

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held  
on Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 7.00pm  
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:** Cllr. K. Bedwell  
Cllr. D. French (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. J. Love (Town Mayor)  
Cllr. D. Manvell  
Cllr. P. Selby  
Cllr. P. Ullmann  
Cllr. B. Cox  
Cllr. V. Frost  
Cllr. C. Macve  
Cllr. B. Reed  
Cllr. A. Smith  
Cllr. D. Ward

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling  
1 member of the public

Holly Goring                      Town Clerk  
Sarah D'Alessio              Assistant Town Clerk & RFO  
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 D. Manvell advised that both himself and Councillor B. Cox were directors of the Uckfield Community Fridge CIC. The Community Fridge had received grant funding from the Wealden Food Partnership's Household Support fund, which related to agenda item 16.0. The Town Clerk confirmed that they could remain in the room for this agenda item, as we were only seeking to appoint a representative.

## **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.29.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by County and District Council representatives.

Councillor Chris Dowling provided an update on his ward area. The Newtown Action Group were keen to establish a Community Speedwatch group in their area and were currently working on this with Sussex Police. They would be looking for volunteers. They were delighted to see the new road surface in Newtown, and had been advised that day that the resurfacing of Lewes Road would take place between 7 and 14 August via night works. Traffic calming measures were being introduced to Lewes Road from 17 July to 4 August. The detail of these works were still awaited. There was also the possibility of UKPN returning to Newtown to rectify issues from the full cable lay. He had been reassured that this work would cause minimal disruption to traffic flow, as it would not require excavation.

Clarification was requested on the Lewes Road roadworks. It was confirmed that it would include replacement cats eyes, new markings, gully cleansing and anti-skid surfaces being laid in addition to resurfacing.

It was questioned whether there was any further news on the works required on the bypass – i.e. the reconfiguration of Copwood roundabout.

Councillor Claire Dowling referred to the sinkhole by the bus stop in the High Street, and the concern in Church Street. Drainage investigative work had been booked and she would keep pushing this. Uckfield was being scheduled for road maintenance and resurfacing with Newtown complete, Lewes Road planned and London Road scheduled for a later date (Brown's Lane to Church Street). We were awaiting dates for the next stages of the bus station improvements, which would include the installation of the new street furniture and bus stops and resurfacing. Downsvie Crescent and Southview Drive had further deteriorated. Work would be completed during school holidays at some stage this calendar year. Councillor Dowling had noted the road safety motion on the agenda. Although it was not within her remit, she would keep a watch on progress.

Councillor Bedwell advised that the road was splitting at the top of Mallard Drive, between the school and new development. Also a drain outside 56 Mallard Drive, had sunk.

Councillor D. Manvell advised that Wealden DC's Overview & Scrutiny Committee had invited East Sussex Highways to meet with them with regards to road maintenance, and they were yet to receive a response.

Councillor Claire Dowling advised that although she wasn't aware of the finer details, she understood a report was due before the Lead Member of Resource, at East Sussex County Council on 11 July 2023 on Uckfield Leisure Centre.

Councillor B. Reed had asked for a tour with the project manager of Ridgewood Place, and invited Councillor Chris Dowling to join her. There were some concerns with regards to the traffic calming measures being installed.

The Town Clerk had to remind everyone to use their microphones to enable an accurate recording of the meeting and accurate minutes, and ensure those more hard of hearing could hear the discussions taking place. The Town Clerk also clarified the work and considerations that went into the traffic calming

measures in Lewes Road.

Councillor B. Reed stressed the importance of accessibility for those who had difficulties with mobility and the need for dropped kerbs and wider pavements to be considered in any highway/pedestrian footway improvements. Councillor D. Manvell had noted a similar issue on the Manor Park estate. The Town Mayor advised that this could be raised in the SLR meeting in July.

District updates were provided.

Councillor B. Reed attended Wealden DC's Full Council that day and referred to a debate that took place on the South East Water supply issue. Large parts of Wealden had experienced multiple events. At Environmental training that day, she had raised the issues with flies in Uckfield, and clarified that this was a long standing problem. Councillor Reed stressed the importance of logging every single incident that occurred with regards to the flies, so that Environmental Health were aware. Councillor K. Bedwell felt that normally sewage works were built around or near to a woodland, but because all the woodland had been cut down for Ridgewood Place, it had possibly directed them back to the woodland at Bridge Farm Wood.

Councillor B. Cox referred to Wealden DC's council and committee meetings and his written update. He felt that Wealden DC's approach was community led, and the representation of Uckfield at those meetings was strong.

Councillor D. Manvell didn't have much more to add, but also stated that a Cabinet decision was due on the Uckfield Leisure Centre on 12 July 2023.

**FC.30.06.23** The Councillors were thanked for their input and update, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillors D. Bennett, S. Mayhew and M. McClafferty.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 15 May 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

It was noted that a typo in the minutes referred to Councillor A. Smith as both present and giving her apologies.

**FC.31.06.23** Subject to the above typo being amended, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### 5.2 Action List

Members requested that the following action be removed:

FC27.05.23 - To consider the motion from Councillor Manvell (Leisure Centre)  
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 22 May and 12 June 2023

**FC.32.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 22 May and 12 June 2023.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 5 June 2023

**FC.33.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committees of the 5 June 2023.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 19 June 2023

**FC.34.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 19 June 2023.

## **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

A meeting was due to take place the following week.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Nothing to report at present.

## **9.0 TO NOTE END OF YEAR PROGRESS TOWARDS UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES IN 2022/23**

This report provided an overview of progress towards the Town Council's annual plan in 2022/23.

Members were happy to note the contents of the report.

## **10.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**

Members were directed to the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 as contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the contents of this paper.

The new Internal Auditor had also carried out their end of year review with a copy of their full report included within the agenda papers.

Councillor C. Macve referred to insurance cover, and felt that the value given for the Signal Box should be greater. He also requested clarity of the Hub/Source site. The Town Clerk reminded members that there were funds in the 2023/24 budget to commission new reinstatement valuations for insurance purposes and these would be undertaken over the summer to reflect our buildings insurance renewal in October 2023.

Councillor P. Ullmann queried the difference in declared value for insurance and the accounting statements which showed a different figure for fixed assets. The Town Clerk explained that they had been discussing this matter with the Internal Auditor. At present, the Town Council had market valuations of their properties which were undertaken every five years (last undertaken March 2019), reinstatement valuations, which were undertaken around every two to three years to inform the Town Council's building insurance and then the accountant applied depreciation for the purpose of the CIPFA accounting statements. The Internal Auditor had suggested reviewing the latter methodology.

The Town Mayor thought it was a brilliant report, but also reminded members of the importance of the member audits.

Members received, considered and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 within the AGAR.

**11.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 1 – THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement for the period 2022/23 which formed part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) on page four of six.

**FC.35.06.23** Members reviewed the contents of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2022/23) and **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23, and authorised for the Town Mayor as Chairman of the meeting and the Town Clerk to sign and date this statement on behalf of the Town Council.

**12.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 2 – THE TOWN COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**

Members reviewed a summary of the Town Council's accounting statements, as presented on page five of six, in the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return ending 31 March 2023, and a set of financial statements prepared by the Town Council's accountants at the end of March 2023.

The Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the report(s) to members explaining the figures – in particular the capital reserves. A tremendous vote of thanks was also recorded for the staff involved in the year end process, to finalise the accounts and annual governance and accountability return.

**FC.36.06.23** Members **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the draft annual governance and accountability return, and financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023, and authorised for the Town Mayor as Chairman of the meeting to sign and date this return, on behalf of the Town Council, in conjunction with the Finance Sub-Committee's final approval.

**13.0 TO CONFIRM THE LIST OF TOWN COUNCIL SUPPLIER PAYMENTS BY DIRECT DEBIT FOR 2023-24**

Members were provided with a list of Town Council supplier payments made by direct debit, for full transparency. It was clarified that there were no standing orders.

Members noted the list provided.

**14.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BENNETT**

Members considered a motion from Councillor D. Bennett which related to concerns with road safety in the area near to Uckfield College following a recent collision. It was hoped that the individual involved was now well.

**FC.37.06.23**

Members supported the motion and **RESOLVED** for this to be sent to the Road Safety Team at East Sussex County Council and for local County Councillor, Claire Dowling to be included in this correspondence.

*“For many decades there has been concerns raised regarding the safety of students and other pedestrians crossing the Upper High Street/London Road between the top of North Row and the bottom of Tower Ride.*

*This is a very busy crossing point which is used by many people seeking to travel on foot between the greater Church Coombe area and Manor Park, including its schools and other facilities.*

*Today, Friday 9th June 2023, a collision occurred between a vehicle and a Year 12 student from Uckfield College.*

*This reinforces the fears and concerns which have been felt by generations of local people.*

*Indeed, this is not the first instance of such an incident.*

*May I please ask fellow councillors to support my suggestion that we write to ES Highways to most strongly request the installation of a formal crossing point at this location as soon as possible.”*

**15.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HOLY CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Members were provided with a copy of a consultation document in relation to the proposed closure of Holy Cross CE Primary School on 31 December 2023. Members had already been encouraged to respond individually but were asked if a corporate response from Uckfield Town Council should be submitted before the deadline on 21 July 2023.

The Town Clerk took into account the feedback provided by members which included concerns with increasing development within the town and need for school places, the possible split of siblings between different schools, the loss of facilities for working parents and the future use of the site.

**16.0 TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OUTSIDE BODY: WEALDEN FOOD PARTNERSHIP**

Members considered a report previously circulated and further detail provided by Councillor Bedwell.

**FC.38.06.23**

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor K. Bedwell as a representative for Uckfield Town Council on the Wealden Food Advisory Group. Councillor J. Love was nominated as a substitute representative, and Councillor B. Reed would attend when possible as a Wealden District Councillor representative.

**17.0 TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

The Town Clerk explained the reason for looking at long service awards for elected members to thank them for their dedication to their community. There were a mix of views from Town Councillors on the potential length of service, which varied between:

- more than one municipal term;
- two or three terms;
- 10 years;

Members were generally in favour of the idea, and thought the certificate and meal or afternoon tea in the restaurant was a good idea.

One member suggested that a book or record be maintained of long service in the Town Council office.

It was suggested that members send ideas to the Town Clerk and consider how such a programme could work for Uckfield, and for this item to return to the next meeting.

**FC.39.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable the meeting to be extended by a further 30 minutes to 9.30pm

**18.0 TO CONSIDER UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT IN FORTHCOMING PLANNING APPEALS**

The Town Clerk and Chair of Plans Committee advised members of the Planning appeals that had been registered on two sites in Uckfield (i) Land at Bird in Eye Farm and (ii) Land at Downlands Farm. The first Planning Inquiry would commence on 12 September, and the second would commence on 24 October 2023. Members discussed the options for the Town Council and what Rule 6 status involved, along with just registering to speak. Members noted the update.

**19.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Members noted the report.

**20.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**

Six deed of grants had been received:

Mr Robert Gardner

Mrs Patricia Ann Walter

Mr David John White and Mavis Emily White

Mr Richard Peirce

Lesley Ann Blackford, Richard Blackford and Philip Blackford

Mr Ian Mitchell and Mrs Carolyn Mitchell

**FC.40.06.23** It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

**21.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

**22.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that the Countryside Ranger, Mr Matheson, who looked after the Town Council's nature reserves and ancient woodlands was leaving for pastures new (no pun intended) that Friday for a new role at a district authority.

Members wished to thank him for his hard work, and wished him well. The Town Clerk reminded everyone of the Flexibus service, which was a sort of on-demand service which also travelled certain routes each day. There was now an increase in the number of services in the bus routes in and out of Uckfield since the funding was received by East Sussex County Council as part of their bus improvement plan.

Wealden DC was currently working on their Local Plan. By law they had to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal, and ensure they looked at how the plan could contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions and to mitigate any potential adverse effects. Members were invited to respond to this consultation which would run until 7 August 2023.

### **23.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love did not have any announcements at this meeting.

### **24.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

#### **FC.41.06.23**

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.

#### **24.1 To review the Town Centre CCTV Contract for renewal in 2024-25**

The Town Clerk provided a presentation to members on the current position.

#### **FC.42.06.23**

It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders and the meeting closed at 9.06pm.