

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Weald Hall of the Civic Centre on Monday 15 May 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. B. Cox
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. M. McClafferty
Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. P. Selby
Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. V. Frost (co-opted)
Cllr. B. Reed (co-opted)
Cllr. P. Ullmann (co-opted)

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Councillor K. Williams

9 members of the public including three former councillors and three members of the public who wished to stand as a co-opted member. Three members of the public were co-opted and joined the meeting from agenda item 3.0 onwards.

Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

Before the meeting commenced, the Town Mayor advised members of the very sad news received over the weekend that Mr Alan Blackford, a local resident and business owner had passed away after a short illness. Mr Blackford had been a great supporter of the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society and would regularly attend council meetings. He would be very much missed, and the council's thoughts were with the family at this difficult time. A minute's silence was held in his memory.

1.0 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Four nominations were received in advance of the meeting for the role of Town Mayor. The councillor(s) nominated for Town Mayor were:
Councillor J. Love.

FC.01.05.23 With no further nominations, members **RESOLVED** for Councillor Jackie Love to be re-elected as Town Mayor, for a third consecutive year.

1.1 The Town Mayor to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Councillor J. Love thanked members for their support.

Councillor J. Love then signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Proper Officer (Town Clerk).

2.0 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

The Town Clerk advised that nomination(s) had also been put forward for the role of Deputy Mayor.

The name(s) put forward for Deputy Mayor, was that of Councillor D. French, for a third consecutive year.

FC.02.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D. French be appointed as Deputy Town Mayor.

3.0 TO CO-OPT TO THREE VACANCIES ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Clerk advised that a total of three applications had been submitted prior to the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council for the three Town Councillor vacancies on Uckfield Town Council.

One application had been received for the vacancy in the ward of Uckfield West:
Mrs Val Frost

One application had been received for the vacancy in the ward of Uckfield Ridgewood:

Mrs Bernadette Reed

One application had been received for the vacancy in the ward of Uckfield New Town:

Mr Peter Ullmann

In line with the Town Council's Co-option Policy, the Town Clerk invited the candidates, in the order that their applications were received for each ward (as listed above) to introduce themselves to members and read out their manifesto. Each candidate had a maximum of two minutes in which to do this. Town Councillors were also reminded that they were not obliged to co-opt any members, if it was felt that the candidate(s) were not suitable.

All three candidates read out their manifestos. The Town Clerk then asked members whether they wished to vote by a show of hands or signed ballot. Two councillors requested a signed ballot.

FC.03.05.23 From the results of the signed ballot, it was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mrs Val Frost onto the Town Council, for the ward of Uckfield West.

FC.04.05.23 From the results of the signed ballot, it was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mrs Bernadette Reed onto the Town Council, for the ward of Uckfield Ridgewood.

FC.05.05.23 From the results of the signed ballot, it was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mr Peter Ullmann onto the Town Council, for the ward of Uckfield New Town.

3.1 To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Newly co-opted Town Councillors V. Frost, B. Reed and P. Ullmann signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Proper Officer (Town Clerk).

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor A. Smith who was unwell, and County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling.

5.0 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. None were forthcoming.

6.0 MINUTES

6.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of the 6 March 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC.06.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on the 6 March 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

6.2 To note the minutes of the Annual Town meeting of the 15 April 2023, previously circulated, and for the Town Council's committees to take forward the issues raised as appropriate.

Members received and noted the minutes of the Annual Town meeting on 15 April 2023.

6.3 Action List

Members noted the contents of the action list:

7.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

7.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

(a) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 20 March 2023

FC.07.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 20 March 2023.

(b) Plans Committee of the 24 April 2023

FC.08.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 24 April 2023.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 11 April 2023

FC.09.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 11 April 2023.

8.0 TO REVIEW THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The latest version of the Committee's terms of reference were shared with Councillors as part of the agenda pack. This included some very minor tweaks to reflect the buildings within the Town Council's portfolio, making reference to climate change and consideration of appropriate initiatives or recent issues.

Councillor C. Macve requested that the section on buildings under General Purposes Committee be further strengthened to reflect the expectations of tenants and leaseholders for internal decoration and maintenance, as well as making reference to insurance cover.

Councillor K. Bedwell also wished to make reference to the committee's work to respond to local and national consultations on planning policy.

FC.10.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Terms of Reference for Uckfield Town Council's committees.

9.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED STANDING COMMITTEES

General Purposes - 9 members

FC.11.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that six members of the General Purposes Committee be as follows:-

Councillors J. Love, C. Macve, D. Manvell, P. Selby, A. Smith, and D. Ward.

This left three seats vacant.

Councillor B. Cox offered to stand as a substitute in light of the lower numbers serving on the committee, which was accepted.

Environment and Leisure - 9 members

FC.12.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the nine members of the Environment and Leisure Committee be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, D. French, V. Frost, S. Mayhew, M. McClafferty, B. Reed, A. Smith and D. Ward.

Plans - 7 members

FC.13.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that six members of the Plans Committee be as follows:-

Cllrs. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, J. Love, C. Macve, S. Mayhew and P. Ullmann.

This left one seat vacant.

Prior to adjourning to consider the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for the various committees, Members were reminded of the Council's Standing Orders relating to voting on appointments which stated:-

"15.3 - Nor should any Member of the Council be Chairman of more than one committee or sub-committee at any one time."

and

"15.4 - "Neither shall the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be Chairman of a full committee."

GP.01.05.23 In considering the appointment of Chair of the General Purposes Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. D. Ward be re-appointed as Chair.

GP.02.05.23 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. A. Smith be appointed as Vice-Chair. Councillor A. Smith was absent from the meeting due to sickness, so this would need to be confirmed at a future General Purposes Committee.

EL.01.05.23 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. S. Mayhew be re-appointed as Chair.

EL.02.05.23 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. A. Smith be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

P.01.05.23 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. K. Bedwell be re-appointed as Chair.

P.02.05.23 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. C. Macve be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

10.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED SUB-COMMITTEES AND THE VOICE EDITORIAL PANEL

In considering the appointment of members to the sub-committees, the Clerk reminded Members of Standing Order No. 19.1.8 which stated that the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or in their absence the Vice-chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it, unless they signified that they did not wish to serve.

The Town Clerk asked the Chair of General Purposes Committee, Councillor D. Ward, if they wished to sit on Personnel Sub-Committee. Councillor D. Ward confirmed that she did wish to have a seat on Personnel Sub-Committee.

Personnel - 5 members

(Reporting to the General Purposes Committee)

FC.14.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Personnel Sub-committee be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, D. French, M. McClafferty, A.Smith and D. Ward.

The Chair of General Purposes Committee, Councillor D. Ward had already expressed an interest in Finance Sub-Committee.

Finance – 5 members

(Reporting to the General Purposes Committee)

FC.15.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Finance Sub-committee be as follows:-

Councillors B. Cox, D. Manvell, S. Mayhew, D. Ward and P. Ullmann.

The meeting then adjourned to allow the sub-committees to meet and elect a Chair and Vice-chair.

PS.01.05.23 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor A. Smith be appointed as Chair.

The position of Vice-Chair would need to be appointed at the first meeting of Personnel Sub-Committee.

FS.01.05.23 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor B. Cox be appointed as Chair.

FS.02.05.23 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Finance Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor S. Mayhew be appointed as Vice-Chair.

The Voice Editorial Panel - 3 members

The Clerk advised that two Members had expressed an interest in the Editorial Panel. One member wished to withdraw if other interest was put forward. Further interest was expressed by members around the table:

FC.16.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** that the four members of the Voice Editorial Panel would be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, C. Macve, S. Mayhew and P. Selby.

11.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

FC.17.05.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed as the Council's representatives to the following outside bodies:-

FULL COUNCIL

Organisation	No. Required	
Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee	2	Cllr Jackie Love Cllr Diane Ward
Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee – Substitute Members	2	Cllr Donna French Cllr Angie Smith
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	5	Cllr Karen Bedwell Cllr Jackie Love Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Bernadette Reed Cllr Angie Smith
Gatwick Airport Consultation Group	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Peter Selby

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wealden Citizens Advice	1	Cllr Angie Smith
East Sussex Association of Local Councils	1	Cllr Diane Ward
Emergency Planning Co-ordinators	3	Cllr Karen Bedwell Cllr Duncan Bennett Cllr Donna French
Uckfield Volunteer Centre	1	Cllr Peter Selby
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	1	Cllr Diane Ward

Wealden District Association of Local Councils Parish Planning Panel ad hoc meeting/ Local Plan Engagement Cluster	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Representation by office or Plans Committee representative.
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AGM meetings only:

Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew
Uckfield & District Preservation Society - Bridge Cottage	1	Cllr Donna French

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Active Uckfield	2	Representation by office or Plans Committee representative.
All Weather Pitch Operational Advisory Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Peter Selby
Conservators of Ashdown Forest	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Bernadette Reed Cllr Angie Smith
Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	<i>To be appointed at first E&L Committee after Annual Stat meeting</i>
Luxford Centre Management Committee	1	Cllr Chris Macve
Stakeholder Group exploring provision of Tennis facilities in Uckfield with Uckfield College	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Peter Ullmann Cllr Spike Mayhew (substitute)
Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee	1	Cllr Chris Macve
Uckfield Youth Club Board	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Mike McClafferty Cllr Dan Manvell (substitute)
Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link Forum	1	Cllr Angie Smith

AGM meetings only:

Uckfield & District Twinning Association	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew Cllr Ben Cox (substitute)
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12.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Members considered a report previously circulated which provided information on the working groups which currently fell under the remit of Full Council. This included the Civic Centre Working Group, Events Working Group and Infrastructure Working Group. Members were asked to appoint no less than three and no more than five members to each working group:

FC.18.05.23 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the contents of the report, and;
- (ii) confirm appointments for all three working groups

Civic Centre Working Group –

Councillors Bennett, French, Mayhew and Ward

Events Working Group -

Councillors Bedwell, French, Frost, Love, Mayhew.

Infrastructure Working Group –

Councillors Bedwell, Mayhew and Smith

13.0 TO REVIEW AND ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS

Town Councillors were provided with a copy of the Town Council's standing orders for reference and review.

FC.19.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's standing orders.

Councillor D. Bennett suggested that in light of the longer agenda for the evening's Full Council meeting and business still to attend to, that the Town Council suspend standing orders to extend the meeting to 9.30pm, should this be required.

FC.20.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable the meeting to run until 9.30pm.

14.0 TO REVIEW AND ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Town Councillors were provided with a copy of the Town Council's Financial regulations for reference and review.

Reference had been made on page 8 to the change in banking procedures since the closure of the Town Council's bank.

FC.21.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's financial regulations.

15.0 TO REVIEW AND ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Town Councillors were provided with a copy of the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy for reference and review alongside the NALC Model Councillor Code from 2020, for reference.

FC.22.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy.

16.0 TO CONFIRM THAT THE CRITERIA FOR THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE HAVE BEEN MET AND TO THEN ADOPT THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Members considered a report which provided the background and history to the General Power of Competence and set out the position with regard to the

necessary criteria in order for the Town Council to adopt the power, following an election.

FC.23.05.23 Members wished to thank officers for going the extra mile to make the Town Council competent, and **RESOLVED** that:-

- (i) the criteria to adopt the General Power of Competence had been met and;
- (ii) Uckfield Town Council adopted the General Power of Competence.

17.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION.

None.

18.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEED OF GRANT

Three grave certificates had been received:

Mrs Miriam Barbara Hartley

Miss Julianne Crowhurst

Clare Cooper

FC.24.05.23 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the deeds of grant.

19.0 TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMPLETE AUDITS UNTIL THE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING IN MAY 2024

Members were presented with a report which confirmed audits were almost on track for completion for 2022-23. A new schedule had been drawn up for 2023-24 which members were asked to approve.

FC.25.05.23 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) complete audits outstanding from 2022/23 and;
- (ii) approve the proposed schedule for member audits for the financial year 2023/24.

20.0 TO RECEIVE UPDATES 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.

21.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Uckfield – Events Working Group

A verbal update was provided on the activities that took place over the weekend of the King's Coronation. Members noted the update.

(ii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Members noted the report

(iii) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iv) Infrastructure Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

22.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

No questions were received by the deadline.

23.0 TO CONFIRM APPROVAL OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Members were provided with a copy of the Risk Management Policy which had been updated and presented to General Purposes Committee in January 2023. Although the policy had received approval by General Purposes Committee in January 2023, it was a requirement to ensure this decision was ratified by full Council.

FC.26.05.23 Members **RESOLVED** to confirm the approval and adoption of the Town Council's Risk Management Policy – Policy No. 29 (dated January 2023).

The Town Clerk advised the Chair to consider the following two agenda items together as they were linked.

24.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAN MANVELL

Councillor D. Manvell put forward a motion relating to Uckfield Leisure Centre which was intended to structure a way forward for the Town Council.

Councillor D. Manvell introduced his motion, which not only asked the Town Council to respond to the consultation, with the stance that any reduction or loss of facilities would be opposed. The motion also encouraged promotion of the consultation and nearing deadline, and for the Town Council to apply to Wealden District Council, to register Uckfield Leisure Centre as an Asset of Community Value.

Members agreed, stating that the District and County Councils needed to get the matter sorted. Councillor P. Selby felt that the Town Council should emphasise the Leisure Centre's educational value – enabling people to learn to swim, and learn other sports.

Members were aware that Uckfield College and the local Maresfield Tennis Club Le Tennis were keen to increase provision for tennis, but the two matters were not associated. This was confirmed by a newly co-opted member who had previously been the Vice-Chair of Governors at Uckfield College.

Councillor D. Manvell reminded members that the results of an FOI request, highlighted that Uckfield's swimming pool had been the most used pool in Wealden.

Members reflected on the consultation, which had been heavily weighted towards capturing data on those who had used the facility in the last six months. Members referred to the circumstances of Heathfield and Ringmer, but the situations were different.

Councillor D. Manvell proposed that members accept his motion, with the addition of Councillor Selby's emphasis on the educational value of the Leisure Centre, and reference to the National Curriculum.

FC27.05.23 Members voted to support the motion put forward by Councillor D. Manvell and subsequent addition from Councillor P. Selby to, agree that:

Following the opening of East Sussex County Council's consultation into the future of Uckfield Leisure Centre, Uckfield Town Council **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Respond to the consultation, opposing any loss of community access to the 'wetside' or 'dryside' facilities including the pool, gym, sports hall, squash court, sauna, studios, creche, café, etc and emphasising the educational value of the facilities and their importance to meet the requirements of the national curriculum;
- (ii) Include comments made at the Full Council meeting on 15 May 2023 and those submitted in writing by Town Councillors before Wednesday 17 May;
- (iii) Encourage all residents of Uckfield and the surrounding towns and villages to respond to the consultation before the deadline of 27 May;
- (iv) Submit a nomination to Wealden District Council for Uckfield Leisure Centre to be listed as an Asset of Community Value;

It was also agreed to keep the MP Nusrat Ghani in the loop with the Town Council's response to the consultation and associated correspondence.

25.0 TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE ESCC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF UCKFIELD LEISURE CENTRE

This item was superseded by the motion in agenda item 24.0.

26.0 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love wished to thank everyone involved in organising the events over the King's Coronation weekend. It was great to have representatives of the French Twin Town Arques-la-Bataille and local Twinning Association attend the event, and the Town Mayor had also received thanks from a number of residents living around Downlands Copse for the fantastic clean up operation on the Bank Holiday Monday. The work to the raised flower beds outside the Luxford Centre looked marvellous and she was aware that volunteers worked there for a solid six hours, to weed and replant.

The Town Mayor wished to thank Councillor A. Smith for the recent food collection for the Uckfield Food Bank, which had been an excellent initiative, and asked members to support officers with key projects within the town.

27.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reflected on the recent elections and changes to voter requirements with the addition of voter ID.

The Town Clerk welcomed the newly co-opted councillors to Uckfield Town Council and reminded all members to complete the required paperwork by the deadline specified.

28.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

To consider whether to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted:

28.1 To consider commissioning a light-touch external review of council services and existing resources

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

FC.28.05.23

It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.
The meeting closed at 9.27pm.