

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held remotely via Zoom on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm

## PRESENT:

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

## IN ATTENDANCE:

2 members of the public  
2 members of the press

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. None were received.

### 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

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillor C. Snelgrove. No apologies were received for Councillor B. Cox.

### 4.0 MINUTES

#### 4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committees held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**GP15.11.20** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> October 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 They agreed to remove the following action from the list as this work had now been superseded by another resolution. Members subsequently noted the report.

GP14.08.20 – Position with council's buildings

4.3 Project list  
Members noted the report.

## 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)  
Councillor Sparks expressed how pleasantly surprised he was with how the figures were looking for the General Purposes Committee Income and Expenditure in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. He expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and all staff who had managed the finances well in these difficult times.

The Chairman, Councillor Macve agreed that the staff had worked excellently throughout.

A query was raised regarding the cemetery, to which the Town Clerk advised that the Cemetery came under grounds and was therefore detailed in the Environment & Leisure Committee income and expenditure report.

The Town Clerk also highlighted that monies (RHI payment) had just been received for part of 2019/20 and part of 2020/21 for use of the alternative fuel - Biomass boiler (£7,000).

Councillor Sparks also stated that his comments followed similarly for Luxfords Restaurant. The restaurant had been helped by the furlough monies received and £10,000 grant received from Wealden District Council's Phase 3 Discretionary Grant scheme.

Members wished to thank all staff and the new Hospitality Manager for their hard work and efforts.

5.3. Bad Debts  
Members noted the current bad debts recorded.

5.4 To re-consider the draft fees and charges for 2021/22  
The Town Clerk had returned with a follow up paper for the draft fees and charges for room hire in the Civic Centre and Foresters Hall. As members were uncertain of how to move forward in 2021/22, the Town Clerk had suggested a 1.5% increase across the board, and asked questions with regard to whether a peak rate should be added to the Council Chamber, if the equipment hire charges should also increase by 1.5% and if any further increase should be placed on the hire of Luxfords Restaurant to reflect commercial bookings.

**GP16.11.20** Members discussed the questions posed and **RESOLVED:**  
(i) with all in favour, voted to agree to an increase of 1.5% for room hire across all rooms at the Civic Centre and Foresters Hall in 2021/22;  
(ii) with all in favour, to add a peak rate to the Council Chamber;  
(iii) with six in favour and one abstaining (Cllr Firth), to agree to increase the hire of equipment by 1.5%, and;  
(iv) with four in favour, and one abstaining, to agree to add a commercial rate to Luxfords Restaurant hire charge.

- 5.5 To re-consider new initiatives for the draft committee budget(s) for 2021/22  
Members reviewed a brief report which highlighted items previously discussed or referenced by members and staff.

In response to the current difficulties experienced during the pandemic, Councillor Sparks noted the huge impact this was having on young people 16 – 24 year olds. He was aware that Youth Services were still doing outreach for the younger age groups, but wondered if there was anything we could do going forward, in terms of entertainment or using the Civic Centre or restaurant.

The Town Clerk agreed that younger age groups would be supported by Youth Services and outreach until the Youth Club could recommence, but the older age groups didn't have much right now. The Town Clerk suggested that she would liaise with the Hospitality Manager to look at ideas, although noted for those aged 18 years and over, that the Civic Centre's licence would need to be considered and thoughts given to the risks around alcohol.

Councillor Ward advised that although she had a number of ideas she did not want to see the precept go up by much in 2021/22 due to the impact of Covid-19 and number of people who had suffered financially this year. She therefore wanted to keep the precept down.

Members noted the report and contents included.

## **6.0 BUILDINGS**

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

The Estates & Facilities Manager provided an update – advising that work was still ongoing at Foresters Hall with the floor, and had become a much larger project than first anticipated. Two quotes had been received for heating options in place of the existing old heating system. Once a third quote had been received a report would be circulated to the Urgent Consultation Panel for decision so this work could be completed in the forthcoming weeks.

A repair had also been carried out to the boiler at the Signal Box that week. Members subsequently noted the report.

## **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 report from August 2020.

## **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  
Councillor Ward advised that this meeting had been cancelled due to it falling on the day before the second lockdown. It was due to be rearranged.
- (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  
A report would be circulated by Councillor Ward.
- (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**

##### **GP17.11.20**

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 consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant**

Members complemented the new Hospitality Manager on the report and for the ideas and work carried out. The report was subsequently noted.

##### **12.2 To note an update on the Town Council's buildings and procedures in response to the second lockdown**

The Town Clerk and Estates & Facilities Manager provided an update to members on staffing, the buildings and procedures followed.

The meeting closed at 7.39pm.