

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 31 January 2022 at 7.00pm
(meeting was moved from the Weald Hall to the Council Chamber)

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the press
1 member of the public

Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Mark Francis – Estates & Facilities Manager
Minutes taken by Sarah D'Alessio

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 forthcoming.

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 Councillor C. Snelgrove.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 8 November 2021

GP26.01.22 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 8 November 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. Members agreed to remove the completed sections within GP16.08.21 and GP19.10.21 relating to recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee in August and September 2021. Members subsequently noted the report.

4.3 Project list

Councillor C. Macve raised a question with regard to the Annual Building

Maintenance programme, and requested further details on the outstanding repairs in Foresters Hall. The Estates & Facilities Manager explained that this incorporated repairs to the rear toilets, and flooring. Since returning after lockdown, groups and hirers had returned to their regular bookings within the hall, and as these works were not of immediate priority, the works could be held off until a more appropriate time such as school holidays etc.

Members noted the contents 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 Dec 2021)

Members reviewed the income and expenditure reports for General Purposes Committee and Luxfords Restaurant and noted the current position.

5.3. Bad Debts

Members were presented with the current list of bad debtors. The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks referenced a note within the report which highlighted that some of the outstanding invoices had not been received by customers in August 2021. The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO clarified that when customers had been recently chased for monies owed, a handful explained that they had not received invoices during that time. Office staff believe this may have aligned with a short period of time when the server/IT systems were down within the office. In most cases, the funds had since been received and office staff continued to chase bad debtors in the lead up to financial year-end.

Members subsequently noted the report.

5.4 To receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 25 January 2022

Members received and noted the contents of the draft minutes of the recent Finance Sub-Committee held on 25 January 2022.

5.5 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 25 January 2022 (this agenda item was no longer necessary as the only recommendations from the meeting related to the policies in agenda items 7.1 and 7.2)

6.0 BUILDINGS

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

Members considered the contents of the report. Councillor H. Firth asked the Estates & Facilities Manager if the loose cable between the Signal Box and café/kiosk (previously the town's toilets) had been investigated. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that he would follow up on this.

Members subsequently noted the report.

6.2 To consider enquiry from Brighter Uckfield regarding storage

Members were presented with a report which explained that Brighter Uckfield were looking for a potential location to place a shed for storage of their equipment. They wished to place it adjacent to the Uckfield Community Fridge on land behind the Hub, owned by Uckfield Town Council.

The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks could see how this would be a suitable position, but did highlight that this would restrict any expansion for the Uckfield Community

Fridge should they wish to review their needs.

A couple of Town Councillors noted their concerns with regards to security in this location and noted that the Town Council would not want to be held liable for this and presumed that Brighter Uckfield would make the relevant arrangements for insurance.

The Estates & Facilities Manager reminded Town Councillors that the lease for the Source was up in September 2023, so with this in mind, any decision would be on a short-term basis.

GP27.01.22 Members **RESOLVED** that subject to Brighter Uckfield taking responsibility for the security of their storage facility and its contents, that the Town Council would support the temporary siting of a shed adjacent to Uckfield Community Fridge.

7.0 POLICY

7.1 To consider the revised Risk Management Policy – No. 29

This policy was discussed at length at the recent Finance Sub-Committee meeting.

Councillor C. Macve added a couple of points with regards to security of the Town Council's buildings which the Estates & Facilities Manager would follow up in due course.

GP28.01.22 Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the revised Risk Management Policy – No. 29.

7.2 To consider the revised Investment Policy – No. 45

This policy was again discussed at the Finance Sub-Committee where members recommended an addition regarding non-financial investments and more detail to be provided on the current financial position, within an appendix.

GP29.01.22 Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Annual Investment Strategy – No. 45 for 2022/23.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council

Members reviewed and noted the report circulated, with the Chair, Councillor P. Sparks reflecting on the impact of covid, long term sickness and unforeseen absences affecting staffing levels over the past 8-10 weeks.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the reports from September and October 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

Members noted and thanked the member for their report.

- (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
Members noted and thanked the member for their report.
- (viii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel
Nothing to report at this time.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Councillor P. Sparks wished the Town Clerk a speedy recovery as she was currently unwell.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP30.01.22

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 wished to thank everyone who had worked so hard to keep the hospitality businesses of the Town Council going during these particularly difficult times. The Town Councillors very much appreciated the hard work and support staff were providing to each other.
Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.