



THE UCKFIELD VOICE

February 2020

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thevoice

A NEW YEAR, WITH SOME CHANGES

BY THE TOWN CLERK, HOLLY GORING

Well I think we've all definitely got through the post-Christmas and winter blues now that January is over. Let's look ahead to Spring and Summer and roll on the sunshine!

Planning ahead

As you'll see through this edition of The Voice, the Town Council has been busy planning ahead, looking at key projects and priorities that we wish to focus on in the new year; the exciting project of upgrading Luxfords play area and most importantly setting and adopting our budget for the year ahead.

Financially sound

The Town Council remains financially sound but not without ongoing challenges. We continually reviewing our outgoings and costs, and as well as our contracts and quotations to make savings and consider how we can generate further income.

New members of staff

The start the new year brought changes to our staffing within the office of the Town Council. Two of our long serving full-time staff, our Assistant Town Clerk and Administrative Officer, both retired in 2019. Christine Wheatley, as mentioned in The Voice previously, retired then in December Angela Paul also retired. We wish her well and thank her for many years of devoted service to the council. This provided us with an opportunity to



review our needs within the office and recruit new positions within the team. In October 2019, Sarah D'Alessio joined us as the new Part-time Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Sarah is local to Uckfield and has a wealth of financial experience, having worked in both private and public sector organisations.

We also have two further members of staff who have joined us this year - we will introduce them to you next month. I hope you will all join me in making these new staff members very welcome and we look forward to assisting you with any enquiries you may have over the course of the year.

Contact us through:

admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk



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WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2020-2021 Annual Priorities
- Luxford Play Area public consultation
- Last month in your council

OUR ANNUAL PRIORITIES 2020-2021



Play Area Upgrade

Upgrading Luxfords Play Area following a public consultation



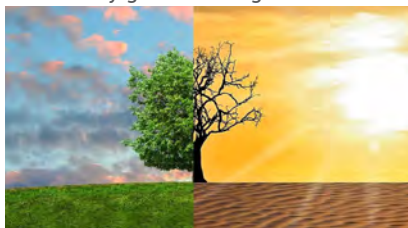
Community Grants

We will award up to £43,900 of community grant funding for 2020-2021



Public Events in the Town

Two free public events within the town - Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival



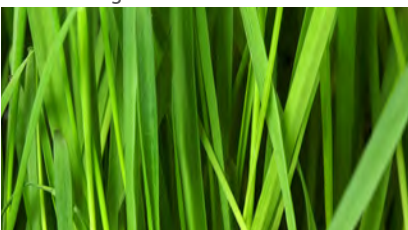
Reducing impact on Climate Change

Reviewing contracts, buildings, equipment, managing land and minimising waste



Tree for a Tree

We will implement a tree for a tree replacement scheme and identify where additional trees can be planted



Grass Verge Cutting

We will contribute to the costs of East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting



Reviewing Town Council Buildings

To better suit the needs of hirers and ensure they are in a good state of repair



Neighbourhood Plan

Preparing a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood plan for submission

OUR ANNUAL PRIORITIES 2020-2021



New Finance

Changing our existing cheque payment method to a BACS system



New Booking System

Installing a new internal computer booking system for Town Council rooms and open spaces.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON ACTIVITY AND PLAY!

In 2020, Uckfield Town Council is looking to upgrade the equipment, green space and facilities in Luxfords Play Area (in Luxford Field). The field is a great facility within the centre of the town, and is widely used for events and activities. With the play area set adjacent to the field, we know how important this facility is to you!

Public Consultation

You are invited to a public consultation day on Saturday 8 February between 10.00am – 2.00pm in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield TN22 1AE. Play area companies will be in attendance with their designs and proposals for the space, so you can take a look, and let us know what you like or dislike. We will also be displaying posters from a project with local primary schools to understand what themes and equipment they would like to see.

Online Survey

If you can't make the consultation day, there's still a chance to be involved. We have been running a survey online and in paper format where you can give us your views. The deadline for responses is **midnight on Sunday 9 February**. We would like to hear from you about which types of equipment your children enjoy the most, and what you would like to see in Luxford's Play Area.



To complete the survey please visit:
<http://bit.ly/luxfordplayareasurvey>

Environment and Leisure Committee

All the feedback received will be reported to Environment and Leisure Committee on Monday 17 February 2020 for their consideration.

LAST MONTH IN YOUR COUNCIL

Setting the scene for 2020/21

The meeting of Full Council on Monday 20 January 2020, saw elected members adopt the five year strategic plan for the Town Council (2020-25), the annual plan 2020/21, the annual budget and precept for 2020/21 and the Town Council's asset management plan for 2020/21. These documents are pivotal in the organisation's forward planning and enable both Town Councillors and staff to work towards key objectives for the benefit of the Town's residents. These documents are also crucial in prioritising the day-to-day running of the Town Council's buildings, facilities, open spaces and activities.

Budget

The budget figures adopted by elected members have been reported to

Wealden District Council to inform of our 2020/21 precept requirements. The Town Council's budget saw an increase from that recorded in 2019/20; this increase is lower than previous years.

Reductions in expenditure

Council staff have made reductions in expenditure across all service areas and reviewed a number of contracts in the past six months to provide better value for money in the coming years.

Increasing costs

Unfortunately, increasing utility costs, the loss of the parish support grant and the need to support our partner organisations and community groups within the Uckfield area, has resulted in this slight increase.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Agendas and minutes can be seen at Uckfield Library and on the town council website. If you wish to ask a question

at a meeting, on items on the agenda, it is advisable to submit your question beforehand to allow a full response to

MON 3 FEB	– PLANS
MON 17 FEB	– ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE
MON 24 FEB	– PLANS
MON 2 MAR	– FULL COUNCIL
MON 9 MAR	– GENERAL PURPOSES
MON 16 MAR	– PLANS
MON 30 MAR	– ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

be given at the meeting. All questions should be directed to the Town Clerk at:

admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk

COMING NEXT MONTH

- Annual Town Meeting
- Food Bank
- New office staff

