

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Monday 25 July 2022 at 7.00 pm
in the Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT: Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. J. Beesley
Cllr. J. Edwards
Cllr. D. French (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. H. Firth
Cllr. J. Love (Town Mayor)
Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. P. Sparks
Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:

No members of the public.

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.

Councillor P. Sparks declared a personal interest in agenda item 10.0 as a result of his position as Chair of Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association.

Councillor J. Beesley declared a personal interest in agenda item 17.1 as the Uckfield Performance Ensemble hired the Source.

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.33.07.22 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by a District Council representative.

Councillor H. Firth referred to the recent work of the Licensing Committee.

Councillor P. Sparks referred to the motion debated at the recent Full Council meeting of Wealden DC, which requested action by Southern Water following reports of raw sewage spilling into Wealden District's waterways. This was the first time every WDC member spoke with the same voice with regard to one subject. The motion was supported unanimously by Wealden DC members. This would involve inviting the new incoming CEO of Southern Water, plus senior representatives from the Environment Agency and Natural England, to attend a meeting to answer questions on the current levels of sewage discharge. It would also involve asking Southern Water, in its planning consultation responses for major development, to clarify which treatment works will be managing the sewage and whether it has information available to assess the impact on the number or duration of sewage discharges into local rivers or seas.

Councillor P. Sparks referred to the Council Tax Rebate scheme. There were in the region of 30,000 eligible properties in Wealden District that paid by direct debit. All of those households should have received payment by now. Those who made other arrangements for payment (around 13,000) were having special arrangements provided. It was anticipated that all recipients would receive the funding by 31 July 2022.

Councillor P. Sparks also referred to the Ukrainian guests currently being supported within Uckfield. There were a total of 25 guests in Uckfield being supported, there were 27 guests in Buxted, and 31 guests in Forest Row.

Councillor J. Edwards wished to thank Councillor Firth for highlighting the survey at the last meeting for the review of Wealden DC's Housing Allocation Policy. He expressed his disappointment in how much detail he could give in the survey responses.

Councillor C. Macve attended an online presentation from Southern Water and they promised to send through the slides from the presentation which hadn't been received yet. They made out that they had been improving their situation, that they had a lot of new staff in post and they had taken the complaints received in recent months very seriously. One point of interest – they were not a statutory consultee, and sometimes they were not consulted, and if they were, they were not obliged to make a response or for the planning authority to take notice.

FC.34.07.22 The Councillors were thanked for their input and updates, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors D. Bennett, B. Cox, G. Johnson and D. Manvell. Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Chris Dowling and District Councillor Claire Dowling.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 27 June 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.35.07.22 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List
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 11 July 2022

FC.36.07.22 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 11 July 2022.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee
No meeting held.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 18 July 2022

FC.37.07.22 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 18 July 2022.

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

Members noted the report.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Members noted the report.

9.0 TO NOTE THE QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

Members were provided with an update on the annual priorities for 2022/23 and the progress undertaken in the first quarter of the year. Members wished to reinforce their support of this progress, and to thank the fantastic Town Council team including the Clerk. The report was subsequently noted.

10.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DENE, BROWN'S LANE, UCKFIELD AND CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NEXT STEPS

Members reviewed a report prepared by the Town Clerk which explained that Buxted Parish Council were looking to sell the land in their ownership called the Dene. As the land had been registered as an Asset of Community Value, the Parish Council were therefore required to follow a strict procedure to enable eligible community interest groups to express an interest within a set time period. The Town Clerk explained the details of the site to members, and procedures

should they express an interest at this stage.

In the main, members felt that the Dene as a grassed area adjacent to Brown's Lane on the Manor Park estate, was an important local green space on the garden estate of Manor Park, and captured an important key view looking out of Uckfield towards Buxted Park.

FC.38.07.22 With unanimous support, members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk with writing to Wealden DC to confirm its intention to bid for the land, within the initial moratorium period and before the deadline of 3 August 2022.

11.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE TRANSPORT FOR SOUTH EAST'S DRAFT STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN

Councillor C. Macve referred to the contents of the consultation document, which had been provided as part of the agenda papers. As this was a summary document, the details were fairly light and it was suggested that more in depth reading would be required of the full document to review those transport interventions relating to Uckfield and Wealden District.

Members noted the contents of the report, and agreed to defer the item to the next meeting.

12.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the engagements.

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

Two deed of grants had been received:
Mrs Pamela Doreen Crowhurst
Joanna Claire Temporal

FC.39.07.22 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

14.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

15.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk put forward a suggestion that had been raised by a staff member, which involved purchasing a batch of deer whistles at cost price to sell onto for staff, councillors and potentially the wider public for a nominal fee, to alert deer whilst driving on the local road network, and reduce the risk of accidents.

It was understood that other local charities sold them in the local area so there was some concern that it could be seen that the Town Council would be undercutting the good cause of donating to the local charities. For that reason members felt that initially the whistles should offered to staff and councillors and the charities selling the whistles should be promoted within a future edition of Uckfield Matters.

FC.40.07.22 Members **RESOLVED** to agree for the Town Council office to purchase a small batch of deer whistles for resale to staff and councillors for a nominal fee.

The Town Clerk also advised that Persimmons Homes wished to commence work on the new western footpath which would cross the top of Harlands Playing Fields between their new development and the corner which led to Selby Meadows. The work was anticipated to take three weeks but agreeing a start date proved difficult as officers were on leave, and it would be important to agree the detail of the works before the project commenced.

Members provided feedback to the Town Clerk, suggesting that it would make more sense for the bulk of the work to be carried out before the primary school returned on 2 September. They also wished for a pre-work site visit to be undertaken to agree any closing off, of the existing footpath and understanding of the exact location of the path. Once a date was agreed, the Uckfield Grasshoppers, local primary school and local news/media outlets would be notified.

16.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love referred to the updates from outside bodies and working groups, and felt it would be helpful to know when the next meetings were due to take place. Fewer updates were being provided by councillors and it would be helpful to see if meetings were booked in.

17.1 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC.41.07.22

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.

17.1 To consider an update from the Hub Working Group and potential works to the Hub (contains commercially sensitive information)

FC.42.07.22

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the contents of the report;
- (ii) confirm the recommendation of the Hub Working Group to appoint (identified company) to project manage the demolition of the Hub building only, and;
- (iii) request staff to approach local commercial estate agents and relevant expertise to gain up to date and further information which would inform future considerations for the site.

The meeting closed at 8.33pm.