

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on
Monday 27th July 2020 at 7.00pm

REMOTE MEETING (VIA ZOOM)

PRESENT:

Cllr. J. Beesley (Chairman)	Cllr. D. French (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. J. Edwards
Cllr. S. Mayhew	Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. A. Smith	Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. D. Bennett	

IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the press (recorded meeting)
One member of the public
Councillor C. Macve

Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk
Mark Francis - Estates & Facilities Manager
Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Rachel Newton

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. No declarations of interest were announced.

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

One member of the public had submitted a question, via email, relating to the re-opening of playgrounds and the options put forward for consideration by the Town Council. She had asked why the local Town Council had sought to implement costly sanitising procedures and suggested other options such as signage to explain the importance of social distancing, the need to sanitise hands before and after use, to keep playground doors tied open to eliminate the main touch points and to inform users that, by using the equipment, they would do so on the understanding that the surfaces may not have been sanitised, and to carry out slightly increased cleaning insofar as budget allows and to limit the number of users on play equipment.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

4.0. MINUTES

- 4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 15th June 2020

EL.07.07.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 15th June 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

- 4.2. Action list

Members noted the action list and Councillor J. Beesley raised items that no longer required action:

EL85.10.17 Request to rent allotment land to the rear of 155 Framfield Road. This land had been reinstated.

Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

EL50.02.20 To consider a number of street light repairs. Due to Covid-19 and difficulties getting parts, there were delays but work had now commenced. Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

EL53.02.20 To consider the opportunities of the Our Parks Initiative. The actions had been superceded by discussions to be raised later in the meeting. Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

Members agreed to remove all above items and subsequently noted the action list.

- 4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only

Members noted the report.

5.0. FINANCE

- 5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

- 5.2. To note the income and expenditure report

There would be no income and expenditure reports until accounts are completed for 2019/20.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1. To consider suggestions put forward for a memorial in West Park Nature Reserve

Members were asked to note the report and consider the suggestions put forward and advise the clerk accordingly.

Councillor D. French liked the idea of a rustic looking bench and a tree, but was unsure if a plaque would be obvious enough. Another Councillor suggested that family and the Groundsmen would have known Geoff best and so it would be good to ask them if they had any suggestions. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that he had spoken to Geoff's brother who had mentioned a bench, so it might be a nice idea to place a bench in the location where Geoff was last having his lunch. People walking their dogs and passers-by would be reminded and remember him that way.

Councillor J. Beesley proposed for the Estates and Facilities Manager to talk to fellow Groundsmen and make a decision from thereon.

EL.08.07.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report; and;
- (ii) agreed for the Estates and Facilities Manager to liaise with the Groundsmen and make a decision from thereon for the best ideas for a memorial.

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

7.1 To consider the current position of the Town Council's Estates

The Estates and Facilities Manager spoke about the recent shortage of football pitches since lots of groups had increasing numbers of players and there were not enough pitches. The Estates and Facilities Manager had been trying to arrange two adult sized pitches at Harlands Fields and the replacement of goal posts.

One member expressed an interest in improving the facilities at Ridgewood Recreation ground for sports and recreation. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that a similar request was made in previous years for Ridgewood but this was turned down as it was too expensive at that time. The Chairman suggested the idea that local developers might be able to provide surplus top soil to lay the ground for the pitches. Another Councillor suggested that it might be a good idea to look at the cost for levelling the area and maybe consider the size of pitch as well, as it did not have to be a full size pitch just for youngsters or for training purposes.

EL.09.07.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report and;
- (ii) agree for the Estates and Facilities Manager to explore the various options available in terms of increasing the Town Council's sports grounds.

7.2 To consider land adjacent to Bird in Eye allotments

Members were happy to note the report and advised the clerk accordingly. Two options put forward by the town council to consider:

Option 1:

(A) To ensure fairness for all residents in houses along Framfield Road bordering Uckfield Town Council land adjacent to Bird in Eye allotments, for UTC to review the previous decision to grant the resident at 151 Framfield Road an agreement to use land bordering the property at 153 Framfield Road;

(B) UTC take action to restore the boundary and remove the fence from UTC allotment land bordering the property at 157 Framfield Road;

(C) In future, any access garden licences should only be granted to a resident where their garden directly borders allotment land.

Option 2:

A – To serve six months' notice on all current licences from 151-157 Framfield Road, to remove all items and re-instate their garden borders. This area of land could be consequently converted to one allotment plot and let at the current allotment rate.

Councillor. K. Bedwell considered 'Option 2' to be fair to residents and to start from scratch. Councillor. S. Mayhew remarked on the fact that the residents at 157 Framfield Road were asked to remove their shed in 2004 but this had not been enforced.

Councillor. D. Bennett asked to be removed from this discussion and made a declaration of personal interest in this topic, although he did raise an issue that might be of interest for consideration in the future, that one of the central properties (in each group of four properties) that backed on to UTC allotment land had right of access, but that he was not sure if this would be included in other residents' property Deeds.

The Estates and Facilities Manager commented that the matter had previously taken a great deal of staff resource to maintain and administer these licences.

Councillor. J. Edwards suggested that 'Option 2' might be a good plan but with a longer notice period due to the growing season. Councillor. S. Mayhew suggested 'Option 2' but with twelve months notice instead of six months, which would be a uniform date for everyone rather than on a case-by-case basis.

Proposal for 'Option 2' was given by Councillor, K. Bedwell and this was seconded by Councillor. G. Johnson.

EL10.07.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report, and;
- (ii) agree 'option 2' but for all residents to be served twelve months' notice on all current licences from 151-157 Framfield Road, to remove all items and re-instate their garden borders.

- 7.3 To consider installing electric charging points at the council buildings
Members noted the report and were asked to advise the clerk - if they wished to consider moving forward with the installation of electric charging points for general public usage.

The Estates and Facilities Manager recommended the following: out of office use only if one charging point was to be placed at the Civic Centre; Victoria Pleasure Ground – Sussex Support Services were hoping to get a hybrid minibus in the future so might be a good option there; Foresters Hall might be worth considering out of hours too; West Park car park would be too far out of the way and with a risk of potential vandalism so was not recommended.

Councillor. K. Bedwell mentioned that with a thousand new houses and potentially more, Ridgewood Village Hall should be considered. Councillor. A. Smith suggested it maybe worth speaking to one of the supermarkets to ask if they could have one in their car park, which was seconded by Councillor. J. Beesley. Councillor. D. French said that Luxford car park really did need a charging area and that we should maybe liaise with Wealden DC so that this would be successful twenty-four hours a day (for visitors rather than just local residents who might normally charge their cars at home).

The Estates and Facilities Manager highlighted the point that the charging points would be two to three times faster than those installed at home, depending on what car and battery was being used, so it would be for anyone who needs one really. Councillor. S. Mayhew and Councillor. J. Edwards agreed swapping West Park idea for Ridgewood Village Hall car park and asked if any points could be installed in the new Estate as well as Luxford car park. Councillor. C. Macve asked if we could run a charging point from the Hub.

Councillor, J. Beesley concluded that Wealden DC had been looking at their car parks and electric car parking points, so we should liaise with them, and proposed installation of electric car charging points to be installed at Ridgewood, Victoria Pleasure Ground, Foresters Hall and possibly the Civic Centre, and that we should also contact Wealden DC and ask them if they would help us to install points at Luxford car park. Members were all in favour of this.

EL.11.07.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report and;
- (ii) agree for the Estates and Facilities Manager to liaise with Wealden District Council to discuss proposals for installation of electric car parking points at various sites.

- 7.4 To consider a request to purchase land adjacent to 10 Wilson Grove, West Park
Councillor. S. Mayhew mentioned that a few people had asked in the past for land but proposed that we should say no at this time because it would open up the flood gates to other requests for council land. Councillor. K. Bedwell agreed that we should hang on to the land. This was proposed by Councillor. S. Mayhew and seconded by Councillor. K. Bedwell.
Members all agreed.

EL.12.07.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report and;
- (ii) agree not to sell or release council land at present and subsequently declined a request made by a resident to purchase land adjacent to 10 Wilson Grove, West Park, Uckfield.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To note the update on the 'Our Parks' Initiative

Members noted the report.

The Senior Administrative Officer advised there would be a Deed of Dedication to be endorsed at the next Full Council Meeting, and that in the meantime, UTC would liaise with 'Fields in Trust' to identify the exact area which would need to be protected on Harlands Farm playing fields. Councillor. J. Beesley proposed holding this over to the next Full Council meeting.

8.2 To review current procedures and options re-opening the Town Council's Play Areas

The Estates and Facilities Manager added that he had been liaising with Framfield Parish Council and there was potential that we could join forces and use the same company on the same day to reduce costs. The Estates and Facilities Manager had also said there was potential for other parish councils to join depending on what decision was made.

Councillor. S. Mayhew had raised a good point that we could be having to do this for a prolonged period, Councillor. J. Edwards agreed that we would have to clean the play area and argued that it has been difficult for local government to give clear and consistent advice when people have been flouting advice from central government in any event and some have been using the play areas. Councillor. D. Bennett proposed the option of using a company for a minimum of three months and for the council to seek part-funding from local parish councils who would maybe want to share the cost, along with recommendation to encourage personal responsibility with signage. This was seconded by

Councillor. D. French. Councillor. S. Mayhew had also raised the concern that this was still a new venture and that we would still have to make sure they did the job properly and asked if we can look at how they are actually do this.

EL.13.07.20 Members **RESOLVED to:**

- (i) note the report, and;
- (ii) agree for UTC to arrange with the company to do the work with an initial short term contract and for signage to be used to increase awareness for users to take personal responsibility with hand sanitisers and to limit numbers entering the play parks.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 Climate Change Working Group

Nothing to report at this time

9.2 2020 VE Anniversary Working Group

(activities placed on hold until autumn 2020)

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1 Active Uckfield

Nothing to report at this time.

10.2 Age Concern

Nothing to report at this time.

10.3 West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

10.5 Uckfield and District Twinning Association

Nothing to report at this time.

10.6 Uckfield Parkrun Board

Nothing to report at this time.

10.7 Uckfield Plastic Free Working Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.8 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

10.9 Uckfield Youth Club Board

Nothing to report at this time.

10.10 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link

Nothing to report at this time.

10.11 All Weather Pitch Operational Group

Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had nothing further to add.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.14.07.20 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 a report on the Marketing programme.

Members discussed and subsequently noted the report.

Councillor. K. Bedwell mentioned that due to open air markets now being possible, that they could have an open air market at Ridgewood Hall to encourage stall holders and visitors to come back in on 13th September 2020 and to try to encourage any of the local businesses to make up for some of their loss of earnings over the summer period. Councillor. D. French said that she would be looking for volunteers to dress up as mascots. This would be organised and announced the week beforehand if it were to go ahead.

The meeting finished at 20.25pm