

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 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. K. Bedwell	

### IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Holly Goring – Town Clerk  
Sarah D’Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO  
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

**EL.16.10.20** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable Town Councillor but non-E&L Committee member, Councillor Macve to speak.

Councillor C. Macve was granted permission to speak in relation to item 5.4 on the agenda regarding the map shown on the fees and charges report as incorrect in that it did not pick up the allotments on the east side of the access road to the hospital. The Senior Administrative Officer would arrange for this to be amended. Councillor C. Macve also referred to item 7.2 on the agenda in relation to how the mountain ash tree donated by the Queen was progressing and also if there would be a commemorative plaque attached to it. This would be discussed later in the meeting.

**EL.17.10.20** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

### 3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received prior to the meeting from both Councillor A. Smith and Councillor D. Bennett due to work commitments.

### 4.0. MINUTES

#### 4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**EL.18.10.20** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

\*19:06pm – a local resident had submitted a written request to speak and apologised for his late attendance. Standing orders were deferred in agreement to allow him permission to speak regarding agenda item 4.2 (the minutes of the previous Environment and Leisure meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020). This was specifically in relation to sporting facilities and anti-social behaviour at Ridgewood. He wanted to clarify that football was not the only sport he was interested in but acknowledged that Ridgewood Recreation Ground was probably not large enough for a full size football pitch. Perhaps hockey or stoolball. He also wished to reference the 101 calls and that most of the anti-social behaviour during the summer months was related to people breaching the Covid-19 restrictions, not as much late night ASB.

Members noted these comments made.

#### 4.2. Action list

Councillor J. Beesley referred to outstanding items to the Ridgewood play area - the shelter and installation of CCTV and the gate. Members were still waiting for information from Sussex Police in relation to figures from local residents and a report would be provided in due course with future proposals.

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

EL.14.07.19 – To consider a 'Bagged Dog Poo' sticker scheme.  
This action has been superseded by item EL19.09.20 – no further action.  
Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

EL.49.02.20 – To consider the future of the calendar competition.  
Work was now progress to develop the 2021 calendar in house. An action in progress, can now be removed.  
Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

EL10.07.20 – To consider land adjacent to Bird in Eye allotments.  
The Senior Administrative Officer had written to the residents at 151/157 Framfield Road serving notice to remove their garden borders. A reminder if necessary to be sent in six months's time and then again three months before.  
Members agreed to remove this item from the list.

EL19.09.20 – To consider – Wealden DC's consultation on the extension of their Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Fouling.  
Dog signs had now been placed at Harlands – two on the notice boards and one on the gate at the third corner leading to the hospital. Wealden DC agreed to put a dog bin at the SANGS as requested. UTC were also seeking to put in an extra dog bin at Harlands. UTC would also explore costs to place clearer stickers on dog bins asking dog owners to clear up after their dogs.

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 for 2020/21

Members noted the report.

5.3. To review fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery in 2021/22

Councillor J. Beesley highlighted the recommendations and asked members to give their thoughts towards the proposed changes to the fees and charges by increasing these by 1.5%. Councillor B. Cox proposed that any higher would not be much benefit and that this proposal would be prudent and in line with inflation. Councillor J. Edwards asked if it were financially viable to freeze any increase in costs for a year and if it was possible to compare year to year, however, the Town Clerk pointed out that since each year had been different with regards to burial income and this year particularly because of the pandemic, we found it very difficult to estimate our budgeted income. Councillor S. Mayhew remarked that if we did put off an increase this year then next year we might have to double our fees so for that reason seconded this motion. Members were all in favour of the proposed increase.

**EL19.10.20 Members RESOLVED to:**

(i) note the report and;

(ii) agreed to increase the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery in 2021/22 by 1.5%.

5.4. To review fees and charges for Sports facilities and allotments in 2021/22

Councillor K. Bedwell agreed that developing a working group to discuss any future changes to fees and charges would be a good idea and that she would be happy to spend some time looking at this, especially to compare fees with other local areas such as Crowborough and to carry out some research in order to pre-empt any concerns.

Members all agreed with the 1.5% increase to the fees and charges for next year and Councillor B. Cox offered to help with the working group. Councillor S. Mayhew also offered to be a part of the working group. Councillor D. Bennett would be deemed as having a conflict of interest in the work of the working group as a result of being an allotment plot holder so would be unable to assist at a working group however, the Town Clerk said that if he wished to submit his thoughts in writing that would be fine. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that he had already carried out some background work on the allotments and would be able to forward this over once the working group had been set up. The proposal for the increase of 1.5% to the fees and charges was seconded by Councillor B. Cox and members were all in favour.

**EL20.10.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:**

- (i) note the report and;
- (ii) agreed to increase the fees and charges for Sports facilities and allotments in 2021/22 by 1.5%
- (iii) set up a working group to look in more detail at the fees and charges for allotments and possibly sports facilities, for October 2021 onwards for allotments (and 2022/23 for sports facilities) with Councillors K. Bedwell, B. Cox and S. Mayhew wishing to participate.

Councillor K. Bedwell further asked about the policy details for the recreation grounds in terms of charging and refunding when there was bad weather. The Town Clerk highlighted that this was not the norm; the football paid for a season from August to May; the majority of any refunds given in the past 12 months were due to the Covid-19 pandemic stopping play. The cost of maintaining the pitches was significantly higher than the income the Town Council received.

5.5 To start considering new initiatives for the draft budget 2021/22

Councillor K. Bedwell asked for members to consider Ridgewood recreation ground as a ground for sports facilities and to look at ways of making this area better by way of levelling the pitch or marking it out, as this would otherwise be a wasted space. Councillor J. Edwards agreed that Ridgewood should be utilised.

The Town Clerk wished to make clear that the list of initiatives on the agenda were items that had cropped up over the last few months, but were not exhaustive. The grass verge cutting contribution would be raised at the next full council meeting and some of these items that would need to be raised annually. Items such as the replacement of grounds vehicles, climate change initiatives and street light repairs would need to be considered for the next year also. Members were invited for comments or other suggestions.

A submission from Councillor A. Smith was read out in her absence by the Senior Administrative Officer concerning the lack of and/or replacement of extra large litter bins in several locations; the skate park, Hempstead meadow: one at the base of the field below the play park where the teenagers congregate and one in the meadow itself. Councillor B. Cox suggested more recycling in town in conjunction with what we already had and also praised the success of the animal friendly bins installed around town. He also mentioned that it would be good to place another bin at Victoria Pleasure Ground like those at Luxfords Field and Harlands Farm playing field.

The Estates and Facilities Manager provided further details of a proposal for the purchase of at least one new grounds vehicle in the next couple of years. The Ford Ranger was faulty as the fans no longer worked, no heating and the air conditioning units would need replacing. Also, due to the age of vehicle and cost of works, the Estates and Facilities Manager had told the mechanic to put off for now for members to decide if those repairs were financially viable. Councillor B. Cox asked if a payment plan idea could be an option now towards new vehicles instead. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that the existing vans were fine for now and had passed the MOT, it was just that the fan was not working in one of the vehicle. It was hoped that the Ford Ranger would last until April next year and to not spend any more money on these vehicles during the pandemic.

Councillor S. Mayhew raised the issue that the dog poo bag dispensers had not been replenished; the Town Clerk pointed out that there was concern over hands accessing these during the pandemic, so the Grounds staff took the decision to remove the bag dispensers due to health and safety reasons. Councillor B. Cox

proposed a possible refund but The Town Clerk pointed out that the dog poo bag dispensers were separate to the budget; the whole point of the fee for the dispensers was about the branding with local advertising, so we would have to look back at the original contract for this.

The Town Clerk said that ideally, in order to research costs, any new initiatives would need to be suggested to staff by mid-November and the final figures would need to be provided by early January as the final budget would be adopted at Full Council on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Councillor D. French agreed with all of the initiatives put forward on the list. Councillor B. Cox seconded that all items on the list sounded good and asked if members could add extras as time goes on.

**EL21.10.20** Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report and;
- (ii) agreed that all the new initiatives suggested be incorporated and any additional ones be added including the additional/replacement bins and recycling bins at Hempstead Meadows, Victoria Pleasure Ground and Harlands Farm Playing Field.

**6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

(nothing to report at this time)

**7.0. ENVIRONMENT**

**7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates**

Councillor K. Bedwell asked when the rest of the play area equipment would be put back at Ridgewood as this had all been sanitised. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that this would be carried out by Wednesday of that week.

Councillor S. Mayhew asked if the work at Hempstead Meadows would be replaced like for like or whether we would be faced with the same sort of damage if the weather were similar to last year. The Estates and Facilities Manager said that this was not our path by East Sussex Rights of Way and that it was due to be done in May 2020, but did express that during the pandemic, this had been delayed.

Members acknowledged the additional feedback and subsequently noted the report.

**7.2 To consider a Tree report from Uckfield Town Council's Ranger**

Councillor K. Bedwell wanted to thank the new Ranger for this superb and very informative report - a lot of thought and planning had gone in to this. Councillor S. Mayhew also added that he had discussed the Queen's mountain ash tree and asked for this to be put forward as part of the 'Tree for Tree' proposal - this tree could be planted back in the Elizabeth Gardens as a good news story and would be a commemorative event for Uckfield Town.

The Estates and Facilities Manager then provided further information regarding the tree planting proposals – the Ranger had put a lot of work in to looking at various areas for planting trees and where to source them. He had managed to get a hundred trees for free from the Forestry Commission despite only having been here five weeks, so this was impressive. The Ranger had trimmed back an area in Hempstead Meadows and liaised with The Sussex Flow Initiative (which is the Wildlife Trust Environment Agency within the Trust and Lewes District Council), along with management of the River Ouse – to try to prevent flooding.

They were quite happy with ideas at West Park and the area of Hempstead as this would reduce the amount of water in the soil there, and the area of Hempstead meadow would hopefully muffle any noise from the trains for nearby residents, although to bear in mind that these would be ongoing projects for five to seven years. The West Park strip was obviously quite close to residents so fruit trees could be placed for local residents to enjoy and which would not grow as big, as this was just a strip of grassland. The area at the bottom of Hempstead recreation ground would be excellent as this was at the bottom of the flood plain. These were the three areas the Ranger was hoping to start with and would keep us informed.

Councillor S. Mayhew was happy to propose for this to go ahead and said it was brilliant that this work had already been proposed since the new Ranger had only been here such a short time. Councillor B. Cox asked if there had been certain areas that had specifically been worked out for the flooding as there were areas mentioned in this regard but which could be put forward as a priority, and also, asked about which were the right kind of trees to be planted for this purpose. Councillor J. Beesley re-iterated West Park and the bottom of Hempstead recreation ground, with Sussex Flow interested in the conservation aspect as this would provide a wildlife corridor to the rest of the West Park recreation ground.

**EL22.10.20 Members RESOLVED to:**

- (i) note the report and commended the new Ranger for his hard work providing suitable areas to plant trees around Uckfield;
- (ii) agree for the Queen's mountain ash tree to be planted in Elizabeth Gardens as a commemorative event.

7.3 To note an update on the allotment competition and conference  
Members noted the report and agreed for the remaining certificates and vouchers to be posted to the winners of this year's allotment competition due to Covid-19 restrictions.

7.4 To note an update on the Community Fridge Initiative  
Councillor B. Cox said that this was going through a funding process and was moving quite fast and building up quite well so a positive outlook. Members subsequently noted the report.

**8.0 LEISURE**

8.1 To note an update on sanitising the Town Council's play areas  
The Estates and Facilities Manager had contacted another fairly local company in Sussex to quote for sanitising the play areas and found out that they used the same sanitising product. The current company were happy to price match which would also save Framfield Parish Council money in the process who had also agreed to do this for a further three months. This would be reviewed at the next Full Council Meeting in December. Two members asked if dates of the sanitisation could be placed on the Uckfield Town Council website for local residents to see when this had been carried out. Councillor G. Johnson wished to thank the Estates and Facilities Manager for saving the Town Council money by venturing further afield.  
Members agreed and noted the report.

**9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

9.1 Climate Change Working Group  
Nothing to report at this time

## 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  
The Chairman thanked Councillor C. Macve and members noted the report.
- 10.9 Uckfield Youth Club Board  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.10 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link  
Members noted the report.
- 10.11 All Weather Pitch Operational Group  
Nothing to report at this time.

## 11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor. J. Beesley announced that it was great to see the re-opening of Luxfords Play Area and lots of positive comments, even though it was unfortunate to see graffiti there on the first night, although there had not been any more since then. He was looking forward to seeing Ridgewood play area back up and running, great work!

## 12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

**EL.23.10.20** 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 note a report on the Marketing programme.  
Members discussed and subsequently noted the report.
- 12.2 Town Clerk to give members time to discuss business planning initiatives for 2021/22 and potential priorities i.e. projects, sites, sports grounds etc.

The meeting finished at 20.38pm