



THE UCKFIELD VOICE

December 2020

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thevoice

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

BY CLLR SPIKE MAYHEW AND
CLLR JACKIE LOVE

On behalf of ourselves and the rest of the Town Council we would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy and healthy new year.

We are all going to have a strange Christmas due to Covid 19, rules on maximum numbers and keeping safe. Normally Christmas is about seeing how many loved ones you can fit around your table, being together, seeing family and friends over the festive period and celebrating what Christmas means to us.

Wishing you magical moments

Nevertheless, we hope you will all have magical moments and, where you can, all connect up using the technology we are lucky to have available to us.

Looking back

This year has been hard for all of us and the near future remains unsettled. All of the events we love were cancelled so hopefully next year's events will be bigger and better.

Supporting others

When the people needed help additional help, residents got together and formed Uckfield's Outreach Box alongside the long-standing Uckfield Food Bank. This provides much needed food to those who were unable to get out during lockdown. Then again during the October half term they provided lunch boxes to children that were in need.



(Ron Hill Photography)

We must ensure that we can do this again over Christmas, not only for our town's children but also everyone who needs help. As a community, helping others is something we do best and why we are such an amazing town.

Supporting our town

Together, we know we will get through this. Please remember when this second lockdown comes to an end, wherever possible, please shop locally as our high street will need us all.

And finally we shall raise a glass (maybe two) to you all on Christmas Day. Merry Christmas!

Stay safe

Contact us through:

admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk



@uckfieldtowncouncil

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Looking back on 2020
- Community Grant Application

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

2020 has been a challenging year with individuals and businesses taking deep breaths and adapting to the current circumstances. We had to close a number of facilities - our seven meeting room conference facility at the Civic Centre, Luxfords Restaurant and the Foresters Hall. We worked hard to reopen these safely as Covid-secure venues and have worked with hirers to assess each and every booking. We had to postpone a number of large-scale events in the Weald Hall this year – Take That, Martin Hopgood, The George Michael Story to name just a few - all of which we hope can go ahead in 2021, as well as our festival 'Weald on the Field' in August and classic car parade 'Uckfield Revival' in October. We also had to postpone the VE Day Party Night, but still commemorated this year, with a reduced and socially distanced Afternoon Tea in September which was a great success.

Delivering Improvements

Despite the pressures on staffing and contractors, we were still able to deliver a number of improvements and have felt proud to continue working through

both lockdowns for our residents. Some achievements include:

- upgrading Luxfords Play Area with the addition of accessible play equipment and improved accessibility and fencing to the site;
- awarding £40,900 to local voluntary and community organisations through the community grant programme;
- contributing £4,271 to ESCC to maintain five to six urban grass verge cuts per annum;
- running an allotment competition which was independently judged by representatives from Stavertons Nursery;
- working with web developers to create an online event ticket sales system on the Civic Centre website. This will be ready in the New Year;
- promoting the Hidden Disabilities sunflower lanyard scheme to help people feel safe and supported when out and about in their town;
- improving the drainage to Victoria Football pitch;
- improving the facilities at Harland Farm playing fields – with the



LOOKING BACK AT 2020

- addition of two football pitches (one adult, one junior), a dog waste bin and signage;
- commissioning re-build valuations for all our buildings for insurance purposes;
- working with DEFRA to prepare draft byelaws for the town's two local nature reserves for consultation in the New Year;
- receiving a good sound internal audit report for the financial year 2019/20;
- repairing and replacing in the region of 20 streetlights;
- being awarded £5,000 from Fields in Trust to help fund the 'Our Parks' initiative - enabling people to access free subsidised weekly exercise classes in 2021 – watch this space;
- replacing all lighting in the Weald Hall of the Civic Centre to LED;
- replacing the roof of the Cemetery Chapels at Snatts Road Cemetery;
- changing the bins in Luxford Field and Elizabeth Gardens to animal proof, to reduce the amount of littering;
- responding to a large number of high profile consultations such as the East Sussex Fire Authority proposals, pavement parking, DEFRA's tree strategy and most recently the Planning White Paper.



COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMME

**OPEN NOW
FOR
APPLICATIONS**

**Uckfield Town Council is inviting
community groups and organisations
to apply for a community grant
for 2021-2022**

Applications can be submitted until 31 January 2021

Visit

www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/community/town-council-grants-2021-2022/

to download an application pack

**All applications will be reviewed by the Finance Sub
Committee on 15 February 2021**

LAST MONTH IN YOUR COUNCIL

Budget setting

Believe it or not, it's already time for the Town Council to start looking ahead to the next financial year in order to set the budget for 2021/22. The Town Council is required to let Wealden District Council know what level of precept it requires by the end of January, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Planning ahead for the next financial year is no mean feat in the middle of a worldwide pandemic with many of the Town Council's income streams affected by the restrictions that have been put in place. One third of the Town Council's income is generated through its own means, and not through council tax (precept). Nevertheless, with consideration for Covid-19 and ensuring we put some funding in place as contingency, we intend to do our best with the funds we have available.

Keeping those verges tidy

At the Full Council meeting on 26th October, members agreed to contribute once again to East Sussex County Council's urban grass verge cutting programme.

To maintain existing service levels and

help visibility at the roadside, the Town Council has agreed to contribute a sum of £4,271 in 2021/22 to ensure that five to six cuts can continue to be carried out through the year to the town's verges.

Remembrance Sunday

The Town Council, with the Royal British Legion and Holy Cross Church worked together to prepare for this year's commemorations, but due to the national lockdown these were cancelled at the last minute. Nevertheless all wreaths were laid around the memorial, a two minute silence was held on Wednesday 11 November and an online morning church service on Remembrance Sunday.



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 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

MON 7 DEC	– FULL COUNCIL (DFT BUDGET)
MON 14 DEC	– PLANS
MON 11 JAN	– PLANS
MON 18 JAN	– FULL COUNCIL (BUDGET)
MON 25 JAN	– GENERAL PURPOSES

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

COMING NEXT MONTH

- Meet the new ranger
- Luxfords Restaurant

