

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held remotely via Zoom on Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)	Cllr. H. Firth
Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. C. Snelgrove
	Cllr. P. Sparks

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the public
Councillor K. Bedwell

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Mark Francis – Estates & Facilities Manager
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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.

Councillor J. Love declared an interest in agenda items 5.4 and 5.5 as a result of being the Chair of the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society.

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

None were received.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received, although Councillor H. Firth lost her internet connection, and therefore missed the majority of the meeting.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committees held on the 13th July 2020

GP12.10.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 13th July 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members reviewed and noted the updates provided within the action list. They agree to remove the following from the action list as this work had now been completed or superseded by another resolution:

GP39.02.19 – Recommendations from Finance Sub-Committee (Grants)
GP41.03.20 – Recommendations from Finance Sub-Committee (Grant)
GP46.04.20 – Review community grant funding allocations (Part i)
GP06.06.20 – Current position with Council's buildings (annual maintenance)
GP10.07.20 – Finance Summary (reinvestment)

4.3 Project list

Members noted the report and the removal of Project No. 65 (*Rebuild Valuation Exercise of the Town Council's buildings*) as this had now been completed for insurance purposes.

5.0 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

5.2 To note the income and expenditure reports for 2020/21 (end August 2020)

The Chairman acknowledged the devastating impact that Covid-19 had had on local businesses in addition to the income streams of the Town Council. Thankfully some of the loss in income had been partly offset by furlough income received thanks to the work of the Assistant Town Clerk, plus the recent receipt of a £10k grant from Wealden District Council in their discretionary grant scheme.

It was recognised that staff needed thanking for their dedication and hard work, and although sales figures were down, purchases were also down. All members of the General Purposes Committee agreed and wished to record their thanks to all staff and for everything they were doing.

It was also noted that the Finance Sub-Committee had reviewed the figures in detail and would continue to do so over the winter months.

5.3. Bad Debts

Members noted the current bad debts recorded and reasons for this.

5.4 To receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 28th September 2020

The Town Clerk advised that there was an error in the minutes on page 4, under agenda item 8.0 – Community Grant Payments. The original amount awarded to the Uckfield Festival for 2020/21 was £3,000 and not £1,500.

Subject to this amendment being highlighted at the next Finance Sub-Committee, members agreed to note and receive the minutes.

5.5 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 28th September 2020

Members noted the amendment that had been mentioned by the Town Clerk above and the recent update regarding the funds awarded to the Uckfield Festival during 2020/21 from their grant allocation.

Members were unable to make a decision at the meeting and requested that this item be deferred to the next Full Council meeting on 26th October 2020.

5.6 To consider the draft fees and charges for 2021/22

Members reviewed a report which explained that the Town Council was required to review its fees and charges for the following financial year to help inform the budget setting process. Office staff had highlighted a couple of issues including fees and charges for Sunday's in the Civic Centre and questioned whether the off peak/peak rates could be simplified in any way.

During the impact of Covid-19 on hirers, members were uncertain of what decision to take as although the cost to open the Civic Centre increased each year and additional PPE/cleaning costs had recently affected expenditure, members and office staff did not wish to make too many changes.

Members requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 9th November 2020.

5.7 To consider new initiatives for the draft committee budget(s) for 2021/22

Members were advised that it was now time to start considering potential priorities and initiatives for 2021/22, as the draft budget papers and annual plan for 2021/22 would be presented to Full Council on 7th December, and would need to be agreed and adopted by Full Council on 18th January 2021. The pandemic had made forward planning particularly difficult as the next 6-12 months were completely unknown in terms of any external factors and their impact on income and expenditure across all areas of the business.

Councillor P. Sparks enquired as to whether the potential funds suggested to place in earmarked reserves for future by-elections or four yearly elections, included the cost of polling cards. The Town Clerk highlighted that this was a good point and would check.

Members subsequently noted the report and the Town Clerk advised that she would bring back this agenda item to the next meeting in case members had had any further considerations.

6.0 BUILDINGS

6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings

Members reviewed the regular update on works and repairs within the Town Council's buildings. One member referenced the move of the Citizen's Advice Bureau from the Hub and wondered what the next steps were. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that there were no plans as the tenants had not yet moved out. So the first task would be to inspect the property after their departure.

Members subsequently noted the report.

6.2 To review the Town Council's Annual Maintenance Programme midway through the year and prioritise works for the remainder of 2020/21

Members were provided with a report which set out the works that had originally been scheduled for completion in 2020/21 across the Town Council's buildings, the works halted as a result of Covid-19 and potential projects that could be delivered instead of those originally planned.

The Estates & Facilities Manager talked through the proposal for the doors at Victoria Pavilion, which were intended to be more vandal proof. The Grounds staff would unlock on their arrival in the morning and close on their departure in the evening.

One member was concerned should the roof works be delayed at Osborn Hall, but it was noted that technically as Osborn Hall had a full repairing lease, it was the tenants' responsibility to carry out these works.

GP13.10.20 It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) agree to carry out the works to the Victoria toilet doors, based on the revised estimate for the works;
- (iii) agree to move works to the Foresters Hall blinds, Weald Hall trussing, roof at Osborn Hall and Biomass Hopper storage to the 2021/22 Building Maintenance Programme;
- (iv) agree to utilise the 2020/21 Building Maintenance Programme Fund to cover the cost of the works at Foresters Hall and to explore partition works to the Green Room in the Civic Centre (ensuring that any partition is adequately sound-proofed).

7.0 POLICY

7.1 None.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council

Members reviewed the report circulated and noted the contents.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the reports from April, June and July 2020. The Town Clerk advised that the member audits were now up to date.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

(i) Citizens Advice Bureau
Members noted the report.

(ii) East Sussex Association of Local Councils AGM
Nothing to report at this time.

(iii) Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee
Members noted the report.

(iv) Uckfield & District Housing Association Ltd Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.

(v) Uckfield & District Preservation Society
Nothing to report at this time.

(vi) Uckfield Volunteer Centre
Nothing to report at this time.

- (vii) Wealden Works
Nothing to report at this time.
- (viii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- (ix) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel
Nothing to report at this time.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP14.10.20

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 review the lease agreements for the storage garages at Victoria Pavilion with Anderida Cricket Club and Uckfield Performance Ensemble
Members discussed the storage garages and requested that the Town Clerk proceed with the renewal process based on their discussions.
- 12.2 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant
Members complimented staff on an extremely comprehensive and well laid out report.
- 12.3 Town Clerk to continue initial business planning discussions for 2021/22, and encourage Councillors to bring forward ideas to forthcoming committee and council meetings.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm.