



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk – Holly Goring

Meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** to be held on
Monday 13 November 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 CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4.0. MINUTES

- 4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 9th October 2023
- 4.2. Action list – for information only
- 4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

5.0. FINANCE

- 5.1. To note bills paid
- 5.2. To note the Income & Expenditure report ending 30 September 2023
- 5.3. To re-consider budget priorities and initiatives for 2024-25
- 5.4. To confirm the fees and charges for sports facilities in 2024-25
- 5.5. To confirm the fees and charges for allotments in 2024-25
- 5.6. To confirm the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery in 2024-25

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

(Nothing to report)

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1. To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates
- 7.2. To consider pathway extension costs around the perimeter of Victoria Pavilion

8.0. LEISURE

8.1 To note a further update on the Our Parks Initiative

9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 To note an update from the Allotment Working Group

10.0. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1. Active Uckfield

10.2. All Weather Pitch Operational Group

10.3. Conservators of Ashdown Forest

10.4. Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group

10.5. Luxford Centre Management Committee

10.6. Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

10.7. Uckfield Youth Club Board

10.8. Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link

10.9. Uckfield and District Twinning Association (AGM and events only)

11.0. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

12.0. 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: -

12.1. To consider a report on the Marketing programme



Town Clerk

7 November 2023



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Monday 9th October 2023 at 7.00pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. French
Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. B. Reed

Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. V. Frost

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Peter Selby

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Rachel Newton

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, members voted unanimously for Councillor D. French to take on the role of Chair for this meeting.

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.

Councillor D. Bennett declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 5.5, as a result of his position as a committee member on the AFC Uckfield Town football club and item 5.6, as he was a current allotment holder.

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 S. Mayhew, Councillor A. Smith, Councillor K. Bedwell and Councillor M. McClafferty due to health reasons and work commitments.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 29 August 2023

EL.21.10.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 29 August 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list

Members discussed items on the action list.
It was agreed to remove the actions on:

72.05.22 – To consider illegal tree works to Town Council trees
08.06.22 – To consider proposal for a Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Sign at Victoria
Pleasure Ground
09.06.23 – To nominate two members to work with the Estates team, to review the
open space grass cutting schedule and future support towards ‘no mow May’.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only
Members noted the report and ongoing actions.

5.0. **FINANCE**

5.1. To note bills paid
Members noted the report.

5.2. To note the Income & Expenditure report ending 31 August 2023
Members noted the report – no comments.

5.3. To consider applying for funding through the Wealden Community Spaces Grants Programme
Members were asked to determine which projects to apply for and to look at the list of items to decide which of them to include.

The first four items on the list included footway improvements within Boothland Wood, West Park and Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserves and Bridge Farm Wood. Although we were still waiting on a quotation for the lower steps needing replacement at Bridge Farm Wood, members considered it to be favourable to apply for those items above all, as being the best way to spread the cost across the town.

This proposal was seconded as it would improve accessibility into public spaces.

EL22.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to apply for funding through the Wealden Community Spaces Grants Programme, to include footway improvements to Boothland Wood, West Park Local Nature Reserve, Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Bridge Farm Wood.

5.4. To undertake an initial review of the budget areas for 2024-25
Members recognised that some items were more in need of repair than others, such as upgrades to the Victoria Pleasure Ground play area and the zipwire at Hempstead Recreation Ground and that they did not want to put fees up to include more items due to the recent cost of living. The allotments were the only statutory provision required of the council and those costs were also being kept to a minimum for similar reasons.

One consideration was to maybe look into the cost of having a wild meadow type garden area on the western side near the trees by the park in Luxford Field, perhaps with sleeper benches.

Members agreed that was an excellent idea but to also stick to the list of items in the report due to the budget being tight and to hold back on any further new initiatives for the time being.

EL23.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to support those suggestions for the draft budget 2024/25 and to look into the provision of a wild meadow garden area on the western side of Luxford Field.

5.5. To undertake an initial review of fees and charges for sports facilities

Members all supported one proposal to initially look at increasing the fees and charges by five percent due to reflect the increasing costs of materials and grounds maintenance.

EL24.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to initially consider placing an increase on the fees and charges for sports facilities by 5% in 2024/25, and for this to be confirmed during the budget setting process.

5.6 To undertake an initial review of fees and charges for allotments

The Town Clerk reminded members that the admin fee was brand new as of 1 April 2023 and the water charge was determined by the water board.

Members agreed that it would be prudent for tenants to settle into the changes established this year and that this could be reviewed more substantially next year.

Members were keen not to allow more than the proposed percentage increase of 1.5% next year.

The deposit would not be increased as this was considered reasonable and refundable.

EL25.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to initially consider increasing the fees and charges for allotments by 1.5% in 2024/25. This would not include the deposit or the admin fee.

5.7 To undertake an initial review of fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery

A proposal was made to continue with the same percentage increase unless the service was experiencing hardship. Members agreed.

EL26.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to initially consider increasing the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery by 1.5% in 2024/25.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1 To note the draft minutes from the Allotment Conference on 20 September 2023

Members noted the draft minutes.

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

Members noted the report.

7.2 To consider a suggestion by the Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents' Association in relation to the Dene

(Cllr B. Reed arrived at 7.28pm)

A Powerpoint presentation was provided by the Town Clerk including feedback from the Head Groundsman.

Although the land registry title register was yet to be received, The Dene was now the property of the Town Council.

An enquiry had been submitted to ask if it would be beneficial to plant a line of four or five carbon catching trees, such as horse chestnuts beside the path that runs beside the tunnel that runs up to Nevill Road.

The Head Groundsman was a little uncertain about this. They had just taken on the cutting of the grounds this season and were concerned about roots growing too closely to the path and the roots pushing up, as they would become very large trees. Also, they had noticed that horse chestnuts were becoming more prone to disease recently.

There was also concern about the anti-social behaviour and mowing around this area.

If members were keen to plant on this site, a suggestion was made to perhaps plant one native tree within the bowl of the green at the bottom.

One member suggested that planting trees could damage the open plan garden design of the Manor Park estate. The Dene was an important vista towards the Buxted Park estate. A specimen Oak might be lovely there and more appropriate. Another member agreed but suggested maybe having a Sycamore tree in thought of the lost Sycamore Gap tree near Hadrians' Wall. Either way, members agreed that consideration would need to be given towards its maintenance, as well as the grass cutting, the potential damage to pathways and safety for those sledging in the winter months.

Furthermore with the garden design of Manor Park estate, a design code dissuaded the planting of native hedgerows, so this also needed to be reflected in any decision made.

Members asked to defer this decision to have a proper look at the area and rethink considering the very recent purchase of the site.

Also, a proposal was made for Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association to look at a tree in Larnach Close, as there was epicormic growth which needed attention.

EL.27.10.23 Members **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to thank the Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association and welcome their suggestion for trees to be planted at The Dene, and;
- (ii) agree that at this precise time the Council needed time to assess the area for future use and defer any decision until the next financial year, with the potential of maybe planting one native tree only.

7.3 To consider the installation of a gate to restrict access to the Grounds work area next to Victoria Pavilion

A powerpoint presentation was provided by the Town Clerk and ideas provided for discussion.

The grounds staff had made a good job of fencing off this area in the last year with a gate installed from the path up from New Barn.

However, with a lot of machinery in this area and moving Grounds vehicles going in and out every day, it was becoming a health and safety concern, especially with bikes and scooters going down the tarmac area at speed whilst at the same time, vehicles were travelling in and out.

One suggestion would be to create a path around the edge of the fencing on the field towards the car park, although this could be costly. However, it was agreed that the issue of safety would prevail over costs.

To hire external contractors to install a path was estimated at around £5K, although this would be halved if the grounds team were to do this instead. This would also include materials and machinery, although labour costs would need to be factored in too. Members were keen on this idea going forward.

A more recent and cost-effective suggestion was for a gate to be installed on the other side of the drive (next to the garages) with a pedestrian gate and closer to

allow an access point. Access to the two rented garages would still need to be provided for the Anderida Cricket club and Uckfield Performance Ensemble.

Members were in favour of this idea too, leaving the area as a work site only and taking out any risk from the equation.

One member suggested the inclusion of some sort of demarcation on the grounds to indicate that this was not a footpath or area for bikes and scooters.

It was also requested that any footway installed would need to meet disabled access requirements.

Although we could ask the Ridgewood Farm developers if they could help with this idea as part of their development, we would need to get this work done sooner rather than later, due to the safety aspect. The developers were also at various phases of purchasing land so it would be unlikely to happen any time soon. There were improvements to the footway around Victoria Pleasure Ground and New Barn planned as part of the S106 agreement for the Ridgewood Farm site, but that would not be for a while yet and was more focused on improving accessibility from the town centre through to the Ridgewood Farm estate via the sports pitches and Boothland Wood.

Also, the responsibility would be down to us to make our grounds area safer. There was some money available from earmarked reserved which could be used for this purpose, which would need to be explored further.

EL.28.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to:

- (i) install a gate on the main drive (with a pedestrian gate and closer) estimated at £300 to 400, and;
- (ii) defer the decision to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park to the next E&L Committee in November 2023, after seeking further details on accessibility and funding options.

7.4 To consider a relaunch of the Drone Code

Members were aware that this was purely to publicise the key principles of the drone code, including consideration for neighbouring households and where drones would be allowed.

EL.29.10.23 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the relaunch of the Drone Code.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To note an update on the Our Parks Initiative – Wealden funding

Members noted the report and were keen on the provision of further funding for this initiative which was as no extra cost and beneficial for all our residents to have access to join.

The Wellbeing Project Officer at Wealden District Council had confirmed that they now had an agreement in place and had officially appointed Our Parks to deliver sessions in Wealden. Our Parks had been working on recruiting coaches for the sessions in other areas and Wealden DC were hoping that they would be able to give them an indication of a likely start date for those this week. The Wellbeing Officer would touch base with Our Parks to discuss their plan for continuing the sessions in Uckfield, which the Town Council had been assured would be included in the programme costs that they had agreed to fund.

As soon as they had any further details they will let us know.

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

Members noted the report – with thanks to Councillor Reed.

10.4 West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.5 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Members noted the report – with thanks to Councillor Macve.

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

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.30.10.23 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 20:13pm.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST - FOR INFORMATION ONLY Environment and Leisure Committee

Please note no resolutions can be made from the action list and is for information only.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL.28.09.16</u>	<u>To consider revised byelaws for the Town Council's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)</u> Members reviewed the amendments to the byelaws which still require Natural England and DEFRA's approval. It was RESOLVED to accept the revised byelaws.	05.09.16	HG	The Town Council has sealed and signed the byelaws. A public notice will be published soon to provide the public with an opportunity to view the byelaws, prior to their submission to the Secretary of State.
<u>EL.26.01.19</u>	It was RESOLVED that the Supporter Groups for both reserves be consulted with a view to shorten the byelaws in accordance with DEFRA's comments and report back to the Environment & Leisure committee.	28.01.19		
<u>EL73.05.22</u>	<u>To consider a number of improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to: (i) introduce the following ideas for improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield at the next infrastructure working group meeting: better parking facilities for motorhomes in town and improved signage, and to; (ii) consider if there was anything additional that should be explored to be discussed at that next meeting, and; (iii) for the E&F Manager to explore those initiatives put forward already with the various responsible agencies, including any leverage through ES Highways for proper signage from developers.	16.05.22	RN/ HG	In progress.
<u>EL.16.09.22</u>	<u>7.4 To consider street lighting repairs</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to: (i) agree with proposals to carry out repairs on the street lights within the report, and; (ii) for the Town Council to get back in touch with East Sussex Highways to arrange for further details to be presented to Full Council for consideration on street lighting designs.	28.09.22	JH	East Sussex Highways changed their contractor from Costain to Balfour Beatty. The Estates and Facilities Manager met with ES Highways for an update on current issues and for quotes. A copy of outstanding jobs has only just been received and we are still awaiting quotes. The Estates and Facilities Manager last chased on 1/11/23.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL.13.07.23</u>	<p><u>6.2 To review Seasonal pitch hire terms and conditions 2023-24</u> Members RESOLVED to agree to:</p> <p>(i) a request by AFC Football Club for the football season to start at the beginning of August (instead of mid-August) with a view to monitoring this within the next two years if this should become an issue with grass erosion;</p> <p>(ii) should the times of hire be exceeded, the Council reserved the right to levy a surcharge for the additional period of use, and;</p> <p>(iii) to arrange a working group meeting soon and raise this item on the agenda</p>	10.07.23	RN	<p>Football pitches are being booked and the grass is being monitored by the Grounds team who will provide any feedback.</p> <p>NFA</p>
<u>EL.22.10.23</u>	<p><u>5.3 To consider applying for funding through the Wealden Community Spaces Grants Programme</u> Members RESOLVED to agree to apply for funding, to include footway improvements to Boothland Wood, West Park Local Nature Reserve, Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Bridge Farm Wood.</p>	09.10.23	HG/JH	<p>Funding application has been submitted to Wealden DC.</p> <p>NFA.</p>
<u>EL28.10.23</u>	<p><u>7.3 To consider the installation of a gate to restrict access to the Grounds work area next to Victoria Pavillion</u> (i) install a gate on the main drive (with a pedestrian gate and closer) estimated at £300 to £400, and;</p> <p>(ii) defer the decision to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park to the next E&L Committee in November 2023, after seeking further details on accessibility and funding options.</p>	09.10.23	HG/JH	<p>A further report has been added to the agenda for the E&L meeting on 13 November 2023.</p>

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2023-24**

Projects in 2021/22 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Green Projects plus £5,000 in earmarked reserves		Project Number	58
<u>FC.64.01.21</u>	£18,000 minus £1,800 =£16,200	18.01.21	Carbon footprint audit carried out £1,800.	

Projects in 2022/23 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Speed reduction initiative (already have £3,199.64 in earmarked reserves)		Project Number	69
<u>FC.82.01.22</u>	Plus £2,000 placed into budget in 2022/23	17.01.22	Will be utilised when further research has been undertaken into the various roadside initiatives available.	

Projects in 2023/24 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Tree for a tree planting programme		Project Number	74
<u>FC.86.01.23</u>	£2,000	23.01.23	These works usually take place during the winter season. New Ranger to follow up.	

Project Name	New gazebo and trestle table for events		Project Number	75
<u>FC.86.01.23</u>	£300	23.01.23	Recommend that Events Working Group identify suitable items to purchase.	

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2023-24**

Project Name	Victoria Rainwater Tank Clean and Service		Project Number	77
<u>FC.86.01.23</u>	£7,000 - £4,289.85	23.01.23	A total of £4,289.85 has been spent on undertaking a thorough clean and service of the tank. A follow up visit will take place in the autumn.	
	-£1,031.06	01.11.23	An annual service was undertaken of the rainwater harvester as anticipated.	
	= £1,679.09 remaining.	NFA.		

Project Name	Wildflower areas		Project Number	78
<u>FC.86.01.23</u>	£250	23.01.23	To be progressed. Seed has been purchased for next season.	

Project Name	Vehicle replacement		Project Number	79
<u>FC.86.01.23</u>	£7,500	23.01.23	These funds will be used towards the cost of leasing a new Grounds vehicle in 2023 onwards. Waiting on final costings.	

Environment Leisure Committee as at 30 Sept 2023

	Apr 23 Actuals £	May 23 Actuals £	Jun 23 Actuals £	Jul 23 Actuals £	Aug 23 Actuals £	Sep 23 Actuals £	Actuals at 30 Sep 23	Budget at 30 Sep 23	Oct 23 Budget £	Nov 23 Budget £	Dec 23 Budget £	Jan 24 Budget £	Feb 24 Budget £	Mar 24 Budget £	Total 2023/24	Budget 2023/24
Sales																
Contribution to Town Centre Security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	620	0	0	0	0	0	620	620
Weald Hall Events	1,061	860	1,380	2,046	1,739	2,092	9,178	12,498	2,571	2,571	2,571	2,571	2,571	2,571	24,606	25,000
Allotments	6,862	(15)	71	(83)	0	21	6,856	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,500	9,356	7,000
Allotment Admin Charge	3,555	45	30	90	0	30	3,750	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,750	2,500
Allotment Deposits	18	156	104	156	0	104	538	500	83	83	83	83	83	83	1,038	1,000
Playing Fields & Pitches, Sport Income	27	87	164	351	83	166	878	500	3,800	200	8,000	0	0	500	13,378	13,000
Playing Fields & Pitches, Event Income	68	325	124	4,337	0	1,428	6,281	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,281	5,000
WDC- WPark Culverts Agreement	0	370	0	0	0	0	370	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	370	400
Cemetery - Interments	776	6,850	5,736	2,152	2,061	1,500	19,075	15,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	34,075	30,000
Cemetery - Memorials	1,453	105	1,187	46	509	46	3,345	3,000	500	500	500	500	500	500	6,345	6,000
Cemetery - Sundry income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200	200
Cemetery Maintenance Charge	100	209	627	439	209	418	2,001	2,000	333	333	333	333	333	333	4,001	4,000
Sale of Ransome Parkway Mower	0	0	0	0	0	3,500	3,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,500	0
Env Sundry Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200	200
Litter/bus station	0	398	0	0	398	0	795	663	0	331	0	0	331	0	1,458	1,325
Road Safety Week/Eco EXPO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
Weald on the Field	0	0	0	1,700	796	1,305	3,801	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,801	0
Roundabout income	864	0	0	0	0	0	864	850	0	0	0	0	0	0	864	850
Total Sales	14,783	9,388	9,422	11,234	5,794	10,610	61,231	49,910	10,408	6,519	13,988	5,988	6,319	9,488	113,942	97,195

Boxes highlighted are to be funded or part funded by earmarked reserves/new initiative spending

Purchases																
Protective - Outdoor staff	80	92	92	237	0	278	779	325	54	54	54	54	54	54	1,105	650
Street lights, supply & maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,000	11,000	11,000
Street light repairs	5,031	0	0	0	0	0	5,031	8,750	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,389	13,364	17,500
Allotments	4	1,642	15	156	1,111	475	3,403	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	500	3,903	3,500
Playing fields and pitches	276	1,086	749	1,303	1,005	444	4,864	11,890	1,982	1,982	1,982	1,982	1,982	1,982	16,754	23,780
Playfing fields electricity	33	1,029	69	69	82	435	1,717	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,717	220
Play Areas	0	0	80	686	1,497	30	2,293	2,000	0	0	500	0	0	500	3,293	3,000
Cemetery, grave digging	320	640	1,346	320	640	0	3,266	2,500	333	333	333	333	333	333	5,266	5,000
Cemetery, rates & water	1,116	115	115	(1,695)	115	115	(119)	1,100	183	183	183	183	183	183	981	2,200
Cemetery, litter	234	293	249	220	249	249	1,493	1,500	250	250	250	250	250	250	2,993	3,000
Cemetery, maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200	200
General equipment repairs	659	136	1,211	1,561	2,271	0	5,838	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,838	2,500
New Equipment	0	0	747	0	327	2,230	3,303	3,750	0	0	0	0	0	1,250	4,553	5,000
Ground Maintenance General	2,341	715	627	803	710	17	5,213	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,213	2,000
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Ranger)	2,377	2,189	2,177	0	0	1,028	7,770	15,536	2,589	2,589	2,589	2,589	2,589	3,614	24,331	31,071
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Working budget)	176	9	0	0	0	0	184	1,500	250	250	250	250	250	250	1,684	3,000
Transit	97	163	94	413	119	0	887	1,000	222	222	222	222	222	222	2,220	2,000
Ford Ranger	546	60	260	69	330	11	1,276	1,000	167	167	167	167	167	167	2,276	2,000
Tractor maintenance & running costs	202	2,242	2,912	48	164	0	5,569	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,569	1,500
Movana Vehicle	536	94	109	214	129	0	1,081	1,000	167	167	167	167	167	167	2,081	2,000
Grass cutting mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	167	167	167	167	167	167	1,000	1,500
Fencing	45	193	0	10	0	0	248	500	83	83	83	83	83	83	748	1,000
Trees	120	650	0	167	3,002	750	4,689	6,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	12,689	12,000
Litter bins	0	0	0	786	140	0	926	800	0	0	0	0	0	0	926	800
Litter collection, open spaces	948	980	1,135	1,295	1,006	1,109	6,472	4,550	758	758	758	758	758	758	11,022	9,100
Horticulture	37	0	0	0	0	0	37	150	25	25	25	25	25	25	187	300
Roundabout expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
Weald Hall Events	0	1,000	0	0	0	2,280	3,280	4,000	0	0	10,000	0	0	1,000	14,280	15,000
Corp dev- signage outside areas	0	0	537	0	196	0	733	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	733	500
Groundsmen - salaries	6,339	7,274	9,382	9,894	10,306	10,026	53,220	60,191	10,032	10,032	10,032	10,032	10,032	10,032	113,411	120,382
Groundsmen - National insurance	561	587	772	842	899	893	4,554	4,898	816	816	816	816	816	816	9,452	9,796
Groundsmen - Pension	1,505	1,676	2,056	1,453	2,072	2,015	10,777	11,075	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846	21,852	22,150
Town Security/CCTV	1,482	55	976	60	55	58	2,686	2,200	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,686	2,200
Floral displays	0	1,343	507	507	657	507	3,520	3,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,520	3,500
Repair and replace street furniture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	750	125	200	200	200	200	200	1,125	1,500
Cleaning materials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50
Performing rights	157	671	0	0	0	475	1,303	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,303	400
Event Advertising Marketing	190	80	130	80	530	280	1,290	1,750	292	292	292	292	292	767	3,515	3,500

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 5.3

TO RE-CONSIDER BUDGET PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES FOR 2024/25

1.0 Background

1.1 The draft budgets are presented to Full Council in early December for the following financial year, prior to a final decision being taken on the precept and detailed budget papers by mid-January 2024.

1.2 Members reviewed a list provided to the meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee on 9 October 2023. This included the following:

ITEM	SHORT/MED/LONG TERM	ESTIMATED COST
E&L Committee (Grounds, CCTV, Leisure, Events)		
Funding for D-Day 80 th Anniversary on 6 June 2024 Beacon Lighting Ceremony	Short	£2k
New Grounds equipment: Tractor	Short	£34k incl. trade in of existing tractor <i>This works out much less, as the tractor can be purchased on payment plan which will require a sum of £15k per annum over 22 months or £11k per annum over 33 months</i>
Ash Dieback and further tree works for winter 2024/25	Short – Winter Year 3 programme	£25k
Football Dug Out – improvements for health and safety purposes	Short to Medium	£2.5k
Continue saving towards upgrade of <ul style="list-style-type: none">Victoria Play AreaHempstead zip lineWest Park Play Area	Short/Medium Short/Medium Medium/Long	
Increase of pitch renovation expenditure for football and cricket in line with audit outcomes.	Medium	Around 10K in house

1.3 Additional equipment is being looked at by the Grounds team, which includes:
- Petrol Trash Water Pump at £300
(useful when water table high and undertaking ground works)

1.4 There was also a suggestion at the last meeting to consider the planting of wild flowers to the west of the field and play area on Luxford Field. This has yet to be explored in more detail.

2.0. Recommendation

2.1. This is the final opportunity to raise any further issues, in addition to the business planning workshop on 20 November. Members are therefore asked to consider the above and advise the Clerk of anything further.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 5.4

TO CONFIRM THE FEES AND CHARGES FOR OUR SPORTS FACILITIES IN 2024/25

1.0 Summary

1.1 Each year as part of the budget setting process, the Town Council is required to review its fees and charges. This includes the fees and charges for the hire of recreation grounds such as Luxford Field for events, and sport pitches/pavilions - cricket, football and stoolball.

1.2 In the past four years the Committee has agreed to increase the fees for sports facilities by 1.5% and sequentially 10% last year in light of the rising cost of living expenses and additional costs to maintain pitches, which has been increasing year on year. At the last Environment and Leisure Committee on 9 October 2023, members initially considered placing an increase on the fees and charges for sport facilities by 5% in 2024/25, and resolved for this to be confirmed during the budget setting process.

2.0 Complexities in the charging of sports hire

2.1 The Town Clerk recently attended a meeting with the Uckfield Grasshoppers and is due to meet with the Uckfield AFC shortly with regard to pitch hire and how we can work in partnership for the benefit of players.

2.2 With the Uckfield Grasshoppers taking on the lease of the West Park Pavilion in May 2023, consideration now needs to be given to the seasonal hire fee. The Uckfield Grasshoppers are utilising their own moveable goal posts, and the pitch is marked out for junior fixtures rather than adult. This therefore makes it difficult to hire out to others for adult fixtures or training. There is also the added complication, that the current seasonal fee includes use of the pavilion, so this would need to be factored in.

2.3 For this reason it would be prudent to halt any confirmation of the sports fees and charges at this point, and bring councillors and officers together to work with the football clubs and explore whether the current structure for fees and charges needs to be reviewed to reflect the current circumstances.

3.0 Current Fees and Charges

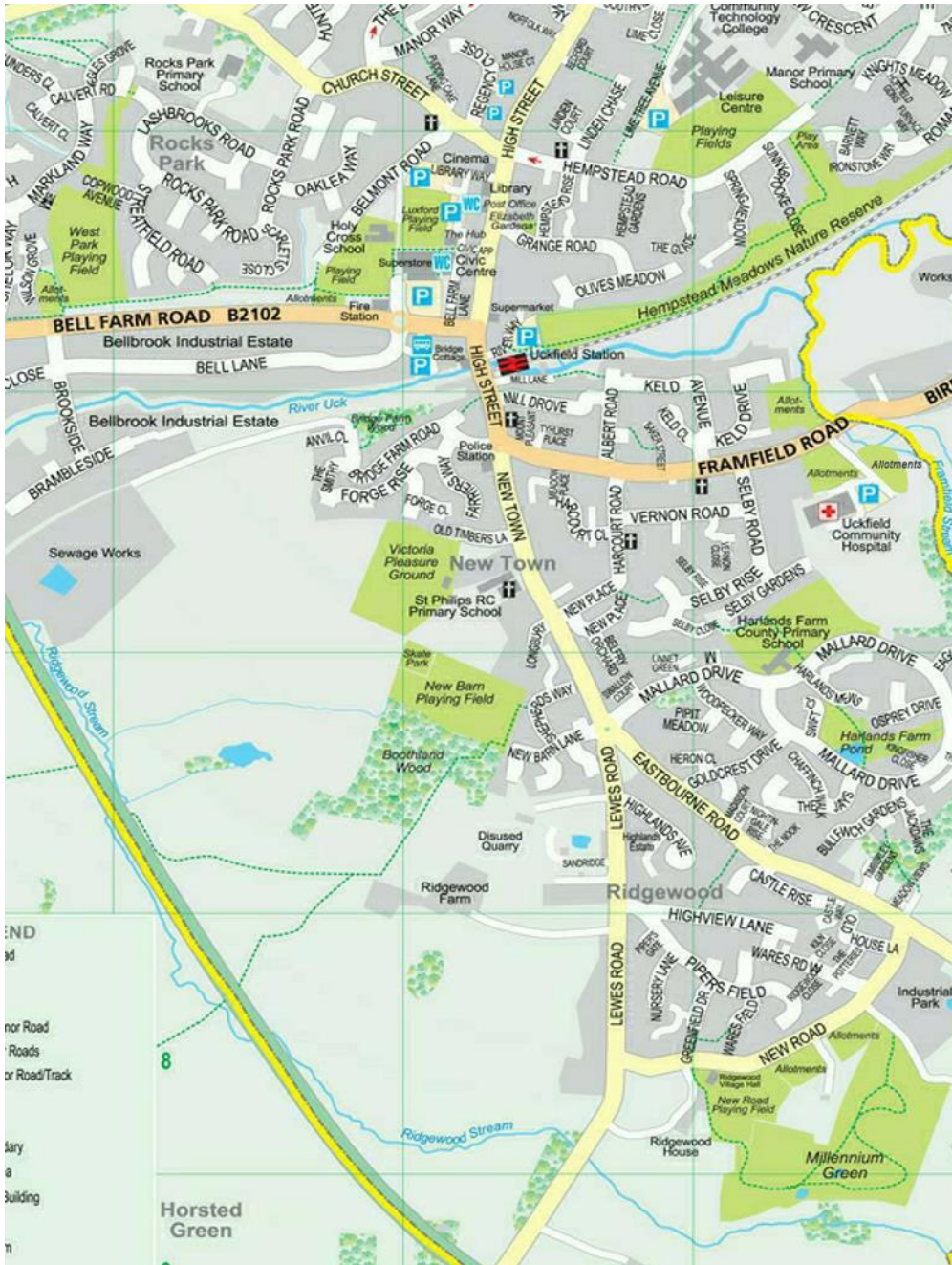
3.1 A copy of our current rates for our sports facilities is attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 Members are asked to request that the combined working group assigned to review allotments and wider fees and charges (Councillor K. Bedwell, Councillor S. Mayhew and Councillor S. Mayhew) and any other interested members meet to consider a way forward and reflects the current circumstances with regards to sports hire.

Appendices: Appendix A: Current fees and charges for sports facilities

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton



Uckfield Town Council

HIRE CHARGES 2023/24 for SPORTS FACILITIES

Uckfield Town Council
Council Offices, Civic Centre, Uckfield TN22 1AE
Tel: 01825 762774 www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk

Uckfield Town Council
Council Offices, Civic Centre, Uckfield TN22 1AE
Tel: 01825 762774 www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk

Terms and Conditions which apply to these facilities will be issued to all hirers

EVENTS PITCH HIRE

- The casual hire charge for locally based organisations is **£67.65** per day (i.e. Luxford Field, West Park & Ridgewood);
- Other commercial organisations will be considered upon application to the Town Council offices;
- Subject to the event taking place, a returnable deposit may be required of **£919.60**;
- Power (electricity) can be made available for which you will be charged at the current unit price by Uckfield Town Council;
- Off-pitch hire – further information available upon request



SPORTS FACILITIES FOR HIRE

Hire per hour + VAT		2023-24 Non-commercial	2023-24 Commercial
Pavilions	Victoria	£7.61	£10.69
Ground charges including pavilion facilities per season		2023-24 Senior (per team)	2023-24 Junior (per team)
Football	Victoria	£999.90	£432.30
	New Barn Farm	£849.20	£432.30
	West Park	£849.20	£432.30
	Harlands	£545.60	£282.70
	Mini Soccer	N/A	£294.80
Cricket	Victoria (grass wicket)	£1,415.70	£720.50
	Victoria (artificial wicket)	£849.20	£432.30
	One off game	£70.79	£21.63
Per team	2023-24		
Stoolball	Victoria and West Park	£247.50	
	Harlands	£198.00	
	Tournament	£83.60	

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 5.5

TO CONFIRM THE FEES AND CHARGES FOR OUR ALLOTMENTS IN 2024/25

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Each year, as part of the budget setting process, the Town Council is required to review its fees and charges. This includes the fees and charges for allotments.
- 1.2 From 1 October 2021 onwards, the Allotment Working Group started to review in detail the structure of the allotment fees and charges and the renewed allotment rates commenced from 1 April 2023.
- 1.3 Succeeding this, members are required to review the allotment fees and charges for 2024/25 and for this purpose to note that in the four years prior to the review period, the Committee had agreed to increase the fees and charges for allotments by 1.5%.
- 1.4 At the last Environment and Leisure Committee on 9 October 2023, members resolved to initially consider increasing the fees and charges for allotments by 1.5% in 2024/25. This would not include the deposit or the admin fee.

2.0 Comparisons

- 2.1 In the past, details of other local council fees and charges have been obtained to try and establish a comparison. However, as with the provision of sports facilities this has proved difficult as other towns and parishes charge differently.

3.0 Current Fees and Charges

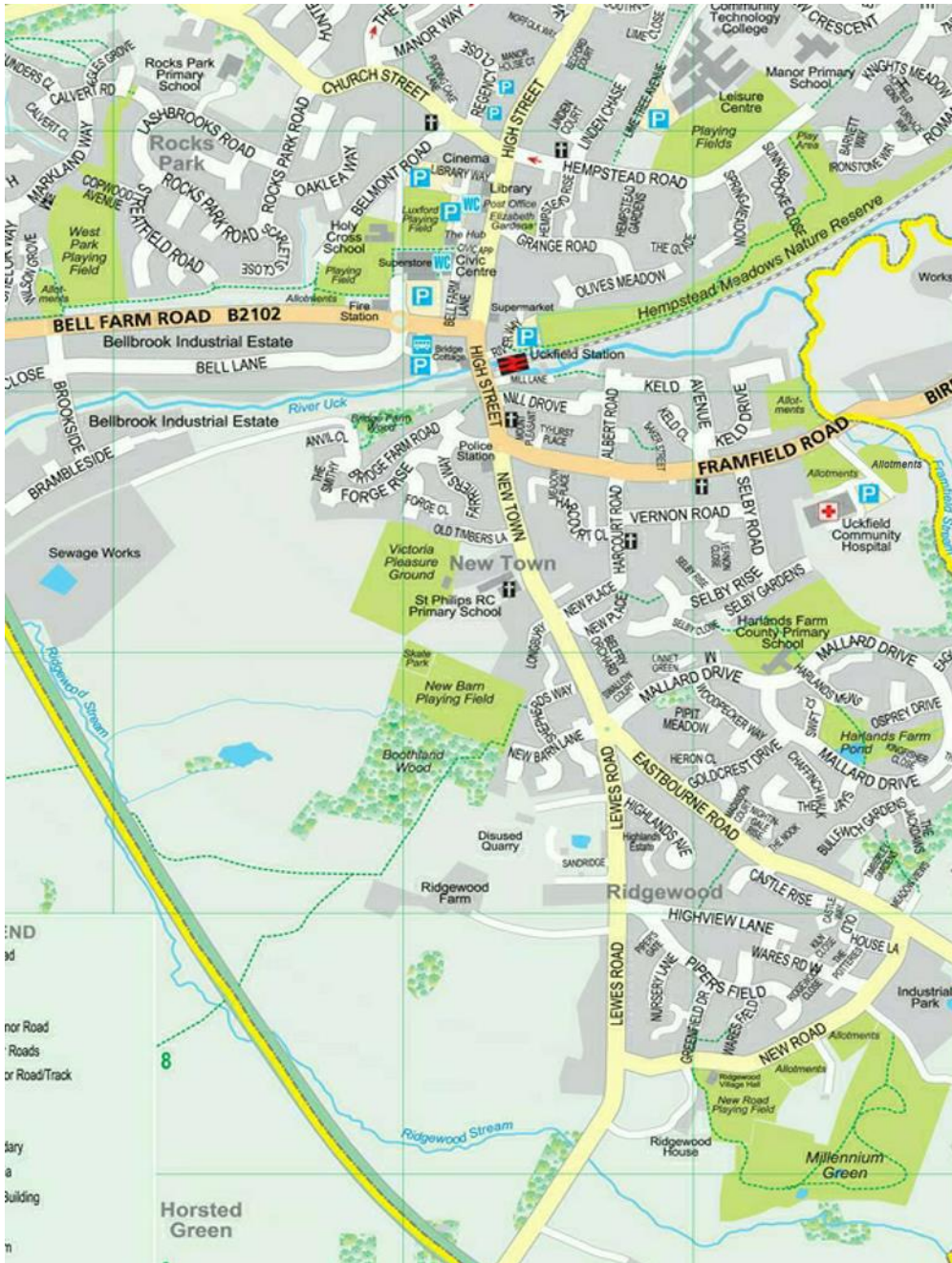
- 3.1 A copy of our current rates for our allotments is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The cost of an allotment plot from 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £2.32 per 15 square metres, plus an additional water charge and £15 admin fee per plot. The deposit for 2023/2024 is £52.00.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to confirm the proposed increase of 1.5% on the current rental fee (only) for allotments in 2024/25

Appendices: Appendix A: Current fees and charges for allotments

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton



HIRE CHARGES 2023/24 for ALLOTMENTS

Terms and Conditions which apply to these facilities will be issued to all hirers

ALLOTMENTS

The annual cost of an allotment plot from 1 April 2023 is **£2.32** per 15m² plus an additional water charge and admin charge of **£15**.

A refundable deposit of **£52.00** is chargeable on all allotments.

There are five allotment sites:

- Bell Lane;
- Bird in Eye;
- Framfield Road East;
- Framfield Road West;
- Ridgewood;
- West Park.



Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 5.6

TO CONFIRM THE FEES AND CHARGES FOR SNATTS ROAD CEMETERY FOR 2024/25

1.0 Summary

1.1 Every year as part of the budget setting process, the Town Council is required to review its fees and charges. In addition to the fees and charges for our room hire and sports facilities, the Town Council is also required to review the fees and charges for burial and ashes interments, along with memorial fees set for Snatts Road Cemetery.

1.2 In early 2022, the Senior Administrative Officer undertook a detailed review of the Town Council's charges in comparison with similar size cemeteries and those in the local area. On reviewing this information in autumn/winter 2022/23, members felt that the rates were satisfactory and therefore kept the usual proposed level of increase.

2.0 Update

2.1 Members are therefore required to review the fees and charges for 2024/25. In the past four years the Environment & Leisure Committee agreed to increase all fees by 1.5% for the Cemetery.

2.2 At the Environment and Leisure meeting held on 9 October 2023, members took an initial view on the fees and charges and felt it would be prudent to continue with the same percentage increase, unless the service was experiencing hardship. Members resolved to initially consider increasing the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery by 1.5% in 2024/25.

A copy of the current rates are attached at Appendix A for reference.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to consider the report and confirm their proposal to increase the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery by 1.5% in 2024/25.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Rules and Regulations

The Snatts Road Cemetery Regulation, a copy of which can be obtained from the Town Council offices, must be adhered to at all times.



Uckfield Town Council

Council Offices, Civic Centre, Uckfield TN22 1AE
Tel: 01825 762774
www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk



Uckfield Town Council

Snatts Road Cemetery Fees

As at **1 April 2023**
Snatts Road Cemetery Fees
as fixed by Uckfield Town Council



Please note: All Exclusive Rights, interment and memorial fees in sections 1-5 are **DOUBLED** for non-parishioners (*non-parishioners are those that have lived outside the parish for six months or more*)

BURIALS

1. **INTERMENT FEE** (including excavation)
 - a. New grave any depth £692.75
 - b. Re-open existing grave £567.00
 - c. Charges for babies and children on application
2. **EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL IN EARTHEN GRAVE**
Deed for the Exclusive Right of Burial for a period of 75 years
 - a. Adult over 18 years of age £801.50
 - b. Child between 1 and 18 years of age £265.15
 - c. Babies under 1 year (parishioners only) Nil
(see below)

The Town Council does not charge for a baby plot for those under 1 year old and will retain the Exclusive Right of Burial unless the plot is purchased at a cost of £252.55. In line with The Social Fund (Children's Funeral Fund for England), burial authorities can claim back the fees incurred for the above exclusive right of burial for a child between 1 and 18 years of age.

ASHES

3. **THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE**
 - a. Deed for the Exclusive Right of Burial of Ashes for a period of 75 years £380.65
 - b. Interment of cremated remains £139.65
4. **CLOISTERED GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE**
The Exclusive Right of Burial of Ashes is not required in this section
 - a. Scattering of cremated remains £139.65

5 MEMORIALS

For the right to erect or place a memorial on a grave the Exclusive Right of Burial must be purchased. The Town Council must approve all memorials and inscriptions including those for babies under 1 year old where the council holds the Exclusive Right of Burial.

Headstones only are permitted on the lawn section plot numbers X1-X296

All memorial sizes must be in accordance with the Cemetery Regulations.

- a. Headstone £169.50 + VAT
- b. Kerb sets including headstone £373.00 + VAT
- c. Kerb sets or book £202.55 + VAT
- d. Tablet – Garden of Remembrance £169.50 + VAT
- e. Plaque – Cloistered Remembrance Wall (single size) – 25 year licence £169.50 + VAT
- f. Plaque – Cloistered Remembrance Wall (double size) – 25 year licence £221.70 + VAT
- g. Additional inscription £58.65 + VAT
- h. Vase memorial only £70.35 + VAT
- i. Rose tree £94.35 + VAT

6 OTHER CHARGES

- a. Cemetery maintenance charge £104.50 + VAT
Applicable for all burial and ashes interments
- b. Fee for search of burial records £11.00 + VAT
- c. Transfer of Deed of Exclusive Rights of Burial £46.10 + VAT

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 7.1

TO NOTE THE CURRENT POSITION WITH THE COUNCIL'S ESTATES

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the current position with the Council's Estates.

Victoria Pleasure Ground and skatepark

Town Councillors and staff are aware the play area needs upgrading. Money has been set aside in 2023/24. It is therefore hoped that with further funding obtained for 2024/25, and community infrastructure levy/developer contributions, the play area will be able to be upgraded in 2024/25.

Discussions have started with companies to get designs and an idea of costings for the play area. First contractor has met Estates and Facilities Manager to discuss design and costing. Quote to follow then other contractors will be brought in for comparison.

Due to vandalism a new skate park sign and two new litter bins have been installed. A stone pillar that was vandalised has also been made safe.

A quote was obtained for the replacement of the nets on the practice cricket area - £1,975 plus VAT. This work has yet to be carried out, but will need to do so before the start of the next cricket season in 2024.

Hempstead Lane Play Area and Hempstead Meadows LNR

The zip line is showing signs of wood rot. The Grounds team will continue to monitor but the Estates & Facilities Manager is investigating the cost of a steel replacement which would have a longer lifespan. Quotes being sort for this to be installed at the same time as replacing Victoria play area to reduce cost.

Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve sign vandalised, both posts replaced

Rocks Park Play Area

A tree limb snapped off in winds has been removed by tree Surgeon. Repairs to the playground surface to be carried out.

Snatts Road Cemetery

Further concerns have been raised with regard to the Lime Tree in the old cemetery.

West Park Recreation ground and West Park LNR

A tree survey by an Independent Arboriculturist was undertaken on the boundary of the residential area and West Park Local Nature Reserve. Any works required will be followed up in due course either by the Ranger or local contractors.

Ridgewood Recreation Ground

The zip line seat has been damaged and is to be replaced.

Elizabeth Gardens

Nothing new to report.

Luxford field and play area

Fixing on climbing bridge repaired. Vandalised fencing repaired. Small dead tree removed. Graffiti removed from Town Council sign.

Woodlands

Works to address ash dieback have been completed in Boothland Wood this winter and commenced in Nightingale Wood on 6 November 2023.

Equipment & Vehicles

Exploration into the lease of a replacement for one of the Ground vehicles has commenced. Further details will be presented to members once we have the information available.

An official offer was made and accepted for the purchase of the Ransomes mower. Three push mowers (including a mulching mower) have been purchased with the money which are more usable for the grounds team. Money remains left over for further equipment. Quotes for a new better powered tractor being obtained.

Street Furniture & Lighting

The Estates and Facilities Manager met with East Sussex Highways for an update on current issues. Awaiting copy of outstanding jobs.

Other

The annual play area ROSPA inspections have been carried out with no red risks Highlighted. The Grounds team will work through the Amber risks. The Head Groundsman and one grounds staff member have been trained for operational inspections. Quotes are being sought for external contractors to work alongside.

A broken seesaw at Oakwood Drive play area has been made safe by the Grounds team and a replacement is on order.

Hughes Way Play area – a fallen tree has been removed by the Grounds team.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officers: James Hollingdale

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 7.2

TO CONSIDER PATHWAY EXTENSION COSTS AT VICTORIA PAVILION

1.0 Overview

1.1 At the last Environment and Leisure Committee on 10 October 2023, members agreed for a gate to be installed on the main drive (with a pedestrian gate and closer) and to defer the decision to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park to the next meeting, to provide time to seek further details on accessibility and funding options.

1.2 The construction of a new pathway would need to be carried out sooner or later due to safety concerns. Members had also requested that any footway installed would need to meet disabled access requirements.

2.0 Comparison of costs

2.1 Members recognised that the costs could be reduced if the Grounds team were able to carry out the works instead of hiring external contractors, but also recognised their current workload, with support needing to be given to the Hub site also.

2.2 Two external estimates were previously sought to compare the costs:

Company	Description	Quotation
Company A (local)	Construct a new 4ft wide gravel path, to supply and install six inches of compacted scalplings on geo-textile membrane	£4,850.00 plus VAT
Company B (Crawley)	Similar to the above	£5,300.00 plus VAT

2.3 The Grounds team believe they could carry out the works at approximately half of the above costs. This estimate was provided to Office staff in September 2023 so may be subject to slight change and consideration of ensuring wider path and gradient up towards car park:

Grounds team	Machinery – hire of digger	£220 per week
	Roller and trailer	£90 per week
	10 tons of MOT type 1	£370.00
	Terram x 2 rolls	£139.96
	Gravel boards x 20	£183.33
	Hot lay tarmac	£880.00
	The estimate comes in at approx. £1883 but we should allow for the works taking longer than one week, and material price increases:	£2,500.00 plus VAT

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 Members are asked to consider the above costs, and advise the Clerk of how they wish to proceed.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 8.1

TO NOTE A FURTHER UPDATE ON OUR PARKS INITIATIVE

1.0 Additional session – Saturdays plus a weekday (yet to be confirmed)

- 1.1 The Our Parks initiative that is currently being run on Saturday mornings in Harlands Playing Fields will now continue with additional funding support from the Wealden District Council Wellbeing Programme which aims to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.2 This funding has been provided by East Sussex Public Health and will enable the current programme in Uckfield to be expanded, and see two sessions each week, including on weekday session.
- 1.3 Officers have identified a day and time that we would like to run the additional session and the Wealden District Council Project Officer has passed this onto Our Parks so that they can start to plan ahead. An online exercise Couch to Fitness programme will also be available to all residents.
- 1.4 Both of those start dates are yet to be confirmed but are anticipated to be soon!
- 1.5 The sessions are funded for fifty weeks and will run right through until this time next year. It isn't ideal to be starting again now during the autumn season but we are informed that there will be a big promotional push in the lead up.
- 1.6 It would not be prudent to wait until the Spring due to the funding agreement that Wealden District Council's Wellbeing team have in place with East Sussex Public Health. Sessions in other areas of Wealden District will also be starting in November as well.

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 Our Parks started in Uckfield on 12 November 2022 and provides weekly, free-of-charge outdoor physical activity sessions. The start-up funding was made available through the London Marathon Charitable Trust and Fields in Trust Active Spaces Programme, which provided a grant of £5k to Uckfield Town Council to deliver this exciting initiative. The grant offer was also made on the condition that Harlands Playing Fields were protected through Fields in Trust's 'Deed of Dedication'.
- 2.2 Going forward, we would be really keen to continue the programme and be able to consider options and whether to continue to fund "Our Parks" after the next 12 months. This is a good opportunity to try to encourage more people to come along and join in!

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Wellbeing Officer will be in touch to update us on the progress that has been made with Our Parks. Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 9.1

UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP

1.0 Overview

1.1 A joint meeting was held by the Allotment Working Group, members of the Allotment Association and allotment reps on 6 November 2023 at 5:30pm, at the Civic Centre.

2.0 Updates

2.1 There were some positive comments made and useful tips in relation to the general upkeep and management of the allotments, and some feedback from the grounds team.

Committee members noted that the allotments waiting list had reduced considerably since lockdown and site inspections carried out at the beginning of May, July and September. Those tenants who did not wish to continue rescinded their plots and some of the plots not being used were offered to the next in line on the waiting list.

Although there were letters sent out for non-cultivation or any issues on the allotments, it was also recognised that allotments provided a safe space and that any tenants with health issues would be supported as much as possible. The allotment land did need to be managed however for health and safety reasons and to ensure weed control.

The next inspections would be carried out in March 2024 with a council official, a councillor and a member of the Allotment Association present on each site.

2.2 A fly tipping sign had been installed on the Bird in Eye allotment site and the woodchip area fenced to prevent this space being used as a dumping area for commercial hedge cutting green waste or fly tipping. The Head Groundsman had not authorised anyone to tip woodchip there and tipping in front of the bins made it impossible to maintain.

The wood chip being tipped was low quality leaf mulch and not what the grounds staff would generally use either, they had their own, so this would no longer be available to tenants as it was becoming a health and safety issue.

2.3 The Head Groundsman also reiterated that they were not responsible for the side paths and should be mown by allotment holders.

Grass cutting times were provided to the group, although this was not set in stone due to weather constraints.

One of the reps advised that a tenant had been cutting the main pathways himself. However, tenants were asked not to as this could be an insurance issue, if for example the pathways were not cut properly and a complaint was received.

The main pathways were cut using a mower and strimmer. During wet weather, a tenant suggested that a strimmer did not work as well, although large machinery could get clogged and also would not work on wet grass.

3.0 Items discussed

- 3.1 A question had arisen at the Allotment Conference as to why tenants with two (or more) adjacent plots had to pay more than one admin fee. Those reasons were explained and those tenants had also been contacted and offered priority if they preferred to swap for a larger plot.

The yearly fees and charges would be reviewed shortly, although this year the admin costs would not be increased.

It was important to mention that the costs to run the allotments were still being subsidised, even though the admin fee had only just been introduced this year.

An allotment rep also mentioned that comparatively, our allotment costs were lower than some other local towns.

- 3.2 One of our reps had been approached by a tenant asking why the allotments needed to be managed at all.

The allotments were a statutory provision of the Town Council and they needed to be run and managed properly. This was hopefully becoming more evident since the allotments had improved enormously on each site in terms of health and safety, cultivation and weed control.

The allotment rep also added that there was a management committee for this purpose and that tenants needed to be aware of this.

Tenants were also asked to raise any issues or concerns they may have via their rep or the Town Council or at the annual Allotment Conference.

- 3.3 Attendees were keen to increase the level of interest and communication with the Allotment Association.

An allotment rep mentioned that he did not have a car so he could not reach the hut and did not know how to reach them if he had a query. Another tenant also had a problem with the order forms, not knowing where to hand them in on time for deadlines for certain produce, when the hut was closed.

The working group would contact the Allotment Association to see if they could go around the allotments or come up with a feasible action plan to assist with any of those issues. Maybe to help them too by sending out information on their behalf or to advertise if one of them could be on the allotments on a particular day for tenants to visit them in person. The Town Council were here to collate that information and get it out there.

The Chairman of the Allotment Association did suggest that anyone could come along to the AGM meetings at the Ringles Cross Pub, and that he would provide those dates. The meetings were usually held on the second Tuesday of the month.

- 3.4 A tenant on the Framfield allotments had asked if the spare land between the Framfield East site and the Town Council car park could be utilised for allotments.

The Head Groundsman had said that this land was not really fit for this purpose, that it was too heavily wooded to be easily used for allotments.

However, he had some ideas for possible use of this land, although the area could not be dug up and it was an area prone to flooding. The Allotment Working Group would await further ideas.

Also, this tenant was concerned about the openness of the Framfield West site and that various animals could enter if the gate was being left open. The Senior Administrative Officer would feed this back to the grounds team to see if the gate could be securely locked and a sign put on the gate.

- 3.5 The taps were currently still on, but would be turned off once the temperature dropped. There was mention of taps being turned on again during winter months on two sites, so the working group had asked for a generic email to be sent out to explain that meter readings were taken when taps were turned off and to look into a tag to put on the tap to prevent these being turned on.

- 3.6 An item was raised by an allotment rep in relation to tenants who still rented an allotment plot but had moved out of the parish.

A comparison was made with another local parish which included a clause in their Allotment Rules and Regulations allowing one months' notice to those who moved outside of the parish.

This also raised a further query that the council may not be able to monitor if an allotment was being sublet.

The working group would look at this at the next working group as this might help reduce the waiting list in future.

This would need to be ratified by the Environment and Leisure Committee first however, before coming into effect in 2025. It was recognised that this would also require a twelve months' notice period if members agreed to make any similar changes to the tenancy agreement.

The meeting finished at 6:35pm and the next joint Allotment Group meeting was due to take place on 26 February 2024.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Agenda Item 10.8

UPDATE FROM WEALDLINK – COMMUNITY BUS SERVICES FORUM MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

1.0 Summary

1.1 Key points from the in-person meeting attended by Councillor Angie Smith:

Traveller numbers across the main services had picked up.

Card machines had now been installed on all buses, although 80% of passengers were still concessionary pass holders.

There was a shortage of staff and volunteers. Currently a D1 licence was required for most vehicles.

As mentioned at other meetings by the Town Clerk, the 262 bus was not currently running whilst they awaited confirmation of funding. The aspiration was for an Ashdown Forest route, linking with Uckfield, Buxted and Fairwarp. Ideally this would link up with train services. There may be support from the Community Rail partnership for this. Still waiting confirmation from other parish councils, which the Town Clerk would follow up on in advance of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting.

It was noted that community groups could book the Wealdlink buses.

There was lots of discussion about the new Flexibus service which was not viewed that positively. Although it was recognised that it was in its first year and trial period, and was not being used efficiently.

From a financial perspective, Wealdlink would be moving into deficit from November 2023.

Councillor A. Smith.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact officer: Rachel Newton