



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
**Tuesday 3 January 2023 at 7.00pm**  
**Council Chamber, Civic Centre**

**PRESENT:**

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

Cllr. A. Smith (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr. D. Bennett  
Cllr. D. Ward

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Holly Goring – Town Clerk  
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. None were forthcoming.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

**3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology was received prior to the meeting from Councillor K. Bedwell due to sickness.

**4.0. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7 November 2022

**EL.26.01.23** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7 November 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list

Members discussed items on the action list.

**EL54.01.22** - To consider if Uckfield Town Council wishes to hold an event which can be incorporated within Uckfield Festival week 2022.

The Chair referred there only being three members who had attended the recent Uckfield Festival AGM meeting so a proposal had been put forward for another meeting this month to try to encourage attendance and future engagement. This item was removed and members would await feedback from the relevant parties involved.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

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

FC.82.01.22 – Purchase of more animal friendly bins.  
No further action.

## **5.0. FINANCE**

### 5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report.

### 5.2. To note the provisional Income and Expenditure report for end November 2022

Members noted the report.

### 5.3 To consider the purchase of a new mower/mower attachment for open space grass-Cutting

The Town Clerk gave a powerpoint presentation to propose the purchase of a more suitable mowing system (since the grass cutting was now dealt with in-house). This came after a summer of struggling to keep up with our mowing obligations, due mostly the age of existing machinery and unreliable second-hand machinery. Luckily, one of the Groundstaff was able to assist with repairs. The Grounds team were also still one member of staff down, so it was imperative to ensure we invested properly and seek a new mower that was efficient.

The proposals set out some options available on the current market and its associated costs. Members were shown three quotations obtained from two separate companies, Haynes and John Deere (Tuckwells), together with a description of machines and attachments.

As the grass cutting season would begin mid to end of March, members noted that any decision would be based on a view to placing an order in the next couple of weeks or so, to ensure the equipment would be received on time. The machines would need be ordered and delivered by April 2023.

#### Suitability

A tractor mounted system was the preferred option by the Head Groundsman as it was only one engine that needed to be run, and was better for storage too. Also, the rotary system was hassle free and better in wetter grass, compared to cylinder mowers and that this system gave a similar finish.

One member asked to ensure that the new mower would be able to deal with any steep inclines such as the area of grasslands at The Dene.

#### Finance options

Members asked to consider the overall costs, whether that be to include any annual interest charges or other alternatives effectiving the budget.

The Town Clerk pointed out that any new mowers would mostly come with a three year warranty, so this would mean most repairs would be reduced.

Tractor hours would also be reduced as this would cover large areas and be easier to manage. The tractor would also be able to travel on the roads (licenced) which would make it a lot safer to manage, instead of having to mount the pathways or causing any obstructions.

#### Options available

The first option put forward was considered the most suitable in terms of cost and efficiency, costing in the region of £20k and including a discount.

Although there would be no finance option for this mower, the Town Clerk suggested that the costs could potentially come from earmarked reserves, which were in the region of £20-25k.

One member asked about the life expectancy of the mower which was a good question, since this may impact on long term costs if the mower were to break down in the longer term.

Another member asked about the re-sell value of the current mower, as even if sold at a slight loss, would be of a helpful contribution.

Another idea was put forward to maybe hire out the new mower to other local councils and smaller parishes, to cover any future expenses.

**EL27.01.23** Members **RESOLVED** for the Town Clerk to explore the points made by members with the idea of possibly opting for the 'Major' mower and funding the purchase with the reallocation of earmarked reserves.

## **6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

### **6.1 To request items for the Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with East Sussex Highways on 17 January 2023**

Members were asked if there were any items to raise before the agenda items would be circulated to committee members the following day.

Members asked for the following items to be raised:

A resident had reported a tree down across a walk way on Brown's Lane, Manor Park (Tower Ride) on 28 December, and had asked if someone could advise the status of the removal of this tree.

Works previously carried out on the verges outside Manor School to introduce grass crete: there were three to four fixed but some were thought to be raised slightly and needed looking into again. These works were originally carried out due to parking issues and some held up well, but others needed attention.

ES Highways to monitor/survey the roads in terms of pots holes and sink holes as these issues were reoccurring in certain areas – in particular the High Street and Eastbourne Road.

Members were also keen to understand what was agreed for 2022-23 in terms of ES Highways expenditure and going forward for road maintenance; how ES Highways would seek to address the further pothole issues exacerbated by the recent cold and wet weather and most badly affected roads.

**EL.28.01.23** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree all agenda items for the Clerk to raise at the next Strengthening Local Relations meeting with East Sussex Highways on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

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

One member asked about progress being made in Boothlands Wood following the ash die back works end of last year, since heavy duty machinery had been used and a fence panel taken down in a one area of woods. This would be followed up and an update would be given at the next meeting in February.

Members noted the rest of the report.

### **7.2 Update on Street Lighting repairs**

Members noted the report and acknowledged that the East Sussex Highways Street Lighting Officer had explained that it had been necessary to change contractors and the new contract would commence on 1 May 2023. This would result in delays to quotations and repairs between now and May 2023, whilst the contract was transferred over.

- 7.3 To consider the draft Management Plan for West Park Local Nature Reserve  
A member wished to make note that the saplings on the outskirts of the north entrance into West Park Recreation Ground had been planted there deliberately in order to create a new hedgerow along this area and eventually replace the adjoining wooden fence posts. Although they were tilting slightly this was not a concern and the Ranger was monitoring this.

Members wished to thank our Ranger for this excellent report and asked if there had been any liaison with the Supporters Group of the nature reserve to see if they had any feedback. Members also agreed that this report needed to be commended and expressed further afield in respect of how precious those land areas were, for archaeological reasons also.

The Town Clerk suggested that subject to consultation with the supporters groups, and prior to being formally adopted, members may wish to approve the report and that a separate webpage could be made to present both management plans for the local nature reserves of Hempstead Meadows and West Park.

One member also mentioned about the archaeological aspects in the report which may be of interest to our local students as a structure for learning.

**EL.29.01.23** Members **RESOLVED** to give thanks and respect to our Ranger for his knowledge on all subject related matters and approved the report (subject to consultation with the relevant supporters groups and report being adopted thereafter).

## **8.0 LEISURE**

Nothing to report.

## **9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

### 9.1 Update on review of Sports Fees & Charges 2023/24

Members noted the report.

### 9.2 Update on review of Allotment Fees & Charges from 1 April 2023

Members noted the report.

### 9.3 Update on review of Cemetery Fees & Charges 2023/24

Members noted the report.

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

### 10.1 Active Uckfield

Nothing to report at this time.

### 10.2 Age Concern

Nothing to report at this time.

### 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 at this time.
- 10.8 Uckfield Festival Association  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 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  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.12 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link  
Nothing to report at this time.

**11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
None.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.30.01.23** 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 20.02pm.