

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 17 July 2023 at 7.00pm

## **PRESENT:**

Cllr. D. Ward (Chair)  
Cllr. J. Love

Cllr. C. Macve (appointed Vice-Chair)  
Cllr. D. Manvell  
Cllr. A. Smith

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Holly Goring – Town Clerk  
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

### **1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

Councillor J. Love referred to agenda items 4.3, 5.2 and 6.1 and explained that she had a personal interest as she worked for a business which leased out space at Victoria Pavilion. The Town Clerk advised that Councillor J. Love could speak but not vote. Members noted this declaration of interest.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

### **3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor P. Selby and substitute member Councillor B. Cox.

It was at this point in the meeting that the Chair, Councillor D. Ward wished to bring forward the first part of agenda item 11.0 (Town Clerk's announcements) to re-appoint a Vice Chair to the General Purposes Committee.

### **11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (BROUGHT FORWARD PART 1)**

#### **11.1 Re- appointment of Vice Chair**

Members were presented with a short report which explained that the committee was seeking to appoint a new Vice-Chair.

The Chair, Councillor D. Ward wished to nominate Councillor C. Macve for the role.

The Town Clerk asked if there were any further nominations within the room. Councillor D. Manvell explained that he was going to put forward a nomination for himself if the committee struggled to fill the position but was satisfied with the nomination.

Councillor J. Love seconded the nomination of Councillor C. Macve.

**GP16.07.23** With three votes in favour, members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Chris Macve to the position of Vice-Chair of General Purposes Committee.

#### **4.0 MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 19 June 2023

**GP17.07.23** Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 19 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members noted the update.

4.3 Project list

A couple of questions were asked in relation to the booking system and the 262 Saturday bus service. The North Wealden Community Transport Partnership had been updated on the Town Council's position and would now be liaising with the smaller parishes to obtain their support for the service. Members noted the project list.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

5.2 Bad debts

Members were provided with an update on the current list of bad debtors. Clarity was sought on one of the names listed, to which the Town Clerk explained that it was the short name on the finance system and explained the name of the company. Members subsequently noted the report.

5.3 Finance Summary

Members were presented with a report which explained that the fixed term deposit which had held a sum of £300k from the Town Council's reserves was coming to an end on 26 July 2023. Members were asked to consider if they wished to reinvest these funds and to determine which bank's 12 month fixed rate interest account they wished to invest in.

**GP18.07.23** Based on the rates provided in the report, members **RESOLVED** to reinvest the £300k plus the interest received in the last 12 months, into a NatWest fixed rate interest savings account for a period of 12 months.

#### **6.0 BUILDINGS**

6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings

Members were presented with a detailed update on the current condition of the Town Council's buildings and the compliance work being undertaken.

Members put forward details of a well-regarded local flooring contractor, and noted the detailed update provided.

#### **7.0 POLICY**

None.

## **8.0 ADMINISTRATION**

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council  
Members noted the report.

8.2 To receive Members' audit report  
Members noted the audit reports for March, April and May 2023.

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

9.1 To consider reports from: -

(i) Wealden Citizen's Advice  
Nothing to report at this time.

(ii) East Sussex Association of Local Councils AGM  
Nothing to report at this time.

(iii) Uckfield Volunteer Centre  
Nothing to report at this time.

(vi) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee  
Councillor D. Ward provided a verbal update from the meeting. The Association received an update from Wealden District Council who advised them that they had liaised with East Sussex Highways with regards to potholes. The strike action had now subsided with Biffa, and matters had eased. They were running a good service of household waste collection. Further to action by Wealden DC, SE Water were due to meet with the district authority in September 2023. With a very new council in the weeks following the election, it did not look like any review of civil parking enforcement would be taken at this point. Updates were provided on the key contacts for the overdevelopment action group in Wealden DC, since the election and it was hoped that there would be a parish conference in the autumn/winter months. Parishes were also being encouraged to respond to the Railway Ticket office public consultation. Members noted the update provided.

(v) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel  
Nothing to report at this time.

## **10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair, Councillor D. Ward wanted to thank Councillor C. Macve for filling the position of Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee.

## **11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

11.2 The second item that the Town Clerk wished to discuss was that of the railway ticket office public consultation. The deadline fell on 26 July 2023 so there was not the time to address the matter at full Council.

Members raised their concerns with the proposals and reviewed the draft response which had been put together by Councillor A. Smith on behalf of the Town Council.

The main concerns focused on:

- those with disabilities, impairments or conditions which would make utilising the

automated system difficult;

- useability of the automated system for those less digitally minded;
- the need for technological advancements as the automated systems would often freeze or not recognise people's finger tips when they were trying to purchase tickets;

- the importance of personal contact and the expertise of the ticket office staff was particularly welcomed when undertaking a complicated or long journey to understand the best times to travel and best routes;

- the automated systems would also struggle to deal with the volume of enquiries the ticket office staff supported each day.

**GP19.07.23** It was **RESOLVED** to support the submission of the proposed response put forward to members with emphasis on the above points, and for the response to be sent to both London Travelwatch and Transport Focus (as detailed on the Southern Rail website).

## **12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**GP20.07.23** It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

### 12.1 To consider the draft lease agreement for the Source

Members discussed the contents of the draft lease agreement. It was suggested that further reference be made under the Insurance section to reflect the risk of acts of terrorism, and for the year to be changed to 2023 (typo) on page 1.

**GP21.07.23** It was **RESOLVED** that subject to these changes the lease agreement could be signed by two Councillors on behalf of the Town Council.

### 12.2 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members wished to thank the Hospitality Manager for a very good report, which was testament to the hard work being put in by the team.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm.