

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 3 October at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Ward (Chair)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. P. Sparks (Vice-Chair)	Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. H. Firth	H. Hemming (Youth Member)
	L. Kortenbout-Wright (Youth Member)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

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, but nothing was forthcoming.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

None.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence recorded.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 18 July 2022

GP14.10.22 Subject to an amendment being made to reflect that the WDALC meeting had taken place on Thursday 14 July, despite being reported in the meeting as Wednesday 13 July, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 18 July 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members reviewed and noted the action list.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the project list.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

- 5.2 To consider the income and expenditure reports for up to end of July 2022
Members acknowledged that the sales were looking good under General Purposes Committee which was excellent news, and members subsequently noted both reports.
- 5.3 Bad Debts
The Town Clerk provided an update on one specific case, with members subsequently noting the report.
- 5.4 To note the current borrowing rates of the Public Works Loans Board
Members were presented with a report by the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, which highlighted the current borrowing rates through the Public Works Loans Board for £500k and £1million. This enabled members to understand the current rates of the scheme for the future. Members reviewed the rates and concluded that this was not an ideal time to borrow this scale of funding. It was suggested that the report be noted and a review be brought back when the financial market had settled down.
- 5.5 To review the Community Grants programme prior to launching the application process in November 2022
Members were presented with a summary of findings from similar sized authorities across the country, including Seaford, St Ives, Haywards Heath and Macclesfield. Members reviewed the way in which the grant schemes were run/allocated, their procedures and criteria.

Members discussed the idea of offering different programmes for different amounts of funding, but it was felt that it would be prudent to stick to one application period at this time, to reduce any pressure on office workload.

The criteria and procedures for St Ives were thought to be useful, and very reasonable with most of these being the general requirements for any grant funder. It was agreed that key information be included from the criteria that St. Ives set out.

Members noted that both Seaford Town Council and St Ives Town Council stated that if money wasn't spent on the project for which the application was requested, the money should be returned. It was suggested that this be included at the bottom of the Uckfield Town Council application form, in bold, to ensure this was clear to applicants.

GP15.10.22

Members **RESOLVED** to make slight amendments to the Town Council's application form, with the inclusion of set wording from St Ives' Town Council and a statement at the end of the form, which requests that the money be returned if it is not spent or spent on the project for which the application was made.

- 5.6 To start considering new initiatives for the draft budget of 2023/24
Members reviewed a proposed list of new initiatives put together by officers, for consideration. The list included short, medium and long term priorities.

Members agreed that rooms such as the Weald Hall needed to be redecorated, and that it was important as this was a major asset to the Town Council for the hosting of events. Members also supported the proposal to improve technology to support hybrid meetings, and the inclusion of solar panels on the Civic Centre

roof. The Chair, Councillor D. Ward asked that if members had anything further to add to the list for consideration, to let the Town Clerk know as soon as possible, so costings could be explored.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
Members noted the report.

7.0 POLICY

None.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council
The Assistant Town Clerk advised that WPA had visited Uckfield Town Council twice and spoken to staff. Staff were also being encouraged by those who had a positive experience and used the scheme. Members noted the report.
- 8.2 To receive Members' audit reports (May and June 2022)
Members noted the audit reports.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 9.1 To consider reports from: -
- (i) Wealden Citizen's Advice
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
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (iv) Uckfield & District Housing Association Ltd Mgt Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (v) Uckfield and District Preservation Society
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (vi) Uckfield Volunteer Centre
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (vii) Wealden Works
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (viii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
 - (ix) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel
Nothing to report at this time.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Councillor D. Ward announced that this would be the last meeting that Mark, the Estates & Facilities Manager would be attending, as he was due to

move to pastures new, with a new job secured at Lewes and Eastbourne Borough Councils. She expressed that the Town Council would miss him, and on behalf of all councillors, she wished him the best in his next role, thanking him very much for his work.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nothing to report.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP16.10.22 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 from Luxfords Restaurant
Councillor Sparks expressed how superb the catering was at a recent event, and had seen the positive feedback on social media relating to the 100th birthday party. Members wished to celebrate how well the restaurant was doing. Members noted the report.

12.2 To consider reports reviewed by Personnel Sub-Committee on 3 October 2022 to inform potential recruitment and/or staff changes in response to recent retirement and departure

GP17.10.22 With eight votes in favour and one member abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee

The meeting closed at 8.06pm.