

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held as a
REMOTE meeting via ZOOM,
on Monday 17th August 2020 at 7.00 pm
(rescheduled meeting from 3rd August 2020)

PRESENT: Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. H. Firth
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. S. Mayhew (Town Mayor)
Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. D. Ward
Mr. L. Westwood Flood

IN ATTENDANCE:

3 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

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.

No interests were declared.

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

None received.

3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FC.14.08.20 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by District and County Councillors.

Councillor Chris Dowling advised matters relating to East Sussex County Council and East Sussex Highways were relatively quiet at present, but he had been dealing with a few resident enquiries. There had been a fatal accident on the A26 near Little Horsted, where someone very sadly lost their life. This was being thoroughly investigated by both Sussex Police and East Sussex Highways.

Councillor Claire Dowling referred to her involvement and work in the 'Shop safely, shop local and shop Uckfield' campaign in partnership with the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce, Uckfield Town Council and Uckfield FM. They had been pleased to be able to receive support from Wealden District Council, to help with the publicity and encourage people to shop local.

Councillor D. Ward raised a couple of enquiries:

- (i) could an update be provided on the road improvements outside the new Ridgewood Farm development (traffic calming features that were due to be installed in Lewes Road, Uckfield);
- (ii) could an update be provided on the installation of defibrillators in sheltered accommodation, for example Grants Hill Court.

Councillor C. Macve, referring back to the very early proposals about the Uckfield by-pass and Ridgewood Farm development was certain there was mention of undertaking improvements to the existing roundabouts to increase capacity and traffic flow on these roundabouts but nothing had been mentioned since.

Mr L. Westwood Flood enquired as to how plans were going for the reopening of schools in East Sussex, and what the County's approach was to this. Councillor Claire Dowling responded advising that unfortunately the Education department at East Sussex County Council was waiting on government guidance at present, but were regularly liaising with schools to help them reopen fully.

Councillors advised that they would look into these matters further and respond as soon as possible.

Councillor P. Sparks advised that Wealden DC had extended their discretionary grant support scheme for those businesses impacted by Covid-19. All businesses of rateable value in Wealden should investigate and see if they were eligible. The deadline for this next round of funding was Friday 28th August 2020.

Councillor H. Firth advised that she had been mostly involved in Planning discussions and supporting local elderly residents with shopping, or issues relating to anti-social behaviour. Planning officers had provided members with a breakdown of the new guidance and legislation being introduced by central government in respect of planning. She would ask for this to be circulated to the parishes.

Councillor G. Johnson, reiterated his involvement in planning issues, as a member of both Wealden Plans Committee North and South. He also highlighted the importance of the business grants available and for businesses to look into whether they could apply.

FC.15.08.20 Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors J. Beesley, D. Bennett, B. Cox, J. Edwards and C. Snelgrove. Apologies were also received from Mr A. Brunson (Youth Member).

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meetings of Full Council on 22nd June 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.16.08.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of Full Council on the 22nd June 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members requested that the following action be removed
'FC11.06.20 – Wealden DC's strategic housing and economic land availability assessment.

Members subsequently noted the action list.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee

No meetings have taken place.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15th June and 27th July 2020

FC.17.08.20 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committees of the 15th June and 27th July 2020.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 13th July 2020

FC.18.08.20 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 13th July 2020.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Councillor P. Sparks advised that he was wearing one of the sunflower lanyards at the meeting. The campaign had now been launched, and the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance had been very supportive, by funding the purchase of the lanyards for distribution across the district.

Councillor P. Sparks had been up and down the shops in Uckfield High Street and was hoping the sunflower lanyard scheme would give confidence to those with hidden disabilities, and encourage people to come back to the shops and businesses. The campaign also involved the Volunteer Centre who were helping to reach out to community and vulnerable groups.

Members noted the report.

9.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020

Members were directed to two documents which related to this agenda item: (i) the 'Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20' as contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and (ii) the detailed Internal Audit report undertaken by Auditing Solutions Ltd for 2019/20.

One member gave her congratulations to the new Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (Sarah D'Alessio). This officer had big shoes to fill following the retirement of the previous Assistant Town Clerk who had worked at the Town Council a number of years. Very good comments had been received from the auditors, and this was great work.

A point of clarification was raised by a second member in regards to a row within the first AGAR paper.

Members received, considered and noted the two parts of the Internal Audit Report for the year ending 31st March 2020 (i) Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 within the AGAR and (ii) the detailed Internal Audit report undertaken by Auditing Solutions Ltd 2019/20.

10.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 1 – THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement for the period 2019/20 which formed part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) on page four of six.

FC.19.08.20 Members reviewed the content of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2019/20) and **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20, and authorised the Town Mayor as Chairman of the meeting and the Town Clerk to sign and date this statement on behalf of the Town Council.

11.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 2 – THE TOWN COUNCIL’S DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020

Members reviewed a summary of the Town Council’s accounting statements, as presented on page five of six, in the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return ending 31st March 2020, and financial statements at the end of March 2020.

One member requested a breakdown of the figures provided on page 2 of the financial statements (other direct service costs), which the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO advised she would provide the following day to the elected member.

Queries were also raised with regards to a couple of lines within the earmarked reserves. The Town Clerk advised that if members wished to review the earmarked reserves, there would be an opportunity to review these during the budget setting process in the autumn of 2020.

FC.20.08.20 Members **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the draft annual governance and accountability return, and financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2020, and authorised for the Town Mayor as Chairman of the meeting to sign and date this return, on behalf of the Town Council.

12.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE DEED OF DEDICATION BETWEEN ‘FIELDS IN TRUST’ AND UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL FOR HARLANDS FARM PLAYING FIELDS

The Town Clerk referred to an update provided by the Senior Administrative Officer at the last meeting of Environment & Leisure Committee. Fields in Trust had agreed to provide funding of up to £5,000, with the purpose of utilising an open space that had been identified (Harlands Farm playing fields) and protecting this space, for the future. A copy of the draft deed of dedication was attached in appendix A, and a map highlighting the area that would be designated for protection in appendix B.

One member highlighted their interest in the report, and how nice it would be to see the land at Harlands Farm playing fields being used. This member requested that matters such as parking provision be re-explored with East Sussex Highways, to understand how we can support the site with ancillary facilities for recreation, in the future.

Councillors S. Mayhew and H Firth offered to sign the deed of dedication when ready.

FC.21.08.20 Members **RESOLVED** to provide authority for two members to review the documentation and execute the final deed of dedication between Uckfield Town Council and Fields in Trust, once ready.

13.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21 (Q1)

Members thought that this was a good report, and good to see progress considering the impact of Covid-19 in the previous few months on resources and service provision.

Members noted the report and congratulated the officers at the Town Council for their hard work.

14.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the engagements listed, and the Town Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor J. Love for attending the unveiling of the WW2 commemoration bench in Brown's Lane on 16th August 2020.

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

Four deed of grants had been received:

Margaret Eastwood, Sarah Gauntlett, Sophie Joel and Thomas Eastwood

Sally Moira King and Bruce King

Pauline Carless and Lucy Barnes

Carl Ronald Constable and Julie May Constable

FC.22.08.20 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

16.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

17.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk advised that two new members of staff had recently joined the organisation (i) Part time administrative officer, Julie, who started on 3rd August and (ii) Hospitality Manager, Louise, who started on 10th August. The Town Clerk hoped everyone would join her in welcoming these new officers to the team.

There was very little to add to the General Purposes Committee agenda on 24th August, and therefore the Town Clerk advised that with only a couple of the standing agenda items also available, that she had contacted the Chair and Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee to request that the meeting be cancelled. Members nodded in support of this suggestion.

18.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor S. Mayhew said a big thank you to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor J. Love for her continuing and frequent liaison with Sussex Police. She had been doing a sterling job following the Town Council being inundated with enquiries relating to anti-social behaviour across the whole town over the past few weeks.

The Town Mayor also advised that the Town Council had received a large number of comments and concerns from residents regarding the screenings and applications for future development. The Town Mayor was looking at ways in which the Town Council could get these views across to the relevant authorities with a stronger approach, as the town's voices needed to be heard.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm.