



# THE UCKFIELD VOICE

July/August 2020

EDITION 211

## SUPPORT OUR HIGH STREET

With the opening of non-essential shops from mid-June and a number of businesses having more flexibility from early July, we are very pleased to see the heart of Uckfield blossoming again.

### Key service centre

Uckfield is a key service centre, not only for those living in the town, but also for many of the surrounding villages. We are very fortunate to have a range of retailers, independent and national chains who make getting what you need, local to home, much easier. We have DIY stores and builders' merchants on the Bellbrook Business Park. The High Street offers a wide and varied range of retail outlets as well as banking and professional services. Uckfield has also been fortunate to have a large range of food establishments offering takeaways during the lockdown period – either for collection or delivery. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard and adapted to a new way of operating, providing a safe space for our residents and visitors to shop.

### Working together

The Town Council has been working closely with the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and Wealden District Council to understand what issues retailers may be experiencing during this period of change. We have been discussing ways in which we can best ensure a safe shopping experience for members of the public.



Picture courtesy of Skyshots RPAS

### Shop Local

Uckfield is a spacious and safe space to shop, and there is room for everybody. Shoppers have been in good spirits and waited patiently observing government advice on social distancing. We recognise that this has been a strange time for all, thank you for your support.

Contact us through:

[admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)



@uckfieldtowncouncil

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Reviews from Council Committees
- A tribute to our ranger Geoff Pollard
- Civic Centre open again

# LOOKING BACK AT ACHIEVEMENTS

## Full Council

BY TOWN MAYOR CLLR SPIKE MAYHEW

May 2019, saw a new municipal term commence and six new members join Uckfield Town Council. After a busy first meeting, where all members were appointed to committee and outside groups, we continued to keep up that pace and work together for the benefit of the town over the next few years.

Throughout the year a number of motions put forward by councillors were supported, and work continues in the following areas:

- supporting the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden DC to examine measures to reduce emissions
- supporting the objectives of the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Community toolkit and confirm Uckfield Town Council's commitment to make Uckfield a plastic free community
- to look into civil order such as Public Space Protection orders and to reconsider the role of a Community Warden
- to investigate the extent of youth food poverty in the Uckfield area.

## General Purposes Committee

BY CLLR CHRIS MACVE

The final quarter of the last municipal year was a very strange time without normal committee meetings due to social distancing measures.

Despite this, the work of the Council continued. Following is a brief synopsis of the report that would have been submitted for the Annual Town

Meeting. Many of the items considered, discussed and voted on were a continuation of the work of the previous council. This year was the first year of this present council following the elections in May 2019. One topic that has taken up a lot of committee time has been the upkeep and maintenance of the Council's properties and other assets - not only maintaining the buildings but also improving them to ensure that they serve the town for many years to come. Works have included:

- carrying out a condition survey of all of the Town Council buildings and re-evaluating the value of our assets and their rebuild valuations for insurance purposes
- carrying out improvement works to the chapel windows and roof at Snatts Road Cemetery
- internal decorative works and improvements to the lighting and ceilings in the Civic Centre
- internal and external decoration works to Foresters Hall.

The committee also had the responsibility of monitoring and approving the Finance Sub Committee actions, which in the past year included awarding a total of £43,367 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations. All internal audits recorded that the Town Council's finance and governance procedures were sound and annual reviews of financial policies were undertaken.

Together with the above there were also other matters that were set as goals for this present year which have been completed or are ongoing including new online booking systems for rooms and events.

# LOOKING BACK AT ACHIEVEMENTS

## Environment and Leisure Committee

BY CLLR JEZ BEESLEY

We have had a very busy year indeed! Due to the Annual Town Meeting being postponed here are just a few of our many achievements.

- The Tree Policy was reviewed - for every tree that has to be removed a new tree would be planted
- Dog poo bag dispensers were installed in the town's main green spaces
- Selby Meadow licence agreed with the Newtown Action Group for a further 10 years
- We established a Climate Change Working Group, and have set out a number of actions for delivery over the next 2-3 years
- The Civic Centre installed a mains supplied water cooler and signed up to the 'Refill' scheme.
- We replaced the safety surface around some of the equipment at Hempstead Play Area
- We agreed a new design for the Luxfords Play Area upgrade which is hoped to be installed in 2020
- We held the Allotment Holders conference at which the competition winners were presented with their awards. We thank Staverton's Nursery for their sponsorship and judging.
- In August 2019 we held the most successful Weald on the Field yet
- October 2019 saw the Uckfield Revival array of classic vehicles parade through the town. This had to be moved to the station car park due to heavy rain overnight.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Clerk and office staff for all of their work behind the scenes, also the grounds staff looking after our open spaces, and everyone for their work and commitment for the events to take place.



## GEOFF POLLARD - OUR RANGER

It was with great sadness that Uckfield Town Council had to announce the sudden passing of Geoff Pollard, the Town Council's Countryside Ranger.

As Countryside Ranger, Geoff had been with the Town Council for five and a half years and was responsible for carrying out practical conservation work in the town's two local nature reserves (Hempstead Meadows and West Park), our ancient woodlands and sites of key wildlife and biodiversity such as Harlands Pond.

Geoff had a wealth of knowledge and

expertise in conservation management with over 25 years' experience. Prior to working at Uckfield Town Council he had worked for The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) as a trainer and assessor in a variety of skills including environmental conservation, creative crafts and land management at Plashett Wood, Rose Hill and Stanmer Park, Brighton – . In that role, he had also provided a great deal of support to the Millennium Green Trust, in Ridgewood. He had experience in using both traditional and modern methods of conservation management to encourage the co-existence of flora and fauna. An example has been the introduction of sheep grazing at West Park Nature Reserve. The sheep were provided by The Sussex Wildlife Trust – it was an idea Geoff had gained from Sheepcote Valley LNR, owned and run by Brighton and Hove City Council. The sheep reduce the bracken and increase the diversity of plant species in an area that requires management.

Geoff supported and welcomed volunteers to assist with works across the town. Work experience students visited from Uckfield College, Beacon Academy and Plumpton College. He welcomed volunteering days with local businesses and recreational visits. He also ran a guided walk as part of the Uckfield Festival each year through Hempstead LNR.

We received numerous comments in relation to this year's bluebells in West Park Nature Reserve, and we are so grateful for his dedication and hard work, which helped to make Uckfield such as a beautiful place to live. He will be greatly missed by his work colleagues, volunteers and friends. Thank you, Geoff!



# WELCOME BACK TO THE CIVIC CENTRE - YOUR COMMUNITY HUB IN THE HEART OF UCKFIELD

The Civic Centre re-opened on Monday 6 July in full compliance with the government guidance to manage the risk of Covid-19 and make the Civic Centre a place where you feel safe.

We have:

- carried out risk assessments for our room hirers, our staff and restaurant
- cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in place for our toilets and key touch points around the building
- reassessed the numbers we can take in each room for bookings to ensure our customers can maintain a safe distance
- hand sanitiser stations and added screens at both our caretaker and office counters
- introduced a one way system within the Civic Centre with clear access through our corridors to reduce touch points and risk of contact
- reduced the number of Town Council staff working in the office at any one time
- procedures in place to monitor the temperature of our staff on a daily basis as they enter the building.

If you wish to recommence your bookings or look ahead to further in the year, please visit [www.civiccentreuckfield.com](http://www.civiccentreuckfield.com) or contact [admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk) or 01825 762774.



## Calendar Photographic Competition 2021 Funny Photograph Caption

This year's competition is all about your funny photographs and the captions that go with them

**Get your entries in by 31 August 2020**

Full details and entry form available at

<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/community/calendar-competition/>

## LAST MONTH IN YOUR COUNCIL

Members reviewed East Sussex Fire Authority's Public Consultation document "Planning for a Safer Future – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25" in June. The document set out proposals which aimed to deliver services in a flexible and efficient way. With representations from other councillors and a comprehensive proposal put forward on the planned changes to resources and duty stations/crew created healthy debate. Members raised concerns with the timing of the public consultation and impact of new housing developments on the emergency services' ability to respond.

In summary, members responded with: "Uckfield Town Council urgently and forcefully calls upon the East Sussex Fire Authority to immediately drop all, and any proposed amendments, to the Fire Service in our county. This council believes that the proposed cuts will put the town and its villages at risk and in danger. The council wholeheartedly disagrees with the cuts and will push back at East Sussex County Council

on the proposal and, to our best endeavours, fight to keep the high standards and first rate fire service that the people of Uckfield deserve."

As a result of passing this proposal, Uckfield Town Council will

- demand that any public consultation be suspended until it can be given proper consideration (post Covid-19);
- ensure that consideration is given to the new large-scale housing developments and subsequent population increase in this area in the next 5-10 years;
- demand a comprehensive risk assessment of the impact of the cuts to all South East Fire and Rescue Services, and in dealing with capacity for East Sussex;
- ask for modelling of common fire risks in Wealden such as bush fires on the Ashdown Forest and the effects to capacity on Uckfield's Fire station;
- demand a full explanation from East Sussex Fire Authority on the proposed cuts."

## 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

MON 13 JULY	– GENERAL PURPOSES
MON 20 JULY	– PLANS
MON 27 JULY	– ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE
MON 3 AUG	– FULL COUNCIL
MON 10 AUG	– PLANS
MON 24 AUG	– GENERAL PURPOSES
TUES 1 SEP	– PLANS
MON 7 SEP	– ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE
MON 14 SEP	– FULL COUNCIL
MON 21 SEP	– PLANS

is advisable to submit your question beforehand to allow a full response to be given at the meeting.

All questions should be directed to the Town Clerk at:

[admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

\* meeting dates may change or be held remotely see website for latest details

### COMING NEXT MONTH

- Calendar Competition
- Uckfield Revival

