



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk – Holly Goring

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

on

**Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield**

AGENDA

Under The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public are able to film or record during a committee meeting.

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Should any Member consider that they require a dispensation in relation to any prejudicial interest that they may have, they are asked to make a written application to the Clerk well in advance of the meeting.

Notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration. The nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

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

3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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 Town Mayor.

5.2 Action list – For information only

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) | Plans Committees | 22 May and 12 June 2023 |
| (b) | Environment and Leisure Committee | 5 June 2023 |
| (c) | General Purposes Committee | 19 June 2023 |

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group

- 8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**
- (i) Civic Centre Working Group
 - (ii) Events Working Group
 - (iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum
 - (iv) Infrastructure Working Group
- 9.0 TO NOTE END OF YEAR PROGRESS TOWARDS UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES IN 2022/23**
- 10.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**
- 11.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 1 - THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**
- 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**
- 13.0 TO CONFIRM THE LIST OF TOWN COUNCIL SUPPLIER PAYMENTS BY DIRECT DEBIT FOR 2023-24**
- 14.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DUNCAN BENNETT**
- 15.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HOLY CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL**
- 16.0 TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OUTSIDE BODY: WEALDEN FOOD PARTNERSHIP**
- 17.0 TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**
- 18.0 TO CONSIDER UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT IN FORTHCOMING PLANNING APPEALS**
- 19.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**
- 20.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**
- 21.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**
- 22.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 23.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 24.0 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: -
- 24.1 To review the Town Centre CCTV Contract for renewal in 2024-25



Town Clerk
22 June 2023

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.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

FULL COUNCIL

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<p><u>FC.105.02.17</u></p> <p><u>FC.95.01.20</u></p>	<p><u>14.0 To sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members RESOLVED to sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows and West Park Local Nature Reserves.</p> <p><u>18.0 To sign and seal the Town Council's byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members RESOLVED to:</p> <p>(i) authorise the affixing of the common seal to the byelaws for both Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve and signing by two named councilors, and; (ii) authorise the Town Clerk for Uckfield Town Council to carry out the necessary procedures and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation.</p>	<p>20.02.17</p> <p>20.01.20</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>The Council will be advertising its intention to apply for confirmation once covid restrictions have eased. The byelaws must then be held for at least one month at the offices for inspection by the public, before any representations are reported back as part of the package of information, to DEFRA.</p>
<p><u>FC115.04.19</u></p>	<p><u>9.0 To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Donna French</u> It was RESOLVED to support the motion put forward, and; “reinvestigate the possibility of part funding a traffic warden; entering into a discussion with Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate, with a view to joint funding a shared traffic warden, employed via Sussex Police.”</p>	<p>08.04.19</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>This matter has been raised with the Wealden Inspector of Sussex Police. It is understood that Sussex Police and Wealden DC were due to hold discussions once again. UTC will await the outcome of these.</p>

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<u>FC.30.09.20</u>	<p><u>12.0 To review a report by Councillor A. Smith on the need for affordable homes in Uckfield</u></p> <p>After a detailed discussion, it was RESOLVED to request that the Town Clerk write to the Housing Minister Rt Hon Robert Jenrick with a copy of this report and advise Wealden DC's planning department of these discussions along with neighbouring parish councils.</p>	14.09.20	HG	The data is being updated ready for compiling into a letter to the new Minister for Housing.
<u>FC.55.10.21</u>	<p>Members RESOLVED to approve the motion put forward by Councillor D. French and for staff to make contact with the County Council: <i>"Uckfield Town Council supports the increase in the provision of Changing Place Toilets across the country, and will approach East Sussex County Council to understand if they:</i></p> <p><i>(i) have submitted an expression of interest to central government to draw down funding to the county of East Sussex, and:</i></p> <p><i>(ii) if ESCC have expressed an interest, that Uckfield Town Council lobby for such facilities to be introduced in Uckfield."</i></p>	25.10.21	HG	Having understood the requirements from the recent funding round we now have time to prepare for the next funding round and have the necessary evidence and associated costs available.
<u>FC.94.02.22</u>	<p><u>11.0 To consider a further motion by Councillor B. Cox, relating to food poverty</u></p> <p>Members unanimously RESOLVED to approve the motion put forward by Councillor B. Cox to:</p> <p>What the council still needs to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the results of the schools' questionnaire and review the recommendations; • Be open to any new ways to offer 'out of term' food for young people and where needed, push the higher tiers of local government to back schemes; • Review and offer a final report on food poverty in March 2023 before the end of the term of this Town Council; <p>Summary.</p> <p><i>Food poverty in Uckfield is an issue that is growing still. However, Uckfield Town Council have done a number of things to help ease the issue. The next year will see some very challenging times and it is important that the Council keep up the work in highlighting and where possible, easing food poverty. A review is needed in 2023 and a final report offered to the Town Council. The attached report within appendix A contains statistics for Uckfield in terms of earnings and age by ward should be offered to our local authorities (District and County) to highlight some local needs.</i></p>	28.02.22	All	In progress.

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<u>FC.82.01.23</u>	<p><u>9.0 To consider a response from Buxted Parish Council regarding the purchase of the Dene, Uckfield</u> Members RESOLVED to support the inclusion of an overage clause in the purchase of the land, the Dene, Brown's Lane, Uckfield but requested that the Town Clerk return to Buxted Parish Council to request whether they could contribute towards the legal fees.</p>	23.01.23	HG	The purchase is underway with Solicitors acting behalf of both parties. The terms of the overage clause have been drafted and sent to Buxted Parish Council. In progress.
<u>FC27.05.23</u>	<p><u>24.0 To consider a motion from Councillor D. Manvell</u> Following the opening of East Sussex County Council's consultation into the future of Uckfield Leisure Centre, Uckfield Town Council RESOLVED to:</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(iii) Encourage all residents of Uckfield and the surrounding towns and villages to respond to the consultation before the deadline of 27 May;</p> <p>(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.</p>	15.05.23	HG	<p>(i)and (ii) A formal response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council was submitted as part of the consultation on 26 May 2023. NFA.</p> <p>(iii) Members of the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation, with information on the council's website, social media posts, and the weblink being shared with key community groups. Hard copies in the Civic Centre. NFA.</p> <p>(iv) In progress.</p>

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda item 9.0

END OF YEAR PROGRESS UPDATE TOWARDS UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES – 2022/23

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a review of progress at year end towards the Town Council's priorities for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The priorities identified for delivery in 2022/23 consisted of initiatives which were often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but demonstrated that by working together with colleagues and partner agencies, we could achieve a great deal for the town and its residents.
- 1.3 Organisations often spent time producing plans or lists of priorities, but did not review progress until year-end. With this paper, the Town Clerk had been able to provide a quarterly update to members to explain the progress being made to deliver these priorities.
- 1.4 It was critical to note that following a period of staff vacancies, the Town Council has recently appointed new members of staff, so there was still a learning curve for these new members and project work had to be placed second to the day to day priorities of service provision. The vacancies on the Grounds team had just been filled.

2.0 End of Year Progress Update





- 2.1 Of the 12 priorities, seven had completed the work identified for delivery in 2022/23, four had seen some progress and one was behind schedule. A big thank you to a fantastic Town Council team for their hard work.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to review this progress report, and note the work undertaken to date.

Appendices: Appendix A: End of Year 2022/23 Progress Report
Contact Officer: Holly Goring




Key:




 = Progress behind schedule	 = Some progress has been made
 = On schedule for completion	 = Completed

APPENDIX A: End of Year - 2022/23 Progress Update

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
COMMUNITY GRANTS We will award up to £54,500 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations in 2022/23. (£27,500 to community groups, and £27,000 through service level agreements).	✓	All first and second instalment payments were paid to the community groups awarded community grant funding during 2022/23. SLA funding has also been issued for the Uckfield Volunteer Centre (£8,000) and Wealden Citizen's Advice Bureau (£19,000).	General Purposes Committee	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE TOWN We will work alongside the local business community and local community groups to deliver two free public events within the town; Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival	✓	It was previously agreed to move Uckfield Revival to May rather than October each year to avoid the heavy rain showers that we have experienced previously. Unfortunately due to staff sickness and vacancies during the winter months, the Town Clerk and her team did not have the capacity to support the organisation of the Uckfield Revival so it was agreed to cancel for 2022. The Weald on the Field festival however did go ahead on Saturday 13 August 2022, from 11am until 7pm on Luxford Field. It was a great success and well attended by the local community. There was an excellent range of street food, pop up bars, crafts stalls and live music. Thank you to all those involved in the event's organisation.	Full Council	Town Clerk
IMPROVEMENTS TO OPEN SPACES We will undertake repairs and improvements to a number of our open spaces including installing new signage, repairing equipment, investigating drainage issues and responding to enhancements identified through the Green Spaces Project.	✓	<p>Improvements to signage within the open spaces were made with additional safety notices incorporated at Harlands and Downlands Copse as well as the larger open spaces. Repairs to equipment have been ongoing. Unfortunately some play area equipment at Victoria Pleasure Ground has not been possible to repair. Town Councillors have therefore put a substantial amount of funding aside towards the play area's upgrade with the intention that further funding be set aside to deliver this upgrade in 2024/25.</p> <p>Specialist topographical and drainage surveys were carried out at Ridgewood Recreation Ground and car park in summer 2022 to assist with the design of a suitable surface which would take the local watercourses and drainage into consideration. Final plans and drawings were now being developed for the car park and drainage improvements, for submission to the local planning authority.</p> <p>A report was received from the Green Spaces Health Audit Pilot. Due to more urgent priorities consideration of the suggested improvements had to be halted for 2023/24, but these will be factored into the business planning process for 2024-25 unless grant funding opportunities become available.</p>	Environment and Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN We will commence work on our 10-year woodland management plan to ensure ongoing maintenance and tackle diseased trees as and when appropriate.	✓	Now the Woodland Management Plan has been adopted, work has been underway to address trees affected by Ash Dieback within Nightingale Wood and Boothland Wood. Ash Dieback works were completed in both Nightingale and Boothland Wood. Additional works were also carried out in Bridge Farm Wood.	Environment & Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager
GRASS VERGE CUTTING We will continue to contribute to the costs of East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract to retain a good standard of service and ensure visibility is maintained on pavements and highways.	✓	Payment was made to East Sussex County Council for 2022/23 to maintain existing service standards and frequency of cuts to the town's grass verges. <i>(Urban verges used to receive 5-6 cuts per annum but East Sussex County Council can now only afford to fund two. Rural verges receive two cuts per annum).</i>	Environment and Leisure Committee	Town Clerk
CLIMATE CHANGE We will investigate ways in which we can reduce our impact on climate change by seeking to deliver our climate change policy by reviewing our contracts, considering alternative fuel supplies, exploring additional insulation in our buildings and equipment, reviewing the equipment we purchase, managing our land for nature and minimising waste.	▲	<p>The Eco EXPO was a great success on 30 April 2022 and helped to promote the various alternative products and technologies, and companies supporting households and businesses to tackle climate change and make a difference.</p> <p>The lighting within Foresters Hall and West Park Pavilion has been changed to LED.</p> <p>Detailed work was undertaken to explore the addition of further solar panels on the Civic Centre roof.</p> <p>Grounds equipment has been slowly replaced for electric where possible. The infrastructure and ability of the electric and hybrid vehicles is unfortunately not yet suitable for our needs, so this will be a longer term project.</p> <p>Tree planting continued during the winter season of 2022-23.</p>	Environment and Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<p>REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON PAPER We will look to reduce postage and paper usage by increasing correspondence by email with customers and reviewing our current procedures for the hire of our facilities and purchase order and invoicing.</p>		<p>Administrative Officers have been emailing the majority of invoices and correspondence with hirers and residents, unless the customer has specifically requested a hard copy. This has already reduced our postage costs.</p> <p>As part of the security upgrade, the server cabinet was updated and the old matrix printer used for invoices has been removed.</p> <p>We will now be running a hybrid style purchase order/invoice approach to ensure we maintain both paper and electronic records, until the new financial year in April 2023, when we will move almost fully to electronic.</p>	<p>General Purposes Committee</p>	<p>Assistant Town Clerk & RFO</p>
<p>NEW BOOKING SYSTEM We will look to install a new booking system for the internal management of booking enquiries for the Town Council's rooms and open spaces</p>		<p>Webinars were carried out with a number of recommended suppliers to explore options available and a trial will be run using the preferred software over the summer of 2023.</p> <p>Progress has now been made, although behind anticipated date for completion.</p>	<p>General Purposes Committee</p>	<p>Town Clerk/ Assistant Town Clerk & RFO</p>
<p>TOWN COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS We will review our older buildings by undertaking repairs and improvements, exploring options or vacant premises such as the Hub and exploring options for further community space within the town.</p>		<p>Some of the Building Maintenance Programme funding was re-allocated by Full Council on 19 December to enable important compliance works to be undertaken in the Civic Centre and Foresters Hall, Victoria Pavilion and West Park Pavilion to address fire safety, and emergency lighting works.</p> <p>Local surveyors were appointed to manage the demolition project of the Hub (Hub building only, not the Source or full site). A contractor has been selected and is currently liaising with the utility companies to arrange for demolition.</p> <p>West Park Pavilion has been passed to the Uckfield Grasshoppers on a full repairing lease. Works were carried out to the building beforehand, to ensure as a landlord, electrical and fire safety compliance, and roof repairs undertaken.</p> <p>The Signal Box will require refurbishment prior to re-letting. Unfortunately due to priorities in other buildings, this work has been placed on hold for the time-being.</p>	<p>General Purposes Committee</p>	<p>Estates & Facilities Manager</p>

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<p>ROAD SAFETY We will work with partner organisations such as Sussex Police and East Sussex Highways to re-establish community speedwatch initiative(s) in the town and explore the installation of a speed reduction device.</p>		<p>Due to the current limited availability of community speedwatch volunteers and other work pressures and staffing shortages, this project has been delayed.</p>	<p>Environment and Leisure Committee</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>
<p>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN We will support the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan ready for submission to the local Planning authority.</p>		<p>Public consultation sessions were undertaken during the afternoon, evening and Saturday morning in May 2022, followed by a stand at the Uckfield Festival in July 2022, to check in with residents on the work undertaken to date. The Town Clerk also presented to the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce on 21 July 2022, to explain the work being undertaken and further consultation exercise due to be shared, shortly.</p> <p>Work is now underway to prepare all documentation for the Town Council website and work with Wealden DC to prepare for the pre-submission consultation.</p>	<p>Full Council</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING We will work with local partner agencies, residents and local businesses to understand the infrastructure requirements for Uckfield, in regards to sport, leisure and recreation and community facilities and the future impact on the Town Council's provision of allotment and cemetery space.</p>		<p>Work slowed on this but with the work being undertaken on responding to planning applications, formulating the Neighbourhood Plan, and reviewing the information from residents and businesses, can help to feed into both processes.</p>	<p>Full Council</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>

Holly Goring
Uckfield Town Council

22 June 2023

Dear Holly

Uckfield Town Council

Internal Audit 22-23

The internal audit of Uckfield Town Council for the 2022-23 financial year is now complete. I visited the Council on 21 June for an in person audit.

I am pleased to be able to report that I have signed off the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2022-23 with no comments.

The Council should note that I was appointed very late in the financial year, with the engagement letter not signed until 17 March 2023. As a result, I have not been able to complete interim audits. This year I concentrated on transaction and governance testing necessary to provide me with evidence to enable me to sign the internal audit report in the AGAR. Going forward, I will carry out two interim audits and one final audit each year, all in person, which will enable me to review financial and governance controls in place at the Council in more detail.

As stated in the engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year. In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements– that is the job of external audit.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These control assertions are set out in the detailed report, together with the results of my internal audit work for 2022-23. Recommendations identified in the course of my testing are attached at Appendix A. These will be followed up at my next audit. At Appendix B I list tests not completed as they are not relevant to this Council.

You should now present this report to the next available meeting of Full Council, to assist councillors in the sign off of the Annual Governance Statement.

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A - Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year

The Council maintains financial records on the Sage Accounting system. My testing confirmed that income and expenditure is balanced to the cashbook and reconciled to bank statements on a regular basis. In the course of my testing I confirmed there is a clear audit trail from the accounts to supporting documentation such as invoices. The Council received a clear audit opinion for 21-22, so there is nothing that needs to be taken into account for the 22-23 financial year. I was able to agree the opening balances in the cashbook back to the accounts for 21-22.

The Council has a system of member audits. These are carried out each month, and a member is tasked with reviewing the following:

- Supplier invoices
- Sales ledger transactions
- Staff timesheets
- Bank and petty cash reconciliations

I checked the January review – this was completed by Councillor Bennet, but not until 5 April. I recommend that this check should be completed within 28 days of each month end to ensure that any matters identified are rectified on a timely basis.

The Council is registered for VAT, and submits VAT returns to HMRC on a quarterly basis. I reviewed the VAT return for quarter 4. The return was completed on 4 May 2023 and VAT of £12,576 was reclaimed from HMRC. This was received in the Council's bank account on 18 May – I have checked this to the bank statement. I checked the VAT return and test checked that entries in the return could be agreed to VAT reports extracted from the Sage system.

The accounting statements have been agreed back to bank reconciliation and cashbook reports produced from the Council's Sage accounting package. All comparatives reported in the financial statements have been agreed back to the audited 21-22 accounts, as published on the Council website. The process of producing the annual return is complex, as the nominal code structure is not currently aligned with the requirements of the annual return. I recommend that nominal codes are reviewed in the course of 23-24 with the aim of:

- Reducing the number of nominal codes to ensure that only those needed for management accounting reports are maintained;
- Aligning the nominal code structure to AGAR requirements, to reduce the level of manual intervention required to produce statutory accounting statements.

I am satisfied that this control objective has been met.

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B - The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for

Non pay expenditure per box 6 to the accounts amounted to £741,374, up from £690,732 in 21-22.

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are based on NALC templates. Standing Orders were last reviewed at the Full Council meeting in May 2023. Financial Regulations were last reviewed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2023.

I carried out a sample test of 16 non-pay expenditure transactions selected at random from cashbook throughout the financial year. I was able to confirm the following for all transactions:

- Payment agreed to invoice
- Invoice signed off by 2 councillors on face of invoice
- Expenditure appropriate for this Council

I have identified the following areas for improvement as a result of this testing:

- Payments made by direct debit and standing order should be approved in an advance at a Council meeting. This is a requirement of Financial Regulations:
 - 6.9 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by ~ variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to the relevant committee. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution by the relevant committee at least every two years.
- Utility meters are not always read in advance of direct debit payments leaving the Council's bank account. All meters should be read monthly by council officers, and readings sent to the RFO ready to be checked against bills;
- The Council should add the purchase orders module to the Sage accounting system. Purchase orders should then be completed on line by budget managers as goods or services are ordered, and sent to suppliers by email. This will improve budget monitoring (by enabling commitment accounting) and will link all purchases to the accounting system at the point of ordering. The current system of producing paper purchase orders often on the same day as invoices, serves no useful purpose.

However, I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective.

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C - The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

The Council is insured with Zurich Municipal on a standard local council package for employer liability and public liability plus some smaller assets. The policy was in date at time of audit, with an expiry date of 19 June 2024.

Fidelity cover may not be sufficient, this is set at £1 million. Given that Council bank balances regularly exceed this amount, I recommend that the insurer is contacted. The Council can then decide if it wishes to increase insurance cover.

Buildings Insurance has been arranged by a broker, Marsh. The broker has provided the following schedule of buildings insured.

Location Number	Premises	Postcode	Buildings Declared Value £	Buildings Sum Insured £
1	Uckfield Civic Centre, Bell Lane Farm, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 1AE	5,681,859	7,102,324
2	The Cemetery, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 2AL	398,820	498,525
3	The Museum, Bridge Cottage & adjacent Shop, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 1AZ	1,885,940	2,357,425
4	The Forresters Hall & 2a Vernon Road Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5DU	1,290,337	1,612,921
5	The Chapel, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 2AL	432,500	540,625
6	The Pavillion, West Park, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 2DG	616,896	771,120
7	Uckfield Signal Box, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5XS	168,000	210,000
8	(Main) New Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5DJ	1,854,152	2,317,690
9	(Garage Block) New Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5DJ	114,240	142,800
10	(Storage Units) New Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5DJ	11,200	14,000
11	Osborn Hall, Hempstead Road, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 1DZ	544,065	680,081
12	The Hub, Civic Approach, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 1AL	599,536	749,420
13	Ridgewood Village Hall, New Road, Uckfield, East Sussex	TN22 5TG	607,690	759,613
		Totals	£14,205,235	£17,756,544

I am satisfied that the Council has arranged appropriate insurance cover for its buildings.

The Council has a well-developed risk management strategy. This document sets out how the Council identifies risks and controls put in place to counter these risks. I have reviewed the risk register as discussed at the General Purposes Committee meeting in January 2023. It appears comprehensive, and there is evidence of update in the course of 2022-23. This was presented to Full Council on 17 May 23. The Council should ensure that the risk assessment review is minuted at Full Council as well as GP Committee within each financial year.

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The Sage Accounting system is backed up to a cloud server, alongside other council data, a process managed by the Council's IT contractor. The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO or Town Clerk also back up Sage to a memory stick at the end of each day, and take this with them off site. Back ups have been tested, as Uckfield is prone to power cuts, and backups have been used successfully to restore data.

I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective

D - The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate

Reserves at 31 March 2023 were £1,309,129 (21-22 £1,280,471).

The Council has a number of earmarked reserves. These amounted to £860K at 31.3.23. These reserves are held for a variety of reasons, including financial support for fixed assets, to support future projects, and for regulatory reasons. The largest earmarked reserves were :

- £261K – Building Management Reserve
- £75K – Town Centre Consultancy
- £50K – Joint Committee Master Plan
- £60K - Weald Hall Floor

Earmarked reserves are managed on a spreadsheet – there is evidence of update in year. I checked earmarked reserves back to the Sage balance sheet, as at 31.3.23. This check showed there are significant differences between the earmarked reserves on the spreadsheet reported to Council and the Sage accounting system . I therefore recommend

- Earmarked reserves on Sage are reviewed and journals posted to bring the reserve balances to levels reported to Council at 31.3.23
- Reserves are managed on the Sage accounting system going forward, and all reporting of reserves to Council should be based on Sage reports.

The precept and budget for 2023-24 were approved at the Full Council meeting on 23 January 2023 (minute FC 86.01.23) following review by sub committees and final review by members of the Finance Sub-Committee. A precept of £1,051,151 was set. A detailed budget sets out expenditure plans for 2023-24.

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A balanced budget has been set:

	£ proposed 2023-24
Gross income proposed 2023-24	£489,835
Gross expenditure proposed 2023-24	£1,540,986
Precept Approved	£1,051,151
Net impact on reserves	Nil

I confirmed regular budget monitoring reports, as required by financial regulations, are being produced for Council meetings, by reviewing minutes. Budget monitoring reports are produced for the following committees:

- General Purposes and Luxfords
- Environment and Leisure

I have 2 recommendations relating to budget monitoring:

- The overall Council budget and balance sheet position should be reviewed by a Council committee (Full Council or Finance) on a quarterly basis. Committee only review is not sufficient to check the financial position of the Council as a whole;
- The Council should move away from using spreadsheets for budget monitoring and should make use of budget monitoring modules in Sage. This may require nominal codes to be tidied and the budget monitoring module on Sage to be purchased. This would save staff time and improve the accuracy and timeliness of budget monitoring.

I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective.

E - Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Precept per box 2 to the accounts was £983,076 (2021-22 £955,945). This has been agreed to third party documentation provided by central government.

Income per box 3 to the accounts was £490,071 (2021-22 £448,347).

I tested a sample of 15 credits from the cashbook. These transactions were selected randomly, and included items from each month of the 22-23 financial year. In all cases I was able to agree the credit booked to the cashbook back to supporting documentation. This included:

- Z readings from the till in the restaurant or bar, and from there I checked income to paying in slip and to the bank account
- Grant award letters
- Credit note from electricity company
- Feed in tariff statement
- Invoices for room hire and functions

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I am satisfied that for all transactions tested I was able to agree the cashbook figure to supporting documentation. I will carry out more detailed work on till income as part of my interim audit in 23-24.

F - Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts; all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

The Council holds 2 petty cash balances, for the Council Office and for Luxfords Restaurant. I reviewed the count for November 2022, and was able to confirm the petty cash balances had been counted and reconciled to the SAGE accounting system, This was reviewed by a Councillor as part of the member audit, although the check was not completed until February 2023.

G- Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Staff costs per box 4 to the accounts were £674,686 (2021-22 £608,662).

Payroll is processed in house by the RFO using the Sage payroll package.

I confirmed that the accounts only include payments relating to employment of staff in box 4 to the accounts. I tested the February 2023 payroll. I agreed payroll payments per the cashbook back to the monthly payroll summary document. From there I selected 5 officers, and confirmed that the gross pay per the payroll summary agreed to hourly rate per JNC pay scales x contracted hours for the officer. I am satisfied that gross pay was calculated correctly.

I recommend that pay / scale point and contracted hours are confirmed by notification from the RFO, issued from the payroll system, whenever these are changed. This ensures that there is a clear record of pay for each officer on the payroll.

I checked the Council's HMRC account online – this confirmed that the Council is up to date with payroll taxes.

I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective.

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Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

H - Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Final Audit

Fixed assets per box 9 to the accounts were £ 6,621,504 (21-22 £6,621,504).

I have agreed the balance in the accounts back to the asset register. The asset register appears complete and to record assets at cost or proxy cost, as required by regulations. I checked arithmetic, and the accounts balance agrees to the assets listed on the asset register. There are no additions in 22-23 – I have confirmed with the Clerk, and none have been identified in my review of the cashbook

I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective.

I – Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Loans per box 10 to the accounts were £460,800 (21-22 £486,000)

This has been agreed to year end statements published on the Debt Management Office website.

Cash per box 8 to the accounts was £1,249,562 (21-22 £1,258,228)

I reperformed the year end bank reconciliation. For all bank accounts I was able to agree the balance on the bank reconciliation back to bank statements and cashbook balances recorded on Sage – details of work completed are set out below.

General Account	207,948	Agreed to sage and to bank statement . Reconciling item (Wellpay transactions) agreed to bank statement credit in May 23
Fixed Rate Bond	300000	Agreed to NatWest deposit confirmation letter, dated 26.7.22
Lloyds Bank	21067	agreed to bank confirmation statement at 31.3.23
Business Reserve	720,006	Agreed to sage and to bank statement 31.3.23
Petty cash UTC	117	agreed to count
Luxfords Petty Cash	224	agreed to count
Luxfords Float	200	agreed to count

1,249,562

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I confirmed that the General Account and Petty Cash Accounts are reconciled promptly on a monthly basis, by review of the bank reconciliation file. These reconciliations are also reviewed by Councillors on a regular basis – this is evidenced on members' audit checks.

It is recommended that monthly member audits should cover all bank account and deposit balances, with all bank reconciliations reviewed and signed off as reviewed on the face on the reconciliations and bank statement. This is a requirement of financial regulations

- 4.6 At least once a quarter and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and be noted by the Council. This can form part of the existing member audit procedures.

The Council has an investment strategy in place, as required by regulations. This was last reviewed at General Purposes Committee in January 2023.

I am satisfied that the Council met the requirements of this control objective.

J - Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Satisfactory – Uckfield has produced accounts on an accruals basis, it is required to do this is required as income / expenditure is in excess of £200k.

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective have been met.

K: If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.

- Not applicable, Council completed limited assurance review.

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L: The Authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements

Yes – the Council has published statutory documentation as required by the 2015 Transparency Code. The Council has an up to date website, and the 21-22 AGAR and external audit certificate can easily be located on the website. Minutes of Council meetings are published on the website and were up to date at the time of my audit. I specifically tested the following information, required by the Transparency Code, was available to view on the Council website:

- Expenditure. The Council lists bills paid each month on the website. This was up to date to the end of April 2023 at the time of my audit
- Grants . Grants awarded are listing on a webpage, Town Council Grants. This was up to date at the time of my audit, with grants paid in 22-23 listed on the website.

The Council may wish to streamline transparency reporting on the website to demonstrate full compliance with the Transparency Code. A template can be found at

[Transparency Information - Windlesham Parish Council \(windleshampc.gov.uk\)](http://windleshampc.gov.uk)

M - Arrangements for Inspection of Accounts

Inspection periods for 21-22 accounts were set as follows

Inspection - Key date	21-22 Actual
Accounts approved at Full Council	27 June
Date Inspection Notice Issued	28 June
Inspection period begins	29 June
Inspection period ends	9 August
Correct length	Yes

The Council met the requirements of this control objective.

N: Publication requirements 2021-22 AGAR

The Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the external audit certificate for 21-22 are published in document archive section of the Council website. The external audit certificate was clear. There are no matters to take into consideration in the 2022-23 accounts. The Conclusion of Audit certificate was published on 26 September, after the date of the audit certificate (22 September), and before the regulatory deadline of 30 September . The external audit certificate was reported to the meeting of Full Council on 17 October (minute 18.0).

The Council is required by regulations to publish AGAR documentation for the previous 5 years. I have checked the Council website, and I was able to view AGAR documentation going back to the 2017-18 financial year.

The Council met the requirements of this control objective.

O - Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

Satisfactory –The Council has confirmed to me that the Council is not sole trustee of a charity.

I would like to thank you for your assistance with the audit. I attach the internal audit report from the AGAR and my invoice, for your consideration. In the meantime, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at all.

I look forward to working with you again in 2023-24.

Yours sincerely



Mike Platten CPFA

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✉ mike@aprilskies.co.uk

Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Appendix A – Recommendations

Points Forward – Action Plan

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
The process of producing the annual return is complex, as the nominal code structure is not currently aligned with the requirements of the annual return.	I recommend that nominal codes are reviewed in the course of 23-24 with the aim of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing the number of nominal codes to ensure that only those needed for management accounting reports are maintained - Aligning the nominal code structure to the AGAR statement of accounts requirements, to reduce the level of manual intervention required to produce accounting statements. 	
Member audits	I recommend that this check should be completed within 28 days of each month end to any matters identified are rectified on a timely basis .	
Standing Orders and Direct Debits	Payments made by direct debit and standing order should be approved in an advance at a Council meeting.	
Utility meters are not always read in advance of direct debit payments leaving the Council's bank account.	All meters should be read monthly by council officers, and readings sent to the RFO ready to be checked against bills	
The Council should add the purchase orders module to the Sage accounting system.	Purchase orders should then be completed on line by budget managers as goods or services are ordered, and sent to suppliers by email. This will improve budget monitoring (by enabling commitment accounting) and will link all purchases to the accounting system at the point of ordering	

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April Skies

Accounting

<p>Fidelity cover may not be sufficient, this is set at £1 million. .</p>	<p>Given that Council bank balances regularly exceed this amount, I recommend that the insurer is contacted . The Council can then decide if it wishes to increase insurance cover</p>	
<p>I checked earmarked reserves back to the Sage balance sheet, as at 31.3.23. This check showed there are significant differences between the earmarked reserves on the spreadsheet reported to Council and the sage accounting system .</p>	<p>I therefore recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earmarked reserves on Sage are reviewed and journals posted to bring the reserve balances to levels reported to Council at 31.3.23 - Reserves are managed on the Sage accounting system going forward, and all reporting of reserves to Council should be based on Sage reports. 	
<p>I have 2 recommendations relating to budget monitoring:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The overall Council budget and balance sheet position should be reviewed by a Council committee (Full Council or Finance) on a quarterly basis. - The Council should move away from using spreadsheets for budget monitoring and should make use of budget monitoring modules in Sage. This may require nominal codes to be tidied and the budget monitoring module on Sage to be purchased. 	
<p>I recommend that pay / scale point and contracted hours are confirmed by notification from the RFO, issued from the payroll system, whenever these are changed.</p>	<p>This ensures that there is a clear record of pay for each officer on the payroll.</p>	

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April Skies

Accounting

Bank reconciliations	It is recommended that monthly member audits should cover all bank account and deposit balances, with all bank reconciliations reviewed and signed off as reviewed on the face on the reconciliations and bank statement. This is a requirement of financial regulations	
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Appendix B

Internal Audit Control Objectives – Marked as not covered

Control Objective	Area for Audit	Why this has not been audited
K	Exemption from limited assurance review	Council had limited assurance review in 22-23
O	Trust Funds	No trusts at this council

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Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/> PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

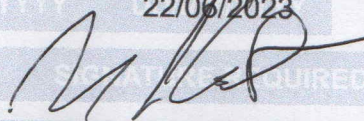
DD/MM/YYYY

DD/MM/YYYY

22/06/2023

MIKE PLATTEN CPFA INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

22/06/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Uckfield Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

ON SIGNATURE

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

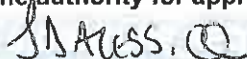
Uckfield Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,232,125	1,280,471	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	955,945	983,076	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	448,347	490,071	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	608,662	674,686	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	56,552	28,428	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	690,732	741,374	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,280,471	1,309,130	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,258,228	1,249,562	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	6,621,504	6,621,504	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	486,000	460,800	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date 22/06/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Uckfield Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ACCOMPANYING INFORMATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

INDEX

PAGE	CONTENTS
1	Variance analysis
2	Income Statement
4	Other Comprehensive Income
5	Statement of Financial Position
6	Earmarked Reserves note

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Comparison of income and expenditure in year with original budget

The following shows a comparison of the budget and outturn figures in 2022/23 analysed by the cost centres as disclosed on the Income and Expenditure account. The effect of depreciation and pension adjustments are excluded from this analysis.

	Budgeted £	Actual £	Variance £
Income			
Grants received	-	5,000	5,000
Furlough Grant - Civic Centre	-	-	-
Furlough Grant - Luxfords	-	-	-
Rental income, interest and investment income	184,515	204,948	20,433
Charges made for services	212,300	228,191	15,891
Other income or contributions	40,345	51,932	11,587
	<u>437,160</u>	<u>490,071</u>	<u>52,911</u>
Expenditure			
Direct service costs:			
Salaries and wages	214,118	365,979	151,861
Grant aid expenditure	54,500	41,333	(13,167)
Other direct service costs	533,522	595,023	61,501
Democratic, Management and Civic costs:			
Salaries and wages	273,993	308,707	34,714
Other democratic, management and civic costs	173,943	126,246	(47,697)
	<u>1,250,076</u>	<u>1,437,289</u>	<u>187,213</u>
Net expenditure	<u>812,916</u>	<u>947,216</u>	<u>134,300</u>
General Reserves	101,110	(8,079)	(109,189)
Earmarked Reserves*	69,050	43,939	(25,111)
Net charge to Precept	<u>983,076</u>	<u>983,076</u>	

*Earmarked Reserves is represented by £228,591 of income and £184,652 of costs. The net surplus is therefore £43,939.

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

	31.03.23 £	31.03.22 £
Income		
Precept	983,076	955,945
Grants received	5,000	15,000
Furlough Grant - Civic Centre	-	12,352
Furlough Grant - Luxfords	-	9,436
Rental income, interest and investment income	204,948	173,209
Charges made for services	228,191	181,229
Other income or contributions	51,932	57,122
	<u>1,473,147</u>	<u>1,404,293</u>
Expenditure		
Direct service costs:		
Salaries and wages	365,979	332,386
Grant aid expenditure	41,333	56,150
Other direct service costs	595,023	528,765
	<u>1,002,335</u>	<u>917,301</u>
Democratic, Management and Civic costs:		
Salaries and wages	308,707	276,276
Other democratic, management and civic costs	126,246	128,169
Depreciation	88,043	103,002
Net pension costs	125,000	(145,000)
	<u>647,997</u>	<u>362,447</u>
Net operating surplus/(deficit) for year	<u>(177,183)</u>	<u>124,545</u>
Statutory charge for capital	(19,200)	(25,200)
Reversal of annual depreciation charge	88,043	103,002
Capital expenditure from the General Fund	-	-
Pension fund adjustment	125,000	(145,000)
Net transfer from/(to) Earmarked Reserves	(43,939)	(49,734)
Net surplus/(deficit) for year	<u>(27,279)</u>	<u>7,613</u>

The lines regarding net pension interest cost and depreciation are required to be recorded for accounting purposes, but do not impact on the level of Council precept

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Trade operations

The totals shown in the Income and Expenditure account include the following trading operations relating to the Luxfords restaurant, Uckfield Civic Centre:

	31.03.23	31.03.22
	£	£
Income	191,974	152,927
Expenditure	242,690	181,389
Net surplus/(deficit)	<u>(50,716)</u>	<u>(28,462)</u>

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

	31.03.23	31.03.22
	£	£
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(177,183)	124,545
Re-measurements related to pensions	820,000	134,000
	<u>642,817</u>	<u>258,545</u>

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

	31.03.23 £	31.03.22 £
Fixed Assets		
Land and buildings	4,378,269	4,443,167
Vehicles and plant	99,856	123,001
	<u>4,478,125</u>	<u>4,566,168</u>
Current Assets		
Stocks	3,925	3,584
Debtors	70,991	49,100
Cash at bank and in hand	1,249,562	1,258,228
	<u>1,324,479</u>	<u>1,310,912</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	33,351	30,441
Current portion of long term debt	19,200	25,200
	<u>52,551</u>	<u>55,640.96</u>
Net current assets	<u>1,271,928</u>	<u>1,255,271</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>5,750,052</u>	<u>5,821,439</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		
Long term borrowing	441,600	460,800
	<u>441,600</u>	<u>460,800</u>
Pension Liability/(Asset)	(23,000)	672,000
Total assets less liabilities	<u>5,331,453</u>	<u>4,688,639</u>
Reserves		
Capital Receipts Reserve	15,795	15,795
Revaluations Reserve	569,173	569,173
Pensions Reserve	23,000	(672,000)
Capital Financing Account	3,430,152	3,498,995
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	815,057	771,118
General Fund	478,278	505,558
	<u>5,331,453</u>	<u>4,688,639</u>

These financial statements were approved on _____.

Cllr. J. Love
Town Mayor

Sarah D'Alessio
Responsible Financial Officer

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
EARMARKED RESERVES NOTE TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023**

	1 April 2022	Contribution to reserves	Contribution from reserves	31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£
Allotment Fencing	3,824		(3,698)	126
Boothland Wood	500			500
Browns Lane Rockery Plants	-			-
Building Maintenance Fund	232,879	80,300	(53,807)	259,372
CCTV Replacement Programme	-			-
Cemetery Enhancemnet	8,300			8,300
Chapels Maintenance Programme	-			-
Civic Centre Booking System	8,000			8,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	40,237	11,798	(25,085)	26,950
Consultants - Town Centre	120,300		(45,000)	75,300
Data Protection	1,680		(55)	1,625
Dementia Training	725		(28)	697
Elections	26,962	5,000	(4,611)	27,351
HMLNR Donation	665			665
HMLNR & WPLNR Supporters group donation	-			-
Hughes Way Play Area Donation	-			-
Joint Committee Master Plan Work	50,000			50,000
Library Way Re-imbusement	-			-
Litter Bins	1,708			1,708
Luxfords Refurbishment	-			-
LuxfordsNew Microwave	-			-
Notice boards	-			-
New equipment/New cricket Mower	-			-
Old Timber Lane Maintenance	16,500	250		16,750
Picnic Tables	-			-
Play area enhancements	10,000	1,525		11,525
Play ground fencing	-			-
Professional Fees	3,497			3,497
Public Conveniences	30,000			30,000
Playing fields & Pitches	5,259			5,259
Ranger equipment budget	-			-
Renewal/Upgrading Notice Boards	2,512		(1,374)	1,138
Re-surface Osborn Hall Car Park	3,658			3,658
Ridgewood Car Park Re-surface	16,885	11,000		27,885
Carried forward totals	584,091	109,873	(133,658)	560,306

Continued

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
EARMARKED RESERVES NOTE TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023**

	1 April 2022	Contribution to reserves	Contribution from reserves	31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward totals	584,091	109,873	(133,658)	560,306
Ridgewood Recreation Ground levelling	2,493			2,493
Seats, Signage for Tennis Courts	595			595
Section 106 Agreements	17,909			17,909
Signal Box Ext/Internal Maintenance	6,280		(1,058)	5,222
Skatepark Peripheral Area	2,542			2,542
Speed Reduction	3,200			3,200
Street Furniture Donation	1,200			1,200
Street Furniture repair/replace	1,431		(995)	436
Street Light Repairs	-			-
Street Light Timers/column inspections	1,856			1,856
Street Light Replacemnr SOX Lanterns	8,000	2,500		10,500
Telephone boxes	-			-
Training	724			724
Trees	4,701			4,701
Tree planting	-	718		718
Twinning Hospitality	133			133
Upgrading of IT Systems & Equipment	-			-
Vehicle replacement	10,000	5,000		15,000
Weald Hall Floor	55,500	5,000		60,500
Weald Hall Replacement Backdrops	-	2,500	(760)	1,741
Weald on field	-			-
White Rails Improvements	1,200			1,200
West Park Pavilion Scheme	45,000			45,000
Climate Change Initiatives	5,700			5,700
ESCC Verge Cutting Contribution	9			9
Covid Memorial Bench	300			300
General Power of Competence	250			250
Green Projects	18,000			18,000
262 Saturday Bus Service	3			3
Ash Dieback		25,000	(18,859)	6,141
Streetlighting repairs		25,000	(9,322)	15,678
Upgrading Victoria Pleasure Ground facilities		10,000		10,000
Future land expansion - Snatts Rd & HMLNR		2,000		2,000
Foresters New Front Doors		500		500
Luxfords New Dishwasher		500		500
Civic Centre Lift Upgrade		5,000		5,000
New Major Contoura Mower		20,000	(20,000)	-
Climate Change Carbon emission projects		10,000		10,000
Ridgewood Water Course Maintenance		5,000		5,000
	771,118	228,591	(184,652)	815,057



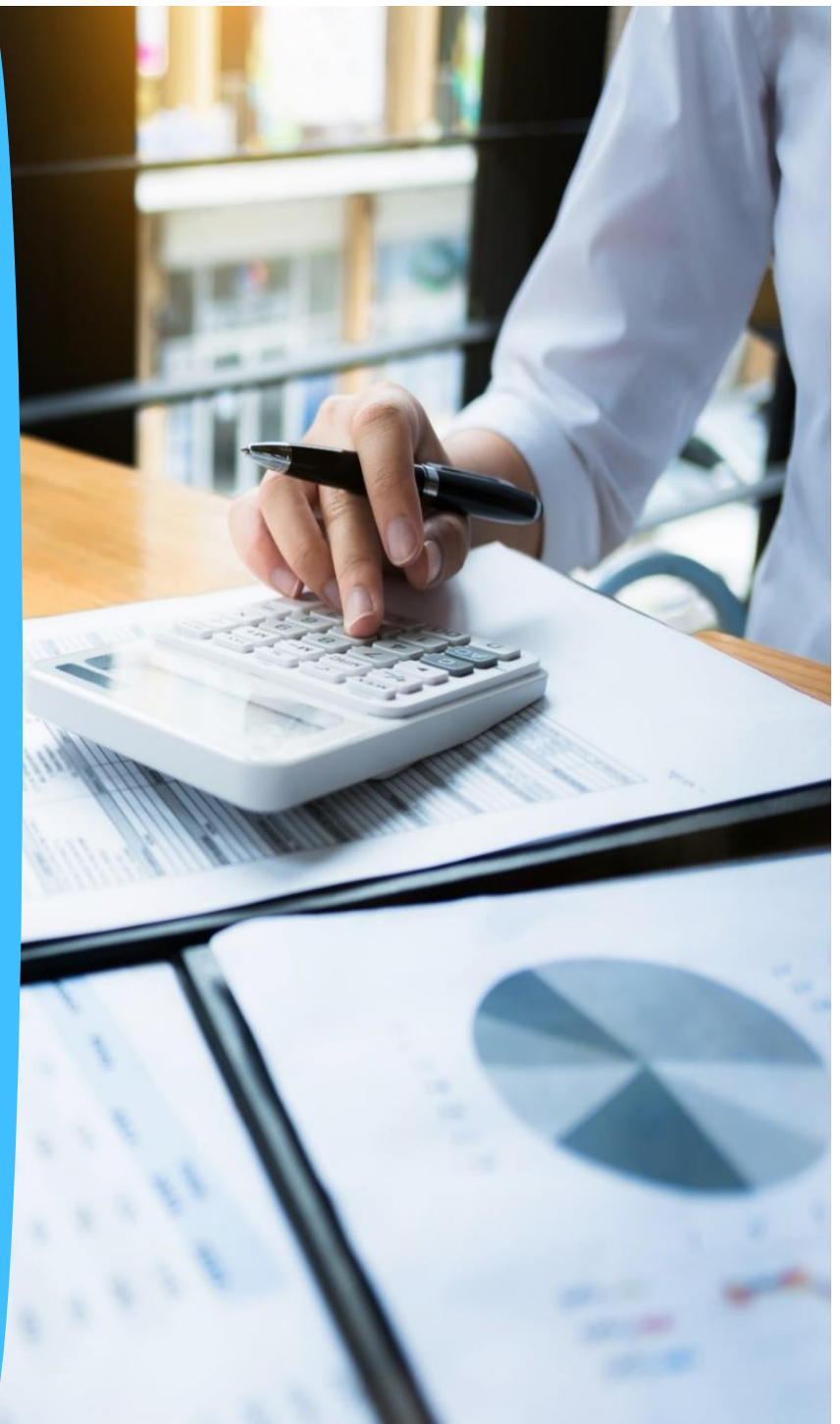
**BARNETT
WADDINGHAM**
beyond the expected

East Sussex County Council Pension Fund

(00X3X) Uckfield Town Council

FRS102 Report as at 31 March 2023

12 May 2023



Introduction

We have been instructed by East Sussex County Council, the administering authority to the East Sussex County Council Pension Fund (the Fund), to undertake pension expense calculations in respect of pension benefits provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme (the LGPS) to employees of Uckfield Town Council (the Employer) as at 31 March 2023. We have taken account of current LGPS Regulations, as amended, as at the date of this report.

This report is addressed to the Employer and its advisers; in particular, this report is likely to be of relevance to the Employer's auditor.

The LGPS is a defined benefit statutory scheme administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and currently provides benefits based on career average revalued earnings. Full details of the benefits being valued are as set out in the Regulations and summarised on the LGPS website (www.lgpsregs.org/) and the Fund's membership booklet (www.lgpsmember.org/).

The Pension Fund Committee oversees the management of the Fund whilst the day to day fund administration is undertaken by a team within the administering authority. Where appropriate some functions are delegated to the Fund's professional advisers.

This report is prepared in accordance with our understanding of FRS102 and complies with Technical Actuarial Standard 100: Principles for Technical Actuarial Work (TAS 100).

The figures disclosed are in respect of the Employer's pension obligations under the LGPS as at 31 March 2023.

This report should be read in conjunction with the post accounting date briefing note for disclosures as at 31 March 2023.

FRS102 also requires the disclosure of any other employer provided pension benefits which are not paid from the Fund itself. We have only valued such additional liabilities, which would not be covered in the formal LGPS valuation, to the extent that they have been notified to us and are as disclosed in the data section of this report.

We would be pleased to answer any questions arising from this report.



Barry McKay FFA
Partner

Additional notes

We have not included the impact of any asset ceiling, but can do so if the Employer wishes to restrict the surplus within this accounting disclosure.

Data used

We have used the following items of data which we received from the administering authority:

Results of the latest funding valuation as at	31 March 2022
Results of the previous FRS102 report as at	31 March 2022
Fund asset statement as at	31 March 2023
Fund income and expenditure items to	31 March 2023
Employer income and expenditure items to	31 March 2023
Details of any new unreduced early retirement payments to	20 March 2023
Details of any settlements to/from the Employer for the period to	31 March 2023

The data has been checked for reasonableness and we are happy that the data is sufficient for the purposes of our advice.

Although some estimation of the data to the accounting date may be required, we do not believe it is likely to be material to the results in this report.

We are not aware of any material changes or events since we received the data.

Employer membership statistics

The table below summarises the membership data at 31 March 2022 for members receiving funded benefits.

Member data summary	Number	Salaries/Pensions £000s	Average age
Actives	22	425	48
Deferred pensioners	9	24	55
Pensioners	11	74	68

Employer payroll

The total pensionable payroll and projected payroll for the Employer is set out below and is based on information provided to us by the administering authority. This has been used to calculate the service cost and projected service cost respectively.

Estimated payroll for the year to 31 March 2023	£499,000
Projected payroll for the year to 31 March 2024	£499,000

Scheduled contributions

The table below summarises the minimum employer contributions due from the Employer to the Fund over this inter-valuation period. The Employer may pay further amounts at any time. Future contributions may be adjusted on a basis approved by us.

The calculated cost of accrual of future benefits is 21.4% of payroll p.a.

Minimum employer contributions due for the period beginning	1 Apr 2023	1 Apr 2024	1 Apr 2025
Percent of payroll	20.1%	20.1%	20.1%
plus monetary amount (£000s)	-	-	-

Funding approach

#N/A

Assets

The return on the Fund (on a bid value to bid value basis) for the year to 31 March 2023 is calculated to be -2.75% based on the Fund asset statements and Fund cashflows as set out in the Data section above.

The Employer's share of the assets of the Fund is approximately 0.06%.

The estimated asset allocation for the Employer at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022 is as follows (noting that due to rounding they may not total 100%):

Asset breakdown	31 Mar 2023		31 Mar 2022	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Equities	1,947	71%	2,134	74%
Bonds	335	12%	466	16%
Property	443	16%	242	8%
Cash	33	1%	56	2%
Total	2,758	100%	2,898	100%

Actuarial methods and assumptions

Details of the actuarial methods and derivation of the assumptions used can be found in the 31 March 2023 briefing note issued alongside this report unless noted otherwise below. The key assumptions used are set out below.

Financial assumptions	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2022	31 Mar 2021
	p.a.	p.a.	p.a.
Discount rate	4.80%	2.60%	2.00%
Pension increases (CPI)	2.85%	3.20%	2.80%
Salary increases	2.85%	3.20%	2.80%

In addition, we have allowed for actual pension increases up to and including the 2023 Pension Increase Order. This is reflected in the Experience loss/(gain) on defined benefit obligation figure in the results. We have also allowed for actual CPI inflation experienced from September 2022 to March 2023.

We have adopted a set of demographic assumptions that are consistent with those used for the most recent Fund valuation, which was carried out as at 31 March 2022. These assumptions have been updated from those adopted at the last accounting date. Details of the post retirement mortality assumption are set out below; further details of the demographic assumptions adopted can be found in the briefing note corresponding to this report, and the Fund's actuarial valuation report.

Post retirement mortality	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2022
Base table	Club Vita tables	Club Vita tables
Future improvements model	CMI_2021	CMI_2020
Long-term rate of improvement	1.25% p.a.	1.25% p.a.
Smoothing parameter	7.0	7.0
Initial addition parameter (M/F)	0.0% p.a.	0.5%/0.25% p.a.
2020 weight parameter	5%	25%
2021 weight parameter	5%	n/a

The assumed life expectancies, based on the assumptions set out above, are set out in the table below:

Life expectancy from age 65 (years)		31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2022
Retiring today	Males	21.1	21.2
	Females	24.1	23.8
Retiring in 20 years	Males	22.2	22.0
	Females	25.6	25.1

Employer duration

The estimated duration of the Employer as at the accounting date, using the assumptions set out above is 18 years.

Past service costs

Past service costs arise as a result of introduction or withdrawal of, or changes to, member benefits. For example, an award of additional discretionary benefits to a member such as added years by a member would be considered a past service cost. We are not aware of any additional benefits which were granted over the year ending 31 March 2023.

Curtailments

Over the year, we understand no employees were permitted by the Employer to take unreduced early retirement that they would not otherwise have been entitled to.

Settlements

We are not aware of any liabilities being settled at a cost materially different to the accounting reserve during the year.

Results

Balance sheet	As at 31 Mar 2023	As at 31 Mar 2022	As at 31 Mar 2021
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Net pension asset in the statement of financial position			
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	2,735	3,570	3,512
Fair value of Fund assets (bid value)	2,758	2,898	2,561
Deficit / (Surplus)	(23)	672	951
Present value of unfunded obligation	-	-	-
Unrecognised past service cost	-	-	-
Impact of asset ceiling	-	-	-
Net defined benefit liability / (asset)	(23)	672	951
The amounts recognised in the profit and loss statement	Year to 31 Mar 2023	Year to 31 Mar 2022	
	£000s	£000s	
Service cost	210	176	
Net interest on the defined liability / (asset)	16	18	
Administration expenses	2	2	
Total loss / (profit)	228	196	
Remeasurement of the net assets / (defined liability) in other comprehensive income	Year to 31 Mar 2023	Year to 31 Mar 2022	
	£000s	£000s	
Return on Fund assets in excess of interest	(156)	247	
Other actuarial gains / (losses) on assets	(75)	-	
Change in financial assumptions	1,816	143	
Change in demographic assumptions	(112)	-	
Experience gain / (loss) on defined benefit obligation	(653)	(9)	
Changes in effect of asset ceiling	-	-	
Remeasurement of the net assets / (defined liability)	820	381	

Reconciliation of opening & closing balances of the present value of the defined benefit obligation	Year to 31 Mar 2023 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2022 £000s
Opening defined benefit obligation	3,570	3,512
Current service cost	210	176
Interest cost	92	70
Change in financial assumptions	(1,816)	(143)
Change in demographic assumptions	112	-
Experience loss/(gain) on defined benefit obligation	653	9
Liabilities assumed / (extinguished) on settlements	-	-
Estimated benefits paid net of transfers in	(117)	(80)
Past service costs, including curtailments	-	-
Contributions by Scheme participants and other employers	31	26
Unfunded pension payments	-	-
Closing defined benefit obligation	2,735	3,570

The experience loss/(gain) on the defined benefit obligation includes £334,000 in respect of the allowance for actual pensions increases and CPI inflation over the accounting period.

Reconciliation of opening & closing balances of the fair value of Fund assets	Year to 31 Mar 2023 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2022 £000s
Opening fair value of Fund assets	2,898	2,561
Interest on assets	76	52
Return on assets less interest	(156)	247
Other actuarial gains/(losses)	(75)	-
Administration expenses	(2)	(2)
Contributions by employer including unfunded	103	94
Contributions by Scheme participants and other employers	31	26
Estimated benefits paid plus unfunded net of transfers in	(117)	(80)
Settlement prices received / (paid)	-	-
Closing Fair value of Fund assets	2,758	2,898

Sensitivity analysis	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adjustment to discount rate	+0.5%	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.5%
Present value of total obligation	2,521	2,690	2,735	2,781	2,979
Projected service cost	81	92	95	98	112
Adjustment to long term salary increase	+0.5%	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.5%
Present value of total obligation	2,755	2,739	2,735	2,731	2,716
Projected service cost	96	95	95	95	95
Adjustment to pension increase and deferred revaluation	+0.5%	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.5%
Present value of total obligation	2,963	2,778	2,735	2,693	2,535
Projected service cost	112	98	95	92	81
Adjustment to life expectancy assumptions		+1 Year	None		- 1 Year
Present value of total obligation		2,838	2,735		2,636
Projected service cost		99	95		92

Projected pension expense

Year to
31 Mar 2024
£000s

Service cost	95
Net interest on the defined liability / (asset)	(4)
Administration expenses	2
Total loss / (profit)	93
Employer contributions	100

These projections are based on the assumptions as at 31 March 2023, as described earlier in this report. The figures exclude the capitalised cost of any early retirements or augmentations which may occur after 31 March 2023.

Meeting of Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item No 13.0

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

1.0 Summary

1.1 The report details the current list of direct debit payments set up with suppliers.

2.0 Details

2.1 The following table shows the current list of companies we have set up to be paid by direct debit and a description of supply.

Supplier Name	Description
Acuity Professional Partnership LLP	Accountants
British Telecom	Utilities – Broadband
Scottish Water/Business Stream	Utilities – Water
CF Corporate Finance Ltd	Lease rental – Photocopier
Focus Group	Utilities – Telephone
Harvey's Brewery	Luxfords Supplier
Investec Asset Finance PLC	Telephone Lease Rental
Long Man Brewery	Luxfords Supplier
NatWest Bank	Credit Card Payments
Public Work Loan Board	Loan Repayments
SAGE Software Ltd	Software Subscription
Shell Fuelcard Services	Grounds Maintenance Vehicles
SSE PLC	Utilities – Electric & Gas
Wealden District Council	Rates
WorldPay	Credit Card
WPA Health	NHS Top-up Scheme

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Sarah D'Alessio

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item No. 14.0

TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DUNCAN BENNETT

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out a motion submitted by Councillor Duncan Bennett in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

2.0 The motion for consideration

2.1 Councillor Bennett gave written notice of the following motion which was received on 9 June 2023 and before the required deadline:-

2.2 *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.

2.3 It has since been advised that Uckfield College would support the installation of a pedestrian crossing.

2.4 It has also been advised that the request should be directed to the Road Safety Team at East Sussex County Council. This does not fall within the remit of East Sussex Highways.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to consider the motion and advise the Clerk accordingly.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item 15.0

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

1.0. Background

- 1.1. As many of the Town Council members will be aware, the Interim Executive Board of Holy Cross Primary School wrote to the Secretary of State in March 2023, to propose the closure of the primary school on 31 August 2023.
- 1.2. The school had been experiencing difficulties for some years and after a number of avenues had been exhausted, they sadly put forward a proposal to recommend its closure.
- 1.3. In March 2023, there were only 34 pupils still being educated at the school. We do not have the latest figures for June 2023.
- 1.4. On 22 May 2023, the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability gave approval for a consultation to take place on a proposal to close Holy Cross CE Primary School with effect from 31 December 2023.
- 1.5. We understand that the attached consultation document has been shared with parents, and other local primary schools. This consultation would require individual response, but it is questioned whether Uckfield Town Council should also provide an overall response on behalf of the town.

2.0. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are asked to consider if they wish to prepare a response to the consultation before the deadline on 21 July 2023.

Appendices: Appendix A: Consultation document on proposed closure of Holy Cross Primary School on 31 December 2023

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Holy Cross CE Primary School Closure Consultation



Consultation document for pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, and other stakeholders

East Sussex County Council is proposing to close Holy Cross CE Primary School on 31 December 2023

PART ONE

Introduction

East Sussex County Council (the local authority) has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet demand and is committed to working in close partnership with schools, academy trusts, dioceses, and key partners to ensure that the supply of school places across East Sussex is in the right location, is of sufficient size, is viable and of good quality.

We know that schools can face challenges in meeting pupils' needs, particularly where pupil numbers are falling, and that in some cases, changes to the pattern of school organisation in an area can help secure the viability of schools, improve opportunities, and raise standards.

On 22 May 2023 the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability gave approval for a consultation to take place on a proposal to close Holy Cross CE Primary School with effect from 31 December 2023.

This consultation document is for pupils, parents and carers, staff, members of the Interim Executive Board, the local school community, and other stakeholders. We welcome your views on the proposal. The local authority will consider all the views put forward during the consultation period before a decision is taken on whether to proceed with the statutory process to close the school.

PART TWO

Background to the proposal

Holy Cross CE Primary School is a Voluntary Aided (VA) school located in Uckfield. It has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 and capacity for 210 pupils.

In recent years, the school has faced many challenges relating to leadership, retention of staff, quality of provision and low pupil numbers which, despite significant support from both the local authority and the Diocese of Chichester (the diocese), it has not been able to overcome. As a result, the school is considered extremely vulnerable. The challenges are set out in more detail below.

Pupil numbers

The school has experienced a reduction in its popularity in the local community for some years. This is illustrated in Table 1 which shows the number of first preferences received by the school in the last seven years against its PAN of 30.

Table 1

Holy Cross CE Primary School	Year R first preferences						
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yr R first preferences	6	9	11	8	10	11	7

Source: Admissions data

This reduction in popularity has led to falling pupil numbers going back over a decade. Table 2 illustrates the level of pupil number decline in the last ten years, a fall of 62 pupils, or 50%.

Table 2

Holy Cross CE Primary School	Primary capacity and primary total number on roll									
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Primary capacity	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210
Primary total NOR	124	126	117	106	110	105	84	77	76	62
Surplus places	86	84	93	104	100	105	126	133	134	148
Surplus places %	41%	40%	44%	50%	48%	50%	60%	63%	64%	70%

Source: January school censuses

In recent months the school has lost further pupils, linked to the leadership challenges the school has faced and the high turnover of teaching staff. At the time of writing, pupil numbers had fallen to 24, meaning there are 186 surplus places in the school (89% of capacity). Only seven first preference applications were received by the school for a place in Reception in September 2023. This reduced to two following withdrawals from five families. Two places were allocated on National Offer Day; given the uncertain future faced by the school, the families were also offered places at alternative schools should they wish to accept them instead.

Demand for places in Uckfield and the surrounding area

Births in Uckfield have fallen significantly in recent years, from 189 in-area births in 2011/12 to 137 in 2020/21. This has resulted in low pupil numbers in the town, with historically popular schools carrying surplus places.

At the January 2023 school census, there were 1,053 children on roll across the five primary schools in Uckfield, with surplus capacity standing at 16%. Table 3 illustrates this.

Table 3

Uckfield primary schools	Primary capacity and primary total number on roll							
	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Year group capacity	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	1260
Year group NOR	138	146	159	157	160	134	159	1053
Surplus places	42	34	21	23	20	46	21	207
Surplus places %	23%	19%	12%	13%	11%	26%	12%	16%

Source: January 2023 school census

Uckfield schools: Harlands Primary School, Holy Cross CE Primary School, Manor Primary School, Rocks Park Primary School, St Philip's Catholic Primary School

At the same time, there was 14% surplus capacity in the rural primary schools surrounding Uckfield, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Rural primary schools near Uckfield	Primary capacity and primary total number on roll							
	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Year group capacity	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	630
Year group NOR	59	72	82	83	94	76	80	546
Surplus places	31	18	8	7	0	14	10	88
Surplus places %	34%	20%	9%	8%	0%	16%	11%	14%

Source: January 2023 school census

Surrounding rural schools: Bonners CE Primary School, Buxted CE Primary School, Fletching CE Primary School, Framfield CE Primary School, Little Horsted CE Primary School

Pupil forecasts in the local authority's [School Organisation Plan 2022 to 2026](#) indicate that intakes to Reception in Uckfield schools will remain low in the forthcoming years, with surplus capacity in the town expected to reach 21% by 2025/26.

Quality of education

The school has struggled to secure good outcomes for pupils over time, this is reflected in the grades received in Ofsted Inspections, described below.

- 2006 - Full Inspection - Satisfactory
- 2009 - Full Inspection - Satisfactory
- 2013 - Full Inspection - Requires Improvement
- 2015 - Full Inspection - Requires Improvement
- 2017 - Full Inspection - Good
- 2022 - Ofsted completed a 'Section 8' or ungraded inspection having previously judged the school to be Good during the graded or full inspection in 2017. The Section 8 inspection found that *'There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection'*.

As a result of the falling pupil numbers, the school has had to reorganise its class structure since the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year. Having started the year with three classes, there are now only two classes, for Reception to Year 2 and Years 3 to 6. This, together with the significant turnover of teaching staff has impacted on the quality and consistency of education. This is a major concern to both the diocese and the local authority which has provided significant resources to support the school in terms of additional financial resources and officer capacity, particularly around leadership, additional support for teaching, safeguarding and support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

School leadership

In recent years the school has experienced several changes of leadership and, therefore, a lack of stability in this area. The last substantive headteacher left on 31 December 2021. At that point, the then governing board approached the local authority for support with interim leadership. An interim leader was deployed to the school, full time, from January 2022. A number of different and temporary leadership arrangements were subsequently put in place at the school between November 2022 and February 2023. Additional leadership capacity is currently being provided to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to support the school and the vulnerable families throughout this turbulent time. Due to the falling roll at the school and the increasing pressure on the budget, the school cannot now afford a substantive full-time headteacher.

The local authority issued a warning notice to the governing board in February 2023 pursuant to s. 60 (2) b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended) because '*there has been a long term, serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance*'. In responding to the warning notice, the governing board concluded that the right course of action was for the local authority to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) to appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to replace the governing board. Governors took this decision having explored all the options available to secure the sustainability of the school and to ensure that appropriate support was in place to oversee the next steps for the school. The local authority applied to the DfE in February 2023 for an IEB, which was approved by the DfE's Regional Director.

Interim Executive Board

In March 2023, the IEB met to review the due diligence undertaken by the previous governing board and consider the current situation of the school. Taking into account these findings, the subsequent further drop in pupil numbers, the challenges around recruitment and the quality of provision, the IEB agreed that the school is no longer viable and cannot meet the needs of its children and should therefore close.

On 21 March 2023, the IEB wrote to the Secretary of State for Education asking that the local authority be directed to close the school on 31 August 2023. The DfE's Regional Director responded to the IEB on 30 March 2023 stating:

'The evidence you have presented clearly indicates the belief of the Interim Executive Board, East Sussex County Council and The Diocese of Chichester that closure of the school is in the best interests of the children who attend the school and the wider community. Your report highlights concerns about leadership and the quality of education which have been exacerbated by rapidly falling pupil numbers. The low number of pupils in the school is unlikely to recover and as a result there is little likelihood that a Multi Academy Trust would be willing to support the school.'

However, the Regional Director did not agree to the IEB's request to issue a direction to close the school as the DfE stated it was for the local authority to take forward a statutory closure process if it considers the school to be unviable. On 26 April 2023, the IEB considered the Regional Director's response and wrote to both the local authority and the diocese requesting that the local authority should follow a statutory process to close the school.

Alternative options to closure

The local authority and the diocese have supported the school to try to identify a long term solution for the school without success. The low pupil numbers and the resulting significant impact this has on its budget means that the school is not an attractive proposition for school partners. This can be evidenced by some of the options we have explored:

- Brokering a school improvement partnership with the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) with a view to the school joining the multi academy trust. This proved unsuccessful as DCAT concluded that the school was not viable.
- Supporting the school to explore partnership with a local church school. This again proved unsuccessful as the proposed partner school decided that there were too many challenges, including financial viability, to partner with the school.
- Supporting the school to explore joining another local federation. This again proved unsuccessful as the proposed federation similarly decided that there were too many challenges, including financial viability, to partner with the school.
- The diocese has supported the governing board to explore academy trust options with all existing Diocese of Chichester academy trusts, however, all the trusts expressed concern about the school's financial viability and subsequent impact on their own trusts. The falling numbers on roll and the impact this has on the school's budget has meant that the school is simply not attractive to academy trusts or other school partners.

At the current time all alternative options to closure have therefore been considered unless the consultation raises any other option. Unfortunately, the local authority and the diocese believe there are no other viable options available to the school.

Admissions and transport arrangements

Should Holy Cross CE Primary School close on 31 December 2023, parents and carers of children at the school would be able to express a preference for a place at an alternative school. Parents and carers would be asked to complete an admissions application form and to name up to three schools they would prefer their child/ren to attend. Parents and carers would be offered a school place either at one of their preferred schools named on the application form or, if this is not possible, at the nearest school to the child's home where a place is available. We would try to meet parents and carers preferences wherever possible but cannot guarantee to do so. The allocation of places would be made in line with the admissions policy as set out in the school admissions booklet which is available on the East Sussex website at:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/admissions/>

Free home to school transport would only be provided for eligible pupils who meet the criteria set out in the link below.

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/transport/>

For information about which schools have spare places and whether your child/ren would qualify for free home to school transport please contact the admissions and transport team on 0300 330 9472.

PART THREE

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013

In accordance with Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, there is a defined statutory process which local authorities must follow when proposing to close a maintained school. There are five stages to the statutory process:

Consultation

The publication of this consultation document marks a period of consultation during which the views of interested parties are sought and which will be considered by the local authority.

The local authority is consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, members of the IEB, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups and organisations including early years providers, the district and town councils, the local MP and the Church of England and Catholic dioceses.

The consultation period runs from 9 June to 21 July 2023. Following the consultation period, a report on the outcome of the consultation will be considered by the local authority's Lead Member for Education, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disability at a decision making meeting on 11 September 2023. The Lead Member will decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

Publication

If approval is given to proceed with the proposal, the local authority would publish a statutory proposal relating to the proposed closure. This would likely happen in September 2023.

Representation

Publication of a statutory proposal would trigger a period of representation which must last for a period of four weeks. During this period, any person or organisation may object to or comment on the proposal by sending their representations to the local authority.

Decision

The local authority must make a decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. The Lead Member would consider any responses received during the representation period before making a final decision on the proposal at a meeting likely to be held in November 2023.

Implementation

If the proposal is approved, Holy Cross CE Primary School would close on 31 December 2023.

PART FOUR

How you can give your views

The consultation period runs from 9 June to 21 July 2023.

You can give your views by:

- Completing the online survey on the local authority's [consultation hub](#)
- Emailing the local authority at: school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Attending a meeting for parents and carers at the school on Wednesday 21 June 2023 from 6pm to 7pm.

All comments must be received by **21 July 2023**, or they cannot be considered.

If you need this information in a different format or language, or you would like help to complete the survey please contact us at school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk

Please submit only one response per person to this consultation

This consultation forms stage one of the process required when a school closure is proposed. The information provided in this document is intended to be sufficient for people to form a view on the proposal. The local authority will consider views and concerns raised during the consultation period before making a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

We will not be able to acknowledge written responses or enter into correspondence with interested parties during or after the consultation period.

Holy Cross CE Primary School Closure Consultation



Our proposal is to close Holy Cross CE Primary School on 31 December 2023.

The local authority would welcome your views on the proposal. The consultation period finishes on 21 July 2023.

1. Do you support the proposal to close Holy Cross CE Primary School on 31 December 2023?

Yes

No

Undecided

2. If Holy Cross CE Primary School was to close, how would this directly impact on you and your family?

3. Please let us know if you have any alternative suggestions on how we should address the significant challenges the school faces, as set out in the document.

4. Which of the following best describes you?

- Pupil at Holy Cross CE Primary School
- Parent/carer of a child at Holy Cross CE Primary School
- Member of staff at Holy Cross CE Primary School
- Member of the IEB at Holy Cross CE Primary School
- Parent/carer of a child at a local school
- Member of staff at a local school
- Governor at a local school
- Other (please say)

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item 16.0

TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OUTSIDE BODY: WEALDEN FOOD PARTNERSHIP (ADVISORY GROUP)

1.0. Outside Bodies

- 1.1. Further to the appointments made to outside bodies at the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 15 May 2023, the Town Council office has since been approached by 3VA and asked to provide representation at their Wealden Food Advisory Group.
- 1.2. This advisory group will form part of the governance of the Wealden Food Partnership, and help to push forward and advise on elements of the agreed action plan that the Food Partnership have in place.
- 1.3. The Advisory Group met in May and they identified that it would be helpful to have elected members representing the local communities, on the group. The Partnership already has representation from local foodbanks, community fridges, farmers, and other groups across Wealden.
- 1.4. We have already received interest from one Town Councillor, and will be asking full Council for any nominations to be put forward, before a vote is taken on the member(s) to be appointed.

2.0. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are required to appoint a maximum of two representatives (one and one substitute) to the Wealden Food Advisory Group.

Appendices: Appendix A: Information on the Wealden Food Partnership
 Appendix B: Action Plan

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

APPENDIX A

Wealden Food Partnership

Wealden Food Partnerships is a collaboration of organisations and individuals who come together to focus on all elements of the food system including food insecurity & food poverty, food waste and re-distribution, education, community food, farming, growing, processing, production and climate change.

Information gleaned at partnership network meetings, and face to face discussions, is helping to develop a plan of action with priorities decided by partners.

These include:

- Developing a website and online directory so that anyone can know what is happening in Wealden.
- Building connections between schools and farmers to improve food education in schools, for example 'twinning' schools and farms.
- Promoting and sharing resources for education sessions on key topics, for example food growing, cooking using little energy, using seasonal produce, reducing food waste, healthy, cheap and quick recipes, etc.
- Advocating for Councils to invest in longer-term, unrestricted funding for community services that we know work.
- Applying for and distributing funding across local community services that may not have the capacity to apply themselves.
- Support emergency food providers to introduce more sustainable and dignified models, for example food cooperatives/community supermarkets.
- Hosting events and opportunities for farmers, growers, producers, manufacturers and retailers to meet.
- Advocating for better processing and storage infrastructure locally, for example abattoirs, milk vending machines.
- Advocating for investment in a food hub, for collection and distribution of surplus food, alongside community services.
- Identify and respond to community food needs; developing one-stop shop models such as food co-operatives and/or community supermarkets
- Address distribution issues for farmers and growers to connect with their communities
- Offer support and shared experiences across the network
- Develop events and workshops around specialisms such as education and skills, farming and growing, volunteer development, fundraising support
- Support local and national campaigns such as Universal Free School Meals

APPENDIX B

Wealden Food Partnership Action Plan 2023-24

Food Culture & Connection

- Developing & maintaining an up-to-date mailing list and shared contact details so partners can speak to each other.
- Developing an online directory so that anyone can know what is happening in Wealden. This can be fast tracked by combining existing directories, e.g. Green Transition Crowborough's.
- Developing a Wealden Food Partnership website linked to above
- Sharing case studies through blogs and social media to promote businesses and share effective practice.
- Building connections between schools and farmers to improve food education in schools, for example twinning schools and farms. Link to the Country Trust and learn from existing programmes run by farms.
- Promoting and sharing resources for education sessions on key topics, for example food growing, cooking using little energy, using seasonal produce, reducing food waste, healthy, cheap and quick recipes, etc. Could be held as symposiums or events.

Food Inequality & Health

- Providing centralised volunteer management support for food services across Wealden. This could include support with recruitment, processing (e.g. DBS), training, etc.
- Advocating for Council to invest in longer-term, unrestricted funding for community services that we know work.
- Applying for and distributing funding across local community services that may not have the capacity to apply themselves.
- Support emergency food providers to introduce more sustainable and dignified models, for example food cooperatives/community supermarkets.

Supply Chains & Infrastructure

- Hosting events and opportunities for farmers, growers, producers, manufacturers and retailers to meet.
- Advocating for better processing and storage infrastructure locally, for example abattoirs, milk vending machines.
- Advocating for investment in a food hub, for collection and distribution of surplus food, alongside community services such as cooking lessons. Look at and learn from models such as the Open Food Network and Sussex Peasant.
- Advocating for better and more flexible funding for sustainable food production and processing practices; currently too restrictive and funds only new initiatives not existing practices and programmes; provide administrative funding support to farmers.

Cross Cutting

- Hosting regular events, hosted at partners and with locally produced food. Have a mix of stakeholder targeted sessions, topic focused sessions, and broader sessions.
- Promoting key messages locally through both the Wealden Food Partnership membership For example, the benefit of eating venison locally. This could be done through “spotlights” and “interviews”. If monthly, could include what’s in season this month, and where to buy it from.

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item 17.0

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

1.0. Summary

- 1.1 In the time of the current Town Clerk, the Town Council has not introduced any scheme to reward or recognise elected members who have served on the Town Council for any period.
- 1.2 In the case of staff, if you work for the organisation for a period of five years or more, you would receive more days of annual leave. For Town Councillors there is no recognition for long service.
- 1.3 There are a number of initiatives around the country at parish, town, district and county councils.
- 1.4 With the recent departure of Councillors H. Firth and P. Sparks who had both served on the council for a number of years, it would only seem fitting to formally recognise their service to the Town Council, and their contribution to the town of Uckfield. Councillor D. Bennett who is current serving as an elected member of the Town Council is also a long serving councillor.
- 1.5 If a long-service award was established for councillors, a consistent approach would need to be applied both to the term considered long-service and the recognition and award presented.
- 1.6 It would perhaps be welcome to formally present a framed certificate to each eligible councillor signed by a dignitary and the Town Clerk recognising their service achievement.
- 1.7 It may also be a gesture of good will, to offer an experience, such as afternoon tea with the Town Mayor to celebrate their service at Luxfords Restaurant or a small gift depending on the term of long service.

2.0. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider this proposal and advise the Clerk how they wish to proceed in terms of agreeing to the criteria for such an award.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Meeting of the Full Council

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Agenda Item 19.0

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out the engagements of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor between 15 May and 28 June 2023.
- 1.2 Please note that the Mayor, Councillor J. Love and Deputy Mayor, Councillor D. French were re-elected on 15 May 2023 for their third consecutive year.

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 02.06.23 | Ashdown Radio Interview.
Dawson Hart Cyclathon, Tesco Stores, Uckfield |
| 04.06.23 | Official opening of the Uckfield & District Lions Family Fun Day
Luxford Field, Uckfield |
| 22.06.23 | VIP Guest of Honour at Sussex Grant Final of Speak Out Challenge
Uckfield College |
| 23.06.23 | Funeral of Mr Alan Blackford, Holy Cross Church and
Celebration of Life at the Civic Centre, Uckfield |

TO NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 02.06.23 | Ashdown Radio Interview.
Dawson Hart Cyclathon, Tesco Stores, Uckfield |
| 23.06.23 | Funeral of Mr Alan Blackford, Holy Cross Church and
Celebration of Life at the Civic Centre, Uckfield |