

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held  
on Monday 21 October 2024 at 7.00pm  
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling  
2 x members of the public  
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 15.0 (*due to reference being made to the Uckfield & District Lions Club*), as he was a member of the Lions.

Councillor K. Bedwell declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 14.0 (Buildings Insurance Renewal) and 18.0 (King's Award) as a result of being the Chair of Ridgewood Village Hall (a leaseholder of Uckfield Town Council).

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

**FC.55.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable a member of the public to speak.

A resident of West Park wished to further elaborate on his previous comments, regarding the highway verges on Bell Farm Road between the entrance to the Meads Surgery and Copwood roundabout. The resident had previously raised his concerns regarding visibility and this being impaired at the junction of Batchelor Way. He wished to add that bracken was also now encroaching and

the vegetation may need attention.

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

Councillor Chris Dowling referred to a meeting he had had with ward members relating to the concerns of residents living in New Road, with the increase in traffic and visibility at the junction of New Road/Lewes Road.

He was also liaising with East Sussex Highways with regard to streetlights not working in Lewes Road and the entrance to Pipers Field. The Town Clerk asked the County Councillor for the location and lamp column numbers so she could check responsibility.

Deer warning signs had been placed up in New Town in response to the request of the Newtown Action Group, including Bird in Eye Hill, as it was rutting season. Councillor K. Bedwell requested that some be placed up in Mallard Drive, by the pond, which had since been added.

Councillor Claire Dowling advised that she was aware of the large pot hole that had appeared by the Jet garage in London Road, and this was being dealt with.

Highway contractors would be returning to Lashbrooks Road, to undertake further repairs, and address snagging from the previous works. Works were also due to be undertaken in Belmont Road and Grange Road.

All being well, the bus station was due to reopen on Friday 25 October following the refurbishment.

Councillor B. Reed advised that the junction of Snatts Road and London Road had flooded again, following the recent weather. She also advised where sections of the Uckfield By-pass had lowered, and at the roundabouts of Budletts and Batsbridge. Councillor C. Dowling advised that the issue at Snatts Road would still occur but the works undertaken had enabled the water to disappear/drain more quickly.

Councillor B. Cox advised that he had attended an Extraordinary meeting of the Council at Wealden DC, where they signed off three Neighbourhood Plans.

Councillor B. Reed advised that there was no further update on the Ashdown Forest at that time, and referred to ongoing engagement she had had with Knepp.

Councillor D. French had attended the Newtown Action Group meeting, and Extraordinary meeting of Wealden District Council.

**FC.56.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor D. Manvell due to annual leave.

### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on 9

September 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**FC.57.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on 9 September 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

## 5.2 Action List

Due to the number of actions outstanding on the action plan, it had previously been agreed to review each of the actions at this meeting of the council, to consider whether the actions were still relevant.

FC115.04.19 – Parking – it was proposed that this matter be brought back to Full Council on 2 December 2024, so members could fully understand the views of individual councillors. This has been delayed until the New Year, to give time to review the feedback from local residents from the residents' survey.

FC30.09.20 – Affordability report – the report would be updated utilising the latest market analysis, affordability and housing market assessment information from Wealden DC. It would be presented back to UTC before being sent to MHCLG, and to the Deputy Prime Minister.

FC55.10.21 – Changing Place Toilets – members were asked to assist the Town Clerk with the consideration of potential locations.

FC.94.02.22 – Food poverty – this action had now been completed, and could be removed.

FC.68.10.23 – Royal Mail – this action could be removed.

FC.93.01.24 – Lloyds Banking Group – a final letter would be sent to Lloyds Bank and the Financial Ombudsman, advising of their failure to consult.

FC.29.06.24 – Opening times of toilets at Victoria – this would be considered in the budget setting process

Members agreed that unless an item was in the process of being actioned, it would not stay on the list after 12 months. Members subsequently 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 16 September 2024

**FC.58.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 16 September 2024.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 14 October 2024

**FC.59.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of 14 October 2024.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 23 September 2024

**FC.60.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 23 September 2024.

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

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

**8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS**

(i) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Ageing Well Forum

Nothing to report at present.

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

General Purposes Committee

(i) Pension Policy

**FC.61.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to support the approval of the General Purposes Committee and adopt the revised Pension Policy.

**10.0 TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

Members were presented with a copy of the Notice of conclusion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Town Clerk reported that there was one ‘Except for’ matter reported in Section 3 (page 4) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return:

*The Except for matter related to the exclusion of fixed asset purchases from Box 6. The accountant and the External Auditor had a difference of opinion on where the changes from year to year should have been recorded in the boxes on the form. The External Auditor referred to Section 2 of the Practitioners Guide and advised that the adjustments would have to be recorded at the end of this financial year.*

The figures had since been adjusted by the Town Council’s Accountant in preparation for the financial year end of 2024-25. The Town Council’s governance and financial procedures continued to be considered sound, but on this occasion, the figures had been entered into the wrong box of the return.

Members wished to thank the Responsible Financial Officer for their hard work and completion of financial year-end.

**11.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL’S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25 (Q2)**

Members reviewed the contents of the report, and wished to thank all staff for their hard work in delivering the priorities of the organisation alongside the day to day workload.

**12.0 TO REVIEW A SNAPSHOT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL’S BUDGET AND BALANCE SHEET POSITION FOR Q1 OF 2024/25**

This report provided a snapshot of the Town Council’s accounts at the end of quarter one (end of June 2024). Members requested a breakdown of the

overspend of £16,308.67 under General Purposes Committee before reviewing and noting the contents of the report.

**13.0 TO NOTE THE DECISION OF THE URGENT CONSULTATION PANEL OF 11 OCTOBER 2024**

Members were presented with a brief report submitted by the Town Clerk to the Urgent Consultation Panel on 11 October 2024, due to the failure of the Restaurant's commercial microwave oven. Members noted the decision of the Urgent Consultation Panel to re-allocate £1k of earmarked reserves and utilise £1,000 from general reserves to fund a replacement.

**14.0 TO REVIEW THE DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS INSURANCE RENEWAL**

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mayhew, chaired this item, due to the Town Mayor's prejudicial interest.

Members were presented with the policies and buildings/machinery schedule for the renewal of the Town Council's buildings insurance. The renewal also included the addition of Cyber Insurance cover, flood risk insurance for Bridge Cottage and the Signal Box, as well as combined engineering inspections for the lifts and lift shaft in the Civic Centre.

The renewal had also included Claims assist (loss adjuster service) which members questioned could be purchased as and when something happened rather than paying upfront for the service. The Town Clerk clarified a couple of points within the report, and the suggestion to obtain regular reinstatement valuations for insurance purposes. The last valuations had been obtained in 2023, so should be carried out in 2025 or 2026.

Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling left the meeting at 7.50pm.

**FC.62.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the package supplied for the renewal of the Town Council's Buildings Insurance, which also incorporated flood risk cover for the Signal Box and Bridge Cottage, combined engineering, cyber cover and claims assist.

**15.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR D. FRENCH**

Councillor D. French put forward a motion to request the addition of a Public Access Trauma Kit (bleed kit) on the outside of the Civic Centre, and to encourage local public houses in Uckfield to consider installing the kits.

Councillor French had made initial contact with the Uckfield Lions, and they were keen to support the initiative. It was suggested that any added within the town be placed on venues/buildings that already had trained emergency first aiders.

**FC.63.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase and installation of a central locked box housing a public access trauma kit on the exterior of the Civic Centre, with plans to look wider in the town, in due course. Research should be undertaken to establish a joint partnership initiative to deliver this project in association with local emergency services and/or the Freemasons, Rotary Club and Uckfield Lions.

**16.0 TO CONSIDER FURTHER EXPANSION OF A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR B. REED**

Members were presented with a report which requested further expansion of an existing motion from Councillor B. Reed.

It was requested that the work undertaken to map key green assets in the Uckfield area with 'Weald to Waves' should be further expanded, to become a partner of the initiative and, to broaden the Town Council representative role of the Conservator of Ashdown Forest, to also include the Weald to Waves initiative.

Councillor Reed explained that she would be happy to trial the broadening of the Town Council representative role for a year to see how it would evolve and develop.

Councillor Reed also offered to assist with the mapping, liaise with the relevant agencies, and identify further funding streams to support work around conservation and ecology within the Town Council's assets.

**FC.64.10.24**

Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) approve the broadening of the Town Council representative role for the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to also include the Weald to Waves initiative (Councillor D. French and Councillor B. Reed), and;
- (ii) approve for Councillor Reed to utilise that role to liaise with the relevant agencies involved in the Weald to Waves initiative, and understand what the partner role entailed in terms of resource and if a financial contribution is required. Councillor Reed was asked to bring back a report with this information.

**17.0 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2025**  
Members noted the calendar of meetings for 2025.

**18.0 TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION PROCESS FOR THE KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

Councillor S. Mayhew chaired this item, and reminded members that they could identify potential organisations and put forward nominations themselves rather than through the Town Council office. Information was available within the report on how nominations could be put forward.

**19.0 TO CONSIDER THE CONTENTS OF A DRAFT RESIDENTS' SURVEY**

Members were presented with a draft of a residents' survey, with plans to place this out for consultation in November 2024. It would assist with the Town Council's annual business planning, and future planning for the town.

Members found the survey relatively easy to use, but provided some advice on potential changes to question 16. It was also suggested that on the sports facilities, that reference be made to an athletic track.

One member noted that when completing the survey on a smartphone, the phone needed to be turned on its side to see the full question and tick boxes. They had also added some comments in their practice run on the draft.

A few more suggestions were made by members before they noted the contents of the report, and survey.

**FC.65.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** that subject to the slight additions and amendments, that the Residents' Survey be placed out for public consultation in November, to better inform the Town Council's annual business planning.

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

The Town Mayor advised that both her and the Deputy Mayor had also attended the Uckfield Community Fridge's third anniversary celebration that Saturday.

The Town Mayor talked through her attendance at the business lunch with the Lord Mayor of the City of London that day, and what a wonderful and useful experience it had been.

**FC.66.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, to ensure completion of the Full Council agenda.

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

Three deed of grants had been received:

Janet Baah

Margaret Elaine Ward

Matthew Wyatt

**FC.67.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

**22.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

**23.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised members that the Member Register of Interest form, provided by Wealden DC, had changed, and the full address of employment was required for members in work. Some members would therefore need to complete the form(s) once again, to ensure this was completed accurately. They would be circulated in due course.

The Town Clerk also advised of a webinar being run by the Local Government Association on Personal Safety for Councillors.

**24.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor, Councillor Bedwell, reminded members of the importance of attendance at the Town Council's committees, and in particular during the budget setting period, as a number of important decisions would need to be undertaken. She fully appreciated how busy everyone was, and their work and personal commitments.

Members of the public left the room at 8.58pm.

**25.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**FC.68.10.24** 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.

25.1 Uckfield Town Council: An Organisational Review

The Town Clerk advised that an Organisational Review had been prepared and would be hand delivered to all Town Councillors by the end of that week.

Members were asked to attend a meeting on Monday 11 November at 6.30pm, where members of Management Team would be present, to talk about their service areas.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.