



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Tuesday 29 August 2023 at 7.00pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Mayhew (Chair)
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. M. McClafferty

Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. V. Frost
Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Peter Selby (arrived at 7:03pm)

Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Rachel Newton

1.0. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. No declarations of interest were provided at this stage in the meeting.

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

None.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Councillor Reed, Councillor Smith and Councillor Bennett due to other commitments.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 10 July 2023

EL.17.08.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 10 July 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list

Members noted the report and approved actions still pending. Members were informed that the upgrade to the existing Diamond Jubilee sign at Victoria Pleasure Park was now completed.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report and ongoing actions.
(Cllr Val Frost arrived at 7:03pm)

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report.

- 5.2 To note the Income & Expenditure report for Quarter One (April – June 2023)
Members noted the report – no comments.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1 To note the draft minutes from the Strengthening Local Relations (SLR) meeting held on 14 August 2023

Two councillors raised a concern in relation to East Sussex Highways' involvement with works carried out near Ridgewood Farm, where an island had been positioned outside the entrance into Ridgewood Place.

For cars entering Lewes Road from the roundabout (with a 40-mph approach), they would have to stop at this island for any oncoming traffic, but if cars were to pull out immediately from Ridgewood Place, members felt this could be potentially dangerous and that this island should be positioned further up the road.

With the Ridgewood House development plans, if that entrance was to fall literally opposite, then this could be raised then with East Sussex County Council with regard to overall safety access.

- 6.2 Update on the Allotment Competition 2023
Members noted the report.

- 6.3 To consider the Cycle to Work Scheme for Town Council staff

The Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer had explored the current schemes available further to member approval back in 2021. The Gogeta scheme was considered to be the most competitive on charges, to both the local business and the employee. Members agreed with the principles of this scheme.

The Chairman was familiar with a similar scheme in his workplace which he said was excellent for staff who could not afford this otherwise.

EL.18.08.23 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to pursue a salary sacrifice 'cycle to work scheme' with Gogeta based on the current information provided.

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

Members noted the report and raised a query in relation to ash die back and the trees cut down in Nightingale Wood and Boothland Wood, as there were piles of chippings leftover from the trees cut down rotting on the ground. Members asked if there was a proper disposal method and maintenance program to prevent the disease from spreading.

Some of the wood had been chipped at the Victoria depot earlier in the year, but were being stolen which was concerning, so the former Ranger had suggested leaving the rest of the dead wood in the woodland, which was preferable.

Some of the brash wood was being extracted for biomass where possible. Going forward, if it was decided for the wood to become habitat piles, realistically, they could not be chipped.

With follow-up works due to be carried out in September, as this was an amenity woodland and should be protected against fire risk, this would be raised with the Head Groundsman.

- 7.2 To note an update on street lighting repairs
Members noted the report.

- 7.3 To note an update on the Rural Grass Cutting Trial (East Sussex County Council)
One query was discussed in relation to the 'No Mow May' initiative as this was within the same period when East Sussex County Council would be doing some of these rural grass cuts. It was understood that that some of the verges that required cutting were due to safety reasons, but it was unclear if other rural verge cuts would be avoided during the nesting season.

The Chairman advised members to provide any feedback or comments via the link provided in the report.

8.0 LEISURE

- 8.1 To consider Wealden District Council's proposals to extend the Public Space Protection Order for Dog Fouling

Members agreed that although the majority of owners did clear up after their dog waste, a few still did not and unfortunately gave a bad name to those who did.

A comparison of pre and post Public Spaces Protection Order for dog fouling (PSPO) was provided in the report, which measured dog fouling to the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse standards. The results suggested that dog fouling was down since covid times and the order had a significant positive impact, particularly with the increase in the number of dog owners during the pandemic.

A member asked if there was any evidence to support how this was being monitored, however, it was also suggested that it could be that people are simply not reporting any problems with dog fouling.

One member said that it was a shame that a dog bin had gone in Pudding Cake Lane and that it would be helpful to have one placed near the fence by the twitten which went into Regency Close.

An article about dog fouling would be placed in 'The Voice' in the October edition of Uckfield Matters, under a new heading of 'Councillors' Soapbox'.

- EL.19.08.23** Members noted the report and were happy to support Wealden District Council's proposal to extend the Public Space Protection Order for Dog Fouling.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Nothing to report.

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 10.1 Active Uckfield

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.2 All Weather Pitch Operational Group

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.3 Conservators of Ashdown Forest

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.4 West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.5 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.6 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

Members noted the report – with thanks to Councillor Macve.

10.7 Uckfield Youth Club Board
Nothing to report at this time.

10.8 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link
Nothing to report at this time.

10.9 Uckfield and District Twinning Association (AGM and events only)
Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that 'Weald on the Field' went well and thanked local councillors, especially Cllr Peter Selby for his contribution for his hard work in emptying bin bags and checking the portaloos and general cleanliness of the site. The event was very well attended and the clearing up was carried out efficiently by all. As this was a town council event, more councillors were encouraged to attend in future.

Future editions of The Voice were being spruced up, with a new heading 'Soapbox' to include councillors' views on a variety of topics such as dog fouling, anti-social behaviour concerns and parking on double yellow lines, but a few. This would still include the usual format of information, but councillors would touch upon any subjects or concerns of our local residents.

Our Parks were still running free group exercise classes at Harlands Playing Field every Saturday morning at 10am. Residents who wished to join would simply need to register on their website each week to join in.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.20.08.23 It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

12.1 To consider a report on the Marketing programme
Members noted the report.

The meeting finished at 19.42pm.