

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 7.00pm**  
**in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. A. Smith (Vice-Chairperson)	Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. J. Beesley	Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. J. Edwards
Cllr. H. Firth	Cllr. D. French

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

One member of the public  
Councillor C. Macve

Holly Goring – Town Clerk  
Mark Francis - Estates & Facilities Manager  
Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative 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**

None

**3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received in advance from Councillor S. Mayhew.

**4.0. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**EL.34.10.21** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 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 or appeared later in the agenda:

EL.60.05.20 – To consider a suggestion by Councillor D. French re: ancient trees to be felled at Mallards Drive Unfortunately the developers had already cleared the wood so this could not be utilised. No further action.

EL.09.07.20 – To consider the current position of the Town Council's Estates The Estates and Facilities Manager had spoken about the recent shortage of football pitches for an increasing number of players. Two football pitches had been installed at Harlands, one for adults and the other slightly smaller (goal posts to accommodate different size pitches). Discussions would form part of the future planning and work ongoing within the Infrastructure Working Group. No further action.

EL.51.05.21 – 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) This was agreed by Environment & Leisure Committee on 6 September 2021 and MPHFA were informed. A draft copy of the licence had been presented to this meeting for reference and would accordingly be endorsed at the next Full Council Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021. No further action.

EL.16.07.21 – An update on street lighting maintenance and repairs The Estates and Facilities Manager had given ES Highways authorisation to go ahead with the works required. No further action.

EL.19.07.21 – To appoint a representative to join a stakeholder group exploring the future provision of Tennis in Uckfield Members had resolved to appoint Cllr S. Mayhew and Cllr A. Smith as a substitute to join the stakeholder group looking at tennis facilities in Uckfield and the Town Clerk would advise the stakeholder group and Infrastructure Working Group accordingly. No further action.

EL.20.07.21 – Initial update from Allotment Working Group meeting held on 12 July 2021 The date of rescheduled Allotment Conference was within a report presented at this committee meeting. Allotment fencing with hedgerow would be discussed further with the Climate Working Group. No further action.

EL.27.09.21 – To consider resident parking on council land at West Park Local Nature Reserve (WPLNR) A letter was sent to the resident on 16.9.21 with polite notice asking them to stop parking in this area or placing bins here as it was council land and part of our nature reserve. A fence would be also need to be re-instated. The vehicles had been moved and the situation was being monitored. No further action.

EL.30.09.21 – To consider a storage option at Harlands Playing Fields The Estates and Facilities Manager would liaise with Uckfield Grasshoppers on the most suitable location for the container in due course. No further action.

#### 4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only

Members noted the report and agreed to remove the following items:

FC.64.01.21 – New signage for play areas and recreation grounds Works now completed. No further action.

FC.64.01.21 – Replace boardwalk plus £21,470 in earmarked reserves Works now completed. No further action.

## **5.0. FINANCE**

### **5.1. To note bills paid**

Members noted the report.

### **5.2. To note the Income and Expenditure report ending 31 August 2021**

Members noted the report –\_no comments.

### **5.3 To review fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery for 2022/23**

Councillor K. Bedwell announced that she had looked around East and West Sussex and noted that our cemetery fees and charges were comparatively quite low, particularly where we only charged double compared to some other local councils where they quadrupled their costs for non-residents. She added that our fees and charges were slightly off kilter with those around us, similar to our allotments. She proposed that we did need a review of our cemetery fees and charges long term, not just by increasing them by 1.5% each year in line with our statutory objectives and that this could be achieved by setting up a working group to review in detail. She asked if this could include the same members who formed the allotment working group earlier this year since the two groups would be able to work conjointly as those two services were ones which the council were required to provide.

Councillor H. Firth said that historically, the cemetery had always been the highest earner that the council offered so did not agree to increasing the costs as it was still expensive for a burial or cremation. However, Councillor K. Bedwell remarked that the council could not continue simply putting the prices up each year by a set amount as they had been doing over the years without looking at the details, and whether that would mean an increase in charges or not, this would need a proper review.

Councillor B. Cox mentioned that we had been struggling with space issues too whilst having to find ways to expand the cemetery so agreed to having a review although not necessarily to increase the prices so much that it became unmanageable.

Councillor D. Bennett pointed out that all these things needed to be reviewed on a continuous basis and mentioned that there was a cemetery working group set up a few years ago so rather than reinvent the wheel, asked for that structure to be re-used instead. Councillor J. Edwards asked if members could be given access to the previous working group report as a future agenda item instead to look at together and re-visit with some updated figures. Councillor D. Bennett said that the previous cemetery review was looked at in detail in accordance with ICCM (The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) to ensure best practice, so revisiting this again may not be productive.

The Town Clerk acknowledged that there had been a full and very thorough cemetery working group review undertaken just before she had joined the office, and wanted to clarify that she supported the proposal for a review of the cemetery fees and charges but after the next budget setting period. Staff had been swamped this year in terms of workload and one of the issues raised with regard to the changes to allotment fees and charges this year had been the short time scales given to undertake that review. The Town Clerk highlighted that cemetery management would have to be approached in line with strict legislation and that we would need to ensure that we followed those rules and regulations and not rush any review. Also, there were other streams of income that had not yet been explored, such as lease renewal on graves over seventy-five years old.

Councillor D. French proposed said that after listening to the Town Clerk she believed a working group did need to be set up. She also suggested looking into woodland burials which was an item raised by a local resident.

**EL.35.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree to increase the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery in 2022/23 by 1.5%, and;
- (ii) set up a working group to discuss the pricing structure, the rules and regulations and the future progress of the cemetery provision. Member volunteers included Cllr H. Firth, Cllr B. Cox and Cllr A. Smith.

5.4 To start considering new initiatives for the draft budget 2022/23

Councillor A. Smith made a suggestion to look into the feasibility of providing an enclosed dog walking area to be known as a puppy walking park and felt that this would be very much needed in the town. Councillor D. French agreed wholeheartedly and said that this had already been suggested previously and asked if this could be provided on either the Luxford's and/or Victoria park areas. Councillor H. Firth also agreed that this would be a good idea.

Another suggestion was made by Councillor B. Cox for an expansion of the animal friendly bins in other areas around the town to prevent wildlife such as squirrels and birds getting stuck, as well as having more recycling bins too.

**EL36.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree for new initiatives suggested for 2022/23 be incorporated such as extra animal friendly bins and recycling bins.

## **6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

6.1 To consider the draft licence agreement between Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association and Uckfield Town Council for Brown's Lane Rockery

This was purely a licence agreement with nothing controversial and members were asked for their approval.

**EL.37.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) accept the new licence agreement between Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association and Uckfield Town Council for Brown's Lane Rockery, and;
- (ii) agree that the licence will be taken to the next Full Council meeting for signature.

6.2 To consider costs for moving the traditional red telephone box

The Chair covered the potential costs involved within the report and re-iterated that the town council had earmarked reserves of £1,000 for this project, although this would have left a shortfall of funding of £725 which could be accommodated from the repair and replacement of street furniture budget.

Councillor D. Bennett suggested approaching private contractor Kier and tell them that we had a shortfall in the budget and to ask them if they would be able to contribute and/or offer to do this work for us.

Councillor K. Bedwell agreed to this and also with the earmarked reserves and added that as the defibrillator wasn't going to be installed now and that the phonebox was just going to be used by the school, she felt that the Town Council

should not have to find this extra £750 funding when times were already under a lot of duress.

Councillor D. French said that another funding source could be the developers at Harlands as their development was near to the phonebox. She appreciated that the Lions and Rotary Club did do a lot for the town but asked if their money could be saved for other reasons.

Councillor H. Firth said that Harlands Primary School was a good school and made a further suggestion such as the Chamber of Commerce to help provide the extra funding.

Councillor K. Bedwell and Councillor B. Cox proposed that since the developers hadn't been able to pay for the bench from the wood from the trees, then perhaps they could be asked to contribute for this instead and see where we go from there. Councillor D. French seconded this motion.

The Town Clerk agreed noting that UKPN would be asked for a lot more funding that £750 as compensation for the disruption in town.

- EL38.10.21** Members noted the report and (if additional funding was sought) **RESOLVED** to:
- (i) agree to the relocation of the telephone box from its current location and to create a new space for it and place into position at the cost of £3,225.00 (including the Town Council's earmarked reserves of £1,000 and Harlands Primary School donation of £1,500), and;
  - (ii) source the additional funding of £750 from elsewhere (preferably from the developers or by asking UKPN/Kier contractors for a contribution).

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates  
Members noted the report.

7.2 To consider a bin store at Foresters Hall  
Members were asked for their ideas from the two options provided in the report, to either remove the bins altogether or to place a textile and shoe recycling bank in the car park at the same location.

Councillor H. Firth suggested having the recycling bank here would be good if it were looked after by The Salvation Army. Councillor K. Bedwell agreed this was the perfect place with a bit more parking space.

The Chair said that given that it stated in the report that it had not yet been decided on the placement for the Children's Air Ambulance Textiles recycling bank, she asked if members wished to consider for that to be sited at Foresters Hall first. The Senior Administrative Officer said that she could ask Wealden DC if they dealt with both. *[Wealden DC confirmed that they had a partnership agreement with the Salvation Army so were limited to working with them for textile recycling but as it was our land the Town Council were free to work directly with any service provider it preferred so they would be happy for us to install an air ambulance textile bank where the bins were now and would remove everything from site].*

Councillor D. Bennett proposed making it first choice to have an air ambulance textile bank, and if that was not practical or workable then they would accept the Salvation Army proposals.

**EL.39.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

(i) agree to Option 2 – remove the bins, fencing and signage but in its place, to place a textile and shoe recycling bank in the car park at the same location [an air ambulance textile bank].

7.3 To consider future grass cutting arrangements on town council owned open spaces

Members' feedback was positive. Councillor H. Firth and Councillor K. Bedwell both felt that this was a great idea to have this work carried out in-house and would save us on costs as set out in the report.

The Town Clerk said that due to the fact that the draft budget would be taken in December and final budget in January, that this decision could be taken through that process.

**EL.40.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

(i) agree to bring grass cutting of Town Council open spaces only, in-house from 1 March 2022 onwards (adding cost implications for grass cutting equipment) and;

(ii) accept the requirement to increase the grounds maintenance team by one full-time person in April 2022 (an alteration to the existing full time seasonal grounds person role) to cover the year. This new role would be primarily used for grass cutting between April and October and assist with general grounds works between November through to March.

7.4 To consider the reallocation of earmarked reserves for tree works

Overall, the Town Council were looking at an increase to the budget for the tree works by a further £3,983.00 and member were asked to provide their comments.

Councillor J. Edwards remarked that this had already been alluded to at a previous Full Council meeting a little while ago and that we could not argue with this as trees needed to be addressed, so this had to be done. Proposal to accept. All in favour.

**EL.41.10.21** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

(i) agree to the reallocation of earmarked reserves by a further £3,983.00 to meet the level of work required to trees on Town Council owned land.

**8.0 LEISURE**

Nothing to report.

**9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

9.1 To receive an update from the Climate Change Steering Group

Members noted the report.

9.2 To receive an update from the Allotment Working Group and confirmed date of rescheduled Allotment Conference

Allotment holders had been invited to the Allotment Conference to be held on Wednesday 10 November at 7pm (along with Q&As) in the Weald Hall.

Members noted this report.

**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 All Weather Pitch Operational Group  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.4 Conservators of Ashdown Forest  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.5 West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.6 Luxford Centre Management Committee  
Members noted the report.
- 10.7 Uckfield and District Twinning Association  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.8 Uckfield Festival Association  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.9 Uckfield Parkrun Board  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.10 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.11 Uckfield Youth Club Board  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.12 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link  
Nothing to report at this time.

**11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
None.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.42.10.21** 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 a report on the Marketing programme  
Members noted the report.
- 12.2 To receive an update on potential future land acquisition enquiry  
Members discussed the contents of the report.

The meeting finished at 19:55pm