

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held remotely via Zoom on Monday 8 March 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

4 members of the public
1 member of the press

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

The Town Clerk read out the declarations of interest for the four members of Finance Sub-Committee who were present at the meeting and reminded them of their personal and prejudicial interests and where they could speak and not vote or neither speak nor vote. Dispensations had also been granted as per the full details provided for Finance Sub Committee.

Councillor C. Macve declared a personal interest in agenda item 5.4 regarding Uckfield Phab. Councillor P. Sparks declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5.4 regarding Uckfield Phab as he was a Trustee. Councillor J. Love declared a personal interest in agenda item 5.4 regarding Uckfield Phab and a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5.6 as a result of being Chair of the Uckfield & Bonfire Society.

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

GP25.03.21 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable members of the public to speak.

Mr Manvell, wished to speak on behalf of the Uckfield Community Fridge CIC in regards to agenda item 5.6. They were very grateful for the support that had been offered (Finance Sub-Committee recommended that £1,500 be awarded). They were also aware that there was still £4,000 unallocated, so wished to make a case for the Community Fridge.

They had liaised with both the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and Uckfield Foodbank and the project was considered beneficial for the town. The Uckfield Community Fridge CIC needed a sum of £6,000 to build the facility and get set up. They had requested £3,000 in grant funding to help support their upfront costs, and were aware that the Town Council was supportive of the project by offering a temporary site for the unit as well as assisting with other facilities. They were very grateful for the support they had received so far and asked to be considered in the discussions later in the meeting.

GP26.03.21 Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were recorded from A. Smith.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 25 January 2021

GP27.03.21 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 25 January 2021 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 actions from the list as this work had now been completed or superseded by another resolution. Members subsequently noted the report.

GP42.03.20 – Update from Ridgewood Village Hall Committee

GP19.01.21 – Finance Sub-Committee recommendations

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 of January 2021)

Councillor P. Sparks wished to say once again that he was very thankful for the excellent way in which the finances had been handled during the pandemic. Even though the Town Council had been impacted by the loss of income, the deficit was manageable which was a remarkable achievement. Thank you to all staff.

The Chair, Councillor C. Macve concurred and wished to reiterate these comments. Members noted both reports.

5.3. Bad Debts

Members noted the current bad debts recorded and were informed that staff were attempting to clear these bad debts by year end.

Councillor C. Snelgrove left the meeting at 7.10pm due to a personal commitment.

- 5.4 To review previous request for support from Uckfield Phab for 2020/21
Members were reminded that Uckfield Phab had to move from the Youth Centre early 2020, to a new venue as a result of the works and longer term plans of Uckfield College. Although Uckfield Phab found an alternative premise to hire on a weekend, they needed storage space and managed to secure a discount for the rental costs of storage space in 2020/21 with a local company. They were however in need of financial support to meet these costs as they had been unforeseen. The Town Council was not able to provide grant funding at the time as the enquiry had been received after the Community Grants Programme for 2021/22 had closed. All funds had been allocated. For that reason the Town Council offered to hold an event to help fundraise to support them with these costs. Unfortunately with the pandemic, the event could not take place.

Members were asked whether they would consider providing financial support to Uckfield Phab before year end using unspent funds within the Community Grant funding (General Power of Competence) budget for 2020/21.

Members were reminded that only five could vote on this agenda item, due to three members declaring an interest under agenda item 1.0. The Chair, Councillor C. Macve, passed this agenda item to the Vice-Chair, Councillor D. Ward to manage as a result of his declared interest.

Councillor D. Ward proposed that three quarters of the storage costs for 2020/21 (£840.75) be provided from the underspend in the General Power of Competence Community Grant budget for 2020/21. Uckfield Phab carried out excellent work; providing important support in the community. Councillor H. Firth seconded the proposal.

GP28.03.21 With four votes in favour, it was **RESOLVED** to provide a sum of £840.75 in financial support to Uckfield Phab from the 2020/21 underspend in the General Power of Competence (Community grant funding) revenue budget. It was recommended that Uckfield Phab contact organisations such as Uckfield & District Lions, Rotary Club for Uckfield and Wealden DC for support in 2021/22.

- 5.5 To receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 15 February 2021
Members agreed to note and receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 15 February 2021.

- 5.6 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 15 February 2021

Members were asked to review three matters whilst reviewing the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee from their meeting on 15 February 2021. They were asked to:

- (i) consider the application received from Wealden Citizen's Advice for grant funding under Section 142 of the Local Government Act;
- (ii) consider the allocation of community grant funding under the General Power of competence, and underspend of £4,207;
- (iii) ratify the grant funding recommended to the Uckfield Volunteer Centre of £8,000.

The Chair, Councillor C. Macve, recommended that committee members first consider the application for funding from Wealden Citizen's Advice. Members recognised the importance of the organisation and the great work they carried out

in supporting local residents in Uckfield and the surrounding villages, particularly during the pandemic when the country had seen an increase in Universal Credit applications and subsequent financial and debt enquiries. Members however had mixed views on the amount of grant funding being requested.

One member highlighted the funding allocated to Wealden Citizen's Advice in previous years, and reminded members that the Section 142 revenue budget had already been set by Town Councillors for 2021/22 in January 2021, so it was now a bit late to be querying the amount being requested. Perhaps during the budget setting process for 2022/23, members could review grant funding arrangements, but it was now too late to pull the rug from someone's feet.

Councillor J. Edwards proposed to provide the requested £18,900 to Wealden Citizen's Advice from the Section 142 Grant funding revenue budget for 2021/22. Councillor B. Cox seconded the proposal.

GP29.03.21 With four votes in favour, and two members abstaining it was **RESOLVED** to provide £18,900 in grant funding to the Wealden Citizen's Advice Bureau for 2021/22.

The members considered the recommended allocation of the main grant funding (general power of competence) to community grant applicants. There were still funds remaining to the sum of £4,207.

After some discussion, a proposal was put forward by Councillor P. Sparks, to provide the requested £500 to East Sussex Hearing, provide £1,000 to ATC 2530 (Uckfield Squadron), increase the funding allocated to Family Support Work by £500, to meet their requested amount of £2,000, and to increase the allocated amount of funding to Children with Cancer Fund, by £193, to meet their requested £693.

GP30.03.21 With five votes in favour, it was **RESOLVED** to allocate the recommended amounts and increases above to East Sussex Hearing, ATC 2530 (Uckfield squadron), Family Support Work and Children with Cancer Fund.

This left £2,014 remaining within the budget.

Councillor J. Edwards proposed that the grant funding allocated to the Uckfield Community Fridge CIC be increased to £2,500, from their original allocation of £1,500. Councillor H. Firth seconded the proposal.

GP31.03.21 With four votes in favour and one member abstaining it was **RESOLVED** to increase the amount of grant funding allocated to Uckfield Community Fridge CIC to £2,500.

Members felt that the grant funding allocated to Uckfield Allotments Bee Club should be increased to meet their requested amount. Finance Sub-Committee had recommended a sum of £500 towards their request for £647.55.

GP32.03.21 With five votes in favour, it was **RESOLVED** to increase the amount of grant funding allocated to Uckfield Allotment Bees Club to £647.55.

Members then considered how to utilise the funds remaining which totalled £866.45. Two members put forward proposals, with the second proposal being seconded. Councillor P. Sparks recommended that the remaining funds be added to the

allocated grant funding for Wealden Works, as they helped young people to get on their feet; getting back into work, training and education, and changed their lives. Councillor B. Cox seconded this proposal.

GP33.03.21 With five votes in favour and one member abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to increase the amount of grant funding allocated to Wealden Works to £2866.45.

GP34.03.21 The Chair, Councillor C. Macve, reminded members that they needed to review the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee to the allocation of £8,000 grant funding to the Uckfield Volunteer Centre as part of a service level agreement. With four votes in favour and one member abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of Finance Sub-Committee.

The final summary of the awarded community grant funding for 2021/22 is as follows:

Community Grant Funding under the General Power of Competence	
Applicant	Recommended allocation
The Uckfield Housebound & Friendship Club	£220.00
Family Support Work	£2,000.00
Age Concern Uckfield and District	£420.00
Uckfield Allotments Bee Club	£647.55
The Royal British Legion	£403.00
Uckfield Theatre Guild	£600.00
Uckfield Festival Association	£3,000.00
Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society	£3,000.00
St. Wilfrid's Hospice	£1,000.00
Uckfield Community Orchestra	£150.00
Uckfield Community Radio Limited (Uckfield FM)	£1,500.00
St Peter & St James Hospice	£1,000.00
East Sussex Hearing	£500.00
Ridgewood Village Hall Committee	£1,000.00
The Luxford Centre	£1,000.00
Wealden Works	£2,866.45
Maresfield Village Meadows Trust	£1,000.00
ATC 2530 (Uckfield Squadron)	£1,000.00
Uckfield & District Preservation Society	£1,000.00
Counselling for Students at Uckfield College	£2,000.00
Uckfield Community Fridge CIC	£2,500.00
Children with Cancer Fund	£693.00
TOTAL	£27,500.00
Wealden Citizens Advice (Section 142 Grant funding)	£18,900.00
Volunteer Centre Service Level Agreement	£ 8,000.00

Summary:	
General Power of Competence Grant funding	£27,500.00
Section 142 Grant funding	£18,900.00
Wealden Citizens Advice	
Volunteer Centre Service Level Agreement	£ 8,000.00

6.0 BUILDINGS

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

Members noted the report.

6.2 To consider an update on the proposed works to the Civic Centre Atrium (due to water ingress)

The Estates & Facilities Manager provided members with an update on the proposed works to the Civic Centre Atrium. The tender quotations had unfortunately come out at least £9.5k over budget. Planning permission had been granted and building regulations agreed. It was now hoped that works could commence sooner rather than later to minimise disruption to the Civic Centre and Luxfords Restaurant with their reopening as lockdown restrictions are eased. A date for works to commence had been set for Monday 22 March 2021 and the contractors would be working weekends to complete on schedule also.

Members thanked the Estates & Facilities Manager for his helpful update and subsequently noted the report.

7.0 POLICY

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 December 2020.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

(i) Citizens Advice Bureau

Nothing to report at this time.

(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

GP35.03.21

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 Action list

Members noted the update to the action list.

12.2 Update on future building/maintenance works to the Town Council's Assets

Members noted the verbal update provided.

The meeting closed at 20.27pm.