



# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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**Town Clerk – Holly Goring**

## YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

on

**Monday 26 February 2024 at 7.00pm**  
**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 MAYOR'S DISCRETION**

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

### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To **RESOLVE** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 15 January 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

5.2 Action list – For information only

### **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

- (a) Plans Committees – 29 January 2024 and 19 February 2024
- (b) Environment and Leisure Committee – 22 January 2024
- (c) General Purposes Committee – 5 February 2024

### **7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group

**8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group
- (ii) Uckfield Dementia Forum
- (iii) Uckfield Events Working Group
- (iv) Infrastructure Working Group

**9.0 TO RATIFY DOCUMENTATION CONSIDERED BY STANDING COMMITTEES:**

General Purposes Committee

- (i) Annual Investment Policy – No. 45

**10.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JACKIE LOVE**

**11.0 TO REVIEW A SNAPSHOT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND BALANCE SHEET POSITION FOR Q3 OF 2023/24**

**12.0 TO NOTE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S LIST OF STANDING ORDERS AND DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS**

**13.0 TO RECEIVE A SHORT BRIEFING ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**14.0 TO CONSIDER THE ISSUES BEING EXPERIENCED WITH PARKING AT VICTORIA PLEASURE GROUND**

**15.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

**17.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

**18.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**19.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**20.0 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:

- 20.1 To confirm the final quotations for the plumbing and heating improvements at Foresters Hall



Town Clerk  
20 February 2024

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held  
on Monday 15 January 2024 at 7.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor K. Williams    Wealden DC  
Sarah D'Alessio        Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Holly Goring            Town Clerk  
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

**1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent.

Councillor C. Macve declared a personal interest in agenda item 23.3.

Councillor K. Bedwell declared an interest if discussions became detailed on specific objectives/projects within the Strategic Plan (agenda item 11.0) and the Annual Plan (agenda item 12.0) due to her role as Chair of Ridgewood Village Hall Committee.

Councillor D. Manvell declared an interest if discussions became detailed within the Annual Budget (agenda item 13.0) due to his role on the board of the Uckfield Community Fridge CIC.

Councillor J. Love declared a personal interest in agenda item 23.1 should discussions move to discuss Victoria Pavilion due to her work for a business which leased part of the building.

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

None received.

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

**FC.83.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable District Councillor K. Williams to provide an update.

Councillor K. Williams believed that Wealden DC would be in a position to appoint a new contractor to redevelop the Streatfeild House site in the next seven to ten days.

Discussions were still continuing between Wealden DC and East Sussex CC with regard to Uckfield Leisure Centre. Progress had been slow but was moving in the right direction. A grant application had been submitted for energy improvements for all three leisure centres (Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield).

The play space strategy had been published on Wealden DC's website. This report would form part of the Planning Policy department's evidence base for the Local Plan.

Licensing conditions were currently out for consultation. With the District Council's move towards a net zero approach, they were keen to see events and licenced businesses making efforts towards alternatives. The consultation had been extended to 11 February 2024.

Wealden DC Planning Committee South were due to sign off the new Sports Hub near to the Boship roundabout, which would be funded by a mix of grant funding and developer contributions (Community Infrastructure Levy). The establishment of a new medical centre was moving forward in Mayfield.

Wealden DC had commissioned a tree survey of its tree stock, which had been positive, and no issues were of concern at this point in time. An audit of the Food Service, also found no issues.

An extraordinary meeting of Wealden DC had been called on 8 February 2024, to consider the draft Local Plan and to give approval to go out for Regulation 18 (public consultation on the draft Local Plan).

Councillor K. Williams explained that within his portfolio he covered the areas of public health, crime and disorder, assets, special projects, licensing, emergency planning, the voluntary sector and wellbeing.

Councillors requested clarification on the Play Space strategy, to which Councillor Williams explained that it looked at current availability and condition of sports facilities including football pitches, tennis courts, etc. It was undertaken by external consultants and looked at the whole district.

Councillor D. Manvell asked what Councillor Williams would like to see in Uckfield in terms of special projects. Councillor Williams explained that Wealden DC would be preparing a commercial strategy to ensure the organisation was

proactive rather than reactive to opportunities with an associated plan for funding. An example of this could be if a parish had play areas which were unusable due to drainage issues, that perhaps the two organisations could join together to take improvements forward. A draft strategy would be presented to Cabinet before Full Council, once ready.

Councillor S. Mayhew explained that a decision had been taken by the Planning Inspectorate to overrule the refusal of the planning application for a new build in Sycamore Close. He was aware that Uckfield TC's Plans Committee would be disappointed with this outcome.

Councillor D. Manvell added that the changes to the NPPF could be important in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan. The local planning authority may only have to provide a four-year housing supply rather than a five-year.

Councillor B. Cox added that he had taken a motion to full Council which was carried, to call the Environment Agency to account and work with them and other key partner agencies to clean up rivers and waterways within the district.

Councillor B. Reed had circulated a written update to Town Councillors prior to the meeting, which members referenced.

**FC.84.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor D. Bennett due to another commitment and apologies were also received from County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 11 December 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

**FC.85.01.24** Subject to an amendment being made to confirm that the Sports Hub for Hailsham would be funded by grant funding and developer contributions as expected (no other forms of funding) it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 11 December 2023 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### **5.2 Action List**

Members noted the report.

#### **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 8 January 2024

**FC.86.01.24** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee on 8 January 2024.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee – no meeting held

(c) General Purposes Committee – no meeting held

## 7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Members noted the report.

## 8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Uckfield Dementia Forum

Nothing to report at present.

(iv) Infrastructure Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

## 9.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WEALDEN PARISH REMUNERATION PANEL ON TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES FOR 2024/25

Members were presented with the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel who met on 12 December 2023. This report recommended a 4.6% on the figures recommended for 2023/24. Uckfield Town Council had not followed the recommended increases for around three years, which meant that the starting position was different to that within the Panel's report for 2023/24.

It was suggested by the Town Clerk to keep discussions contained, that members consider three to four options. These were:

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	BASIC ALLOWANCE	CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE
A	Freeze member allowances at the current rate	£1,348.20	£1,861.65
B	Increase the current rate of allowances by a further 5%	£1,415.61	£1,954.73
C	Increase member allowances to the rate recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel	£1,492.00 (10.67%)	£2,060.00 (10.65%)

A fourth option was proposed by a member, which suggested that new councillors did not receive an allowance in their first year.

Members discussed the agenda item at some length before the matter was taken to a vote.

**FC.87.01.24** With 10 votes in favour and two members voting against, it was **RESOLVED** to agree to an increase of the basic member allowance and the Chairman's allowance by 5% which would set the basic allowance at £1,415.61 and the Chair's allowance at £1,954.73 for 2024/25.

#### **10.0 TO APPROVE THE RE-ALLOCATION OF EARMARKED RESERVES FOR PRIORITY PROJECTS IN 2024/25**

Members were provided with a report which set out a request to re-allocate sums of funding from earmarked reserves to fund certain large expenditure in the next 12-18 months. These re-allocations would help to attend to ash dieback in winter 2024, resolve the ventilation system issue in the reconfiguration of the Caretaker area, and purchase a new ride on mulcher 4WD and tractor for the Grounds and Ranger team. The funding would fund year one of a two year payment plan for these latter grounds machinery items.

**FC.88.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the re-allocations of earmarked reserves for priority projects in 2024/25 as per the report.

#### **11.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2024/29**

Members considered the contents of the Strategic Plan 2024/29, which set out the priorities for the next five years.

Councillor C. Macve requested that reference be made to the footpaths on Manor Park, and an intention to address some of these issues with the relevant residents or partner agencies.

Councillor K. Bedwell wished to make reference to '*protect the green space between Uckfield town and neighbouring villages.*'

Councillor D. Manvell wished to change the phrase 'Our Corporate priorities' to 'Our Council's priorities' on page 7.

Councillor B. Reed wished to include the phrase '*natural*' burials on page 13 and not just woodland burials. The Town Clerk noted this inclusion and explained that perhaps 'woodland' should be replaced with 'natural' to open up the scope of this project. Councillor B. Reed wished to see intentions to work with the relevant authorities to make improvements to Uckfield's watercourses. It was also thought that reference should be made to meet the 30for30 UN policy and see that 30% of Uckfield's green spaces were protected.

**FC.89.01.24** With these additions, members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Strategic Plan 2024/29 for Uckfield Town Council.

#### **12.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2024/25**

Members considered the Annual Plan for 2024/25 which set out the priorities of the Town Council over the next financial year.

Councillor C. Macve wished to add a priority or make reference within the plan, for the Town Council to purchase equipment locally, and use local suppliers. The Town Clerk explained that this was already an objective within the Town Council's Strategic Plan, but she would find a way of referencing this within the annual plan as well.

A couple of suggestions were made for further priorities, but the Town Clerk felt that these were the responsibility of external parties such as the County or District Council, and there were already a number of priorities set out within both the Annual Plan and Strategic Plan which were outside of the Town Council's

remit and would involve working with partner organisations such as the higher tier authorities. It was important with the funds the Town Council had available, and limited staff resource, that it paid attention to the priorities of its own assets (in terms of land and buildings).

Councillor A. Smith suggested that the Town Council incorporated a priority '*to hold developers to account, to ensure that the conditions of planning applications were adhered to and the environmental impact on adjacent land was taken into consideration.*' A discussion followed as to whether this should be included in the Strategic Plan or Annual Plan, and members felt it should be incorporated in both.

**FC.90.01.24** Subject to these additions, members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Plan 2024/25 for Uckfield Town Council.

**13.0 TO FORMALLY SET THE ANNUAL BUDGET (PRECEPT) FOR 2024/25**

Members were presented with two options for the budget for 2024/25 – one proposed a 6.08% increase for a Band D household for council tax, and one proposed a 7.02% increase based on discussions at Finance Sub-Committee on 9 January 2024.

Members talked at length about the advantages and disadvantages of both proposals for 2024/25, and thanked the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, and Town Clerk for their hard work in preparing the budget papers.

**FC.91.01.24** With 10 votes in favour, three members voting against, and one abstaining it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the annual budget for 2024/25 with a 6.08% annual increase for a Band D household, with a precept of £1,127,348.

**14.0 TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024/29**

Members considered the contents of the Property Asset Management Plan for 2024/29.

**FC.92.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Asset Management Plan for 2024/29.

**15.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24 (Q3)**

Members reviewed the progress that had been made towards the 2023/24 priorities and subsequently noted the report.

**16.0 TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSE FROM THE LLOYDS BANKING GROUP TO THE LETTER SENT BY UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

Members agreed that the response received from Lloyds Banking Group was weak, and did not answer a number of points within the Town Council's correspondence.

**FC.93.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) approve the submission of a formal complaint to the Financial Ombudsman;
- (ii) to send a response to the Lloyds Banking Group;
- (iii) to send a letter to LINK in relation to banking hubs, and;
- (iv) to send a letter to the MP expressing our concerns of both the loss of face to face banking services, and ATMs.



**FC.94.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable the meeting to continue until 9.30pm, due to the agenda items still to be discussed.

**17.0 TO REVIEW THE CONSULTATION ON EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (2024-2050)**

Members were advised that there was an opportunity to respond to the consultation on East Sussex County Council's Local Transport Plan until 25 February 2024. Members were encouraged to respond individually as residents, but were asked if they wished to send a collective response on behalf of the Town Council.

There were a mix of views from members as to their position on some of the previously discussed issues – such as the proposed railway line extension between Lewes and Uckfield, and the dualling of the A22 Bypass.

The Town Clerk therefore offered to consider to review the Transport for South East Plan to 2050 alongside the ESCC Local Transport Plan, but suggested that members responded individually. One point to note, was that all members agreed that the regularly referenced Sustrans report needed updating as it was undertaken in 2018 (now five to six years out of date).

**18.0 NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Members noted the update.

**19.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**

Two deeds of grant had been received with the same names for pre-purchases: Sarah Elliott and Maria Blackford

**FC.95.01.24** It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deed of grant.

**20.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received in time for the meeting.

**21.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised members that Wealden DC were running their annual Parish Conference on 14 March between 10am and 3pm, and the Town Clerk would be looking for two representatives to attend.

The Town Clerk also advised that the office had been contacted by ESCC with regards to an independent fostering association who had been making contact with parishes. These independent associations competed with the county council's fostering services. The Town Clerk would share the information with councillors.

The Town Clerk advised members of the proposed changes to the Saturday 262 bus service, and that it would be starting again at the end of January, having sought funding from a variety of means including local parishes, and the Sussex Community Rail Partnership.

**22.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair, Councillor J. Love advised that the Uckfield Food Bank had been nominated for The King's Award for Voluntary Service, and wished them well with

their nomination.

### **23.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**FC.96.01.24** 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.

23.1 To consider works associated with plumbing and heating improvements at Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion

Members focused on Foresters Hall only at this meeting and the need for a new heating system at the rear of the building. Despite the recommendations of officers to install a gas boiler at the cost of £2k whilst a more holistic approach to all of the building's plumbing and heating issues were identified (and maintenance works to address heat loss) and be planned for thoroughly, using a renewable energy option, members voted in favour of a reactive approach, by installing a renewable option now, for just the rear of the building.

**FC.97.01.24** With six members voting in favour, five voting against, and two abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to install a renewable energy option for heating the rear of Foresters Hall.

23.2 To consider the recommendations of Finance Sub-Committee

**FC.98.01.24** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the addition of Cyber Cover to the Town Council's Buildings Insurance policy.

23.3 To consider a proposal by the Uckfield Grasshoppers Junior Football Club

This item was deferred to Environment & Leisure Committee on 22 January 2024, due to time restraints.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

## ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

### FULL COUNCIL

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<b><u>FC.105.02.17</u></b>	14.0 To sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows and West Park Local Nature Reserves.	20.02.17	HG	The Council will be advertising its intention to apply for confirmation once covid restrictions have eased. The byelaws must then be held for at least one month at the offices for inspection by the public, before any representations are reported back as part of the package of information, to DEFRA.
<b><u>FC.95.01.20</u></b>	18.0 To sign and seal the Town Council's byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve Members RESOLVED to: (i) authorise the affixing of the common seal to the byelaws for both Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve and signing by two named councilors, and; (ii) authorise the Town Clerk for Uckfield Town Council to carry out the necessary procedures and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation.	20.01.20		
<b><u>FC115.04.19</u></b>	9.0 To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Donna French It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to support the motion put forward, and; “reinvestigate the possibility of part funding a traffic warden; entering into a discussion with Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate, with a view to joint funding a shared traffic warden, employed via Sussex Police.”	08.04.19	HG	This matter has been raised with the Wealden Inspector of Sussex Police. It is understood that Sussex Police and Wealden DC were due to hold discussions once again. UTC will await the outcome of these.

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<b><u>FC.30.09.20</u></b>	<p><u>12.0 To review a report by Councillor A. Smith on the need for affordable homes in Uckfield</u></p> <p>After a detailed discussion, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to request that the Town Clerk write to the Housing Minister Rt Hon Robert Jenrick with a copy of this report and advise Wealden DC's planning department of these discussions along with neighbouring parish councils.</p>	14.09.20	HG	The data is being updated ready for compiling into a letter to the new Minister for Housing.
<b><u>FC.55.10.21</u></b>	<p>Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the motion put forward by Councillor D. French and for staff to make contact with the County Council: <i>"Uckfield Town Council supports the increase in the provision of Changing Place Toilets across the country, and will approach East Sussex County Council to understand if they:</i></p> <p><i>(i) have submitted an expression of interest to central government to draw down funding to the county of East Sussex, and:</i></p> <p><i>(ii) if ESCC have expressed an interest, that Uckfield Town Council lobby for such facilities to be introduced in Uckfield."</i></p>	25.10.21	HG	Having understood the requirements from the recent funding round we now have time to prepare for the next funding round and have the necessary evidence and associated costs available.
<b><u>FC.94.02.22</u></b>	<p><u>11.0 To consider a further motion by Councillor B. Cox, relating to food poverty</u></p> <p>Members unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the motion put forward by Councillor B. Cox to:</p> <p><i>What the council still needs to do</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the results of the schools' questionnaire and review the recommendations;</li> <li>• Be open to any new ways to offer 'out of term' food for young people and where needed, push the higher tiers of local government to back schemes;</li> <li>• Review and offer a final report on food poverty in March 2023 before the end of the term of this Town Council;</li> </ul> <p><i>Summary.</i></p> <p><i>Food poverty in Uckfield is an issue that is growing still. However, Uckfield Town Council have done a number of things to help ease the issue. The next year will see some very challenging times and it is important that the Council keep up the work in highlighting and where possible, easing food poverty. A review is needed in 2023 and a final report offered to the Town Council. The attached report within appendix A contains statistics for Uckfield in terms of earnings and age by ward should be offered to our local authorities (District and County) to highlight some local needs.</i></p>	28.02.22	All	In progress.

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<b><u>FC.62.10.23</u></b>	<p><u>12.0 - To consider a motion by Councillor P. Ullmann</u>  Subject to the above four suggestions, members <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept the contents of the motion and for the following letter to be sent to the Lloyds Banking Group.</p>	30.10.23	PU/HG	<p>Letter in response received from Lloyds Banking Group on 28.12.23. A report is being presented to Full Council on 15.01.24.</p> <p><b>NFA – this action has been superseded by FC.93.01.24</b></p>
<b><u>FC.63.10.23</u></b>	<p><u>13.0 To receive a response from East Sussex County Council to a previous motion submitted requesting the installation of a pedestrian crossing</u>  Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept the proposed amendment to Councillor Bennett's original motion and set out to:</p> <p>“maintain this as the ideal site and the path that students were taking to reach school, in order to emphasise the views of the young people.</p> <p>Uckfield Town Council would be very happy to explore the option of community match funding and fund a feasibility study, as the Town Council felt it was important to concentrate on this area, and not further north of the town. It was also suggested that any data or feedback from the feasibility study and associated speed surveys, should reflected in any future updates to the Sustrans report.”</p>	30.10.23	HG	<p>The Town Clerk met with a representative of ESCC and the local County Councillor at 8.30am on Fri 1 December 2023 and monitored pedestrian movements across London Road from North Row.</p> <p>In response to the resolution of Council – the Town Clerk will now make contact with ESCC and request a feasibility study for this section of road, and associated speed surveys.</p>
<b><u>FC.68.10.23</u></b>	<p><u>22.0 Chairman's Announcements</u>  Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to support postal workers and write to Royal Mail to ask how they were going to address the current shortfall in staffing levels and support residents and households of Uckfield.</p>	30.10.23	DB/HG	In progress.

<b><u>Resolution No.</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>	<b><u>Date Raised</u></b>	<b><u>Action By</u></b>	<b><u>Date Complete</u></b>
<b><u>FC.76.12.23</u></b>	<u>11.0 To consider a motion from Councillor D. French</u> After some discussion, members <b>RESOLVED</b> to put forward nominations for the Uckfield Rugby Club, the Family Hub (as Childrens Centres were at risk of closure) and the Highlands Inn (as the last remaining pub in the south of Uckfield and their support to community lunches) as Assets of Community Value.	11.12.23	HG	In progress.
<b><u>FC.77.12.23</u></b>	<u>13.0 To consider aboricultural reports for a Lime Tree in Snatts Road Cemetery</u> (i) For the Senior Administrative Officer and Town Clerk to make contact with the relatives of those who had ashes interments or graves in the vicinity of the base of the tree, to inform them sensitively of the current condition of the tree, and; (ii) to seek to address the risks identified, and book in works to reduce the height of the pollarded tree to a monolith shape at a height of approximately 2.5metres at the end of January 2024. This would give time to make contact with relatives but also ensure works are completed before the end of the winter season.	11.12.23	HG/RN	In progress.
<b><u>FC.93.01.24</u></b>	<u>16.0 To consider the response from the Lloyds Banking Group to the letter sent by Uckfield Town Council</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to: (i) approve the submission of a formal complaint to the Financial Ombudsman; (ii) to send a response to the Lloyds Banking Group; (iii) to send a letter to LINK in relation to banking hubs, and; (iv) to send a letter to the MP expressing our concerns of both the loss of face to face banking services, and ATMs.	15.01.24	HG/PU	In progress.

<b><u>Resolution No.</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
<b><u>FC.97.01.24</u></b>	23.1 <u>To consider works associated with plumbing and heating improvements at Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion</u> With six members voting in favour, five voting against, and two abstaining, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to install a renewable energy option for heating the rear of Foresters Hall	15.01.24	JH	A detailed quotation from the selected contractor has been obtained to future proof as best we can the partial installation of a renewable energy option for Foresters Hall, and this is being presented to Full Council at agenda item 20.1 on 26.02.24.
<b><u>FC.98.01.24</u></b>	<u>23.2 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the addition of Cyber Cover to the Town Council's Buildings Insurance policy.	15.01.24	HG	Application in progress.

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 26 February 2024**

### **Agenda Item 9.0**

#### **TO RATIFY DOCUMENTATION FROM STANDING COMMITTEES: Annual Investment Strategy – No. 45 (2024-25)**

##### **1.0 Re-investing council funds**

- 1.1 The Town Council's Annual Investment Strategy is reviewed each year, to provide an update on the council's finances, and provide an opportunity to review banking arrangements and current rates of investment.
- 1.2 A discussion commenced on the Town Council's investments at Finance Sub-Committee on 9 January 2024, following a recommendation by the Internal Auditor to review our options for the funds currently residing within the Business Reserve account. Members agreed that we should try and maximise the amount of interest on these reserves, to provide further funding for project delivery.
- 1.3 The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO explored a variety of options for obtaining a better return on our banking with the Town Council's business banking services. This information was presented to General Purposes Committee on 5 February 2024
- 1.4 At the meeting, the Assistant Town Clerk advised members of a proposed change to the policy on page 2, and explained that the majority of the Town Council's reserves were in a Business Reserves account at a rate of 1.45%. £300k was invested in a 12-month fixed bond which matured at 4.89%. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the minimum amount of reserves within the business reserve account during the year was £700k, and this was currently only earning 1.45% in interest. The Assistant Town Clerk had approached the Town Council's banking services, and was advised that they held a 35 day account and a 95 day account. Funds could be put away for these periods of time, to raise more return on the council's investments. It was thought that a sum of £500k could be moved into these accounts.
- 1.5 One member was concerned about the financial services compensation scheme should anything happen to the bank as this was only £85k per firm. Members noted that the current banking provider was part owned by the UK Government.

The following recommendation was made by General Purposes Committee. The figures will be projected on the screen at the meeting of Full Council to present the interest rates for each option.

- GP38.02.24** With four members voting in favour, and one voting against, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council, that:
- (i) subject to the revision on page 2, that the Annual Investment Strategy be adopted;
  - (ii) the Assistant Town Clerk be asked to investigate the financial services compensation scheme further, and to explore other banking options with large banks such as Lloyds and HSBC, and;



(iii) in the meantime, propose to move funds of £400k into the 95 day account, and £100k in the 35 day account.

## **2.0 Adding a new module to the Town Council's finance system**

- 2.1 As part of the Sage package, we are able to have an automated bank feed to help assist with the bank reconciliation.
- 2.2 When mentioned before, a councillor raised a concern over security. The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO has since spoken with the Town Council's Business Relationship Manager about this and they said that there would not be any issues. The RFO would still need to log in as normal and in doing so, the information would then be upload automatically into Sage. This would reduce the need for the RFO to manually enter it onto Sage.

## **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- (i) confirm if they wish to adopt the Annual Investment Strategy document, with the revision incorporated;
  - (ii) confirm if they are happy to proceed with the recommendations of General Purposes Committee for the proposed movement of funds and investigation into other banking services longer-term, and;
  - (iii) create the bank feed between the Town Council's banking services and finance system.

Contact Officer: Sarah D'Alessio and Holly Goring

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Policy Number 45		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	23.03.09	Adopted at General Purposes Committee - GP068.03.
2	15.12.09	Finance Sub-Committee agreed to review Policy in one year's time. GP.045.12.09
3	05.12.11	General Purposes - GP.63.12.11
4	01.12.14	Reviewed at General Purposes Committee - GP.39.12.14
5	18.01.16	Reviewed at General Purpose Committee GP.50.01.16
6	25.01.22	Review of strategy by Finance Sub-Committee
7	31.01.22	General Purposes Committee GP29.01.22
8	16.01.23	Review at General Purposes Committee 16.01.23
9	09.01.24 05.02.24	Review by Finance Sub-Committee before details consideration at General Purposes Committee GP38.02.24
10	26.02.24	Ratification by Full Council

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The strategy has been produced and complies with the revised requirements set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government in April 2010 with regard to Local Government Investments, CIPFA's Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance notes and takes account of Section 15(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.2 Uckfield Town Council acknowledges its responsibility to the community and the importance of prudently investing the temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the community.

## **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 The general policy objective for this Council is prudent investment of its balances. The Council's investment priorities are:-
- (i) the security of its reserves  
and
  - (ii) the liquidity of its investments.
- 2.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

## **3.0 Policies**

- 3.1 All the Town Council's investments will be Specified Investments which are those offering high security and high liquidity. This means that:-
- (i) All investments will be made in sterling and any payments or repayments will also be made in sterling.
  - (ii) All investments will be short term investments which will not exceed a maximum of thirteen months.
  - (iii) All investments will be made with a body or investment scheme which has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency<sup>1</sup>. (A high credit rating will be defined as 'Investment Grade as measured by two standard credit rating agencies.')
  - (iv) All investments will be made in UK banks, building societies or charitable funds.
- 3.2 Credit Ratings will be monitored at quarterly intervals. If the credit rating falls during that period, the Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, the Chairman of the Finance Sub-committee and the Town Clerk, will decide on the appropriate action.

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<sup>1</sup> A credit rating agency is defined in the guidance as one of the following three companies: Standard and Poor's; Moody's Investors Service Ltd; Fitch Ratings Ltd.

- 3.3 For prudent management of its balances, the Town Council, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, will adopt a policy whereby funds which are likely to be surplus for up to three months can be invested in short term deposits with one or more of the UK major clearing banks and/or building societies.
- 3.4 (The Department of) Communities and Local Government maintain that borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Town Council will not engage in such activity.

#### **4.0 Review and amendment of the strategy**

- 4.1 This strategy will be reviewed annually.
- 4.2 At the end of the financial year during the preparation of accounts the Responsible Financial Officer will also report on investment activity.
- 4.3 The General Purposes Committee may recommend variations of the strategy for approval by the Full Council in accordance with the guidance from the Secretary of State.
- 4.4 The General Purposes Committee will review the Town Council's banking arrangements every two years.
- 4.5 The Finance Sub-committee will consider the placement of the Town Council's deposits one month before any bond matures and recommend movements to the General Purposes Committee or if subject to time constraints Full Council as necessary. At present the 12-month investment period Uckfield Town Council has been reviewing, has fallen each July.

#### **5.0 Current investments**

- 5.1 Uckfield Town Council's current investments are with:
- NatWest Bank Plc – day to day current account;
  - NatWest Bank Plc – business reserve account;
  - NatWest Bank Plc – 12-month fixed term deposit account;
  - Lloyds Bank Plc – Treasurer account;

#### **6.0 Non-financial investments**

- 6.1 Non-financial investments are normally held by a local authority to generate a profit, and it would normally be a physical asset that can be realised to recoup the capital invested. Uckfield Town Council has a portfolio of assets, with most buildings leased out for community use or to local small independent businesses. The full list of the Town Council's assets is available in the Town Council's Property Asset Management Plan 2024-29 which can be found on the Town Council's website:  
<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/key-documents/>

The Town Council currently owns the following residential property which sits adjacent to a Town Council owned community building:

- 2A Vernon Road

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Statement of position at 31 December 2023

**APPENDIX A**

**Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2023**

Specified investments	£
• NatWest Bank Plc – Day to Day Current Account	200,000.25
• NatWest Bank Plc – Business Reserve Account	957,977.56
• NatWest Bank Plc – 12 Month Fixed Term Deposit Account	307,050.00
• Lloyds Bank Plc – Treasurer Account	21,067.15
Non – financial Investments	
• Flat 2A Vernon Road (March 2019 Valuation)	140,000.00

**Nb. For the present time the General Reserve shall, as a minimum be kept as three months operating costs as predicted by the annual budget. This is in addition to earmarked reserves that are allocated for a specific purpose or project.**

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 26 February 2024**

### **Agenda Item No. 10.0**

#### **TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JACKIE LOVE**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out a motion submitted by Councillor Love in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

##### **2.0 The motion for consideration**

- 2.1 Councillor Love gave written notice of the following motion which was received on 14 February 2024 and before the required deadline:-
- 2.2 The Town Mayor, Councillor Jackie Love, has received repeated communications from residents living in the vicinity of Bridge Farm Road about the recent outbreak of flies. The Town Mayor was also not impressed by Southern Water's response to the recent media coverage relating to the matter.
- 2.3 A motion has been submitted resolving that Uckfield Town Council write to the CEO of Southern Water, with the following wording:

Dear Mr Gosden,

#### **RE: Uckfield Waste Water Treatment Works, Bridge Farm Road, Uckfield**

I am writing on behalf of Uckfield Town Council in East Sussex and the residents living to the west of the town (in the roads of Anvil Close, Bridge Farm Road, Farriers Way, Forge Rise, The Smithy), users of Town Council owned land (Victoria Pleasure Ground, which has play provision, sports and a social care establishment) and the proposed development on Ridgewood Farm (Seghers Place) for 750 dwellings with provision for an industrial estate which will incorporate commercial business and retail outlets adjacent to your treatment works.

The purpose of this letter is to find a way forward and to liaise directly with yourself to discuss how we can improve the current living conditions for residents and businesses.

Each year, these properties experience fly infestations (Chironomids), and the number of occurrences has been increasing to what is now a frequent occurrence with an infestation currently underway.

The day to day experiences of residents and businesses in these roads include:

- not being able to open a window without flies entering their homes;
- not being able to turn a light on in their property when they enter the house after dark, for risk of attracting a large number of flies into their property;
- vulnerable residents and those living with recent diagnoses, such as a resident with cancer, struggling to keep their medication safe from the flies, and;
- the inability to open a window or door during periods of infestation, which is having a detrimental impact on residents' mental and physical health and wellbeing;

Residents should be able to feel comfortable, well and safe in their own home.

Since the last campaign by local residents in April 2021, they have had regular liaison with the Site Manager each time the flies appear and they have been advised that the area would be dosed with a chemical (we believe to be called *Bacillus Thuringiensis* -BTI?) for which the residents are grateful.

However, this is not sustainable. A long-term solution needs to be found. On reading various correspondence and documentation, we understand that there are limits on how many times the above chemical can be used, and it is obviously not having the desired effect. At an estimated count, we believe there to have been around 25 reported incidents since April 2021, with I'm sure a more accurate record recorded by staff working onsite.

We have been advised again and again of the possible causes of the infestations. However there are only so many times that the residents and we as the Town Council can put up with this. This matter needs to be resolved for the health and well-being of our town, now and in the future.

We read in an email from a Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO) of Rother and Wealden District Councils, dated April 2021 to Councillor S Mayhew that this isn't an easy issue and indeed one of his most difficult cases he's worked on in respect of finding a solution however we all need to work together. We note also from the EHO that you referred this case to your ecologists back in 2021 to increase predators with ecological improvements. Experts responsible for distributing the Larvicide were also asked to give advice on efficiencies and improvements in dosing and even completed an insect management plan in April 2021. Yet the frequent occurrence and size of the swarms of flies; especially in the last 10 days, makes us question whether any of the actions in 2021, have had any impact.

The response from Mr John Penicud in the recent Meridian News report was very disappointing – it felt like the matter had been brushed off with reference to the flies being in their natural habitat. This is not a natural habitat, this is a man-made treatment works and the larvae are brought in to help with the process to deal with raw sewage! There is nothing natural about this situation.

We are doing our best to support our residents and have made contact with the Senior Environmental Health Officer again, but we need Southern Water to understand the unhygienic situation this places residents in, and really how much it affects their day to day living conditions during an outbreak.

Speaking to our residents they have raised the following questions:

*"We appreciate their dosing with chemicals however we are still struggling. What is the long term plan?"*

*"Do Southern Water have this issue elsewhere as they are describing it as a "natural occurrence? If it does what steps are taken to successfully address it and why aren't they being taken here? If it doesn't occur in other areas by sewage plants why does it happen here?"*

*"The staff on site are trying their hardest to do the right thing. Southern Water hierarchy are clearly not interested and only interested in profit".*

*"Please don't shrug and walk away from this issue"*

Just short of building a roof over the treatment works which would solve all issues including the odour issue Messrs Redrow are working on within their planning application, we would welcome your feedback as to how and when this issue will be resolved.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Jackie Love  
Town Mayor of Uckfield

Link to the recent (2024) meridian news report

<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2024-02-12/its-disgusting-families-being-plagued-by-fliesfrom-local-sewage-works>

Link to the 2021 BBC news report

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-56651196>

### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the above and advise the Clerk accordingly.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring



Date: 20/02/2024  
Time: 10:38:48

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
Balance Sheet

Page: 1

From: Month 1, April 2023  
To: Month 9, December 2023

Chart of Accounts:

UTC General

	<u>Period</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	
Fixed Assets			
Land & Buildings	(55,614.00)	3,181,029.00	
Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	(23,145.00)	99,855.60	
Non-operational Assets	(9,284.00)	1,177,956.00	
Community Assets	0.00	19,284.00	
	(88,043.00)		4,478,124.60
Current Assets			
Stock	341.46	3,925.33	
Debtors	(1,038.44)	28,557.60	
Deposits and Cash	237,833.99	958,380.65	
VAT Liability	0.00	31,550.45	
Bank	0.00	201,489.10	
	237,137.01		1,223,903.13
Current Liabilities			
Creditors - Short term	(5,508.29)	56,573.43	
Taxation	8,797.16	(256.90)	
Wages/Pension Fund	10,100.37	6,768.43	
VAT Liability	817.64	0.00	
Bank Account	6,448.93	0.00	
	20,655.81		63,084.96
Current Assets less Current Liabilities:	216,481.20		1,160,818.17
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:	128,438.20		5,638,942.77
Long Term Liabilities			
Loans	(3,600.00)	432,000.00	
	(3,600.00)		432,000.00
Total Assets less Total Liabilities:	132,038.20		5,206,942.77
Capital & Reserves			
Reserves	(87,527.48)	5,308,444.24	
P & L Account	236,994.84	236,994.84	
	149,467.36		5,545,439.08

From: Month 1, April 2023  
To: Month 9, December 2023

Chart of Accounts:	UTC General	
	<u>Period</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
<b>Sales</b>		
Environment & Leisure	88,024.44	88,024.44
General Purposes	1,224,439.84	1,224,439.84
Luxfords income	166,970.28	166,970.28
	1,479,434.56	1,479,434.56
<b>Purchases</b>		
Environment & Leisure	276,880.14	276,880.14
General Purpose	762,442.81	762,442.81
Luxfords Expenditure	203,116.77	203,116.77
	1,242,439.72	1,242,439.72
<b>Gross Profit/(Loss):</b>	<u>236,994.84</u>	<u>236,994.84</u>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss):</b>	<u>236,994.84</u>	<u>236,994.84</u>

Profit & Loss

GP Sales Breakdown

Total	1224439.84
Precept	-1051151.00
CIL	-8371.85
Balance	164916.99

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 26 February 2024**

### **Agenda Item No 12.0**

#### **TO NOTE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S LIST OF STANDING ORDERS AND DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a quarterly update on the current suppliers who are paid by standing order and/or direct debit.

##### **2.0 Details**

- 2.1 Since the table was presented to Full Council on 30 October 2023, a couple of changes have been made.

We have one new supplier that has been set up as a Direct Debit:  
Adams Catering

We have removed the following supplier from the list of Direct Debits, to manage the bills more closely, as a number of estimated bills have been received in recent weeks despite the office submitted regular monthly actual meter readings:  
SSE PLC

The following table shows the current list of companies we have set up:

<b>Supplier Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
Adams Catering	Luxfords food supplier
Acuity Professional Partnership LLP	Accountants
British Telecom	Utilities – Broadband
Scottish Water/Business Stream	Utilities – Water
CF Corporate Finance Ltd	Lease rental – Photocopier
Elite Fine Foods	Luxfords food supplier
Focus Group	Utilities – Telephone
Harvey's Brewery	Luxfords Supplier
Investec Asset Finance PLC	Telephone Lease Rental
Long Man Brewery	Luxfords Supplier
NatWest Bank	Credit Card Payments
Public Work Loan Board	Loan Repayments
SAGE Software Ltd	Software Subscription
Shell Fuelcard Services	Grounds Maintenance Vehicles
<del>SSE PLC</del>	<del>Utilities – Electric &amp; Gas</del>
Wealden District Council	Rates
WorldPay	Credit Card
WPA Health	NHS Top-up Scheme

- 2.2 When setting up payment by direct debit, two councillors act as signatories on the direct debit mandate.

##### **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the up to date list of accounts currently set up by direct debit.

Contact Officer: Sarah D'Alessio

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## MEDIA POLICY

Policy Number 26		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1.	January 2007	GP 15.01.07
2.	GP.011.07.10	Addition of Chairman of the Town Centre Steering Group as additional contact with the media.
3.	20.06.16	Amendment to Contact with the Media

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with the media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.
- 1.2 It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The Council welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

## **2.0 KEYS AIMS**

- 2.1 The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media – press, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Council and to explain the reasons for particular policies and priorities.
- 2.2 The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the local community in holding the Council to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to Officers and Members and to background information to assist them in this role. To balance this, the Council will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.

## **3.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the governments Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Some aspects of the Code are relevant to this policy:-
  - “Any publicity describing the Council’s policies and aims [and the provision of services] should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both.”
  - “Publicity touching on issues that are controversial, or on which there are arguments for and against the views or policies of the Council... should be handled with particular care. Issues must be presented clearly, fairly and as simply as possible, although councils should not oversimplify facts, issues or arguments.”
  - “Publicity should not attack, nor appear to undermine, generally accepted moral standards.”
  - “... local authorities... should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy.”

- 3.2 In particular, Officers and Members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.
- 3.3 Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and take appropriate action.
- 3.4 When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.
- 3.5 There are a number of personal privacy issues for Officers and Members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details are in the public domain), disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Town Clerk before any response is made to the media.

#### **4.0 CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA**

- 4.1 Staff and elected members should politely refer any direct approach from the media to the Town Council office who will arrange for a suitable response to be provided in association with appropriate officers and Members. The Town Council office will then liaise with the appropriate elected Member (the Mayor, Chairman of the relevant Committee or representative on the Outside Body) in relation to this response and if a quote is required.
- 4.2 Statements made by the Mayor or the Chairman of Committees should reflect the Council's opinion.
- 4.3 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council.
- 4.4 Caution should be exercised when submitting letters to the editor for publication in newspapers. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. However, such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks.
- 4.5 Letters representing the views of the Council should only be submitted by the Mayor or the Chairman of Committees or the Town Clerk. If other Members choose to use the letters page to express their own opinions on Council policies, they are strongly advised to check their facts first with the Town Clerk. It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward are those of the Council or of an individual Member.

- 4.6 At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council.

## **5 ATTENDANCE OF MEDIA AT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 5.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that all agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request, five working days prior to the meeting.
- 5.2 The media are encouraged to attend Council and Committee meetings and seating and workspace will be made available.
- 5.3 Any filming or taping of Council or Committee proceedings by the media must be with prior notice to the Town Clerk and Chairman of the particular meeting.

## **6 ELECTIONS**

- 6.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity contains guidance for providing publicity for Members and for publicity around elections. The code makes it clear that Council resources should not be used on publicising individual Members unless it is relevant to the particular position they hold in the Council. These extracts from the Code illustrate the main points:-

- Publicity about individual councillors may include the contact details, the positions they hold in the council (for example, Mayor or Chairman of a committee), and their responsibilities. Publicity may also include information about individual councillors' proposals, decisions and recommendations only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the Council. All such publicity should be objective and explanatory, and ... personalisation of issues or personal images making should be avoided."
- "Publicity should not be, or liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Whilst it may be appropriate to describe policies put forward by an individual councillor which are relevant to their position and responsibilities within the council, and to put forward their justification in defence of them, this should not be done in party political terms, using political slogans, expressly advocating policies of those of a particular party or directly attacking policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals."
- "The period between the notice of an election and the election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.

- 6.2 In line with practice elsewhere in the country, the Council will not quote any Councillor in a news release or involve them in proactive publicity events during the election period, regardless of whether or not they are standing for election. The only exception to this (as laid down in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity) is during an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the control of the Council. In this situation, Members holding key civic positions should be able to comment.

## **7 PRESS RELEASES**

- 7.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of all Officers and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.
- 7.2 Any Officer or Member may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Town Clerk in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.



## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 26 February 2024**

### **Agenda Item 15.0**

#### **TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The report sets out the engagements of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor between 16 January and 25 February 2024.
- 1.2 Please note that the Mayor, Councillor J. Love and Deputy Mayor, Councillor D. French were re-elected on 15 May 2023 for their third consecutive year.

#### **TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

- 19.01.24 BBC Radio 4 Any Questions? Civic Centre, Uckfield
- 15.02.24 Presentation of King's Award for Voluntary Service to Brighter Uckfield, Civic Centre

#### **TO NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

- 22.01.24 Celebration of Life Champagne Afternoon Tea, Temple Grove Residential Home, Herons Ghyll
- 15.02.24 Presentation of King's Award for Voluntary Service to Brighter Uckfield, Civic Centre