

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held as a TRIAL REMOTE meeting via ZOOM, on Monday 14th April 2020 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. S. Mayhew (Town Mayor)
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. C. Snelgrove
Cllr. D. French	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. G. Johnson	Cllr. D. Ward
	Mr. A. Brunsdon
	Mr. L. Westwood Flood

IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the public
1 member of the press (recording)
County Councillor Chris Dowling
County and District Councillor Claire Dowling

Holly Goring	Town Clerk
Sarah D'Alessio	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Mark Francis	Estates & Facilities Manager
Rachel Newton	Senior Administrative Officer
Linda Lewis	Administrative Officer

Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent.

None received.

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

FC.108.04.20 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by District and County Councillors during this agenda item.

Cllr C. Dowling wished to thank the local voluntary Food Outreach Box Service who were an amazing team of volunteers and worked so hard to support residents in the town who were self-isolating or finding it difficult to get food.

The Community Hub was now up and operating at Wealden DC, and food parcels were already being delivered through the countywide community shield programme which was for the more vulnerable. The Community Hub was the first port of call for enquiries and could signpost or find help for most enquiries relating to financial advice, housing, business support and funding, or food or medical supplies via local voluntary groups or the countywide community shield scheme depending on the level of support required.

Discussions followed on the gaps in service provision, with Councillor. B. Cox highlighting that schemes such as St. Saviours Court were not receiving the information they needed, particularly if they were not digitally minded and had no access to the internet.

Councillor. K. Bedwell felt that the emergency response at the start of the lockdown period had been poor. They had now just entered week 4, and were only just seeing communications joining up and some form of support being provided. Councillor. K. Bedwell wished to thank Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling who had been very helpful in the past few weeks and had been able to resolve issues or direct concerns to Adult Social Services.

Councillor. D. Bennett wished to reiterate the comments of Councillor K. Bedwell but recognised that this was something new, and no one was familiar with the situation. He did however note that the Town Council's Emergency Contacts had not been approached at any point through those past few weeks in their official capacity and wondered whether they should have been in the circumstances.

There had also been issues initially with getting medical supplies to people, with some of the local pharmacies closing temporarily.

Members were concerned by some of the points raised but felt that this was not the time to review at that stage. These matters would be followed up in due course.

FC.109.04.20 Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor H. Firth.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 2nd March 2020 would be taken to the next physical meeting to be approved as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor. It was uncertain at this first remote meeting whether they could be approved and signed remotely.

5.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 16th March and observations 6th April 2020

FC.110.04.20 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 16th March and observations on 6th April 2020.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 30th March 2020

The meeting had been cancelled.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 9th March 2020

FC.111.04.20 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 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;

Members reviewed a detailed document prepared by office staff which highlighted the recent legislative changes in light of the Covid-19 restrictions and guidance from the National Association of Local Councils with regard to the continuation of council business and meetings.

Annual town Meeting for electors

This meeting should have taken place on 21st April 2020, but due to the restrictions of lockdown, no gatherings could take place and the Civic Centre building had been closed.

Members discussed the options put forward by the Town Clerk. They felt that the meeting was important and should be postponed until a more suitable time, once lockdown had been lifted.

FC.112.04.20 With 13 members in support, and one voting against, it was **RESOLVED** to revisit the decision of holding an Annual Town Meeting at a future Full Council meeting (next meeting in June 2020), with a view to organising an Annual Town meeting for electors at an appropriate date after lockdown.

Annual Statutory meeting of the Council

This meeting is the start of the municipal year, and enables members to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the year ahead, appoint members to committees and outside bodies. The meeting typically involves nominations being put forward in person, along with voting, and private signed ballots.

Members discussed the options that had been put forward but felt that continuity was important during this time.

FC.113.04.20 Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to take the decision to not hold an Annual Statutory meeting of the Council in 2020, and for members to continue in their current roles until May 2021 unless there were any positions members did not

wish to hold.

Standing committee meetings

Members felt that the meeting had gone well that evening, for the first remote council meeting. It was proposed that standing committee meetings continue, in the same format.

FC.114.04.20 Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to continue holding standing committee meetings remotely, and to use technology to facilitate these meetings.

Scheme of delegation where required

The Town Clerk advised that work on the scheme of delegation had not been required as a result of the introduction of remote meetings. Uckfield Town Council also had the ability to call upon the Urgent Consultation Panel between meetings.

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

Members noted the update provided.

8.0 TO NOTE THE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q4 – 2019/20)

Members noted the update provided.

9.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

Two deed of grants had been received:

Brent Crompton

Graham Hainsworth

FC.115.04.20 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

10.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

11.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor S. Mayhew gave a massive thank you to those who were still working full time. The community needed to be aware that councillors were in a variety of circumstances themselves, whether working, self-isolating and/or helping in the community.

Hundreds of events had been cancelled and it was a hard time for charities in Uckfield and the surrounding area. The Chairman suggested setting up a fundraising page or JustGiving site to help encourage donations to support these charities and groups at this difficult time. The Town Clerk was asked to investigate crowdfunding platforms. Members also discussed their desire to bring everything together when the Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted such as a street party, to help support local businesses.

FC.116.04.20 Members **RESOLVED** to investigate further.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC117.04.20 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 To note the decision of the Urgent Consultation Panel – signing of lease agreement

Members noted the decision taken.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm.