

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 12 July 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

No members of the public.
1 member of the press

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. None were received.

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

No statements were forthcoming.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillors H. Firth, G. Johnson and although apologies were not recorded at the meeting, apologies had been received from Councillor C. Snelgrove prior to the meeting starting.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 1 June 2021

GP09.07.21 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 1 June 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. Members subsequently noted the report.

GP15.08.16 – Telephone box

GP47.04.20 – Grant allocations

GP04.06.21 – Uckfield Community Fridge CIC

4.3 Project list
Members were happy to note the report.

5.0 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

5.1 To note bills paid
Members noted the bills paid.

5.2 No income and expenditure reports are available due to year end processes.

5.3. Bad Debts
Members noted the report and were pleased to see the list reducing.

5.4 To receive the minutes from the Finance Sub-Committee held on 14 June 2021
Members agreed to note and receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 14 June 2021.

5.5 To note the report of the Internal Auditor report (June 2021)
Councillor D. Ward wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO for their hard work. Councillor Ward was interested to learn when visits would recommence in person, as all audits had been carried out remotely, with the last audit onsite in February 2020. The Town Clerk advised that they too as officers had raised this with the company, and since the meeting it has been arranged that the two-day audit in November would be carried out onsite at the Town Council offices.

The Chairman and all committee members wished to thank the RFO, Clerk and office staff for their hard work and dedication.

5.6 Finance Summary
Members were provided with a report detailing the current position regarding the Council's fixed term account with Lloyds Bank. The Town Council currently holds a fixed term rate with Lloyds Bank which would be maturing on 22 July 2021 for a sum of £300,916.56 including interest. On maturity this amount would automatically transfer into a non-interest current account with Lloyds. A decision was required regarding the re-investment options, if any.

The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO had experienced difficulties accessing the rate information from other banks - being passed from pillar to post, between the branches, telephone services and online. Out of the rates obtained, Lloyds was the best available.

Councillor C. Macve thought that it had been discussed previously for the Finance Sub-Committee to review the potential for repaying some the Town Council's loans. The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks advised that information had been circulated previously which explained that some of the loans had very high repayment penalties, and it was therefore less financially attractive to do this.

Members felt that in light of the timescales they were working to, it would be prudent to renew the fixed term rate account offered by Lloyds for the next 12 months. In the meantime the Finance Sub-Committee could look in more detail at the public works loans outstanding.

GP10.07.21 Members **RESOLVED** to reinvest the above funds (£300,916.56) into the Lloyds Bank 12-month fixed term account at a rate of 0.05%.

6.0 BUILDINGS

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

Members considered the contents of the update from the Estates & Facilities Manager on the Town Council's buildings. The expansion of the pellet hopper for the biomass boiler was due to be commence that week, and would save in the region of £100 per ton of pellets each autumn/winter. Members 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. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised members that the Town Council's risk assessments with regard to Covid-19 would need amending in response to the UK Government announcement that evening, which provided more freedom and flexibility in terms of room numbers and the use of facilities.

The Estates & Facilities Manager reminded members that at present, he was having to review every booking i.e. hirer's risk assessment to check that they had considered all aspects of covid restrictions; to look after their customers and the Civic Centre staff. This was incredibly resource intensive and this change in UK Govt guidance would require further work over the best part of two days to understand what this meant for the Town Council's working practices. The Town Council had passed previous HSE, and Env Health Covid based assessments so would wish to continue on this basis.

Members subsequently noted the report.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the report from April 2021.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from:-

(i) Citizens Advice Bureau

Members noted the report, which was very interesting reading.

(ii) East Sussex Association of Local Councils AGM

Nothing to report at this time.

(iii) Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

(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

The Chairman, Councillor P. Sparks, wished to thank the Uckfield Festival Association for a very good weekend on Luxford Field. The Big Day was a good event despite the weather, with lots of organisations turning out with the public. The Classic Car Show was a fantastic day, and it was great to see the electric vehicle and find out more about how it worked. This information would prove useful for the Climate Change Working Group.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP11.07.21

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 an update on Luxfords Restaurant
Members noted the report.

- 12.2 To consider the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee on their consideration of a proposed change to a staff member's hours

GP12.07.21

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee and increase the number of hours for this individual from 25 to 30 hours per week.

The meeting closed at 7.32pm.