

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
**Monday 16 May 2022 at 7.00pm**  
**in the Council Chambers, Civic Centre**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. S. Mayhew (Chair)  
Cllr. J. Beesley  
Cllr. B. Cox  
Cllr. D. French

Cllr. A. Smith (Deputy Chair)  
Cllr. D. Bennett  
Cllr. H. Firth

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor C. Macve

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**

**EL69.05.22** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable Cllr. C. Macve to speak in relation to item 10.2 on the agenda.

Cllr C. Macve advised that it was a great shame that the Uckfield group for Age Concern had decided to fold. They had provided an invaluable service to the community in taking people to the surgery and hospitals as faraway as Maidstone, Guildford and occasionally up to London. As no one was willing to put themselves forward as an officer of the team, the charity commissioners requirement led to no option but to fold.

Cllr C. Macve asked that if members knew of anyone who could be persuaded or suggested to them to take on the position of Chair, then it was not too late.

The Age Concern group were not going to advise the charity commissioners until next month that they were ceasing to exist, although in the foreseeable future, they did still intend for the Treasurer and several drivers to continue providing a service to the community.

However, without the umbrella backing of the organisation, although they had cover and proper insurances in place, they were not sure how long they could continue with this service without the back of the organisation.

Cllr. C. Macve added that this was not at all an onerous position, the working group meeting was once a quarter for an hour or so. It was just having a name to put on the paperwork.

**EL70.05.22** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

Cllr. D. Bennett had been the councillor at the AGM meetings for a number of years and wanted to echo the above and that it was unfortunate that Age Concern had become increasingly run by the people who now needed the service themselves, so it would therefore be a great loss to the community. As with everything in this town new volunteers to come forward.

The Chairman asked if the town council representative on that committee would be able to become the next chair person if it was just a name to keep it running. However, Cllr. C. Macve asked members to note that the current age of the Chair who had helped to keep this service running over the years may be in need of this service himself, as anyone else in their eighties, so it would be a huge loss for them too if this support no longer existed.

Cllr S. Mayhew asked members to put any feelers out if there was anyone who could volunteer for at least another year to give them more time to continue.

Age Concern were going to register discontinuance at the end of June so it was too late to add to the voice section of Uckfield Matters, which had already gone to print and the next leaflet would not come out until the end of July.

Members would liaise with Ashdown Radio and the new Uckfield News and Events social media group to try to help to continue this service for our local community who were in need.

### **3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Cllr. K. Bedwell and Cllr. J. Edwards.

### **4.0. MINUTES**

#### **4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**EL.71.05.22** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 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:

##### **EL.11.07.20 – To consider installing electric charging points at the council buildings**

This would require some timely investigative work to consider the future options and to undertake the work already underway by WDC and ESCC. The Climate Change working group will remain engaged.

##### **EL.18.09.20 – To consider – Sharing boxes idea from local resident**

The Lions and Men's Shed were asked if anyone might be interested in harnessing this idea. The Secretary of the Lions Club said that unfortunately, members were not ready to undertake this task yet since many of whom are still concerned with Covid. However, this might change when this situation improves.

EL.50.01.22 – To consider a street lamp outside 21 Mount Pleasant

A report was presented at the last E&L meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Works were to be carried out in due course although may now be able to repair the existing light whilst safety audit undertaken. Awaiting quote from ES Highways.

EL.51.01.22 – To consider enquiry relating to litter left at the Ridgewood MUGA

The litter bin policy along with bin scoring evaluation system were updated at the last E&L meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Members agreed to the installation of a litter bin at Ridgewood MUGA. An e-bulletin was also sent to local sports clubs & Uckfield College asking their users to be mindful of litter dropping. No further action.

EL.61.02.22 – To consider fencing along the north end of Harlands Farm Playing Farm

The Secretary for New Town Action Group has written to the residents of the four bungalows for their comments and invited the householders to their last meeting which was held on 6<sup>th</sup> April. No response received from residents in Selby Gardens but the action group would advise if any further comments received. Health and Safety signage had been placed in the highlighted area of concern. No further action.

Cllr. D. Bennett asked for an health and safety issue to be reported: at the southern entrance of Harlands Primary school, near to the entrance gate used to access the field, there were a couple of stumps that were a trip hazard – the Senior Administration Officer would report this to the Head Groundsman to remove or re-plant them if needed.

EL.64.04.22 – To consider revised Litter policy – Policy No. 78

Three new litter bins to be ordered for Streatfield Road, Ridgewood MUGA (Town Council land) and adjacent to Bell Lane Allotment (by Scarlett's Close) and installed in due course. No further action.

EL.66.04.22 – To consider signage for ducks crossing – Mallard Pond

The sign on the pond 'do not feed the ducks' has been removed to try to prevent the ducks from crossing the road if they are feeding within their habitat. No further action.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only

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

FC92.01.20 – Bench on London Road (by Southview Drive)

The covid bench had been installed on Luxford Field with a standard bench going on London Road due to delays with ES Highways.

A new bench had arrived for London Road, UTC had paid for the appropriate licence. Once staff were up to full capacity the bench will be installed. No further action.

FC64.01.21 – Covid contingency fund for play area spraying

This was taken to Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and members asked to monitor situation.

Spraying was undertaken at the end of April, May and June 2021 at a cost of £630.00 per occasion. Plus, swab tests were undertaken in September and November 2021 to check readings. No further action.

FC82.01.22 – Victoria and Ridgewood Signage

This project had been completed. No further action.

FC82.01.22 – ESCC Grass Verge Cutting Contribution

The invoice for the Town Council's contribution was paid in April 2022. No further action.

FC82.01.22 – Grass Cutting Ride On Mower/Chipper

Items purchased and the new Chipper had now arrived. 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 (provisional year end 2021-22)

Members noted the report – no comments.

**6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

6.1 To note changes from ES Highways regarding response to reports of vegetation defects

Members noted the report.

**7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates

Members noted the report.

7.2 To consider illegal tree works to Town Council trees

This report identified an issue regarding unauthorised works on Uckfield Town Council owned trees.

Members agreed with initial information from Wealden that legal action would be required in order for the Town Council to be seen to enforce the the message that local residents cannot just take it upon themselves to vandalise public property.

Committee members were unhappy with this situation as it was unacceptable to be reducing trees beyond their own property which was also Town Council land.

One member pointed out that if this tree had been a vast drinker of water, there could have been unnecessary flooding in the area causing further issues.

Cllr. S. Mayhew proposed sending a strongly worded letter with all concerns raised and within that letter, request that they have to clear up the mess that they had made, at their expense, and be asked to donate to plants and new trees elsewhere. If they did not agree with this, then the Town Council would have no choice but to take legal action. Cllr. B. Cox seconded this motion and members all agreed.

**EL72.05.22** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree that a strongly worded letter be sent to the resident requesting that they clear up the mess created at their own expense, and;
- (ii) donate to plants and new trees elsewhere, but if not carried out;
- (iii) pursue legal action as recommended by Wealden DC.

**8.0 SPORTS AND LEISURE**

## 8.1 To consider a number of improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield

Cllr. D. French advised that this idea began with one resident who had a motorhome and there were often designated places to park and to stop off to visit the local towns whenever she travelled around the country. She said that it would be great if we could promote Uckfield more as a town that people did not just drive past along the bypass, but wanted to visit and enquire about what's on offer in the town.

The Town Clerk had already tied this in with the local plans as an agenda item and something to look into.

Cllr. B. Cox added that if we did have an area where people could settle and feel free to wander around the town, it would mean that our listed areas of outstanding natural beauty would also be open here and would be a reason to come to Uckfield. He agreed this was a good idea to have parking facilities enhanced for motorhomes.

### ***Proposals for better parking facilities for motorhomes:***

The new Gridserve site on the A22 by Copwood roundabout: Cllr. S. Mayhew advised maybe looking at the new solar farm being built on the A22 bypass which would have bigger parking facilities for motorhomes. There was a limited supply of parking in Uckfield on some days, so members agreed that this might be a good idea to pursue.

Fairwarp car park: Cllr. D. French pointed out that there was a motorhome parked at Fairwarp car park, which was a private car park, but was at the back of the shops where people didn't park their cars anyway, so it might be worth approaching them about this. They would still need to be encouraged to walk into town, however.

Whitehouse Farm: There was currently a facility for motorhomes at Whitehouse Farm which attracted quite a lot of motorhomes. This was a caravan club site and a local facility although not in the town centre.

Station car park: Cllr. A. Smith suggested asking the station car park owners if that could be used as it was a large enough space within the town, and with no height restrictions or barriers. Network Rail owned the car park but it was managed by APCOA.

Members agreed that ideally, it would be better if there were just a couple of spaces in town and second, spaces up off the bypass at the new Gridserve site. There were issues with Victoria Pleasure Ground if vehicles stayed too long and also because it was recreational grounds so it could be a bit problematic without regulations in place which we could action to restrict numbers. We certainly didn't want to publicise this area as an option for that reason.

### ***Ideas for better signage to direct people into town:***

Gateway signage: Cllr. B. Cox reminded members that Ashdown Forest were introducing car park fares and trying to keep people away from the forest as much as possible, so we had as much potential as any other local towns such as Crowborough who were re-inventing themselves as a gateway town to the forest.

Gridserve site: members were keen on the idea that this would require signage here so we could maybe make a request for them to put additional signage up with members' recommendations.

The brown tourist signs did need updating as there was still a hotel emblem on the one leading into Uckfield, presumably in reference to the Smoke House & Lodge which had since closed down.

Cllr. J. Beesley asked if we could also have additional signs to the brown tourist signs at main points going into town, such as Budletts roundabout, Tesco's roundabout, the end of Lewes Rd and so forth. It was thought that this would increase visitors to the town generally, not just as a stop gap but for them to learn about our local and special events going on.

Cllr. D. Bennett came up with some good ideas for having the Civic Centre with the two masks to publicise events going on in the town and maybe something like 'Wealden Market Town', 'Historic County Town' or wording to that effect, with of course twenty-four hour petrol information.

Going forward, Cllr. A. Smith suggested adding tourism as a subject at a future infrastructure working group meeting since this should be discussed as part of the infrastructure for the town.

**EL.73.05.22** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) introduce the following ideas for improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield at the next infrastructure working group meeting: better parking facilities for motorhomes in town and improved signage, and to;
- (ii) consider if there is anything additional that should be explored to be discussed at that next meeting, and;
- (iii) for the Estates and Facilities Manager to explore those initiatives put forward already with the various responsible agencies, including any leverage through ES Highways for proper signage from developers.

**9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

9.1 Climate Change working group – Review of Eco Expo – 30 April 2022

Members noted the report and Cllr. A. Smith wished to thank Cllr. K. Bedwell for putting an extraordinary amount of effort into this event, which was incredibly successful.

**10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

10.1 Active Uckfield

Members noted the report.

10.2 Age Concern

Members noted the report.

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  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.7 Uckfield and District Twinning Association  
Nothing to report. There will be another AGM in the near future.
- 10.8 Uckfield Festival Association  
Nothing to report - there will be a poster coming out soon with a line-up of events.
- 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  
Members noted the report.
- 10.12 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link  
Nothing to report at this time.

#### **11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that there had been an exceptionally good turnout for the unveiling of Geoff Pollard's bench at West Park nature reserve, which was absolutely stunning, and included councillors and locals residents attendance. This gathering was extremely heartfelt by everyone who attended.

This was also the last meeting for this term, so the Chairman thanked all those who had provided him with their support and assistance.

#### **12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.74.05.22** 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 a report on the Marketing programme  
Members noted the report.

The meeting finished at 19:40pm