

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held as a  
REMOTE meeting via ZOOM,  
on Monday 12 April 2021 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. S. Mayhew (Town Mayor)
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. C. Snelgrove
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. D. French	Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. J. Love (Deputy Mayor)	Mr Ashley Brunsdon (Youth Member)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

3 members of the public  
1 member of the press (recording)  
County Councillor Chris Dowling  
County and District Councillor Claire Dowling

Holly Goring      Town Clerk  
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

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**In light of the sad news received on Friday 9 April 2021, the Town Mayor, Councillor S. Mayhew opened the meeting by saying:**  
**“It is with profound sadness that the Councillors and officers of Uckfield Town Council learnt of the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on Friday.**

**Our thoughts are with the Royal Family at this sad time.**

**To mark our respect, we would ask that all Councillors and attendees of this evening’s Full Council meeting join us in a two minutes silence.”**

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**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. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent. No declarations were received.

## **2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION**

None received.

## **3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FC.80.04.21** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable members of the public to speak.

Councillor Chris Dowling raised a couple of matters relating to Ridgewood. In particular the highway maintenance issues in Lewes Road and flooding that was brought to his attention. The warranty on the previous work carried out has since expired but highway engineers would be unable to return and investigate until after the UKPN works had been completed.

Councillor Chris Dowling also advised that he was pleased to see that Environment & Leisure Committee were looking in further detail at speed monitoring devices, and would be reviewing this subject further at their next meeting on 4 May.

Councillor Claire Dowling wished to update Councillor D. Ward on her enquiry regarding the installation of a defibrillator in Grants Hill Court. Assurance had been given and supported by a Cabinet member that defibrillators would be installed across the board, in Wealden DC retirement living schemes. They were in the process of completing associated surveys and costings. As soon as she had a date she would let us know.

Councillor Claire Dowling had been liaising with residents regarding the fly issue which was badly affecting households in her county and district constituency. Councillor Dowling has been liaising with the Head of Environmental Health. All residents affected were being asked to gather evidence – photographs, text etc of the impact and how serious the issues were. Councillor Dowling emphasised that they needed to produce as much evidence as possible to enable Environmental Health to serve an abatement notice on Southern Water.

Councillor D. Bennett had heard that Southern Water were adamant they were doing everything they could but even if the abatement notice was served, it was questioned what Wealden DC would expect Southern Water to do. It was clarified that once it became a legal process, they would have to rectify the matter.

Councillor K. Bedwell wished to thank Councillor Chris Dowling but stated her disappointment with East Sussex Highways. One drain was particularly dangerous and had completely sunk. Councillor Bedwell had been raising this issue long before the UKPN works started, so now it would be autumn again before it was addressed.

Secondly Councillor K. Bedwell expressed her concern that the UKPN roadworks had not yet passed Framfield Road. Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and Uckfield Town Council had written to contractors, to check that the roadworks would have passed the Framfield Road junction before businesses reopened on 12 April. Assurance was given that they would do their best. The impact of the roadworks on the town had been huge and could affect trade for businesses

reopening in the town.

Councillor B. Cox wished to enquire about the long-term plan for parking in the New Town area, with potential new developments in the south of the town, and pinchpoints such as Framfield Road.

Councillor C. Dowling recommended that we all write to the relevant organisations to push for progress on the UKPN works. As the Town Council was aware, there were previous discussions in terms of an emerging plan for the access corridors into Uckfield, but this was delayed due to Covid.

Councillor H. Firth provided her update in regards to Wealden DC matters. She wished to give her apologies for failing to get the planning application for 90 homes on Eastbourne Road refused.

Councillor P. Sparks had attended a presentation from Wealden DC Housing services which incorporated a number of interesting facts:

- The average house price in Wealden was £377,858 and you would need a gross income of £86Kpa and a deposit of £75K to buy the average house;
- A gross income of £46Kpa was required to rent privately;
- This year there were 640 households on the Housing Register, this had fallen from a figure of 1,900 in 2011/12;
- In 2019/20 there were 347 lettings by the Council or Housing Associations, of which 50% of applicants needed 1 bedroom but 18% of stock was 1 bedroom and 18% of applicants needed 3 bedroom but 31% of stock was 3 bedroom. Therefore a mismatch between the needs of qualifying households and supply.

Affordable housing delivery - 2019/20 -275 units and 2020/21 – 197 units.

Councillor P. Sparks also explained that in terms of waste collection, they were recording currently only an average of 65 missed bins each week. The garden waste collection service charge was due to increase from £50pa to £55pa this year and reminders were being placed on green bins over the coming weeks.

Councillor G. Johnson had also attended this presentation which was very interesting. Councillor Johnson had been mainly involved in planning matters more recently. The most recent meeting of Plans Committee North had seen a successful result for Coopers Green with the refusal of the application, but he was very disappointed with the result of the Gladmans application on Eastbourne Road. It only went through due to a casting vote by the Chair. Very disappointing. They were pushing for the need for infrastructure, and was not sure how Uckfield could have more houses at a time when the town was already gridlocked. A strategic traffic solution for Uckfield was imperative. He was supportive of the Town Council starting a strategic working party to look at infrastructure requirements as well.

Councillor D. French joined the meeting at 7.23pm.

Councillor K. Bedwell appreciated the statements of Councillors G. Johnson and H. Firth at the meeting. She was extremely disappointed with the outcome of the meeting regarding the 90 homes on Eastbourne Road. Their transport studies

indicated that there would be a 38% increase in traffic in New Road, plus pedestrian access issues. And, it was all decided by one person in the end who did not even live in Uckfield. The item should have returned for debate. Disgusting!

Councillor A. Smith wished to ask Wealden DC councillors, how councils were responding to Domestic Abuse Bill which now required authorities to provide accommodation to all victims of domestic abuse regardless of whether there were children or the victim was vulnerable.

District councillors advised that Wealden DC had been placing greater focus on this topic, and that of temporary accommodation. They would undertake further enquiries.

**FC.81.04.21** Councillors were thanked for their efforts, and members subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 1 March 2021 to be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**FC.82.04.21** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on the 1 March 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### 5.2 Action List

Members reviewed the action list and agreed that the following actions could now be removed:

FC77.03.21 – Additional infrastructure

FC78.03.21 – Proposals by Persimmon Homes

The Town Clerk referred to resolution FC89.01.20. The Town Clerk had recently been advised that the Conservators of Ashdown Forest were due to recommence their parish liaison meetings. They were looking for a representative, so the Town Clerk informed members that one would be appointed at the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 24 May 2021. The Town Clerk had requested that one of the agenda items to be discussed at their first meeting was budget setting timescales and the need for parish/town councils to share their timetable for budget setting and community grant programmes, as enquiries for support from the Conservators were always received after these processes had been completed. The Town Clerk had also requested a breakdown of grant funding provided to the Conservators from authorities at all levels (parish up to county).

Members subsequently noted the report.

## **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

- (a) Plans Committee of the 15 & 22 March and 6 April 2021

**FC.83.04.21**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committees of the 15 & 22 March and 6 April 2021.

- (b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 22 March 2021

**FC.84.04.21**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 22 March 2021.

- (c) General Purposes Committee of the 8 March 2021

**FC.85.04.21**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 8 March 2021.

## **7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Members noted the report provided.

- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

## **8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS**

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

- (ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

- (iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Councillor P. Sparks wished to emphasise how useful the meeting was. He had been particularly impressed with the Energy Champion update from Wealden Citizen's Advice. Many families had been experiencing issues with fuel bills, and they had been supporting these households as well as finding ways to reduce their bills and energy usage. It was very inspiring. Members subsequently noted the report.

## **9.0 END OF YEAR PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020/21**

The Town Mayor, wished to thank the Town Clerk and her team in these trying times for their achievements.

Members noted the report.

## **10.0 TO CONSIDER THE INSTALLATION OF A MEMORIAL FOR THE TOWN IN MEMORY OF LIVES LOST DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Members considered the contents of a report and the Town Mayor, passed the item to Councillor D. Bennett, who had put forward the suggestion.

Councillor D. Bennett had since heard that Hailsham Town Council had also

installed a bench in memory of Covid-19 and those who had lost their lives.

Members thought it was a great idea. Chair of Finance Sub-Committee, Councillor P. Sparks reminded members that £3k was kept aside when members reviewed the Town Council's funding for reinvestment back in June 2020, in order to support the council with any Covid related matters.

Councillor C. Macve also noted the project (new initiative) from 2020/21 for a new bench to be installed on London Road opposite Uckfield Garage, and suggested that the funding for the project could be reallocated to this project with the bench being placed there.

Councillor D. Ward thought a tree would be a lovely idea, as it represented new life.

Councillor D. French thought a bench at the top of Luxford Field just outside of the play area for family members who had dogs who could not access the play area but wished to watch their children or grandchildren play.

Councillor B. Cox thought it would be good if there was a way of putting the memories of families onto the bench or tree.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there were two projects from 2020/21 already closely aligned which had not yet been completed (memorial/art project - £1,500 and the bench at London Road £1,000).

**FC.86.04.21** Based on the report and discussions that had taken place, members **RESOLVED** to request that staff explore the costings and potential location ideas for a tree and Covid memorial bench(es), and for the investigations to be reported back to Environment & Leisure Committee or Full Council.

#### **11.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

No engagements attended during the period 1 March and 12 April 2021.

#### **12.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**

Four deed of grants had been received:

Julie McIntosh-Roffey

Julie McIntosh-Roffey

Mrs Donna Williams

Mrs Andrea West

**FC.87.04.21** It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

#### **13.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

#### **14.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that there had been no changes in legislation so remote meetings would not be legally binding from 7 May 2021. The last fully remote meeting would be Environment & Leisure Committee on 4 May 2021, and the first face to face meeting within the Weald Hall would be Plans Committee on 17 May 2021, followed by the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 24 May 2021.

The Town Clerk also advised that she would be sending all councillors an email on Monday 19 April, with a three week deadline requesting their committee preferences for 2021/22, interest in representations on outside bodies and requesting any nominations for Town Mayor. It was vital members responded as otherwise choices would be made for them.

#### **15.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor, Councillor S. Mayhew sought further support for the Royal British Legion beacon lighting on Saturday 28 August 2021. Interest was expressed by Councillors Macve, Firth and, Councillor Ward and Councillor Love advised that they could loan equipment or support if required.

Councillor S. Mayhew advised members and attendees that this was the last Full Council meeting for Youth Member Ashley Brunsdon, who had served as a Youth member for two years. On behalf of Uckfield Town Council, Councillor Mayhew wished to thank Ashley for his hard work, he got involved in debates and discussions and often challenged East Sussex County Councillors and District Councillors. He wished to thank Ashley for his support and wished him all the best going forward. Mr Brunsdon thanked the Town Council for the opportunity and for the interesting and engaging experience.

Councillor S. Mayhew advised that it was also his last meeting as Chairman, as he had been Town Mayor now for three years. The first two years of the three year term had been excellent, but the third year particularly difficult during the pandemic. This had included hosting meetings online which had been very different to previous face to face council meetings. Councillor S. Mayhew wished to thank his Deputy Mayor, Councillor J. Love who had been an absolute rock and great support.

The meeting closed at 7.57pm.