

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on  
Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.00pm

## REMOTE MEETING (VIA ZOOM)

### PRESENT:

Cllr. J. Beesley (Chairman)	Cllr. D. French
Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. B. Cox
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. A. Smith	

### IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the press (recorded meeting)  
Two members of the public  
Councillor C. Macve  
Councillor P. Sparks

Holly Goring – Town Clerk  
Sarah D’Allesio – RFO & Assistant Town Clerk  
Mark Francis - Estates & Facilities Manager  
Rachel Newton – Senior Administration 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

A local resident and allotment tenant had requested to speak in relation to item 7.2 on the agenda for regarding allotment demand and understanding the legislation.

**EL.42.05.21** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable the resident to speak.

Since the notification to allotment holders of the changes to the structure of the allotment fees and charges from April 2022, although it was understood that this was necessary to meet the Town Council costs, he asked if members could take another look at maybe phasing in or out any increases or discounts. He personally had no particular objection to the discount being reduced or removed but wished to state on behalf of tenants who had an allotment for over ten years that they would naturally be concerned about the changes. Also, in relation to item 7.2 on the agenda, he mentioned that there had been a part of the

Ridgewood Recreation Grounds that had been taken back as green space during the 1990s, and asked if this could be re-constituted back to allotment space.

Finally, the resident thanked the Chairman and Town Council for allowing members of the public to attend the online zoom meetings over the last year and said that they had been run extremely efficiently. The Chairman also thanked the resident for his contributions.

**EL.43.05.21** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

Another resident had also requested an invite to the meeting although they said that they were experiencing problems connecting to the internet, so the Clerk announced that she would be invited to attend the next meeting in June and would be contacted in the meantime with regards to any allotment updates.

### **3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Johnson 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 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

**EL.44.05.21** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list

Members considered the action list which had been previously circulated and agreed to remove the following items which had been completed:

EL22.10.20 – To consider a tree report from Uckfield Town Council's Ranger. Members had agreed for suitable areas to plant trees around Uckfield. Also, arrangements were in place for the Queen's mountain ash tree to be planted in Elizabeth Gardens as a commemorative event on 12 May 2021 at approximately 2:30pm. No further action.

EL38.03.21 – To review the contract for sanitization of play areas. Members had no further comments and it was confirmed that works would be completed as scheduled by end of June. No further action.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only

Members noted the report.

### **5.0. FINANCE**

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report.

5.2. To note the provisional Income and expenditure report for end of financial year 2020/21

Members noted the report.

### **6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

6.1 To review plans to install a memorial bench at West Park Local Nature Reserve

Members considered a report previously circulated for a memorial in West Park Nature Reserve, in memory of our late Countryside Ranger, Geoff Pollard. The

Estates and Facilities Manager had proposed an engraved Granite bench (which was selected as the preferred material due to its hard-wearing nature). With the funds raised from the Town Council's crowdfunding event – our virtual mission from Lands' End to John O Groat's – the bench could now be purchased. Councillor D. French proposed that this was a perfect choice and members agreed. Two potential locations had also been suggested by the Supporters Group on 15 April 2021 and members agreed that the preferred location to place the bench would be option 1: beneath an Oak Tree overlooking the rabbit field which would enable vehicle access and also thoughts of where Geoff would have liked the bench.

**EL.45.05.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

(i) confirm that they were happy for the Estates and Facilities Manager to order the bench and locate it in the position of option 1: situated beneath an Oak Tree overlooking the rabbit field, within West Park Local Nature Reserve.

6.2 **To decide on a theme for the calendar competition 2022**

Councillor D. French suggested a theme for next calendar competition: 'My Uckfield.' This would add a bit of fun, with local residents being invited to capture and submit an image of what Uckfield means to them and to include a selfie in the photo if they preferred to give it a more personal touch. Councillor B. Cox added further that it could be made a campaign and promoted on social media as #myuckfield. Members liked this idea and also that it might also be a good opportunity for the Town Council to brief local primary schools and to ask if they would like to partake in an internal calendar competition and provide a winning photo of a group of friends, for example, to encourage something a little bit different rather than just the same pictures of landscapes. Councillor D. French proposed '# My Uckfield' with a little photo in the corner and an explanation as to why they had chosen that photo to add a bit of personality to the caption.

Councillor A. Smith suggested that Action in Real Sussex could also be asked if they would be able to promote the calendar event to encourage participation from a diverse range of groups in Uckfield.

The best snaps would be chosen by the newly appointed council members when the competition closed by the end of August.

**EL.46.05.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree that the theme for the calendar competition 2022 would be '# My Uckfield' and that residents could include a selfie image of what Uckfield meant to them, and;
- (ii) brief all primary schools to ask if they wish to have an internal competition and to submit one winner to go through to the final, and;
- (iii) for the Town Council to arrange for the winner to choose where they would like to spend their voucher within Uckfield so that the retailer can be reimbursed from council funds.

**7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

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

Members noted the report. The Estates and Facilities Manager pointed out that since the Easter weekend the litter collections had been a lot busier and the Town Council had to increase collections from Victoria Pleasure Ground to two days a week since this had contained all the rubbish in town. This would be trialled to the end of June but may have to continue throughout the summer so members were informed that this would be over budget. The Chairman thanked

the Estates and Facilities Manager for this report and for all the work that has been carried out to try to sort out this problem.

A local resident joined the meeting at 19:31pm.

**EL.47.05.21** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable this resident to speak.

Unfortunately, the resident was still experiencing internet issues. Councillor J. Edwards asked if there would be any way for this resident to be given the opportunity to speak at another time during this meeting if they managed to get online, however, it did not appear that this would happen so members agreed the meeting had to continue at this stage and that the resident would be kept informed with a copy of the minutes.

**EL.48.05.21** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

7.2 To consider an allotment demand and understanding the legislation if there is demand

The Town Clerk advised members that there had been a number of issues that had arisen out of the recent allotment working group, not just solely about the fees and charges. Since the covid pandemic last spring, there had been a lot more requests for allotment space, with a longing to be in the open fresh air, so that had an impact, and there could be increasing interest, with future growth and development in the town. So, this had created a good opportunity to look at and explore options around town either by reviewing the option to change existing land to be designated as allotment land, or, to work with developers to see if there would be any opportunity for them to incorporate allotment land in their proposals.

The idea of establishing the working group would be to look at those aspects above and to review all residents comments that had been received over the last few weeks. Since the initial letter was sent out to allotment tenants with regards to changes in the fees and charges, there would still be quite a bit of work to be done within the remit of allotments – such as reviewing the tenancy agreement, and support for allotment holders.

Also, the Clerk also highlighted that there would be no point in appointing an allotment working group until the next meeting in June, since the members of the Environment and Leisure Committee might change at the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 24th May. Accordingly, the next Environment and Leisure meeting would be on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**EL.49.05.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) re-establish the allotment working group at the next meeting of Environment & Leisure Committee on 14 June 2021, and;
- (ii) look at the issues and comments raised specifically about fees and charges and to explore options for allotment land in the future.

7.3 To consider an update on Community Speedwatch and review into speed reduction monitoring devices

The Town Clerk provided an update report regarding the purpose of the devices and options on the market that would be most cost effective for a parish or town council. The Town Clerk asked members to consider what they wanted such speed reduction devices to do. Roadside speed indicator devices were a form of behaviour change. Monitoring devices purely maintained details of speed. Although no details had been received from ES Highways with regard to potential locations, this report was just to ask whether members wished to look at either monitoring devices or behaviour change devices, or both for that matter.

There had been a sense given from feedback over the years to look at both, so methods were suggested by the Clerk. If they were to work with ES Highways, to request a one-off seven-day speed survey, members may have recalled that that this would cost £400 a time, but for a few at once, it would have included a discount. Alternatively, the Black Cat monitoring device was in the region of £2k to purchase and could be moved around the town, but obviously members would have to agree locations with ES Highways. So, there would be a benefit to having our own device.

With the portable speed indicator device, members had been sent the full spec in terms of one particular company - Westcotec as an appendix.. The figures had ranged from £2,600-3,200k so members would need to be clear about what they preferred as this would not be about a gimmick but to encourage behaviour change..

Councillor B. Cox agreed and said that being data led would be the most crucial part of Speedwatch and would obviously be safer to opt on the side of behavioural change, along with a social media campaign pushed all year round to get the message across.

Councillor A. Smith remarked that some areas had temporary speed cameras and warning signs that were permanent and come up on your satnav, so that when you drove through it would be more of a deterrent than actually having a speed camera, which could encourage behaviour change.

Councillor K. Bedwell said that the portable option was important to move around town and educate people about speed problems as well as collecting independent data that would be useful to show developers if required in planning applications.

Councillor S. Mayhew liked the combination of the potential speed camera and radar speed guns, which he said were successfully used by railway staff, to also monitor speeds.

Further consideration would still be required to decide from the portable indicator devices that were on offer and to decide how to carry out the data collection, as both were separate products.

**EL.50.05.21 Members **RESOLVED** to:**

- (i) note the report, and;
- (ii) agree to having a portable indicator device that could be moved around the town by the Community Speedwatch Team, with further information being circulated by the Town Clerk to obtain a final decision by email.

7.4 To note a brief update on electric car charging points  
Members noted the report.

7.5 To consider a request from Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association to obtain a licence to cultivate land at Brown's Lane (Brown's Lane Rockery)  
Further written clarification had been provided by the Secretary of Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association regarding their request for a licence. The Residents' Association wished to obtain a licence to plant up to five

cherry trees in a particular shape/design within the central section of the land owned by the Town Council and to maintain and care for the trees only; no other aspect of the land. The licence would be required therefore to supply, maintain and care for the trees planted. There would be no interest in the rest of the land.

Members were happy to note the report, however Councillor D. French pointed out that this consideration for a licence at Brown's Lane Rockery should be delayed until the allotment working group had considered all Town Council land for potential future allotment land. Councillor B. Cox seconded this proposal.

**EL.51.05.21** Members **RESOLVED** to:

(i) note the report, and agreed to delay this request for a licence to cultivate land at Brown's Lane Rockery which would be discussed by members once the allotment working group had been re-established.

**8.0 LEISURE**

Nothing to report at this time.

**9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

**9.1 Climate Change Working Group**

Further to an initial meeting held by members on 16<sup>th</sup> March, Councillor A. Smith provided an update. Members had reconvened to discuss future proposals for a green forum and a carbon footprint survey which had been recommended to create a baseline for the Town Council to work from, to tackle climate issues, have a sound audit and to create an action plan on climate initiatives going forward.

The sum of £1,800 was proposed from the Climate Initiatives budget and members agreed for the scoping meeting forum to go ahead. The Chairman also thanked Councillor A. Smith and the group for their great work so far.

**EL.52.05.21** Members **RESOLVED** to:

(i) note the report, and;  
(ii) agree to £1,800 to be used from the Climate Initiatives budget for the carbon audit/carbon footprint survey, and enable an action plan to be created on climate initiatives going forward, and;  
(iii) for work to proceed on establishing the green forum with an initial scoping meeting.

**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  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.9 Uckfield Youth Club Board  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.10 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.11 All Weather Pitch Operational Group  
Nothing to report at this time.

#### **11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor J. Beesley thanked members and Town Council staff for their hard work over the last three years since he had been Chairman of the Environment and Leisure Committee, and that having online meetings over the last year had been interesting and fun. He also passed on his best wishes to his future successor.

#### **12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.53.05.21** 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 To consider a report on the Marketing programme  
Members noted the report.

The meeting finished at 20:10pm