

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Monday 25 October 2021 at 7.00 pm
in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT: Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. B. Cox
Cllr. H. Firth
Cllr. D. French (Deputy)
Cllr. J. Love (Town Mayor)

Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. A. Smith
Becky Ikeson (Youth Member)

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 x member of the press (recorded)
County Councillor Chris Dowling

Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

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. None were forthcoming.

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

Councillor C. Dowling attended the meeting. He understood that UKPN/Kier were planning to finish their Town Centre works the following week. He was hopeful that this was going to happen. He had heard there would still be some snagging works to attend to, but Councillor Dowling had advised that these would have to be carried out in January, after the festive season, to reduce any further disruption to the town, and potential for impact to the retailers.

He had attended a meeting recently of the Newtown Action Group, in addition to

a residents' meeting with Wealden DC officers and Sussex Police regarding Keld Close.

A report had been put forward regarding overgrown vegetation along the narrow footpath on Eastbourne Road between the Fernley Park roundabout and Radjutt Indian Restaurant. This was in hand and landowners were being approached by ES Highways.

Everyone at ESCC was waiting for the announcements in the Chancellor's Budget. ESCC were in the early stages of their budget setting, with a decision due to be taken in February 2022 for 2022/23.

Councillor B. Cox asked what resilience had been put in place for the County Council's budget (i.e. room for contingency and business continuity). Councillor C. Dowling felt that there had been resilience over the past ten years with the substantial impact on local authority budgets, as a result of central government grant funding being reduced and removed. The biggest expense to the County Council was Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Fortunately, funding was ringfenced for these services.

Councillor H. Firth provided an update for Wealden DC. She had also attended the multi-agency meeting relating to Keld Close. More frequent meetings would be arranged with the residents, and Councillor H. Firth expressed her concerns at the lack of communication between certain departments within the health system. Services needed to talk to each other.

Councillor H. Firth was part of a Health & Wellbeing Working Group at Wealden DC. She had recently reminded them that a number of initiatives were online and for those more digitally minded, however a proportion of the district population were still not using smartphones or had broadband, and this should be remembered in future projects.

FC.50.10.21 Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and members subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors J. Beesley, D. Bennett, J. Edwards, G. Johnson, P. Sparks, C. Snelgrove, D. Ward and Youth Member Emily McHale. Apologies had also been received from County/District Councillor Claire Dowling.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on 13 September 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.51.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of full Council on 13 September 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members requested that the following actions be removed as they had now been completed:

FC18.05.21 – Red telephone box
Members subsequently noted the action list.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 20 September and 11 October 2021

FC.52.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 20 September and 11 October 2021.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 18 October 2021

FC.53.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committees of the 18 October 2021.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 4 October 2021

FC.54.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 4 October 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

Nothing to report at present.

(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

Nothing to report at present.

9.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22 (Q2)

Councillor C. Macve wished to record the Town Council's thanks to all of the staff, for their excellent work to keep these projects up to date. The Chair, Councillor J. Love seconded this comment and thought it was brilliant that in such difficult circumstances, staff were still achieving such a lot. Members subsequently noted the report.

10.0 TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2020/21

Members were presented with a copy of the notice of conclusion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2021 which included the response from the External Auditor. Members thought congratulations were in order, especially for completing this so precisely and accurately in extremely difficult circumstances. A big thank you was given to all staff. Members noted the outcome of the conclusion of the Audit.

11.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DONNA FRENCH

Councillor D. French had picked up during an online information session for clerks and councillors that there might be an opportunity to draw down some

funding for Changing Spaces toilet provision.

Unfortunately the Town Clerk had since found out that the deadline had passed but principal authorities such as East Sussex County Council could apply by 27 September. Councillor D. French's motion referenced that and requested that contact be made with East Sussex County Council to understand if they had submitted an expression of interest.

Councillor D. French explained that Changing Places toilets were larger accessible toilet spaces which had benches and adult changing spaces. There was a network across the country and it was hoped improvements could be made to transport links and networks. Councillor D. French hoped that there might be some opportunity to introduce such a space in Uckfield potentially near to the bus station.

Councillor H. Firth congratulated her colleague on this excellent idea. There were currently very limited facilities for disabled people in Uckfield.

Councillor B. Cox also agreed with the motion being put forward. Councillor K. Bedwell added that perhaps this would also be something that developers could contribute to within Uckfield.

FC.55.10.21

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the motion put forward by Councillor D. French and for staff to make contact with the County Council:

“Uckfield Town Council supports the increase in the provision of Changing Place Toilets across the country, and will approach East Sussex County Council to understand if they:

- (i) have submitted an expression of interest to central government to draw down funding to the county of East Sussex, and:*
- (ii) if ESCC have expressed an interest, that Uckfield Town Council lobby for such facilities to be introduced in Uckfield.”*

12.0 TO NOTE THE DECISION OF THE URGENT CONSULTATION PANEL

Members of the Urgent Consultation Panel had been approached on 4 October 2021, regarding the calendar competition, as only four entries had been received. A decision was unfortunately taken to not continue with the calendar for 2022, as a result of this and other pressures on staffing and financial resources. Members noted the decision taken by the Urgent Consultation Panel.

13.0 TO NOTE AND CONSIDER THE MARKET TEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN THE OPERATION OF HEATHFIELD AND UCKFIELD LEISURE CENTRES

Members considered a report which advised that East Sussex County Council had opened up a tender process to invite expressions of interest for the operation of Heathfield and Uckfield Leisure Centres. They were looking to establish a new 25-year full repairing lease/agreement for the operational management arrangements for the ongoing benefit of the local community and College for which curriculum services were currently provided. The Town Clerk advised that interest was also being invited for the Ringmer swimming pool, as no interest had been received for this building. Expressions of interest could be submitted by 5 November 2021 for one, two or all three venues.

Councillor H. Firth felt that the costs of upkeeping the building could be of concern to the Town Council. Councillor C. Macve agreed and felt that the Town Council did not have the relevant knowledge or expertise to run such a site. It was a very specialist field and covered a number of different areas relating to sports facilities, project management, property management etc. He did however feel we should whatever the Town Council could to support East Sussex County Council and any provider with this hugely valuable asset.

Other members agreed, with both Councillors B. Cox and J. Love supporting these comments that we should support the process but leave the management of the site to expert service providers. Members subsequently noted the report having confirmed that they would be happy to support the process and assist East Sussex County Council with any communication, but would not be putting forward an expression of interest.

14.0 TO CONSIDER THE SOUTH EAST WATER'S DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN

Members were provided with a copy of the consultation document, which set out South East Water's Draft Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Councillor C. Macve thought that the document did not make for particularly health reading with many scorings currently not being met. Councillor C. Macve referenced the Arlington Reservoir and any upgrade to this being a number of years away despite numerous homes being built.

Councillor J. Love had also looked at other routes for saving water. It was becoming more apparent that despite the large number of developments being put forward across the district, nothing was included in the planning applications with regarding to the reuse or saving of water, within their sites. South East Water needed to liaise more closely with East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council as the local planning authority. It was paramount that water supplies were protected.

Reference was made by Councillor H. Firth to a case study seen elsewhere where greywater tanks had been placed under the properties (*greywater was waste water from showers, baths, wash basins, washing machines and kitchen sinks*). All bodies should be insisting on this and more legislation was required from central government to enable the enforcement of this. The Town Clerk noted the feedback received from members.

15.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LICENCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MANOR PARK & RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AND UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL FOR BROWN'S LANE ROCKERY

After responding to a query regarding insurance for the trees, members noted the contents of the agreement and

FC.56.10.21 RESOLVED to approve the licence agreement between Uckfield Town Council and the Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association for Brown's Lane Rockery, and agreed for two councillors to sign and seal the licence agreement.

16.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love advised attendees that she had met some incredible people on her civic duties. This had included attending the Uckfield Volunteer Centre awards, learning about the amazing people who volunteered their time to help others, along with celebrating 40 years of dedication to the Uckfield Guides. The opening of the Community Fridge was also a great opportunity to see how it worked and understand more. It was an incredible facility. Members noted the report.

17.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

Five deed of grants had been received:

Christina Blaber

Mr Derek Gildea

Mr Ryan Deller

Mrs L. Elliott

Emma Holford

FC.57.10.21 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

18.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

19.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

20.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

The meeting closed at 19:40hours.