



# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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**Town Clerk – Holly Goring**

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Meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** to be held on  
**Monday 22 January 2024 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 13<sup>th</sup> November 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 November 2023

### 6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1. To request any items for the next Strengthening Local Relations meeting with ES Highways in February (date to be set)

### 7.0. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1. To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates
- 7.2. To provide an update on Grant Funding from Wealden Community Spaces Programme
- 7.3. To consider potential funding announced for Wealden orchards
- 7.4. To receive an update on street lighting repairs

- 7.5 To consider proposals to improve safety at the lower end of Luxford Field
- 7.6 To consider future options for Rural Grass Cutting – Wild Life Corridors (ESCC)

**8.0. LEISURE**

- 8.1 To note an update on the Our Parks Initiative in 2024
- 8.2 To note an update from the Urban Tennis Foundation

**9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

- 9.1 To note an update from the Allotment Working Group
- 9.2 To note an update from the Sports Fees & Charges 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
- 12.2. To provide an update on survey works at Snatts Road Cemetery
- 12.3. To consider a proposal by the Uckfield Grasshoppers Junior Football Club



**Town Clerk**

16 January 2024



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm**  
**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. S. Mayhew

Cllr. D. French

Cllr. Michael McClafferty

Cllr. K. Bedwell

Cllr. Val Frost

Cllr. Diane Ward

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Peter Selby

Councillor Chris Macve

Holly Goring – Town Clerk

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 A. Smith, Councillor D. Bennett and Councillor Bernadette Reed due to other commitments.

**4.0. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 9 October 2023

**EL.31.11.23** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 9 October 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: 13.07.23 – To review Seasonal pitch hire terms and conditions 2023-24.

22.10.23 – To consider applying for funding through the Wealden Community Spaces Grants Programme.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report and ongoing actions.

It was agreed to remove item:

FC86.01.23 – Victoria Rainwater Tank Clean and Service.

**5.0. FINANCE**

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report.

5.2. To note the Income & Expenditure report ending 30 September 2023

Members noted the report – no comments.

5.3. To re-consider budget priorities and initiatives for 2024-25

In relation to continued savings towards the upgrade of the Victoria Play area, Hempstead zip line and West Park Play Area, those figures would be determined once the details of the wider budget setting process were further underway.

It would require a large lump sum of money for these kind of upgrade works, around £40-50k and would depend largely on financial planning aspects and the priority of any of those works required. There would be some Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding available as well earmarked reserves for this, although there may be a slight shortage still.

The Estates and Facilities Manager had met with one company, HAGS UK which we had used before for an initial forecast of costs and that idea would provide a rough idea of how much to put aside and things to consider when going out to tender.

If there were any further ideas or issues, members were asked to contact the Senior Administrative Officer who would then pass them on to the working group.

**EL32.11.23** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to support those suggestions for the draft budget 2024/25.

5.4. To confirm the fees and charges for sports facilities for 2024-25

Although members initially considered placing an increase on the fees and charges for sports facilities by 5% in 2024/25, there were various complexities in the charging of sports hire outlined in the report and the structure of the fees and charges would therefore need to be reviewed in further detail to reflect the current circumstances.

Members of the combined working group assigned to review the allotments and wider fees and charges included Councillors Mayhew, Bedwell, Smith, McClafferty and Councillor Selby also offered to assist.

A date would be set for the group to initially meet to discuss and consider a way forward for the provision of sports hire.

This may involve a further meeting with the Uckfield Grasshoppers and Groundstaff to look at the impact of usage on the pitches.

The Town Council's budget needed to be adopted by mid-January, but any new charges would not need to be agreed until April 2024, when the football and cricket seasons began.

**EL33.11.23** Members **RESOLVED** to agree for the combined fees and charges working group to meet to consider a way forward and to reflect the current circumstances with regards to sports hire.

5.5. To confirm the fees and charges for allotments in 2024-25

A member of the allotment working group reminded members that although the admin fee was brand new as of 1 April 2023, this would not be increased this year.

Those with two or more adjacent plots had been given priority to request a larger plot so as not to have to pay two admin fees.

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.

Also, 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 had been considered reasonable and refundable.

**EL34.11.23** Members **RESOLVED** to increase the fees and charges for allotments by 1.5% in 2024/25. This would not include the deposit or the admin fee.

5.6 To confirm the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery in 2024-25  
At the previous meeting, members suggested that the Town Council continues with the same percentage increase unless the service was experiencing hardship.

**EL35.11.23** Members **RESOLVED** to increase the fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery by 1.5% 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

One member, referenced the vandalism recently experienced and commented that people needed to be aware that the costs of rectifying any damage from vandalism would come out of everyone's council tax.

Members noted the report.

7.2 To consider pathway extension costs around the perimeter of Victoria Pavilion  
Members noted the details of costs outlined in the report and were keen for the Grounds staff to carry out this work internally, since the works would be done at a higher standard if carried out locally and the staff would not want to keep coming back in order to fix anything.

As discussed previously, some money was available from earmarked reserves which could be used for this purpose.

**EL.36.11.23** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park and for this work to be carried out in-house.

**8.0 LEISURE**

8.1 To note a further update on the Our Parks Initiative

Members noted the report and enquired as to when the sessions would continue, as the attendance was very good so far so it would be good to keep this momentum going.

The Senior Administrative Officer advised that as soon as the Wellbeing Project Officer at Wealden District Council had any further details, they would let them know, although the Town Council was keen to find out sooner so that we could help promote this.

## **9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

### **9.1 To note and update from the Allotment Working Group**

One member asked on behalf of a couple of local residents if the majority of tenants were happy with the explanation as to why the fees and charges had gone up.

At the Allotment Conference on 20<sup>th</sup> September, the allotment working group had ascertained that the majority were happy and understood the reasons behind the additional admin fee.

The fees had not been addressed properly over the last few years but the communication about this was now there and things were definitely improving.

There were still some communication issues to iron out although the local allotment holders had also helped to guide the council with local knowledge when it came to understanding the typical year of the allotment plots and to assist with the checks. With the help of the Allotment Association and allotment reps, this was something that had helped enormously.

Allotment tenants were asked to please speak to the Rachel if they had any further concerns at all.

Members noted the 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**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.7 Uckfield Youth Club Board**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.8 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link**

Members noted the report with thanks to Councillor A. Smith.

### **10.9 Uckfield and District Twinning Association (AGM and events only)**

Nothing to report at this time.

## **11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed the new Marketing and Community Engagement Officer to the organisation and wished to relay that they were doing a good job.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.37.11.23** 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 19:37pm.

## 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
<b><u>EL.28.09.16</u></b>	<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 <b>RESOLVED</b> 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.
<b><u>EL.26.01.19</u></b>	It was <b>RESOLVED</b> 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		
<b><u>EL73.05.22</u></b>	<u>To consider a number of improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield</u> Members noted the report and <b>RESOLVED</b> 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.
<b><u>EL.16.09.22</u></b>	<u>7.4 To consider street lighting repairs</u> Members noted the report and <b>RESOLVED</b> 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	The Estates and Facilities Manager has met with the Electrical Supervisor at Balfour Beatty and agreed the liability details with upgrades to lighting.  A copy of outstanding jobs has also been received.  There is a six-month backlog but

				an update report on lighting repairs has been submitted to this E&L meeting, and quotations are now being sent through and authorised by UTC. <b>NFA</b>
<b>Resolution No.</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
<b><u>EL28.10.23</u></b>	<b><u>7.3 To consider the installation of a gate to restrict access to the Grounds work area next to Victoria Pavillion</u></b> (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.	09.10.23	HG/JH	Members agreed at the E&L meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park and for this work to be carried out in-house.  The gate has been installed at Victoria with relevant signage. The path will be looked at when we have staff capacity.

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

**Projects in 2021/22 Budget – New Initiatives**

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

**Projects in 2022/23 Budget – New Initiatives**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Speed reduction initiative (already have £3,199.64 in earmarked reserves)</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>69</b>
<b><u>FC.82.01.22</u></b>	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**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Tree for a tree planting programme</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>74</b>
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£2,000	23.01.23	Planting is due to take place in March 2024, this year.	

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>New gazebo and trestle table for events</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>75</b>
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£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**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Victoria Rainwater Tank Clean and Service</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>77</b>
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£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.	<b>NFA.</b>		

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Wildflower areas</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>78</b>
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£250	23.01.23	Seeds are being planted as we speak. <b>NFA.</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Vehicle replacement</b>		<b>Project Number</b>	<b>79</b>
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£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.	
	-	16.01.24	Looking into options. Plan to make lease arrangement in 2024/25, so funds will need to be carried forward.	

**Environment Leisure Committee as at 30 Nov 2023**

	Apr 23 Actuals £	May 23 Actuals £	Jun 23 Actuals £	Jul 23 Actuals £	Aug 23 Actuals £	Sep 23 Actuals £	Oct 23 Actuals £	Nov 23 Actuals £	Actuals at 30 Nov 23	Budget at 30 Nov 23	Dec 23 Budget £	Jan 24 Budget £	Feb 24 Budget £	Mar 24 Budget £	Total 2023/24	Budget 2023/24
<b>Sales</b>																
Contribution to Town Centre Security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	620	0	0	620	620
Weald Hall Events	1,061	860	1,380	2,046	1,739	2,092	2,950	4,801	16,929	16,667	2,571	2,571	2,571	2,571	27,214	25,000
Allotments	6,862	(15)	71	(86)	0	21	77	(63)	6,867	7,000	0	0	0	0	6,867	7,000
Allotment Admin Charge	3,555	45	30	90	0	30	45	0	3,795	2,500	0	0	0	0	3,795	2,500
Allotment Deposits	54	156	104	156	0	104	156	0	730	667	83	83	83	83	1,063	1,000
Playing Fields & Pitches, Sport Income	27	87	164	351	83	166	0	0	878	800	0	12,000	0	200	13,078	13,000
Playing Fields & Pitches, Event Income	68	325	124	4,337	0	1,428	238	0	6,519	5,000	0	0	0	0	6,519	5,000
WDC- WPark Culverts Agreement	0	370	0	0	0	0	0	0	370	400	0	0	0	0	370	400
Cemetery - Interments	776	6,850	5,736	2,152	2,061	1,500	4,597	4,776	28,448	20,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	38,448	30,000
Cemetery - Memorials	1,453	105	1,187	46	509	46	776	1,143	5,264	4,000	500	500	500	500	7,264	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	314	325	2,639	2,667	333	333	333	333	3,973	4,000
Sale of Ransome Parkway Mower	0	0	0	0	0	3,500	0	0	3,500	0	0	0	0	0	3,500	0
Env Sundry Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	200	214	200
Litter/bus station	0	398	0	0	398	0	0	398	1,193	994	0	0	331	0	1,524	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	0	0	3,801	0	0	0	0	0	3,801	0
Roundabout income	864	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	864	850	0	0	0	0	864	850
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>14,819</b>	<b>9,388</b>	<b>9,422</b>	<b>11,231</b>	<b>5,794</b>	<b>10,610</b>	<b>9,166</b>	<b>11,379</b>	<b>81,809</b>	<b>61,544</b>	<b>5,988</b>	<b>18,608</b>	<b>6,319</b>	<b>6,688</b>	<b>119,412</b>	<b>97,195</b>

£21,916.87 of this expenditure is due to be covered by Ash Dieback earmarked reserves.

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

	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Actuals at 30 Nov 23	Budget at 30 Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total 2023/24	Budget 2023/24
<b>Purchases</b>																
Protective - Outdoor staff	80	92	92	237	0	278	81	45	905	433	54	54	54	54	1,122	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	0	0	5,031	5,000	0	0	0	12,500	17,531	17,500
Bus shelters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	391	391	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allotments	22	(1,642)	15	156	1,111	475	193	807	1,137	3,000	0	0	0	500	1,637	3,500
Playing fields and pitches	276	1,086	769	1,303	816	444	1,185	435	6,315	15,853	1,982	1,982	1,982	1,982	14,242	23,780
Playfing fields electricity	33	1,029	69	69	82	435	435	466	2,618	220	0	0	0	0	2,618	220
Play Areas	0	0	80	686	1,497	30	750	0	3,043	3,000	0	0	0	0	3,043	3,000
Cemetery, grave digging	320	640	1,346	320	640	0	0	640	3,906	3,333	333	333	333	333	5,239	5,000
Cemetery, rates & water	1,116	115	115	(1,695)	115	115	149	115	144	1,467	183	183	183	183	878	2,200
Cemetery, litter	234	293	249	220	249	249	358	205	2,056	2,000	250	250	250	250	3,056	3,000
Cemetery, maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200	200
General equipment repairs	708	136	1,211	1,561	2,271	0	257	102	6,246	2,500	0	0	0	0	6,246	2,500
New Equipment	0	0	747	0	327	2,230	0	0	3,303	3,500	0	0	0	1,500	4,803	5,000
Ground Maintenance General	2,341	715	627	803	710	17	10	445	5,668	2,000	0	0	0	0	5,668	2,000
Hire of equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	675	0	0	0	675	0
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Ranger)	2,377	2,189	2,177	0	0	1,028	2,783	3,312	13,865	20,714	2,589	2,589	2,589	3,614	25,247	31,071
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Working budget)	176	9	0	0	0	0	0	12	196	2,000	250	250	250	250	1,196	3,000
Transit	97	163	94	413	119	0	0	0	887	1,333	222	222	222	222	1,775	2,000
Ford Ranger	546	60	260	69	330	11	0	141	1,417	1,333	167	167	167	167	2,083	2,000
Tractor maintenance & running costs	202	2,242	2,982	48	164	0	88	0	5,726	1,500	0	0	0	0	5,726	1,500
Movana Vehicle	536	94	109	214	129	0	0	864	1,945	1,333	167	167	167	167	2,612	2,000
Grass cutting mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	167	167	167	167	667	1,500
Fencing	45	193	0	10	0	0	0	0	248	667	83	83	83	83	581	1,000
Trees	120	650	0	167	3,002	750	1,290	21,037	27,016	8,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	33,016	12,000
Litter bins	0	0	0	786	140	0	0	0	926	800	0	0	0	0	926	800
Litter collection, open spaces	948	980	1,135	1,295	1,006	1,109	1,112	980	8,564	6,067	758	758	758	758	11,597	9,100
Horticulture	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	200	25	25	25	25	137	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	6,413	1,037	10,730	9,000	0	0	0	6,000	16,730	15,000
Corp dev- signage outside areas	0	0	537	0	196	0	0	0	733	500	0	0	0	0	733	500
Groundsmen - salaries	6,339	7,274	9,382	9,894	10,306	10,026	9,849	14,716	77,786	80,255	10,032	10,032	10,032	10,032	117,913	120,382
Groundsmen - National insurance	561	587	772	842	899	893	836	1,508	6,898	6,531	816	816	816	816	10,164	9,796
Groundsmen - Pension	1,505	1,676	2,056	1,453	2,072	2,015	1,980	2,940	15,697	14,767	1,846	1,846	1,846	1,846	23,080	22,150
Town Security/CCTV	1,482	55	976	60	55	58	58	1,346	4,089	2,200	0	0	0	0	4,089	2,200
Floral displays	0	1,343	507	507	657	507	0	0	3,520	3,500	0	0	0	0	3,520	3,500
Repair and replace street furniture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	750	0	0	0	750	750	1,500
Cleaning materials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50

**Environment Leisure Committee as at 30 Nov 2023**

	Apr 23 Actuals £	May 23 Actuals £	Jun 23 Actuals £	Jul 23 Actuals £	Aug 23 Actuals £	Sep 23 Actuals £	Oct 23 Actuals £	Nov 23 Actuals £	Actuals at 30 Nov 23	Budget at 30 Nov 23	Dec 23 Budget £	Jan 24 Budget £	Feb 24 Budget £	Mar 24 Budget £	Total 2023/24	Budget 2023/24
Performing rights	157	671	0	0	0	475	478	0	1,781	400	0	0	0	0	1,781	400
Event Advertising Marketing	190	80	130	80	530	280	80	80	1,450	2,333	292	292	292	767	3,092	3,500
Weald on the Field	550	138	0	1,533	6,411	984	0	0	9,617	4,000	0	0	0	0	9,617	4,000
Climate Change Working Group activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000
Twinning Hospitality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
HMLNR & WPLNR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	350	0	0	150	500	500
<b>Total Purchases</b>	<b>26,026</b>	<b>21,868</b>	<b>26,435</b>	<b>21,031</b>	<b>33,833</b>	<b>24,691</b>	<b>28,385</b>	<b>51,623</b>	<b>233,893</b>	<b>210,489</b>	<b>22,241</b>	<b>21,216</b>	<b>21,216</b>	<b>58,566</b>	<b>356,741</b>	<b>330,499</b>

**New initiatives 2023/24**

ESCC Grass Verge cutting	4,442	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,442	N/A	0	0	0	0	4,442	4,442
Tree for a tree planting programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	2,000
New gazebo and trestle tables for events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	300
King's Coronation	1,879	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,969	N/A	0	0	0	0	1,969	2,000
Victoria Rain Water Tank clean and service	4,290	0	0	0	0	0	1,031	0	5,321	N/A	0	0	0	0	5,321	7,000
Wildflower areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	250
Vehicle replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	7,500
<b>Total New Initiatives 2022/23</b>	<b>10,611</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,732</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,732</b>	<b>23,492</b>

**Earmarked reserves expenditure covering above expenditure (in progress)**

Cycle to Work scheme	0	0	0	0	0	1,631	0	0	1,631	N/A						
Ash dieback					1,270	90	250	20,307	21,917	N/A						

Income for Cycle to Work Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	116	116	231	N/A						
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## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 6.1**

#### **TO REQUEST ANY ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING STRENGTHENING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS MEETING WITH EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 Members are asked to provide any items they may wish to raise for the next Strengthening Local Relations meeting to be held on a date (yet to be confirmed) potentially in late February 2024. This meeting is a partnership meeting between Uckfield Town Council and East Sussex Highways and takes place every six months. This enables us to raise ongoing issues that need to be brought to attention.
- 1.2 The agenda will be circulated two weeks prior to the meeting by the Customer Service Manager at ES Highways. Items are therefore required as soon as possible so that all attendees, including the Highway Steward, are aware and can provide any feedback or updates at the meeting.

##### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are asked to provide any items for consideration.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **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. Some funds were made available in 2023/24, funds are waiting in earmarked reserves and the remaining funds have been set aside within the budget for 2024/25. We therefore intend to upgrade the play area in the next financial year.

One of the new bins has been vandalised. The Grounds team are looking into possibility of moving this bin further away from the skate park.

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. After speaking to playground companies, it has been recommended to replace the zip line with vikor swing as its cheaper to purchase, maintain, and they see less health and safety implications/maintenance costs. The first quote received for supplying and installing a vikor swing is around £18,000 with a new surface included. This and early quotations for Victoria Play Area will be presented to Environment & Leisure in February/March 2024.

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

A report was presented to Full Council on 11 December 2023, regarding the Lime Tree. Contact is being made with the deed holders of in graves near to where works need to take place.

##### 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 are being followed up 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

### Hughes Way play area

A large and very deep hole appeared in the ground, which was thought to relate to where a tree stump had been removed some years back. The Grounds staff have now filled this area back in.

### 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 were completed in Boothland Wood and Nightingale Wood in November 2023. Restocking (replanting) will commence in March 2024.

### 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 are being obtained.

### Street Furniture & Lighting

The Estates and Facilities Manager met with East Sussex Highways for an update on current issues. A report is available at agenda item 7.4.

### 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 new rocker has been installed this week.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officers: James Hollingdale

## Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 22 January 2024

### Agenda Item 7.2

#### TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON GRANT FUNDING FROM THE WEALDEN COMMUNITY SPACES PROGRAMME

##### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides some good news for the new year! We have been awarded £1,250 towards the cost of the following works that we applied for through the Wealden Community Spaces Programme.
- 1.2 We estimated this costing approximately £2,500, with works being carried out in-house to improve footways and steps within our woodlands and nature reserves. Uckfield Town Council was required to match fund the initiative.

Item or Activity:	Cost of Item:	Amount Requested from us:
<i>Replace sleeper bridges in Boothland Wood</i>	£420	£210
<i>Replace steps to a manageable stepping height – Boothland Wood</i>	£500	£250
<i>Introduce sleeper walkway – West Park LNR</i>	£780	£390
<i>Introduce sleeper bridge – Hempstead Meadows LNR</i>	£300	£150
<i>Lower steps need replacing – Bridge Farm Wood</i>	£500	£250
	£2,500	£1,250
<b>Total Requested</b> Note: 'Box B' MUST be between £1,000 - £5,000 and your organisation must be contributing towards at least 50% of the total cost of the overall project.	Box A (total project costs) <b>£2,500</b>	Box B <b>£1,250</b>

- 1.3 Grounds staff intend to purchase a milling kit (see link below) that will suit the 500i power unit and allow us to make our own sleepers for bridges along with aiding multiple projects. This has been allowed for within existing revenue budgets:  
<https://www.chainsawbars.co.uk/product/3076cm-lo-pro-milling-kit-3076cm-lo-pro-gb-bar-stihl-2/>

##### 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 7.3**

#### **TO CONSIDER POTENTIAL FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR WEALDEN ORCHARDS**

##### **1.0 Funding announced for Wealden orchards**

- 1.1 To mark National Tree Week 2023 – the UK's largest annual tree celebration – Wealden District Council is delighted to announce a successful bid for funding, which will support tree planting initiatives across the district and contribute to supporting biodiversity, tackling climate change and enhancing community wellbeing.
- 1.2 The fund will support the purchase of trees, protection measures and establishment costs as well as commemorative signage. Planting will take place in autumn/winter 2024-2025, allowing plenty of time to plan the orchard appropriately. The fund will be launched in early 2024.
- 1.3 The council has been awarded a grant of £27,756 for a community orchard project in Wealden. Any town or parish council, residents' group, local environmental group or voluntary organisation or school will be able to apply for funding for fruit trees to create their own community orchard.
- 1.4 The fund allows the council to facilitate new planting and restoration of more orchards. Nationally some 90% of traditional orchards have been lost since the 1950s to neglect or development. Orchards are classified as 'priority habitats' by Natural England and Defra, and they're included in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 1.5 Planting more trees in the district will help to 'lock up' carbon, contributing in its own way toward the council's ambition of making the district net zero. Orchards are fantastic for wildlife supporting important pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Creating new community orchards will make the most of valuable underused green spaces for the benefit of local communities.
- 1.6 Such spaces can provide training and learning opportunities for local people about growing fruit and tree care. They are great spaces to run community events, such as Apple days, wassailing and work parties which will help to bring local people and communities together.
- 1.7 The UK Government has provided a total of £2.5 million in funding to local governments, through The Coronation Living Heritage Fund (CLHF), which celebrates the coronation of King Charles III and supports tree planting projects across England.
- 1.8 The aim of the fund is for local community orchard creation projects to provide a lasting commemoration of the Coronation year, and to further the King's lifelong work conserving the natural environment.
- 1.9 Councillor Paul Coleshill, Alliance for Wealden (Liberal Democrat), and lead councillor for Climate Change and Economy "We welcome this new funding, which will allow us to plant more trees to reduce and mitigate carbon emissions and increase the district's biodiversity through the creation of new habitats for wildlife.

- 1.10 “We are particularly excited to be able to offer community powered tree planting initiatives through the Community Orchards projects and hope that community and voluntary organisations across the district will help us to make these a reality over the coming years. We will have more information on how this will be allocated in due course, but we're looking forward to working directly with communities and continuing our work of supporting local biodiversity and woodlands throughout Wealden.”

Editor's notes:

The Coronation Living Heritage Fund supported by £2.5m in funding has been made available through Defra's £758m Nature for Climate Fund to allow county, unitary, metropolitan, London borough, district and city local authorities the chance to apply for up to two grants for projects ranging between £10,000 and £50,000. The funding will support the development of micro woods and community orchards and commemorate the King's Coronation. Funds can be distributed across projects in their area.

Through the England Trees Action Plan and supported by the £758m Nature for Climate Fund Defra will help to transform the treescape and the forestry sector helping to put the UK on track to meet net zero targets, reverse the decline in nature and support economic growth.

**2.0 Suitable areas for planting**

- 2.1 One area where an orchard could be considered useful for the Wealden Orchards funding is next to the Ridgewood MUGA (see image A below - area highlighted in red).

This would create a softened boundary between the MUGA and allotments and would help to reduce noise levels. This area also benefits from direct sunlight and the allotment holders would be able to utilise the fruits grown. Also, it would also aid with drainage issues in this particular green space. There should be minimal footfall to disturb trees growing and it is unlikely to be vandalised due to the location.



Image A: green space next to Ridgewood MUGA

- 2.2 Two further areas have already been identified by the Ranger and Head Groundsman which include:
- (i) for a small orchard at Victoria, behind the basketball court, and;
  - (ii) they are already planning to plant additional fruit trees at the West Park community orchard for which this grant funding would be useful.

**3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report and to consider:
- (i) if they wish to make an application for grant funding through this programme (*once we have more information on how this will be allocated and if this falls within the deadline*), and if so;
  - (ii) to consider the areas recommended by Town Council staff.

Contact Officers: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 7.4**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE ON STREET LIGHTING REPAIRS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Estates and Facilities Manager has met with the Electrical Supervisor at Balfour Beatty and agreed the liability details with upgrades to lighting. Due to the change of contractors last year from Costain to Balfour Beatty, East Sussex County Council were experiencing a period of transition due to some initial teething problems with new systems and software issues.

There is a six-month backlog for works to be carried out but we can now provide an update on outstanding jobs which have obtained authorisation from the Town Council (see appendix A).

- 1.2 This also means that the previous quotes (as above) might vary but only slightly and that as it was recommended to add a contingency of 20% in case of price increases.

##### **2.0 Extension to contract**

- 2.1 Members were informed in August last year that the new East Sussex Highways contract with Balfour Beatty was for seven years with a view to extend for a further seven years, so it was important to establish the right procedures at this early stage. The Estates and Facilities Manager has been pushing for an update on this and will provide feedback as soon as possible.
- 2.2 We are now receiving updates from their Electrical Supervisor and meeting when needed. Any issues are now being reported on the East Sussex website via the office and once inspected, any quotes are raised and sent through to us for authorisation.

##### **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

**Appendix A – Streetlighting repairs that have been authorised by Uckfield TC since Nov 2023**

Column 1	Church street	New lantern required (P5). Cast column with no door. Do council want to keep column has bracket	-	-	-	£ 801.96
Column 8	Church Street	Currently pole mouted in tree move to other side of road	07/10/2021	1510		£ 4,090.11
Column 8	Keld Avenue	New lantern. R/L column with supply transfer frommOHL required and removal of old pole box nad bracket	44165	1514	urbis P5 with 6mtr col	£ 3,098.36
Column 1	Mount Pleasant	New pole bracket and box OHL supply	30/11/2021	1256		£ 1,236.68
Column 4	Selby Road	New box and bracket required along with OHL transfer	09/12/2021	1512		£ 3,005.38
Column 3+5+6	Lealands Drive	Concrete column in grass verge/Concrete column under tree canopy move to opposite side of road/Concrete column in grass verge	09/02/2022	1519		£ 5,711.27
Column 6	Church Street	Column has been stunped/has supplementery post abd large sign plate with light/new one needed	14/11/2022			£ 2,814.93
Column 9+10	Hunters way	Concrete column 6mtr and supply transfer/Concrete column on driveway edge 6mtr column and supply transfer				£ 4,955.77
Column 21	London Road	Remove column	03/08/2022			£ 1,317.64
Column 2	Linden chase	Concrete column with concrete bracket in grass verge				£ 2,459.03
Column 12	Belmont Road & Church Walk	Pass to Eric for new lantern, requires small van to access	02/11/2022			£ 929.35
Column 11+16	Hempstead Road					£ 1,258.11

## Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 22 January 2024

### Agenda Item 7.5

#### **TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AT THE LOWER END OF LUXFORD FIELD**

##### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 As members will be aware, we have seen an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in the past 12 months and one of the key hotspots for this activity is the area between Tesco, the Civic Centre and lower section of Luxford Field.
- 1.2 Uckfield Community Fridge have seen their shed and adjacent area vandalised on numerous occasions over the past two to three months, with frequent activity in the past month with the shed being set up to form a den.
- 1.3 This report seeks to put forward a number of actions with members' approval to try and reduce the activity within this area.

##### **2.0 Issues at the Uckfield Community Fridge**

- 2.1 The community fridge has had a regular issue with anti-social behaviour including break ins, power being turned off, plants being smashed, sheds being broken into and used for drinking in.
- 2.2 Here are the crime numbers and pictures of issues.  
  
Crime number – DP-57687-23-4747-01 shed broken into with clear evidence of drinking (cans and bottles left behind)  
  
Crime number – SD-358-24-4747-01 vandalism and six stolen chairs and advertising banner  
  
Crime number – DP-1312-24-4747-IR01 vandalism and night issues
- 2.3 There have been other issues without a crime number and the intimidation of youth behaviour near the fridge has left volunteers worried at night and down hearted when turning up to a smashed up place.
- 2.4 Currently, volunteers do drop offs in the evening of food collections, and at present many of the volunteers do not feel safe to visit the Fridge after dark, due to the incidents that have been occurring.

##### **3.0 Issues at the Civic Centre**

- 3.1 The Civic Centre continues to experience issues with the fire alarm being set off, with the Quickborn Suite (which is located at ground level near to Tesco) also affected prior to Christmas. This might seem like a minor issue but for about five months now, we have had to spend money again and again to install more secure fire panels to reduce the risk of the young people running in and setting this off by the front door. We have had to close the front doors of the Civic Centre after

4.00pm or 4.30pm, which we have never had to do in my time, to reduce the risk of this happening and it upsetting our hirers. We have also over the course of the year, experienced vandalism to the Civic Centre, and intimidation at the front door at the end of an event. The vandalism at the start of 2023 was a different group of young people, and we believe that group have now disbanded, with the main offender under Sussex Police.

3.2 We also saw a large volume of nitrous oxide cannisters over the year left in Luxford Field, which was shared with the Neighbourhood Policing team, and they were asked to do some education around this with Uckfield College students.

3.3 It has increased fear in both our caretaking staff and Uckfield Community Fridge volunteers and we have advised Sussex Police that Monday evenings are a particular issue along with the weekends.

#### **4.0 Response from Sussex Police**

4.1 Councillor Ben Cox attended a focus group with the Police & Crime Commissioner and local Policing team back in November. He highlighted these issues, but the Police advised that Uckfield had less reporting and that our risk level was seen as low compared to other towns in Wealden. After discussions, the police felt it maybe an issue with under reporting as issues highlighted by Cllr Cox were news to them this is including but not exclusively the issues of anti-social behaviour at Luxford, outside Tesco close to UTC and the Uckfield Community Fridge.

4.2 The Town Clerk has been in regular liaison with the District Inspector and informed them of the key points in the week, that the area tended to see this activity. Civic Centre caretakers were reporting incidents but via the DISC app, and we were advised before Christmas that the local Neighbourhood Policing team didn't tend to see these updates for a couple of days, so the online reporting or 101 was picked up more quickly.

4.3 Following activity before Christmas, two Police officers from the Neighbourhood Policing team advised that all towns within Wealden were seeing similar levels of ASB.

#### **5.0 Taking action**

##### Access to the site

5.1 Despite the area immediately in front of the Uckfield Community Fridge being fenced in, the gate to the Source site is currently open whilst we await the new retaining wall to dry, and the fence line to be installed. We believe this is the current route of access to the fridge's shed, as they would not be able to gain entry from the field.

5.2 We are currently experiencing high sickness levels at the Town Council with these winter viruses but its hoped that now the retaining wall has been built, the fence

line can be reinstated along the side of the car park to restrict access to the site, with works starting in the next couple of weeks by Grounds staff.

5.3 Lighting on the fridge

We have asked our electrician when he is back down next week to price for a dusk till dawn or an LED PIR flood light to be bolted to the fridge container.

5.4 CCTV footage

There are CCTV cameras all around the Civic Centre, and there is a Town Centre CCTV camera at the bottom of Luxfords car park, but these don't always pick up activity in the vicinity of the Source. The Town Clerk will therefore liaise with Sussex Police to see if temporary cameras such as wildlife cameras can be installed in the vicinity of the Community Fridge.

5.5 Bottom area of Luxford Field

The electrician is already booked in to repair the large lamp columns located by the steps, and this will coincide with the Civic Centre's annual gutter cleaning as we need a cherry picker due to the heights involved.

Discussions with Sussex Police have led to the suggestion that we remove the metal youth shelter. Discussions within the focus group, suggest it be moved to another location, but this will just move the problem. We would therefore recommend that the youth shelter be removed altogether.

The Town Council is also aware that parish/town councils can apply for funding through the JAG (Joint Action Group) at Wealden District Council for community safety related matters. We are therefore planning to ask our electrician to price for some pillar lights up the side of the path at Luxford Field to provide some lighting within that area. Once a quotation is received, we can make an application to JAG, to fund these works.

- 5.6 Sussex Police also suggested applying for a 'Public Space Protection Order' (PSPO) to establish a no drinking zone after 6pm as that would help Sussex Police deal with ASB in this area. Although we are conscious that there are people who enjoy sitting in Luxford Field in the summer months who are more considerate to others, and we would have to see how this affects temporary event notices for events such as Weald on the Field.

**6.0 Recommendation**

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

## Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 22 January 2024

### Agenda Item 7.6

#### **TO CONSIDER FUTURE OPTIONS FOR RURAL GRASS CUTTING – WILD LIFE CORRIDORS (EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL)**

##### **1.0 Background**

1.1 Over the past 3 years a trial of reduced rural grass cutting has been undertaken in select Parish and Town Councils who have previously expressed an interest. This has been in response to an increased level of Member and resident contact regarding requests to reduce cutting rural verges or change the schedule in line with wild plant cycles. Further details can be [found online under item 49](#).

1.2 You can view the rural and urban verges on a live mapping system here. Uckfield was one of the areas that agreed to pilot this in February 2023, prior to the start of the verge cutting season for 2023:

<https://escs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5c524023058c4aa088a37b49b0d90814>

Within the Uckfield Town boundary, the rural verges can be found on:

London Road, up to Budletts Roundabout

Snatts Road

Rocks Road

Some of Bell Farm Road, off Copwood roundabout and the southern side of Bell Farm Road into town

Lewes Road

A small section on New Road

Small section of Eastbourne Road between Castle Rise and New Road (likely to have been identified as a rural verge for wildlife)

Bird in Eye Hill

Between Hempstead Mill and Hempstead Oast

1.3 As agreed at [Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023](#), the Council has formally adopted this as Policy, so that the reduced rural cuts (excluding single track lanes for safety) is now available to all Parish and Town Councils to opt in to.

##### **2.0 Options**

2.1 Please advise which option our Council would like to receive for Rural Grass Cutting (*this is not to be confused with the decision that has already been taken with regards to Urban verge cutting and contribution that the Town Council makes to this each year*).

###### Option 1 - Standard Rural Grass Cutting Service – No change

Two cuts per annum of a one-metre wide swathe along the verge plus visibility areas cut for visibility at junctions and for safety on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation.

###### Option 2 - Environmental Enhancement Service (reduced rural service)

Excluding single track lanes, the first cut at start of season to be only visibility cuts for safety at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation. The second cut later in the season will be visibility plus a one-metre wide swathe along the verge.

### **3.0 Future Changes to Rural Grass Cutting**

3.1 Please note, the option we decide on this year will become our default option going forward. They will not contact us each year like they do with urban verge grass cutting to ask which rural grass cutting option we wish to take forward. Should we wish to change options, we will need to email them. We will not be able to change options part way through the grass cutting season.

3.2 Please note, in both options, safety remains a priority. We can report any visibility or safety issues to our Stakeholder Liaison Officer to investigate and rectify as necessary.

### **4.0 Response Deadline**

4.1 We need to inform them of our decision by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.

### **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 Members are asked to note the report and decide which of the two options we would prefer.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 8.1**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE ON OUR PARKS INITIATIVE**

##### **1.0 Two sessions running Saturdays and Wednesdays**

- 1.1 The Our Parks initiative is continuing to be delivered in 2024 with additional funding support from the Wealden District Council Wellbeing Programme which aims to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.2 The funding agreement that Wealden District Council's Wellbeing team have in place with East Sussex Public Health has enabled the programme in Uckfield to be expanded for 50 weeks with 2 sessions a week both starting at 9:30am on Saturdays at Harlands Farm Playing Field and Wednesdays at Luxfords Field.
- 1.3 The sessions are free and delivered by a fully qualified coach and we are hoping that more local residents will want to join in! Classes are suitable for all ability levels and ages so it's perfect for beginners or anyone getting back into fitness.
- 1.4 To join, simply go to: [ourparks.org.uk](http://ourparks.org.uk) and register for free. An online exercise Couch to Fitness programme will also be available to all residents.

##### **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, and support our residents with their health and wellbeing.

##### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 8.2**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE FROM URBAN TENNIS FOUNDATION**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Town Council office has been approached by Tim Cottingham, the Senior Performance Coach from Le Tennis Limited regarding the upkeep of the tennis courts at Victoria Park.
- 1.2 After two to three years of trying to get the lock to work on the park gates, he thinks that this is now fixed. The LTA (Le Tennis Ltd) fitted a new £4,500 lock last summer. He has tested it regularly and not had any issues.
- 1.3 Due to the issues with the old locks, he had to tell people how to let themselves in. Unfortunately, this has left this open to people going onto the courts without booking / joining and sometimes not even to play tennis!
- 1.4 The courts are now getting quite mossy and he would like to get them professionally cleaned. First and foremost, this is for health and safety reasons but they will also look much more cared for.
- 1.5 To do this they will require access to water which we can provide them with. This would be ideal to clean the courts, this process involves a machine lifting the moss and then steam cleaning them.
- 1.6 The courts are currently dark in colour which stems back to the fact that the asphalt used that year was too high in iron content. This issue has now been resolved by the LTA but does mean the courts are darker than they had hoped. Consequently, they are thinking of having the courts repainted.
- 1.7 However, as the surface is still good, they feel it would be better to try and save some more funds over the next couple of years and get one or two of the courts completely re-laid instead (probably in 2025/26).
- 1.8 Sadly, the practice wall was vandalised. The Velcro covering was ripped off. They plan to get this refixed in early spring, ready for the better weather.
- 1.9 There is also some fencing that needs mending.
- 1.10 Hopefully in spring/summer they will be able to run an open afternoon and perhaps run some courses from there.
- 1.11 They will keep us updated but advised, not to hesitate to ask if we require any further information.

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newto

## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 9.1**

#### **BRIEF UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP**

##### **1.0 Overview**

1.1 The Allotment Working Group held their first meeting this year on Thursday 4 January 2024 at 5:30pm, at the Civic Centre.

##### **2.0 Current updates and reminders**

2.1 There are currently fifty-seven people on the waiting list, which includes fifteen tenants waiting for an additional plot, although priority will be given to those without a plot first.

With the growing season approaching, we are looking for inspiration for the Allotment Competition in Spring. Any new or existing ideas are welcome, please do get in touch. So far, we have 'Best vegetable' in the pipeline!

There were a couple of reminders received from the Grounds team in relation to ongoing maintenance:

Allotment holders are responsible for the side paths and these should be mown by allotment holders.

Water meter readings were taken when taps were turned off and will be taken monthly to monitor water consumption. The idea being that there have been a couple of times when the taps have been put on in the winter which is unfair to everyone else. The reason why the taps are off in winter is so that they do not freeze and break.

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

2.2 At the last joint meeting with the Allotment Association and allotment reps, we were keen to increase the level of interest and communication with the Allotment Association. An allotment rep had 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 Senior Administrative Officer has contacted the Allotment Association to see if they could assist anyone who wished to join but who could not reach the hut to place an order for any reason. The Town Council are here to collate that information and get it out and we are waiting for the Allotment Association to let us know if they can help.

The Chairman of the Allotment Association did suggest that anyone could go along to the AGM meetings at the Ringles Cross Pub, the meetings were usually held on the second Tuesday of the month.

### **3.0 Looking ahead**

- 3.1 The next joint Allotment Group meeting is due to take place on 26 February 2024.  
Allotment tenants will be asked to raise any issues or concerns they may have via their rep or the Town Council offices so that these can be discussed.

There will be some minor tweaks to the wording in the new allotment rules and regulations and a letter explaining the slight tweaks will be included along with the annual invoice in April time. This mainly refers to the prevention of weeds and keeping slugs at the same time as looking after our environment!

- 3.2 The next allotment checks will be carried out in March jointly by a council official, a local councillor and a member of the Allotment Association present on each site.
- 3.3 Lastly, if any tenants have any issues or concerns they are asked to get in touch with either Rachel at the Council offices or via their allotment rep.

### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee**

**Monday 22 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 10.2**

#### **ALL WEATHER PITCH OPERATION GROUP**

##### **1.0 Summary report**

- 1.1 The meeting held at Uckfield College on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December received reports from the various representatives present.

Uckfield Rugby Club continue to use the pitch for training but it is not used for matches as it does not comply with requirements. The club has a plan for the next 5-10 days for the redevelopment of the club house and facilities which will cost about £500k, of which they already have over 40% of funding.

Following occasional problems regarding the hours of use reported by local residents, Freedom Leisure confirmed these had been addressed and resolved and that organisers had been instructed on compliance. The lights timing and directions had also been adjusted to avoid intrusion on local housing and are now controlled from the office.

There are plans to install CCTV covering the pitches to ensure tighter control and improved safety and security. An emergency button has been installed by the AED connected directly to the office. There had been one accident in November with a head-to-head clash.

The use of the facility continues to a very high level. There are currently three slots free each week, two on Monday 5.00-6.00 and one on a Thursday 5.00-6.00, and there is a waiting list from groups. The yearly accounts still show a positive balance each year.

The pitch had been inspected in October for football use and there were no reports of repairs. The rugby inspection is due. Investigation as to whether the two inspections could be carried out at the same time to save on costs.

The sinking fund which was set up to provide a replacement at ten years is now extended to eleven years and currently stands at £203,481 as opposed to the planned £225,000 due to the effect of covid and resultant lack of income in 2020/21.

The next meeting would be in February 2024.

Councillor C. Macve

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 11 January 2024**

### **Agenda Item 10.6**

#### **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES: UCKFIELD RAILWAY LINE PARISHES COMMITTEE**

##### **1.0 Summary report**

- 1.1 The committee met on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 but owing to the unexpected absence of the Chairman, the meeting was quite brief.

The Secretary reported that there had still not been any response to the repeated requests to reinstate the 22:07 out of London Bridge. It is felt this service is important to the leisure users of the line, who we understand are now, since covid, substantial line users.

The absence of this service means that the last train to serve stations between Edenbridge and Eridge is the 21:07, which is too early for passengers to leave London after an evening event in towns.

Members reported that generally, the current service is good except for strike days and the effects of recent adverse weather and there continues, as maintained above, to be good levels of off-peak use.

General discussion followed on the duration of the projected life span of the current rolling stock and the anomaly of allowing diesel stuck into London with the new regulation on the Mayor's Clean Air Act UK which would be resolved if the line was electrified.

The next meeting will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in the Buxted Inn.

Councillor C. Macve

##### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton