

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 4 October 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the public
1 member of the press

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.

Councillor P. Sparks declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5.5 as a result of being Chair of Uckfield Volunteer Centre.

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

None were received.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillors H. Firth and G. Johnson.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 23 August 2021

GP18.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 23 August 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.

GP43.02.18 – Consider feasibility report undertaken for WPark Pavilion

- 4.3 Project list
Members were happy to remove Project Number 49 – West Park Pavilion Scheme from 2018/19, and subsequently noted the remainder of 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 2021/22 (end of Aug 2021)
Members reviewed the income and expenditure reports for General Purposes Committee and Luxford Restaurant.

Councillor C. Macve asked for clarification on the Feed in Tariff payments; noting that no funding had been received to date during this financial year. The Town Clerk clarified that funding was due to be received, but there had been issues with transferring staff details over for online claims. This was still underway.

Chairman, Councillor P. Sparks highlighted that he was very pleased to see that the actuals for the sales (income) for General Purposes Committee was about £5k above the budgeted figure (Civic Centre income). It seemed that the Civic Centre revenue was doing very well. The figure recorded for purchases (expenditure) was about £9k less than the actual budget. This was remarkable in these difficult times, and a good achievement. The Chair wished to pass on his congratulations to staff for their hard work.
Members noted the report.

- 5.3. Bad Debts
The Town Clerk advised that four of the five bad debts listed had since made payment or were in the process of making payment to clear these debts.
Members noted the report.
- 5.4 To receive the draft minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2021
Members agreed to note and receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2021.
- 5.5 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2021
Councillor J. Edwards led this item in place of the Chair, who had declared a prejudicial interest.

Vice Chair, Councillor J. Edwards explained that the purpose of the one year Service Level Agreement, followed by a two year Service Level Agreement would not only ensure continuity across two municipal periods (election terms), it would also enable members to become used to this new way of working.

GP19.10.21 With five votes in favour, and one abstention, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of Finance Sub- Committee:

- (i) that the grant funding allocated for Wealden Citizen's Advice should be agreed by Full Council as part of the annual budget setting process, and;
- (ii) using the current amount of the grant given as a baseline figure, set up a

Service Level Agreement for one year followed by a two year Service Level Agreement and so on to carry over to the next council, as well as advising Wealden Citizen's Advice that they do not need to apply through the annual Community Grants Programme, and;

(iii) to undertake a comprehensive review of the Service Level Agreement on the same terms as Wealden Citizen's Advice, and within this service level agreement, require Uckfield Volunteer Centre to carry out an evaluation of 100% of the UTC community grants awarded each year.

- 5.6 To consider the draft fees and charges for room hire 2022/23
Members reviewed the existing fees and charges for room hire in the Civic Centre, Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion.

The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks proposed that in the current circumstances of the pandemic, and to help local organisations, it would be sensible for the Town Council to hold room hire fees and charges at the current level.

Councillor C. Macve recognised that he had previously suggested increasing rates by CPI, but agreed that it would be right this year to keep the rates as they are. He also added that if members had agreed to increase the fees by a nominal amount, the increase would be fairly insignificant overall. By retaining fees at the current level, it would demonstrate to the community that the council is conscious of financial struggles and the impact of the current situation. Councillor Macve therefore seconded the proposal

- GP20.10.21** Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to retain fees and charges for room hire in the Civic Centre, Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion at the current level, for 2022/23, with no increases to be added.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
Members 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 and noted the report circulated.

- 8.2 To receive Members' audit reports
Members noted the report from June 2021.

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
Nothing to report at this time.
- (iv) Uckfield & District Preservation Society
Nothing to report at this time.
- (v) Uckfield Volunteer Centre
Nothing to report at this time.
- (vi) Wealden Works
Nothing to report at this time.
- (vii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Management Committee
The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks thanked Councillor Ward for her report. Councillor Ward added that when a new sports hub was discussed as a proposal near Hailsham, she had expressed that there were other parts of Wealden. Wealden was not just Hailsham. This comment had been supported by other councils present at the meeting. It had also been interesting to hear that the Hailsham Aspire project was now a smaller project, which would include a multi-storey car park. Although, information was not yet understood as to how parking in the multi-storey would remain free.

It was noted that Wealden DC were thought to be contacting the Town Clerk to discuss infrastructure needs in the Uckfield area. No correspondence had yet been received. Councillor A. Smith therefore suggested that Wealden DC be invited to an Infrastructure Working Group meeting to discuss sport and leisure facilities in Uckfield.

- (viii) 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

Discussed Town Council calendar competition.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP21.10.21

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

A number of complimentary comments had been received by customers in Luxfords Restaurant recently. Members were very appreciative of the hard work of staff and welcome environment that had been created. Members noted the report.

12.2 To consider suggestion from Town Clerk for Christmas Opening Times

Members were happy to support the proposal put forward.

- 12.3 To agree the financial terms for the Cycle to Work Scheme
Members discussed the terms with the Town Clerk, and agreed to proceed with the policy on this basis.
- 12.4 To consider the terms of a lease agreement for West Park Pavilion.
Members discussed the contents of the report, and advised the Clerk how they wished matters to proceed.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.