

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



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

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the public
2 members of the press (recording)

Holly Goring	Town Clerk
Sarah D'Alessio	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Mark Francis	Estates & Facilities Manager

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.23.09.20 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by District Councillors.

Councillor H. Firth provided feedback from a recent Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting where they had discussed community safety, and the desire for parking violations to be picked up by Police Community Support Officers whilst on their rounds. Wealden District Council was also progressing work on the new Local Plan.

Councillor P. Sparks, reiterated the issue of parking enforcement. He was aware that the Uckfield Leisure Centre had now reopened and Wealden DC had supported Freedom Leisure in making this possible. Councillor Sparks also referred to housing demand vs supply. In 2019/20 he believed 1,034 homes had been built in the Wealden District, whereas the housing need was 1,231. Each year the number of homes built was falling behind those planned and this was having an impact on the five-year land supply.

Councillor G. Johnson had recently heard a very good presentation from Sussex Police Chief Inspector Alistair Henry, about the work they were doing with PCSOs, their increasing numbers in the local area and recent achievements.

Councillor D. Ward requested clarification on the number of homes built versus the number approved through planning permission.

Councillor J. Beesley referenced the ongoing concerns with regards to pedestrian safety and safety around the schools up at Downsview Crescent. He had heard of the School Streets campaign, and interest that Manor Primary School had shown in this. <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/safer-routes-to-school>

FC.24.09.20 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 Councillor C. Snelgrove. Apologies were also received from Councillors C & C Dowling.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meetings of Full Council on 17th August 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.25.09.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of Full Council on the 17th August 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members reviewed the action list. One question was raised with regards to the new 'Covid' wardens that the UK Government had referenced. The Town Clerk advised that they would look into this further.

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 had taken place.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 7th September 2020

FC.26.09.20 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 7th September 2020.

(c) General Purposes Committee

No meetings had taken place.

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

Members considered an update on the Uckfield Revival which had now been postponed for October due to Covid-19 restrictions and it was hoped would be rescheduled for Saturday 27th March 2021.

A suggestion was made for an online photo gallery in its place, but it was uncertain how this would replace the original intention of the event – supporting local businesses and bringing people into town. Members noted the report.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Councillor P. Sparks praised the success of the sunflower lanyard scheme (supporting those with Hidden Disabilities) and members subsequently noted the report.

9.0 TO CONSIDER THE LATEST GUIDANCE BY THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION FOR REMEMBRANCE PARADES AND SERVICES

Members considered a report which highlighted two issues for consideration by members:

(i) That local authorities should be bearing the costs of road closures and policing, as well as public liability insurance, and,

(ii) In light of Covid-19 restrictions, how should the town's remembrance ceremonies and parade take place, if at all.

Members felt that the remembrance arrangements were important and the Town Council should seek to provide support to the Royal British Legion and Holy Cross Church. It was advised that any arrangements would be by invitation only this year, with 1 or 2 representatives from each organisation.

Members felt that it would be helpful to identify member representatives to work with the Royal British Legion and Holy Cross Church to make the arrangements with Covid-19 in mind. Councillors C. Macve, H. Firth & D. Ward volunteered their time.

FC.27.09.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree for Uckfield Town Council to support the Royal British Legion with the future organisation of Remembrance parades (*and subsequent costs associated with road closure applications and insurance*);
- (ii) put forward Councillors C. Macve, H. Firth & D. Ward to work with the Royal British Legion and Holy Cross Church to prepare for Armistice Day and Remembrance Services in November 2020 with Covid-19 restrictions.

10.0 TO CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE 2021 TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR

Members reviewed proposals for undertaking the production of the 2021 Town Council calendar in-house as a result of changes to the usual supplier.

One member noted that the calendar was popular with certain members of the community, and the community did value it. The proposals to charge a small fee for the advertising space that was available would help to cover the costs somewhat.

It was also acknowledged that it was a really good way of knowing when the town council meetings were, and events within the town.

It was requested that a local printer be used and the A5 size sounded better for hanging up in the home.

FC.28.09.20 Members **RESOLVED** to move forward by ensuring the 2021 Town Calendar continued and for officers to look at advertising to help cover costs and ensure local businesses were used.

11.0 TO REVIEW THE CURRENT CONTRACT FOR CLEANING THE TOWN COUNCIL'S PLAY AREAS

The Estates & Facilities Manager had prepared a report which outlined the costs, the reports from the current contractors and advised that the current contract was due to end at the end of September 2020, hence the reason for bringing the matter to Full Council rather than Environment & Leisure Committee.

Members discussed the topic at length, considering once again whether to carry out the task in-house or to employ a contractor. The Mayor had noted the improvements in the swab readings taken prior to spraying and after.

Members questioned whether the benefits of the spraying was lasting longer than 30 days, but it was advised that the contractors' certificate only lasted for 30 days, so outside of that the Town Council would not be covered by their spraying

and would therefore impact on the insurance policy.

Members considered the usage of the play areas in the winter months, as well as the strength of the zoona product. Members also recognised that to carry out the task in-house would place additional pressure on existing grounds staff who were already dealing with a larger workload, a backlog of work and no seasonal support.

Members queried the period of time by which they should extend the contract and felt that other companies should be approached to see if the costs could be reduced any further.

FC.29.09.20 After substantial discussion, members **RESOLVED** to extend the current contract for sanitising the Town Council's play areas for a further three months whilst approaching similar contractors to compare prices, and see if costs could be reduced further.

12.0 TO REVIEW A REPORT BY COUNCILLOR A. SMITH ON THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES IN UCKFIELD

Councillor A. Smith had offered at a previous meeting to research the issue of affordability and the need for affordable housing in Uckfield. Pulling together a very comprehensive and factual report, the report included data sources, research on average rents and house prices for Uckfield. Chairman, Councillor S. Mayhew thanked Councillor Smith for her detailed research into this subject.

Members agreed it was a very good report. Members noted the contents and acknowledged that the definition of affordable housing had broadened somewhat over the years to include not just social rented properties, but shared ownership and alternative schemes intended for low-income families. It was felt however that despite the 35% affordability ratio set by Wealden District Council on new build housing developments, that this ambition was rarely achieved. It was also clarified by members at the meeting that any new build developments with under 50 dwellings were not required to provide affordable housing.

Members felt frustrated and expressed the need for smaller cheaper properties to keep young workers and local residents in the Uckfield area.

FC.30.09.20 After a detailed discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to request that the Town Clerk write to the Housing Minister Rt Hon Robert Jenrick with a copy of this report and advise Wealden DC's planning department of these discussions along with neighbouring parish councils.

14.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the engagements listed.

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

Two deed of grants had been received:

Elaine Bowling

Michael Francis Charles Hill, Aaron Michael Hill, Matthew Toby Hill and Melanie Blott

FC.31.09.20 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

None.

18.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor S. Mayhew gave a big thank you to Lewis, who was standing down as Youth Member as a result of heading to University. He had been an inspiration, and got involved in everything. Members thanked Lewis for his contribution, wished him all the best and thought he would go far!

The Chairman was hopeful that at some stage, the Plans Committee which had seven members, would be able to recommence face to face. At present, it was recommended that committee meetings continued online.

20.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC.32.09.20

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.

19.1 To consider any updates received from leaseholders

None received.

19.2 Town Clerk to instigate initial business planning discussion for 2021/22 for Councillors to bring forward ideas to forthcoming committee and council Meetings

No discussion held due to time.

The meeting closed at 20:59pm.