date.

Appendices: Appendix A: Q4 (2019-20) Progress Report

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

### Key:



APPENDIX A: Q4 2019-20 Progress Update

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
1. COMMUNITY GRANTS We will award up to £43,367 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations for the period 2019/20.	<b>√</b>	In September 2018, members of the Finance Sub-Committee considered applications for grant funding through the Town Council's community grant programme for 2019-20. General Purposes Committee approved the allocation of grant funding equating to a total sum of £43,367 which was set aside for 24 successful grant applicants.  Full payments were made for the smaller amounts in April/May 2019. The first instalment and second instalment have now been paid to those organisations who were due to receive larger amounts.	General Purposes Committee (Finance Sub)	Assistant Town Clerk
2. HEALTH AND WELLBEING We will seek to update the maps of the town which highlight our open spaces and footways		Work has progressed with the Communities and GIS teams at Wealden DC, to develop their Healthy Wealden website and assist with mapping the open spaces and play and sport facilities in Uckfield. Uckfield Town was the first area to provide information to Wealden DC of all its play areas and open spaces, and acted as a pilot for modelling the new website.  The website was anticipated to go live in Spring 2020. Uckfield TC is awaiting a draft to check the content for our local area. As a result of Covid-19 unfortunately this has been delayed but good progress had been made by year end.	Environment and Leisure Committee	Town Clerk
3. PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE TOWN We will work alongside the local business community and local community groups to deliver two free public events within the town; Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival	<b>✓</b>	The Weald on the Field event took place on Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2019, and it was the best yet! The support we received from local businesses and organisations was excellent and the turn out from the public was higher than previous years. We had a great range of street food, pop up bars and local craft and artisan stalls in attendance.  The Town Council worked with Food Rocks, Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and Wealden District Council to organise the event. Main sponsors SLM Toyota, EMC, Freedom Leisure and Richard Green Funeral Services sponsored the live music. The event was also supported by local businesses – Addagrip, CPJ Field, Lawsons Commercial, Lawson Queay, Net XP, Rix & Kay, Swindells, Travis Perkins Treslers and Uckfield Garage.  The Uckfield Revival event – classic vehicle parade and display took place on 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2019 and despite the heavy rain the week before, the skies cleared and the altered location of the station car park provided an excellent venue to display in the region of 90 vehicles. The event was supported by SLM Toyota and Andy Owen Motor Services & Race Preparation.	Full Council	Town Clerk

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
4. PLAY AREA UPGRADE We will put funds aside towards the upgrade of Luxfords Play Area and explore other opportunities to assist with the funding of this upgrade.		A consultation exercise was carried out with the public in January and February 2020, which included asking residents and potential users about what equipment they would like to see. A poster competition on a fantasy theme or design was undertaken with the local primary schools and an open day with three play area companies and their design was held on Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> February.  At the meeting of Environment & Leisure Committee on 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2020, members selected their preferred design and play area company and requested a couple of additions, plus more research/exploration into accessible play area equipment. Progress was on schedule before year end, and it is hoped that the new play area will be installed in 2020.	Environment and Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager
5.  NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  We will support the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan ready for submission to the local planning authority.		A draft scoping document, which includes the vision, key objectives and draft policy areas, was submitted to Wealden District Council's planning department for a screening exercise to be carried out. This would enable the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to understand whether they need to carry out any further assessments such as a strategic environment assessment (SEA) or habitat regulations assessment (HRA), understand where specific data or publications may help to build their evidence base, and understand if there were any duplication with existing planning policies. The group received a response in December 2019 from the planning department and both a SEA and HRA would be required.  Once back to normal working practices, work will commence on the key documents and stages in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. One thing that should be noted however is if a plan were ready for public consultation (Regulation 14 – public referendum, no referendum or election can now take place until May 2021.	Full Council	Town Clerk
6. CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY We will explore the practicalities of starting a blue plaque heritage scheme	_	It was suggested at the Environment and Leisure Committee in June 2019, that the project be advertised to a wider audience to attract those with an interest in the town. This action still has to be progressed.  Recently the Town Clerk has contacted Thatcham Town Council to find out more about their blue plaque heritage scheme. The information provided has been very useful and will be shared with members in the coming weeks to refresh this initiative.	Environment and Leisure Committee	Town Clerk

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
7. PLASTIC FREE Leading by example, we will work closely with Brighter Uckfield and Uckfield Chamber of Commerce to encourage Uckfield to become a town free of single use plastic.		Good progress has been made. The Town Council has been a strong supporter of the newly established Plastic Free Uckfield campaign. The Town Council has become one of the town's Refill stations (refill.org.uk) with a water fountain in the ground floor foyer of the Civic Centre. There are now 17 refill stations in total within the town.  Two Town Councillors represent the Town Council on the working group and the Town Council confirmed its commitment to the Surfers against Sewage Plastic Free Community Toolkit and to supporting the journey to make Uckfield a Plastic Free Community at the meeting of Full Council in May 2019. Updates would be provided by the representatives to Environment & Leisure Committee, going forward.  The Chair of the Uckfield Plastic Free Working Group advised that unfortunately he had to step down from the position early 2020, so it has been suggested that the work of the town's Plastic Free Group continue under the umbrella of the Town Council's Climate Change Working Group.	Environment & Leisure Committee	Town Clerk
8. PAVEMENTS AND HIGHWAYS Accessibility and safety on our pavements and highways		Work continues in liaison with East Sussex Highways to review the issues that the Town Council has raised about the access corridors into the town, to view the designs and plans for the bus station improvements, and feed in our thoughts regarding plans for highway changes from development (Lewes Road traffic calming and dual roundabout on A22).	Full Council	Town Clerk
9. GRASS VERGE CUTTING We will contribute to the costs of the East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract to retain a good standard of service, and ensure visibility is maintained on pavements and highways	<b>✓</b>	The Town Council made payment to East Sussex Highways to retain the existing number of cuts to urban verges in Uckfield Town in 2019-20.  The number of complaints substantially reduced this year, with only a handful received. These related mainly to two sections of verge along the lower part of Eastbourne Road, which kept getting missed in their cutting schedule. The last cut took place week beginning 23rd October 2019.  The Town Council has also agreed to contribute to maintain service levels in 2020/21.	Full Council	Town Clerk

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
10. TOWN COUNCIL BUILDINGS We will assess whether our buildings could be better utilised and meet the needs of Uckfield's residents and organisations.	•	Work is currently underway to review a couple of the Town Council's buildings and current usage. Further work will proceed into 2020.	General Purposes Committee	Town Clerk/ Estates & Facilities Manager
11. TRADITIONAL RED TELEPHONE BOX We will restore the traditional red telephone box, move it to a more prominent location and use the iconic facility to provide a service for residents and visitors to the town	_	Section 58 on the public highway was lifted in August 2019, which restricted excavation works to the newly upgraded High Street pavements.  Due to staff changes and shortages in the office, we have been unable to proceed with this project but hope to start the project before the end of 2020 to identify the future use of the traditional red telephone box, restore it and relocate. And, most importantly consult with the residents and businesses of Uckfield to understand what they would like to see the facility used for.	General Purposes Committee/ Full Council	Town Clerk/ Estates & Facilities Manager
12. USER FRIENDLY BOOKING We will look to install a new internal booking system to manage room and venue hire, and explore the introduction of an online booking facility on the Civic Centre website for the purchase of event tickets.	_	The office has seen a number of staffing changes in the past eight months. With this and the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, this project had to be placed on hold.  In the meantime, work has been undertaken to install an online booking facility on the Civic Centre website for the purchase of event tickets. We are just finalising the financial elements of the system, before testing and going live with this.	Full Council	Town Clerk/ Hospitality Manager