

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Monday 18 September 2023 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Cllr. K. Bedwell | Cllr. B. Cox |
| Cllr. D. French (Deputy Mayor) | Cllr. V. Frost |
| Cllr. J. Love (Town Mayor) | Cllr. C. Macve |
| Cllr. D. Manvell | Cllr. S. Mayhew |
| Cllr. M. McClafferty | Cllr. B. Reed |
| Cllr. P. Selby | Cllr. A. Smith |
| Cllr. P. Ullmann | Cllr. D. Ward |

IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor Chris Dowling

Holly Goring Town Clerk
Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent. No interests were forthcoming.

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

None received.

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

FC.43.09.23 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by County and District Council representatives.

Councillor Chris Dowling provided an update on his ward area. Councillor Dowling referred to the build out in Lewes Road and recent traffic calming measures put in place. He had received some concerns from local residents on the placement of the build out near to the bend. He would go and undertake a site visit himself and monitor traffic movements in that location. He had been pleased to see the maintenance work completed in Lewes Road in August 2023.

Councillor K. Bedwell reported that within a week of the resurfacing being completed on New Town, the corner of the junction with Harcourt Road saw damage to the kerbstone from heavy vehicles. It had damaged the tactile paving and created a trip hazard. She asked if this could be reported to ES Highways.

Councillor C. Macve referred once again to the traffic calming in Ridgewood. He had seen two instances where two vehicles had met in the middle of the restriction and issues created with giving way. He had also witnessed a vehicle that clipped the island when coming off Little Horsted roundabout into Lewes Road. Councillor Mayhew had had to break suddenly to address poor driver behaviour around the new traffic calming measures. Councillor B. Reed had also experienced issues – witnessing a car mounting the pavement and poor driver behaviour around the new build out. Councillor B. Reed offered to meet with Councillor Dowling onsite.

Councillor V. Frost referred to road markings in Rocks Park Road. There was no evidence of any works taking place, but the markings had been there for some time. It was asked if Councillor Dowling could investigate the reason for these.

Councillor D. Manvell referred to a previous email exchange in relation to the need for dropped kerbs to improve accessibility on the Manor Park estate (in particular the highway adopted footpaths, not the unadopted areas). This was affecting accessibility for a family with disabilities and required improved access, and he had not received a response from East Sussex Highways.

Councillor D. Manvell then led the District Council updates by advising that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at Wealden DC invited South East Water to attend a meeting. They prepared answers to the questions of the district council. They advised that the recent issues were not due to a failure in the infrastructure but that there was not enough infrastructure. They were applying for £5million to address climate change, and going forward they advised that they would be investing more in infrastructure.

Members received confirmation that the District Council had applied for grant funding for the swimming pools in the district, with £78k being applied for, for Uckfield Leisure Centre. An application would also be made in the second round towards upgrades to the facilities.

Councillors S. Mayhew and B. Reed provided further detail on the subject areas above, referenced the Local Plan working group and Planning Committee North and South. Motions had been put forward at full Council – one relating to potholes, and one relating to the Leisure Centre. Councillor B. Reed had a Ward Walk scheduled with senior officers of Wealden DC the following day.

Councillor B. Cox added to the above matters, expressing his concern with accessibility around the town.

FC.44.09.23 The Councillors were thanked for their input and update, and subsequently **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor D. Bennett and County Councillor C. Dowling.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 28 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC.45.09.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Full Council be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members requested that the following two actions be removed:

FC27.05.23 - To consider the motion from Councillor Manvell (Leisure Centre)

FC37.06.23 – To consider a motion from Councillor Bennett (pedestrian crossing)

Members subsequently noted the action list.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 3, 24 July, 14 Aug and 5 Sept 2023

FC.46.09.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 3, 24 July, 14 Aug and 5 Sept 2023.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 10 July and 29 August 2023

FC.47.09.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committees of the 10 July and 29 August 2023.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 17 July and 11 September 2023

FC.48.09.23 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 17 July and 11 September 2023.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Nothing to report at present.

9.0 TO NOTE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES AT THE END OF Q1 (APR – JUN 2023)

This report provided an overview of progress towards the Town Council's annual plan in the first quarter of 2023/24.

Members expressed their thanks and said well done to all staff for their hard work, and were happy to note the contents of the report.

10.0 TO REVIEW MEMBERSHIP OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Members received a report, which reminded them of the vacancies that still existed on two of the Town Council's standing committees. It was also understood that new councillors would require time to fully understand the remit of each of the committees and members were asked if they wished to make any changes.

Members discussed the remit of the Plans Committee and the difficulties experienced if attendance was low and a number of the committee members declared an interest. The committee were often just quorate.

It was clarified that appointments to the Town Council's committees were reviewed annually at the annual statutory meeting of the Council, but in the meantime, the Chair, Councillor J. Love asked members to consider their current position and availability.

11.0 TO REVIEW A SNAPSHOT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND BALANCE SHEET POSITION FOR Q1 OF 2023/24

Members were provided with a high-level snapshot of the Town Council's budget areas which the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO explained. This was produced from the Town Council's finance system and displayed the total income and expenditure at the end of quarter one for each budget areas – General Purposes Committee, Environment & Leisure Committee and Luxfords Restaurant.

Members requested a further breakdown of the income for General Purposes Committee as the total income figure included the first precept instalment received from Wealden District Council.

Members also requested further clarity on the period and year to date but found the report very useful and welcomed this high-level update.

12.0 TO CONSIDER AN OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER AN INTEREST IN THE RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND

Wealden District Council were successful in obtaining funding from DEFRA which had been set up to address the needs of the rural communities.

Wealden District Council were seeking to run a two-year capital funding programme, with the first year focusing on EV charging points. Through the funding programme they would offer match funding to enable roll out across the district. The timescales of the project were tight however and they needed those interested to be in a position to have the EV charging points installed by the end of March 2024.

There were mixed views around the table. Although in the main members were

keen to support the installation of EV charging points in Uckfield, they raised their concerns with ensuring connections to mains power supply, the tight timescales of the grant funding programme and identifying the right locations. They were very interested but felt it was not the correct time.

FC.49.09.23

With eleven votes in favour, one abstaining and one against, it was **RESOLVED** to write to Wealden DC to explain that the Town Council were interested but not at this time.

13.0 TO REVIEW IN MORE DETAIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LONG SERVICE AWARD FOR ELECTED MEMBERS IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SERVICE

This item had been discussed previously at the June meeting of full Council but further consideration was needed.

This item also created a mix of views around the room. Some members felt that recognition should be given to those who had completed at least four terms, one member felt that a simple certificate would recognise their service, others felt that as public servants, there was no need for recognition. It was also acknowledged that some members deserved special recognition for additional work in the community.

It was suggested that it might be helpful to have a book of service, to keep a formal record of the years that members had served for the Town Council.

FC.50.09.23

With nine votes in favour, two abstaining and two against, it was **RESOLVED** to not introduce any recognition of service. Members should continue to work together for the benefit of the community.

14.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL LEASE AGREEMENT(S) RECEIVED IN TIME FOR THE MEETING

Members were updated on the lease agreement for the Source. The Town Clerk was asked by General Purposes Committee in July, to find out if risk of terrorism was incorporated within the buildings insurance. The Town Clerk advised that it was, and the agreement was now ready for signing and sealing.

FC.51.09.23

Members **RESOLVED** for two councillors to sign and execute the lease agreement between Uckfield Town Council and Uckfield Baptist Church for the Source, in the presence of the Town Clerk.

15.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the report.

16.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

Two deed of grants had been received:

Tracy Szekely

William Foster

FC.52.09.23

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

17.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

18.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk had a few updates:

Purchase of the Dene

The transfer document had been received for the purchase of the Dene, from Buxted Parish Council. Councillor Macve noted that the address for Buxted Parish Council was incorrect within the transfer documentation, which the Town Clerk would check with the solicitors.

Members were pleased with the grass cutting and wished to thank the Grounds staff for their work on this.

FC.53.09.23 Subject to the typo, members **RESOLVED** for two Councillors to sign the Land Registry transfer document for the purchase of the Dene.

The Town Clerk asked members for a round of applause for the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO on the news that the annual governance and accountability return had been signed off by the External Auditor and all was sound.

Key meetings coming up included the Allotment Conference, Plans Committee, Uckfield Cluster Community Safety Action Group, Strategic Business Planning Workshop, and the Local Plan Cluster Group for Uckfield area. Members were reminded of the maintenance works in the Civic Centre during half term which consisted of a full redecoration of the Weald Hall, new flooring and redecoration of the restaurant kitchen plus installation of a new cooker.

Members were also reminded of the dates of the planning appeals for Land at Bird in Eye Farm and Downlands Farm.

Members noted the update provided.

19.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor J. Love wished to thank everyone involved in organising the Weald on the Field event in August. It was a great success and the help from councillors and staff was very much appreciated.

The Town Mayor referred to the fundraising exercise that one of the caretakers was undertaking – an 85 mile charity walk from the Emirates Stadium to Hastings, via Eastbourne to raise money for two charities.

Further information was also provided on the Bird in Eye Planning Inquiry.

20.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

FC.54.09.23

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.

20.1 To receive an update on the review of the Town Centre CCTV Contract for renewal in 2024-25

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

The meeting closed at 8.56pm.