



# 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 25 November 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 14 October 2024
- 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 up to 30 September 2024

### 6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1 To note an update on the Law Commission's consultation on burial and cremation
- 6.2 To consider a request to purchase or rent two parcels of town council land adjacent to 9 Saunders Close, Uckfield
- 6.3 To review the 2025/26 proposal from East Sussex County Council on their Urban Grass Verge Cutting Contract
- 6.4 To consider a letter drafted by the Chair of Westmeston PC to their MP proposing a speed limit on rural roads

**7.0. ENVIRONMENT**

- 7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates
- 7.2 To note an update from the Countryside Ranger

**8.0. LEISURE**

None.

**9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

- 9.1 To note an update from the Allotment Working Group, with proposed amendments to the Allotment Rules and Regulations
- 9.2 To receive an update from the Climate Emergency Steering Group

**10.0. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- 10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
- 10.2 Conservators of Ashdown Forest
- 10.3 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 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group

**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 consider the provision of temporary toilet facilities at Harlands Playing Fields



**Town Clerk**

19 November 2024



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.00pm  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. Angie Smith (Chair)  
Cllr. Karen Bedwell  
Cllr. Val Frost  
Cllr. Chris Macve

Cllr. Bernadette Reed (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr. Donna French  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Spike Mayhew

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Jackie Love  
Councillor Peter Selby

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 CHAIR'S DISCRETION**

None.

**3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

One apology was received from Cllr D. Bennett due to personal reasons.

**4.0. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 2 September 2024

**EL.20.10.24** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 2 September 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2. Action list

Members noted the report - no items to remove.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report – no items to remove. Councillor Reed asked if there was an item in relation to the ecology report but this was not part of the action list.

**5.0. FINANCE**

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report and a couple of areas were clarified:

With regards to the £900 payment made to a Tree Surgery company, the Ranger explained that it would normally cost around £350 per day for professional tree inspections and as a practicing Tree Surgeon, they were able to undertake more intricate climbing with specialist equipment. The tree climber worked alongside the Grounds team three days a month, so this was worthwhile and it helped the Grounds team to keep on top of the monthly expenditure by condensing their time at a reduced rate.

Clarification was sought on a payment made for a drum circle activity in August. It was explained that this formed part of the Weald on the Field entertainment and was led by a Ukrainian drummer. Councillors expressed how much fun this was and how much the activity was enjoyed by local residents.

## 5.2 Income & Expenditure report

One member recognised the need for the retainer for a tree surgeon having recently visited the local woodlands and seeing the amount of ash die back works being undertaken, but also found it quite revealing to see how the woodlands had been impacted by new pedestrian routes since developments had been built adjacent.

On account of the low income showing for burials and ashes interments during the first four months (April – July) of the financial year, one member asked if this was likely to be ongoing. It was budgeted at £12k (£3k per month), whilst the actual had recorded half of that budgeted. Members were advised that the income had caught up in recent months and that it had always been difficult to predict income for burials, with patterns changing year to year, particularly during the pandemic. Members asked to look at the costs involved in the upkeep and maintenance of the cemetery (including staffing) and replacement of vehicles and equipment.

Staff were asked to liaise with local funeral directors to find out if there were any recent changes in demand and families' preferred arrangements. They were also interested to understand if the Wealden Crematorium had affected business in the Wealden area. The Senior Administrative Officer stated that people were still requesting both burials and ashes interments so it was not comparable in that regard. It was suggested to investigate other areas, to see what they offered, since the Town Council only budgeted for what they had been doing traditionally (resolution at item 5.4).

## 5.3 To consider the quotations received for upgrading two Grounds team vehicles and to select a suitable lease agreement

The Ranger advised that ideally, the grounds team would like to focus on the replacement of two vehicles, although there was the option of a third electric 'pull' vehicle available that would be useful between Victoria and the Civic Centre. Local suppliers, Citroen and Toyota, had been recommended in the event of servicing requirements, although the Ranger had no preference.

Citroen did not offer pick-up trucks and were slightly cheaper, although one member strongly informed attendees that Toyota were considered to produce more robust works vehicles so could be potentially more cost effective in the long run. Toyota offered good discounts and it was suggested to avoid contract hire and to try making a deal for the purchase of three vehicles.

The Hilux was highly regarded for holding their value and included a tow bar.

The Ranger pointed out that for a 'pool' vehicle (one for all staff), an electric van would support the 'green' agenda, and that the initial costs would be cheaper, even with the additional cost of £1,080 for the charger to be installed, saving around £400 a year. The Toyota Proace box van came with electrics and also worked out slightly cheaper - SLM Group offered a £15k discount with this offer which was good

value. With mileage, this would provide a range of 160-248 miles per week, depending on which offer was accepted.

If a charger was installed for a small van, a suggestion was made to capitalise on this opportunity and purchase a bigger electric van too. Electric was fine as the vehicles would not be required for towing. If anything needed to be pulled out they would use a 4-wheel drive.

A minor point was also raised on the spreadsheet in the report - the contract period for the Toyota Proace was 48-months, not 36-months.

Whilst putting in an EV charger, it was also worth considering future proofing this to prepare for the installation of solar panels on the roof with a battery for economy 7, and to note this whilst setting the budgets.

The current Grounds vehicles were of low value but could be used for part exchange and it was recommended to buy seat covers for inside the vehicles.

**EL.21.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to a finance lease deal for the three vehicles (if the budget allowed) with Toyota (two electric vans and one diesel pick-up).

- 5.4 To review fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery for 2025/26  
Members had already provided their suggestions at item 5.2 to set up a working group to discuss maintenance fees and charges. Also, to round up the figures to the nearest £5 to make it simpler. It was felt that the budget was going to be extremely tight next year and this area had not increased over the last few years, so needed to be looked into.

**EL.22.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to:

- (i) a 2% increase to the cemetery fees and charges in 2025/26 - rounding up the figures to the nearest £5;
- (ii) revisit the working group to discuss cemetery maintenance costs, and;
- (iii) compare prices against Wealden Crematorium for ashes interments.

- 5.5 To review fees and charges for Allotments for 2025/26

**EL.23.10.24** Members **RESOLVED** to agree that recent income was more or less equal and showed that we were now on target, so the proposed 2% increase was satisfactory, and the admin fee would remain at £15 per plot.

## **6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1 To note the draft minutes of the Allotment Conference on 11 September 2024  
Members noted the draft minutes and that the Conference was a huge success.

- 6.2 To consider a draft licence agreement to manage the requests and number of memorial benches in Snatts Road Cemetery and on Town Council owned land  
Members were not keen on the plastic benches being utilised within the cemetery, these would be more suited to the nature reserves. Staff were also asked to find out if they were made of recyclable materials. The timber slatted benches with metal ends were more attractive and better to sit on so would be more suited to the cemetery and open spaces where residents were likely to sit and reflect.

**EL.24.10.24** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to the proposed bench licence with a caveat that the nicer metal benches be placed in the cemetery and recreation areas and plastic/recycled material benches be restricted to the nature reserves.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

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

Councillor Reed provided a verbal update about Harlands Pond and the recent liaison with the Newt Conservation Partnership. Unfortunately Harlands Pond did not meet the criteria, but there might be alternative areas suitable for consideration. If successful, this might support the cost of improving our biodiversity.

The slide at Hempstead Recreation Ground Play Area had been barriered off, although the tape kept being moved so the Ranger would investigate to find out if this was a safety issue and if so, the slide would have to be removed until repair works were done. Further to the annual inspection of the play equipment, any parts that had been removed or gone missing were being replaced or removed for safety purposes.

One of the streetlighting columns had been hit in the High Street by a vehicle. The Estates & Facilities Manager were asked to bear this in mind as it could affect the festive light installation.

## **8.0 LEISURE**

### **8.1 Nothing to report**

## **9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

### **9.1 To receive an update from the Sports Working Group**

Members noted the report.

### **9.2 To receive an update from the Allotment Working Group**

Members noted the report.

## **10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

### **10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.2 Conservators of Ashdown Forest**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.6 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee**

Members thanked Councillor C. Macve and noted this report.

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

Nothing to report at this time.

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

Nothing to report at this time.

### **10.9 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group**

Nothing to report at this time.

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

Nothing to report at this time.

#### **11.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Nothing to report at this time. The Chair thanked the Ranger and Grounds staff for all of their hard work.

#### **12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.25.10.24** 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.

##### **12.1 To consider a report on the Marketing programme**

Members noted the report and thanked the Marketing and Community Engagement Officer as this was very comprehensive. Tickets for the pantomime were due to be ready to order online later that week.

The meeting finished at 20:15pm.

## UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

### ACTION LIST - FOR INFORMATION ONLY Environment and Leisure Committee

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

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL.28.09.16</u>	<u>To consider revised byelaws for the Town Council's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)</u> Members reviewed the amendments to the byelaws which still require Natural England and DEFRA's approval. It was RESOLVED to accept the revised byelaws.	05.09.16	HG	In progress.
<u>EL.26.01.19</u>	It was RESOLVED that the Supporter Groups for both reserves be consulted with a view to shorten the byelaws in accordance with DEFRA's comments and report back to the Environment & Leisure committee.	28.01.19		
<u>EL73.05.22</u>	<u>To consider a number of improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to: (i) introduce the following ideas for improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield at the next infrastructure working group meeting: better parking facilities for motorhomes in town and improved signage, and to; (ii) consider if there was anything additional that should be explored to be discussed at that next meeting, and; (iii) for the E&F Manager to explore those initiatives put forward already with the various responsible agencies, including any leverage through ES Highways for proper signage from developers.	16.05.22	RN/ HG	In progress.
<u>EL28.10.23</u>	<u>7.3 To consider the installation of a gate to restrict access to the Grounds work area next to Victoria Pavilion</u> (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 13.11.23 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. This is quite a big job that will be progressed in due course.



Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL42.01.24</u>	<u>To consider proposals to improve safety at the lower end of Luxford Field</u> Members RESOLVED to agree to: (iii) the electrician to explore costs for pillar lighting at the bottom of Luxford Field.	22.01.24	HG/JH	Works commenced wk beg 18 November for one week to install the lighting.  <b>NFA</b>
<u>EL43.03.24</u>	<u>To consider the 'We Grow' Initiative – a Sussex based gardening co-operative</u> Members RESOLVED to agree to: (i) Request officers to investigate whether there are sites owned by the Town Council which could be utilised as community gardens; (ii) Investigate whether a co-operative gardening approach would be feasible within the Town Council's Allotment Rules and Regulations; (iii) Bring these findings to a future meeting for further consideration by members.	04.03.24	RN	Investigations were undertaken by the Allotment Working Group.  The Initiative has since been established on private land near Uckfield College and Uckfield Leisure Centre: 6 Lime Close on Sat afternoons, and 1 Manor Close (Family Hub Growing Group) on Mondays at 5pm. <b>NFA</b>
<u>EL55.04.24</u>	<u>To consider actions to reduce litter in the vicinity of new food outlets and retail businesses in Uckfield</u> Members resolved to agree for Uckfield Town Council staff to: (i) contact the new Co-op store off Highlands roundabout, to ask them if they would consider contributing to a litter bin in the town, and; (ii) look into other ideas mentioned above, and; (iii) continue to work with Brighter Uckfield on this matter.	15.04.24	RN	To be actioned.
<u>EL.07.07.24</u>	<u>To consider a proposal to limit the number of benches at Snatts Road Cemetery</u> Members resolved to request staff to: (i) investigate how many spaces there were left in the cemetery and around the town, and allocate a wish list of them for communal benches (town owned); (ii) look into a suitable plaque; (iii) set a 10-year licence of the benches (so that we could take them away if they were damaged or deteriorating, replacing old for new); (iv) offer to plant a tree instead on Town Council land in the town (no plaques on trees); (v) potentially, look into any alternatives such as having an engraved brick structure, and; (vi) take those findings to the next E&L Committee.	07.07.24	RN	An updated was presented to E&L Committee on 14/10/24. Members agreed to the proposed bench licence with a caveat that the nicer metal benches be placed in the cemetery and recreation areas and plastic/recycled material benches be restricted to the nature reserves. The procedures are now in place. Two bench requests have been received, one at Victoria Pleasure Ground and one at Snatts Road Cemetery. <b>NFA</b>

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL.11.07.24</u>	<u>Climate Change working Group Update</u> Members resolved to agree to request staff to instruct the Town Council's solicitors in relation to the potential purchase of land adjacent to the River Uck and abutting the lane leading to the Sussex Horse Rescue site.	08.07.24	HG	In progress
<u>EL.18.09.24</u>	<u>To initially consider the proposed re-routing of the Public Right of Way from Ridgewood Farm into Boothland Wood as part of the development of this site</u> Members noted the report and <b>RESOLVED</b> to initially agree to the proposal from Redrow, to re-route the Public Right of Way from Ridgewood Farm away from Boothland Wood as part of the development of this site but if further consideration of routes needed to be explored.	02.09.24	HG	In progress
<u>EL.14.10.24</u>	<u>To consider the quotations received for upgrading two Grounds team vehicles and to select a suitable lease agreement</u> Members resolved to agree to a finance lease deal for the three vehicles (if the budget allowed) with Toyota (two electric vans and one diesel pick-up)	24.09.24	JH	All vehicles are now on order. Two vehicles will arrive at the end of November, and the diesel pick up will be available April/May 2025. <b>NFA</b>
<u>EL.22.10.24</u>	<u>To review fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery for 2025/26</u> Members resolved to agree to: (i) the cemetery fees and charges in 2025/26 – rounding up the figures to the nearest £5; (ii) revisit the working group to discuss cemetery maintenance costs, and; (iii) compare prices against Wealden Crematorium for ashes interments.	22.10.24	RN	In progress – Cemetery fees and charges group to meet in 2025 to discuss

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE  
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2024-25**

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

Project Name	Green Projects plus £5,000 in earmarked reserves		Project Number	58
<b><u>FC.64.01.21</u></b>	£18,000 - minus Cycle to Work scheme purchase of £1,746.67 in 2023/24.	2023/24	<p>The majority of this funding was utilised in 2023/24 for the purchase of an electric bike through the Town Council's Cycle to Work scheme and deposit payments for the installation of an air source heating system in Foresters Hall.</p> <p>This leaves £1,734.29 remaining for expenditure in 2024/25. This has since been utilised to cover further costs to the installation of the air source heating set up at Foresters Hall.</p> <p><b>NFA.</b></p>	
	-minus contribution to deposit payments of £14,519.04 for Foresters Hall Air Source heat pump	2023/24		

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

Project Name	Speed reduction initiative (already have £3,199.64 in earmarked reserves)		Project Number	69
<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.	

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2024-25**

**Projects in 2023/24 Budget – New Initiatives**

Project Name	Vehicle replacement			Project Number	79
<b><u>FC.86.01.23</u></b>	£7,500	16.01.24	Looking into options. Plan to make lease arrangement in 2024/25, so funds will need to be carried forward. We are currently looking at updated costings and proposals.		
		29.08.24	Work underway to address queries raised by members at E&L Committee on 8 July 2024.		
		18.11.24	All vehicles have now been ordered. Two are due to arrive at the end of November 2024. The diesel pick-up will be ready in Spring 2025. <b>NFA.</b>		

**Projects in 2024/25 Budget – New Initiatives**

Project Name	Tree for a tree planting programme			Project Number	81
<b><u>FC.91.01.24</u></b>	£1,000 plus carry forward from 2023-24 (£1,466.35)	10.04.24	This will progress Winter 2024-25. The Town Council was successful with its bid for grant funding through Wealden DC for Community Orchards. Tree planting will also include approximately 50 saplings donated by Eco Green Communities and 15 from another company.		

Project Name	Roofed compound area for Grounds storage			Project Number	83
<b><u>FC.91.01.24</u></b>	£500	10.04.24	Will progress during Winter 2025. Not urgent.		

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2024-25**

Project Name	Harlands Pond Management Plan Works		Project Number	85
<b><u>FC.91.01.24</u></b>	£950 minus £178.33 (siltex) = £771.67.	19.11.24	<p>The funds were set aside to cover the cost of siltex treatment and nesting tubes for Mallards. The siltex has now been ordered.</p> <p>Siltex is a natural and inexpensive way to reduce organic silt and improve water quality. It is environmentally friendly and harmless to plants and animals, and because it recycles organic material, it is a great benefit to the aquatic ecosystem.</p>	

## Environment and Leisure Committee at 30 Sept 2024

	Please note that due to the use of online ticketing systems there is a delay in income.	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Sept 24	Actuals at	Budgeted	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Totals	Budget	
		Actuals £	Actuals £	Actuals £	Actuals £	Actuals £	Actuals £	30 Sept 24 £	30 Sept 24 £	Budget £	Budget £	Budget £	Budget £	Budget £	Budget £		2024/25	
Sales																		
Contribution to Town Centre Security (4040)		0	0	0	645	0	0	645	450	0	0	0	0	0	0	645	450	
Weald Hall Events (4050)		1,655	583	1,888	1,168	949	751	6,993	12,500	0	0	6,250	0	0	6,250	19,493	25,000	
Allotments (4100)		3,635	2,917	71	88	63	51	6,825	6,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,000	8,825	8,000	
Allotment Admin Charge (4102)		2,190	1,455	135	75	45	30	3,930	3,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,930	3,000	
Allotment Deposits (4101)		156	312	262	208	156	104	1,198	500	83	83	83	83	83	83	1,698	1,000	
Playing Fields & Pitches, Sport Income (4110)		44	159	372	99	0	120	794	500	500	2,000	0	500	0	12,500	16,294	16,000	
Playing Fields & Pitches, Event Income (4120)		0	1,455	16	483	4,397	754	7,105	6,000	0	0	0	0	0	500	7,605	6,500	
WDC- WPark Culverts Agreement (4123)		0	0	0	0	400	0	400	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	400	400	
Cemetery - Interments (4180)		1,107	3,107	0	1,737	3,986	8,794	18,730	18,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	36,730	36,000	
Cemetery - Memorials (4181)		236	629	682	516	1,151	1,336	4,551	3,400	567	567	567	567	567	567	7,951	6,800	
Cemetery - Sundry income (4182)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	
Cemetery Maintenance Charge (4183)		212	424	0	318	318	742	2,015	2,100	350	350	350	350	350	350	4,115	4,200	
Farmers Market Income (4270)		0	0	180	60	0	105	345	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	345	0	
Env Sundry Income (4275)		0	0	0	0	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	209	200	
Sundry Income (4276)		0	78	0	0	0	0	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	0	
Litter/bus station (4295)		0	0	398	0	398	0	795	795	0	0	398	0	0	398	1,590	1,590	
Road Safety Week/Eco EXPO (4370)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100	
Weald on the Field (4387)		0	0	0	1,500	250	1,655	3,405	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,405	5,000	
Roundabout income (4350)		0	0	0	864	0	0	864	864	0	0	0	0	0	0	864	864	
Total Sales		9,234	11,118	4,004	7,760	12,122	14,442	58,682	59,509	4,500	6,000	10,647	4,500	4,000	26,148	114,477	115,304	
Grant funding income																		
Wealden DC (step improvements followed by Community Orchards)		0	0	960	0	2,318	0	3,278	0									
Police & Crime Commissioner (Pillar lighting)		0	0	0	0	2,500	0	2,500	0									
Safer Wealden Partnership (Pillar lighting)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,500								
Boxes highlighted are to be funded or part funded by earmarked reserves/new initiative spending	Due to the backlog of repairs in 2023, many of the repairs identified in 2023 and 2024 have been addressed in this financial year. We have £30,647 allocated in reserves for these repairs, so any overspend at financial year end will be allocated accordingly.																£2k was set aside in reserves in 2024-25 for the purchase of new brushcutters, which covers a proportion of the overspend. The remainder was savings made on the purchase of larger equipment.	
Purchases																		
Playing fields and pitches (5120)		18	475	9	3,143	1,655	1,208	6,508	9,500	0	0	4,750	0	0	4,750	16,008	19,000	
Playing fields electricity (5122)		0	23	162	168	35	221	608	1,175	196	196	196	196	196	1,996	3,583	2,350	
Play Areas (5176)		0	2,328	42	35	0	0	2,405	2,000	0	0	2,000	0	0	0	4,405	4,000	
Ground Maintenance General (5204)		959	1,122	568	799	314	194	3,956	2,500	417	417	417	417	417	417	6,456	5,000	
General equipment repairs (5201)		0	0	179	325	1,285	536	2,324	3,500	583	583	583	583	583	583	5,824	7,000	
New Equipment and hire (5202)		90	0	2,644	2,749	200	1,925	7,608	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,608	5,000	
Transit (5269)		84	0	983	141	0	431	1,640	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	2,640	2,000	
Movana Vehicle (5279)		930	85	89	192	86	177	1,559	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	2,559	2,000	
Tractor maintenance & running costs (5275)		104	301	635	226	271	145	1,681	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	2,681	2,000	
Ford Ranger (5271)		74	73	407	142	579	126	1,401	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	2,401	2,000	
Rainwater Harvester Maintenance (5283)		107	1,150	0	0	0	0	1,256	1,200	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,256	1,200	
Grass cutting mower (5276)		105	0	0	357	97	0	559	500	0	500	0	0	0	500	1,559	1,500	
Allotments (5100)		140	(1,199)	246	80	338	(520)	(916)	1,167	0	1,167	0	0	0	1,167	1,418	3,500	
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Working budget) (523)		545	236	813	156	251	158	2,159	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	1,500	3,659	3,000	
Litter bins (5295)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Litter collection, open spaces (5296)		1,232	1,007	1,147	1,093	1,064	892	6,433	6,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	12,433	12,000	
Repair and replace street furniture (5375)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	750	0	0	0	0	0	750	750	1,500	
Corp dev- signage outside areas (5330)		217	0	0	0	0	0	217	500	0	0	250	0	0	250	717	1,000	
Protective - Outdoor staff (5058)		43	46	242	729	0	132	1,192	500	0	0	250	0	0	250	1,692	1,000	
Fencing (5280)		646	18	0	0	0	0	664	500	0	0	0	0	0	500	1,164	1,000	
Horticulture (5299)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	150	300	
Trees (5285)		1,050	1,950	600	1,200	3,390	1,055	9,245	8,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,245	12,000	
HMLNR & WPLNR (5033)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250	250	500	
Weald Hall Events (5300)		0	2,113	33	437	0	868	3,451	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	13,451	15,000	
Performing rights (5301)		0	0	0	0	0	569	569	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,569	2,000	
Event Advertising Marketing (5302)		349	125	130	80	157	890	1,731	2,000	0	500	0	0	0	500	2,731	3,000	
Weald on the Field (5078)		675	0	39	5,277	4,645	684	11,320	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,320	10,000	
Town Security/CCTV (5370)		1,161	(1,100)	0	0	1,702	0	1,763	1,325	0	0	0	0	0	1,325	3,088	2,650	
Floral displays (5373)		0	0	1,960	537	537	537	3,572	3,600	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,572	3,600	
Cemetery, grave digging (5181)		320	0	640	320	320	640	2,240	2,500	0	0	1,250	0	0	1,250	4,740	5,000	
Cemetery, rates & water (5180)		156	115	115	112	115	115	728	900	150	150	150	150	150	0	1,478	1,500	
Cemetery, litter (5182)		343	245	245	245	196	163	1,436	1,500	250	250	250	250	250	250	2,936	3,000	
Cemetery, maintenance (5186)		186	0	0	0	0	0	186	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	186	200	
Street lights, supply & maintenance (5080)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,000	11,000	11,000	
Street light repairs (5081)		0	5,528	4,130	4,133	0	0	13,790	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,790	15,000	

## Environment and Leisure Committee at 30 Sept 2024

	Please note that due to the use of online ticketing systems there is a	Apr 24 Actuals £	May 24 Actuals £	Jun 24 Actuals £	Jul 24 Actuals £	Aug 24 Actuals £	Sept 24 Actuals £	Actuals at 30 Sept 24 £	Budgeted 30 Sept 24 £	Oct 24 Budget £	Nov 24 Budget £	Dec 24 Budget £	Jan 25 Budget £	Feb 25 Budget £	Mar 25 Budget £	Totals	Budget 2024/25
Bus shelters (5086)		0	54	0	0	0	0	54	250	0	0	0	0	0	250	304	500
Groundsmen - salaries (5360)		8,869	11,023	10,827	10,827	10,916	10,827	63,288	68,813	11,469	11,469	11,469	11,469	11,469	11,469	132,101	137,626
Groundsmen - National insurance (5361)		805	998	971	971	983	971	5,700	6,358	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	12,058	12,716
Groundsmen - Pension (5362)		2,256	2,689	2,650	2,650	2,703	2,650	15,598	16,867	2,811	2,811	2,811	2,811	2,811	2,811	32,465	33,734
LNRS & Sites of Interest (Ranger) (5230)		2,577	2,577	2,577	2,577	2,880	2,577	15,767	16,560	2,760	2,760	2,760	2,760	2,760	2,760	32,327	33,120
<b>Total Purchases</b>		<b>24,041</b>	<b>31,980</b>	<b>33,082</b>	<b>39,699</b>	<b>34,718</b>	<b>28,173</b>	<b>191,693</b>	<b>200,165</b>	<b>20,695</b>	<b>27,862</b>	<b>29,195</b>	<b>20,695</b>	<b>20,695</b>	<b>57,737</b>	<b>368,574</b>	<b>379,496</b>

### New initiatives 2024/25

[illegible]

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

Pitch improvement works (cricket or football)	2,095	0	2,435	0	0	0	4,530	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000
New Holland Tractor	0	11,497	1,163	1,163	1,163	1,718	16,703	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,250
New Tractor Attachments	0	0	0	769	0	0	769	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wildflower planting	0	142	0	0	0	0	142	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
Gazebo and equipment for events	0	433	0	0	0	0	433	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	300
Ash dieback works	72	0	775	0	2,420	283	3,549	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34,224
Grillo Brush Cutter (5272)	0	0	1,186	469	400	400	2,454	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,250

Income for Cycle to Work Scheme	116	116	116	116	116	116	693	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,387
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## **Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee**

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda Item 6.1**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE FROM THE SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS ON THE LAW COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION PAPER ON BURIAL AND CREMATION**

##### **1.0 Overview**

- 1.1 The Law Commission has published a consultation paper on burial and cremation which has been informed by discussions with stakeholders in a number of forums. It contains provisional proposals in a number of areas:
  - The regulation of different types of burial grounds, including standards of maintenance, burial specifications, burial rights and record keeping;
  - The reuse and reclamation of burial grounds;
  - Closure and reopening of burial grounds;
  - Exhumation and building on disused burial grounds;
  - Cremation Law;
- 1.2 The consultation paper can be downloaded from the Law Commission's website at [Burial and Cremation – Law Commission](#). A shorter summary outlining the key proposals is available on the website. The webpage also includes a link to the consultation platform, which is the preferred way of receiving consultation responses:  
[Law Commission consultation on burial and cremation – Ministry of Justice – Citizen Space](#).
- 1.3 This may be a once-in-a-generation opportunity for reform, and our input is needed to ensure that eventual recommendations to the UK Government will improve the law.
- 1.4 The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) will be responding to this consultation and would like to hear our views to help inform their response.
- 1.5 Since being made aware of this consultation, the Senior Administrative Officer has drafted responses to the consultation survey (please note - some survey questions are only applicable to crematoriums). A copy of the draft response is available to view in appendix A.
- 1.6 The deadline for the Law Commission's consultation is 9 January 2025 but we will be required to report back to SLCC by 6 December 2024. The survey may raise some points for discussion in the Fees and Charges Working Group, but we need to respond to SLCC before then.

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to review the draft response prepared by the Senior Administrative Officer, and to advise the Clerk of any changes or additional comments, for her to feed back to SLCC by 6 December 2024.

Appendices:                      Appendix A: Draft response to Law Commission Consultation  
Contact Officer:                Rachel Newton



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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda Item 6.2**

#### **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO PURCHASE OR RENT TWO PARCELS OF TOWN COUNCIL LAND ADJACENT TO 9 SAUNDERS CLOSE, UCKFIELD**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report details a request by the owner of 9 Saunders Close, Uckfield to establish if the Town Council would be willing to sell or rent two small boundary extensions of town council open grassland. The resident has stated that this is approximately 30m<sup>2</sup> of land to the front left of the property and 4x11m to the back right i.e. the extension of the boundary from 'stand 11' to bring all the properties in line.
- 1.2 The resident would rather purchase rather than rent these parcels of land.
- 1.3 The resident has provided the following reasons for this request:

##### **Land front left of property driveway:**

- This would not obstruct or hinder access for any emergency ambulances or fire engines requiring access to the area;
- In the late afternoon, it is nearly impossible for a large vehicle or delivery vehicle to gain access without damaging any private vehicles parked along the road;
- There is only enough access for his two other cars in front of the house;
- He needs to allow access for his neighbour's vehicles as they have to share the access road. His neighbour has two vehicles which takes up the remaining area. All other areas are taken up with vehicles, and he has to park on the corner of the grassland, which is a big hindrance to other neighbours.
- The grassland has a small pedestrian path to the woodland, but nothing else.
- He also needs an area to store his waste bins out of sight. There is barely any space for a garden in front of the house, without impacting on his neighbour's access.
- It would enhance the overall aesthetics of the area which is at the end of a cul-de-sac.

##### **Land to rear of property:**

- The resident has stated that the area of woodland is contiguous to the northern boundary of his property and totally unusable. It is currently an eyesore as it is overgrown with nettles and brambles and is a potential fire hazard against the boundary fence.
- He enjoys gardening and intends to use the extended section for a greenhouse and area for the children to play. The children have very little area to play, as the area up to the boundary fence is too small.
- The brambles and nettles encroach and invade his garden and are not good for anything. He would improve that area into a beautiful useful area, which would improve that section of woodland.

- 1.4 The resident has requested for the Town Council to view the front and rear garden areas alongside this row of properties to see that his garden is the smallest, and suggested that he would make improvements to the grassland and woodland and would benefit his children and other local residents.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The land in question would be a part of a section of land within the West Park Local Nature Reserve which is owned by Uckfield Town Council. It is a piece of natural heathland.

- 2.2 The full site can be seen below (Images 1-4).

## **3.0 Issues (for sale of land, not rental)**

- 3.1 The Town Council would be required to establish by whom the land was transferred to Uckfield Town Council, and if it was stated that the land was not to be used for any other purpose than as public open space and no residential or commercial development is allowed. Also, if there were any tree preservation orders on the trees contained on this land.
- 3.2 As a result of the above, and potential covenants in place on the use of the land, a legal opinion would need to be sought as to whether any covenants could be lifted and the land sold. The Local Nature Reserve is designated as a reserve and local wildlife site.
- 3.3 A valuation would also need to be sought from the relevant expertise.
- 3.4 Previous requests to purchase Town Council land have been turned down and it should be noted that if the Committee agreed to sell this parcel of land it could set a precedent for other home owners to make similar requests.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider the report and instruct the Clerk accordingly.

Map below showing Uckfield Town Council land around property:

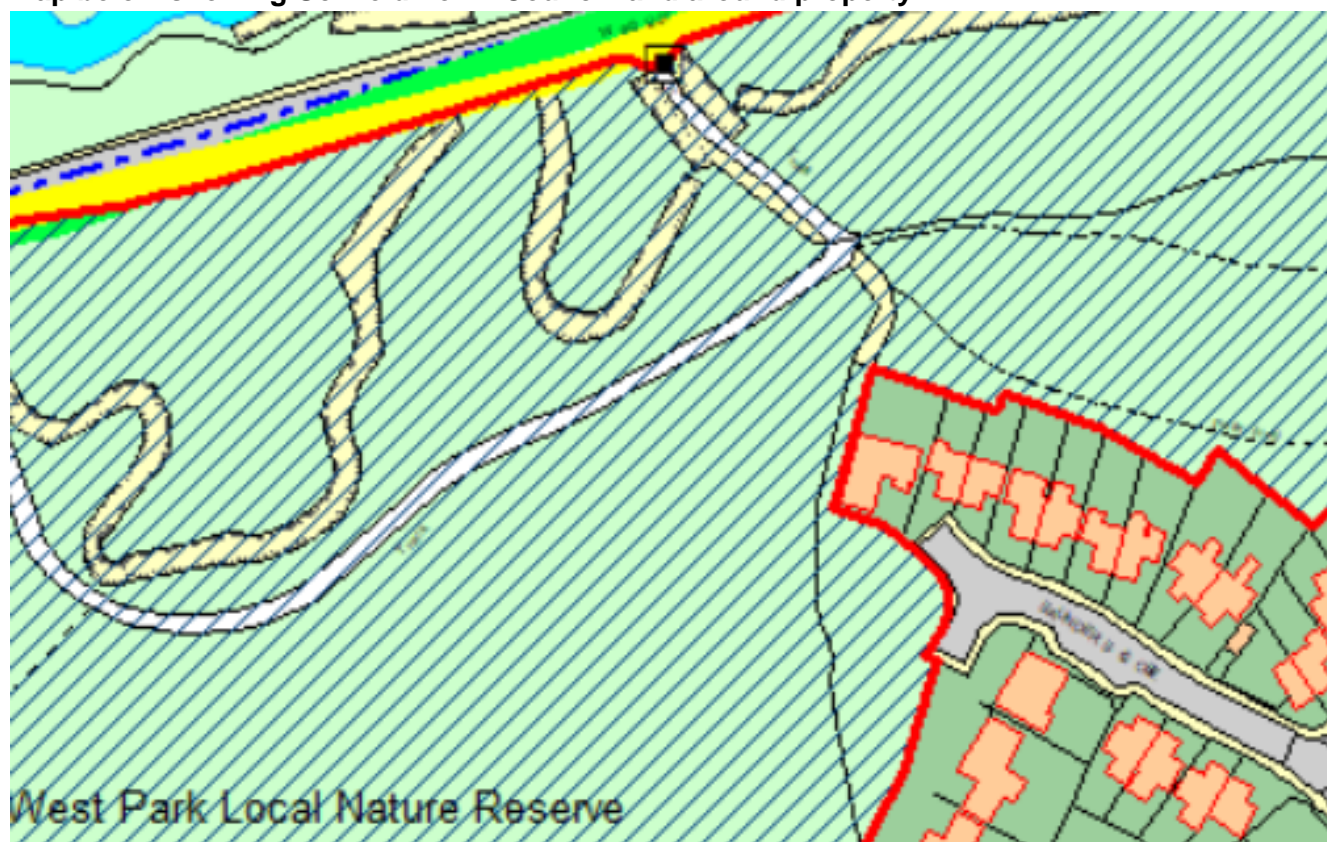




Image 1 above: parcels of town council land requested (in yellow) - 9 Saunders Close





Image 2 above: Google maps view - showing areas of land (circled in red)



Image 4 above: Google maps view showing partial shared driveway and open grassland left of fence

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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda item 6.3**

#### **TO REVIEW THE 2025/26 PROPOSAL FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ON THEIR URBAN GRASS VERGE CUTTING CONTRACT**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Town Council first received contact from East Sussex County Council in February 2018, to advise that reductions would start to be made to the highway grass verge cutting contract. There are two types of grass verges – urban and rural. The majority of Uckfield is classified as urban, except for the outlying lanes and roads such as Snatts Road, the southern end of Lewes Road, part of New Road and Eastbourne Road etc. You can now access the current [grass cutting maps online here](#).
- 1.2 East Sussex County Council considered their draft budget for 2018/19 in February 2018. At that meeting, the County Council explained they would have to reduce the number of cuts paid for by ESCC per annum. At the time, they recognised this was disappointing news but they needed to provide a number of services within very challenging financial constraints whilst at the same time managing demand for important services including schools and social care.
- 1.3 They proposed to reduce the number of urban verge grass cuts from the current six per season, to two per season from 1 April 2018. This meant that their existing policy would need to change. In reducing the urban grass cutting service from six to two cuts per season they would be managing urban grass for safety reasons only. We were advised at the time that rural grass verge cutting would remain as two 1metre swathes plus visibility splay cuts per season.
- 1.4 Since 2019/20, the financial contribution that Uckfield Town Council has had to make towards East Sussex Highways' Urban Verge Cutting Contract, to maintain 5-6 cuts per annum instead of their minimal two is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Financial contribution to maintain previous service levels</b>
2019/20	£6,009
2020/21	£4,271
2021/22	£4,271
2022/23	£4,356
2023/24	£4,442
2024/25	£5,686

In 2025/26, to maintain 5-6 cuts per annum, Uckfield Town Council would need to provide a financial contribution of £6,944.42.

##### **2.0 2024/25 Proposals for Urban Grass Verge Cuts**

- 2.1 East Sussex County Council have been in contact to set out the options for the next financial year 2025/26:

*"I am writing in relation to the urban grass cutting service for 2025. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is continuing to offer the same options as last year and would be grateful if you could let us know which option your Council would like to choose for the 2025 season.*

*This year we have reviewed our verge database and have amended any discrepancies within our mapping where verges have been managed incorrectly in previous years. This means you may notice an increase in the figures outlined in the options below.*

### **Options**

**Option 1 - Standard:** Two cuts over the course of a year to be carried out by ESCC at no cost to the Parish/Town Council. Urban grass will be managed for safety purposes only.

**Option 2 – Extra cuts:** Parish/Town Councils may fund an additional four cuts to be carried out by ESCC, totalling six cuts (two standard and four extra) over the course of the year. This would cost the Parish Council a total of **£6,944.42** for the year.

**Option 3 – Self delivery:** Parish/Town Councils take on responsibility to deliver all urban grass cutting in their area. This must include a minimum of two cuts over the course of the year. ESCC will not carry out any urban grass cutting in the area. ESCC would pay the Parish Council the sum of £3,472.21 to cover the 2 cuts they would have been providing in other options.

*It should be noted that any contractor employed must be suitably competent and qualified to work safely on the highway, evidence of which must be supplied to ESCC. We also request an agreement to be signed between ESCC and the Town Council if you opt to self-deliver. Further details are available in the attached document.*

### **Cost Changes**

*As stated in last year's option email we will be gradually increasing the cost of the grass cutting over the next 5 years to reflect the increased cost of the grass cutting service to the County Council. The below table states the cost increase over the next 4 years. The top line of the table states how much it costs ESCC to undertake the works, the middle line is what we will be charging local authorities per SQM and the bottom line is what we will be charging Uckfield Town Council per cut for the next 4 years. Please note this is worst-case scenario where inflation runs at 5%.*

*Please note these figures are based on the forecast SQM area for your Town/Parish for 2025. These figures are subject to change once the maps have been finalised at the beginning of each year.*

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	£	£	£	£
Cost to ESCC (forecast assuming 5% inflation)	0.063	0.066	0.069	0.073
Charge-out rate (30% increase per annum initially to catch up with actual cost)	0.041	0.053	0.069	0.073
Per cut-Uckfield	£1,736.10	£2,244.23	£2,921.74	£3,091.11

### **Grass Cutting Maps**

You can now access the current [grass cutting maps online here](#). Please note these maps are subject to change until all updates from this year have been finalised in January.

*I would be grateful if you could indicate which option your Council would like to choose by **29<sup>th</sup> November 2024**. Please be aware that if we have not heard back by this date, we will default to Option 1 – two standard cuts.*

- 2.2 Please note that the Organisational Review report prepared by the Town Clerk already highlighted the pressures on grounds staff to maintain the Town Council's asset portfolio. The Town Council would also not currently meet the requirements in terms of being a suitably qualified highways contractor. If the Town Council did take on the work, it would therefore have to contract this out, which would be at a much higher cost than the £3,472.21 contribution provided by East Sussex Highways/East Sussex County Council. The Town Clerk would therefore recommend that members maintain the status quo (Option 2 for 2025-26), with scope to explore our options moving forward for 2026/27 with external contractors). Or alternatively reduce the number of cuts to the standard two provided by East Sussex Highways (Option 1).

### **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to take on board the above information, and the comments of the Town Clerk in paragraph 2.2. Members should advise the Clerk of their decision in regards to the ESCC urban grass verge cutting for 2025/26.

**Appendices:** Appendix A: Guidance for self-delivery

**Contact Officer:** Holly Goring



## Agreement and Evidence Documents

We request all who decide to self-deliver the Urban Grass Cut to sign an agreement.

The agreement outlines both East Sussex County Councils responsibilities and your own.

You will be asked to sign two copies and send the physical copies back to us. We then Seal both and send one copy back to you for your records.

**The Agreement must be signed and sent back to us before the contractor commences work on the highway.**

## Notes on employing a contractor

As noted below, we also request certain documentation to be provided from your contractor. We request this every year as certain documents should be updated each year, such as Risk Assessments and Methods Statements.

When employing a contractor to carry out verge cutting on the highway you must satisfy yourselves of their competence.

Any individual carrying out works on the highway (including grass verges) must comply with all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the [Highways Act, 1980](#) and the [New Roads and Streetworks Act \(NRSWA\), 1991](#).

They must also be trained and competent as required by the [Safety at Streetworks and Roadworks Code of Practice, 2013](#). This includes training in traffic management as well as the use of machinery.

Further information on [Street Works qualifications](#).

In addition they must be able to provide copies of:

- Staff training and qualifications in traffic management including signing and guarding
- Staff training and qualifications in the safe use of machinery
- A formal contract with your Council
- Insurance certificates including a minimum of £10 million public liability insurance
- A health and safety policy
- Risk assessments for carrying out verge cutting on the highway
- Method Statements for carrying out verge cutting on the highway

Copies of evidence **must** be sent to [contracts.managementgroup@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:contracts.managementgroup@eastsussex.gov.uk) **before** the contractor commences work on the highway.

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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda item 6.4**

#### **TO CONSIDER A LETTER DRAFTED BY THE CHAIR OF WESTMESTON PC TO THEIR MP PROPOSING A SPEED LIMIT ON RURAL ROADS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The East Sussex Association of Local Councils has been contacted by Westmeston Parish Council, based in the South Downs National Park (and fall under the district of Lewes, East Sussex).
- 1.2 The Chair of Westmeston Parish Council had drafted the attached letter to their MP James MacCleary for the constituency of Lewes. The letter is in relation to rural roads and the need to improve safety for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. They have been asked to share the draft letter with local parish and town councils, which invites their MP to a meeting.
- 1.3 Parish and Town Councils have been asked if they wish to comment on the draft letter, or share any additional comments with the Chair of Westmeston PC, before they send it. We have also been asked if we wish to write a letter of similar nature to our local MP.

##### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the attached letter, and advise the Clerk, if they wish to take any action.

**Appendices:**           Appendix A:   Copy of draft letter from Chair of Westmeston PC

**Contact Officer:**     Holly Goring

## APPENDIX A

Proposal for 40 mph speed limit on all unclassified roads

Dear Mr MacCleary,

You may be aware that for many years the residents and parish council of Westmeston campaigned for a speed limit on Spatham Lane in East Sussex. During the years that this campaign ran, the volume and speed of traffic increased mainly due to the building of hundreds of new homes to the north of us. Our small lane became a rat run for drivers going north to south and visa versa. Like many rural lanes in the South East and indeed across our country, this lane was never built for the volumes it has to carry and as a consequence, conflict between local users living on these lanes and drivers using them increased.

Very few rural lanes have a safe space to walk and therefore walkers, horse riders and cyclists are in daily conflict with vehicles travelling far to fast for the conditions. We had numerous accidents, and cars clipping each other became a daily occurrence, our litter picking team were picking up wing mirrors and bits of car every month. More seriously we had a number of head on collisions and in 2017 a very serious accident when a rider was hit by a speeding car. The result was a long hospital stay for the rider and the dreadful sight of a horse having to be shot at the side of the road.

Unfortunately, this isn't just Westmeston's story, these incidences are happening everywhere on a daily basis.

Whilst a 40 MPH limit won't solve the problem of volume in our increasingly overcrowded counties, it does bring the overall speed down, increases the quality of life for residents, enables parishes and town councils to bring in traffic calming measures and enables the use of Speedwatch which is a very valuable tool in keeping awareness in the forefront of driver's minds.

We all know that speed kills, but bringing in a national limit on unclassified roads can bring nothing but good. Signage does not need to cost a fortune but the cost must be offset by the saving of lives, the cost to the NHS, police time and the distress caused to families up and down the county.

The change in the speed limit on Spatham Lane has led to a change in driver behaviour and residents and local users are happy to testify to that fact. Care will always be needed while using rural lanes but with vehicles travelling at slower speeds, accidents and casualties will be reduced.

We are asking you to represent the case for this change and continue the work started by your predecessor. We would be very happy to meet with you to discuss this matter.

Kind regards

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

**Monday 25 November 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

Play area companies have been visiting the play area, to draw up initial plans and costings for a full upgrade. The formal tender process will commence shortly on Contracts finder, and the play area companies will be notified. This will be followed by consultation with the local primary school, and public consultation during the winter months.

##### Hempstead Lane Play Area and Hempstead Meadows LNR

The zip line will be replaced with new equipment at the same time as the upgrade of Victoria play area.

In the meantime, the safety fencing keeps getting pulled down at the top of the slide. This needed to be replaced with a more robust solution or alternative to reduce the risk of vandalism.

##### West Park/Rocks Park Play Area

The play area equipment was coming to the end of its life in this play area also so a potential play area for scheduling for upgrade after Victoria.

##### Snatts Road Cemetery

The Head Groundsman had identified a number of potential areas for additional plots, to reduce the pressure on existing burial sections. Office staff would consider whether these were viable.

The Ecologist undertook a wildlife survey of Snatts Road Cemetery towards the end of September, to review the current species of fungi and orchids. A report would follow, once received.

##### West Park Recreation ground and West Park LNR

Tree surveying was underway across Town Council land, but specific focus had been given to the boundary of the local nature reserve, to mitigate risk near to residential properties.

##### Ridgewood Recreation Ground

Nothing to report.

##### Elizabeth Gardens

Shrubs authorised to be planted around as low-level fencing without changing aesthetic appearance of park area.

##### Hughes Way play area

No updates.

#### Luxford field and play area

An inspection had just been carried out of the play area, and a resident had recently reported one piece of equipment as broken in the same period – a list of parts have been ordered.

A repair needed to be taken to the top gate – repaired.

Grant funding of £2,500 had been received from the Police & Crime Commissioner, and a further £2,500 from the Safer Wealden Partnership, towards the project to install pillar lighting at the bottom of the field – installation in progress and to note that this will be completed this week.

#### Woodlands

Works were being programmed in for the large-scale ash dieback works in Boothland Wood for this winter. This work will be undertaken in-house. This is the third year of the scheduled work identified within the Woodland Management Plan developed with the support of the Forestry Commission in 2021.

#### Equipment & Vehicles

All vehicles are on order, with two to be delivered at the end of this month. The diesel pick up will be ready for collection in Spring 2025.

#### Street Furniture & Lighting

The Estates and Facilities Manager had devised a useful system in order to keep up to date with any pending and authorised works.

The Christmas lighting is going towards wk beg 25 November. The infrastructure has been repaired ready for installation apart from the two columns that were damaged in recent weeks.

#### Harlands Pond

The siltex has been ordered for treatment of the pond water.

#### Any other business

The Grounds team are currently working through ROSPA inspections reports, carrying out repairs and replacements.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officers: James Hollingdale

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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda Item 7.2**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE RANGER**

##### **Summary**

This report provides an update on works carried out to date and planned, including projects. The principal focus being tree works currently owing to the volume of trees requiring remedial works; numbers to be confirmed.

##### **Table of contents**

##### **1.0 Trees**

- 1.1 Ash Dieback Project (ADB)
- 1.2 Tree Planting
- 1.3 Community Orchard planting
- 1.4 Remedial Tree works
- 1.5 Tree surveys

##### **2.0 Nature Reserves**

- 2.1 West Park Local Nature Reserve (WPLNR)
- 2.2 Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve (HMLNR)

##### **3.0 Woodland holdings**

- 3.1 Boothland Wood
- 3.2 Nightingale Wood
- 3.3 Downland Copse
- 3.4 Snatts Road Cemetery
- 3.5 Harlands Pond

##### **4.0 External Reports**

- 4.1 Report from Newt Conservation Partnership (see appendix A)

##### **1.0 Trees**

##### **1.1 Ash Dieback Project**

The Ash Dieback (ADB) project is in its third and final year. Work has commenced in Boothland Wood, with the approximate number of ash trees showing signs and in various stages of ADB at 100 Stems. Work has commenced and is being done in stages. The decision has been made to carry out the works in-house this year. By doing so we can minimise the amount of heavy machinery being used and prevent root compaction and damage to ground flora and fauna. An outlet for excess timber is yet to be found, however where possible it is being used to block access along pathways which have been created by excess footfall as per recommendations in the Woodland Management Plan which was developed with the Forestry Commission back in 2021 (

<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Uckfield-Town-Council-Woodland-Mgt-Plan-2021-combined.pdf>)

The Town Council is required to restock in light of the works needing to be undertaken.

## 1.2 **Tree planting**

Tree planting has continued in Boothland Wood and Snatts Road Cemetery woodlands with all holdings to benefit from planted saplings over the next 3-4 months. We were fortunate to receive a grant of 460 saplings from The Woodlands Trust with a further 175 from Carbon Footprint. As well as re-planting in the woodlands in line with the Woodland Management Plan, where possible these will also be used to create new small habitats. The costs involved for the Town Council in addition to labour is consumables which are already in place. Therefore, if we require any commemorative trees to be planted, we have a suitable budget that will allow.

## 1.3 **Community Orchard planting**

Grant funding has been received from Wealden DC and the invoice has been paid for the chosen fruit trees. We are awaiting a delivery date from the supplier. Once this has been received a planting day shall be organised to involve community groups where possible.

## 1.4 **Remedial Tree Works**

Remedial tree works are carried out on a weekly basis as per survey findings and resident enquires, where safety is the overriding factor. This could be anything from removing deadwood to reducing the crown of the tree. Where possible this is done in-house with the assistance of a tree surgeon on their retainer days. Should we require traffic management or similar then this will be organised by an outside contractor. To note the majority of enquires we receive are down to light issues.

It should also be noted that the Town Clerk has made contact with Holy Cross Church, to advise that the large Liquid Amber tree near the Lychgate needs to be crowned due to its size. Due to the close proximity of the road, traffic management will be required, and the project will be managed by external contractors. We will agree dates with the Church, and have suggested that a financial contribution would be welcome due to the cost of the works.

## 1.5 **Tree surveying**

We have concluded external surveys for this year to allow a chance to catch up on recommendations. External contractors remain on the retainer for tree survey works and will be used to carry out aerial works. We will continue to survey in-house should any concerns be raised with trees in our holding. UTC has signed up to use a survey system called OTISS which strengthens the recording of tree surveys and data on trees and street furniture. This will keep track of all surveys undertaken on Town Council trees and ensure the information is stored in a methodical and professional manner (demonstration to follow).

## 2.0 **Nature Reserves**

### 2.1 **West Park Local Nature Reserve (WPLNR)**

The interpretation boards have been approved with some slight changes to the information displayed. They will also now include an QR code which will allow for messages, articles, and announcements to be accessible to users via our website.

Trial excavations are due to take place in the wet meadows to discover the viability of two new ponds to aid in providing habitat for Gold Crested Newts.

Planting is planned to be carried out in the open spaces using the saplings received through grant funding and in line with the Woodland Management Plan. Other than ensuring that it remains a safe environment to enjoy no other projects are planned for WPLNR at this time.

## 2.2 **Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve (HMLNR)**

There are no projects planned for Hempstead meadows this winter. We are currently quoting for stage one surveys of flora and fauna to be carried out in the spring.

## 3.0 **Woodland Holdings**

### 3.1 **Boothland Wood**

The felling of ash has started in Boothland along with re-planting. To date for this season, 120 saplings have been planted with more to be planted. Work continues to restrict access along paths created by heavy footfall. We are currently quoting to have a dormouse survey carried out along with a stage one survey due to the amount of development planned surrounding this holding.

### 3.2 **Nightingale Wood**

ADB works are due to complete in this holding this year with only a small number of infected ash trees remaining. Some of the monoliths left from last year are to be reduced as well. Coppicing is to continue, in particular the lapsed hazel coppice work following an in-house nut survey. These works will open the canopy up allowing the growth of ground flora and coppicing is typical during these winter months to preserve the woodland ecology. Replanting is due to take place in line with the Woodland Management Plan. Remedial works on the boundary trees are ongoing in line with the Professional Tree Inspection Surveys.

### 3.3 **Downland Copse**

The Professional Tree Inspection survey carried out in this small section of woodlands has highlighted some significant works that are required as can be seen within OTISS. This work will be scheduled for the new year.

### 3.4 **Snatts Road Cemetery**

Replanting has taken place within the woodlands on the north side of the cemetery. We are seeing a high failure rate in *Betula pendula* (silver birch) in these woodlands with stems failing at height as well as high levels of fungal fruiting bodies in particular *Fomitopsis betulina* (Birch Polypore). Although no public access is in this section we have liability under the occupiers act to ensure that it is safe for those with access and for those without rights of access. At present, we have been informed by nearby residents that young people are gaining access in this area, so we need to consider both them and safety of adjacent users and landowners of the wooded areas. Therefore, we would suggest the felling of all diseased and dangerous silver birch from within this block and replant for a more suitable genus.

### 3.5 **Harlands Pond**

We will be carrying out the actions within the management plan this winter as already approved. In addition, we can plan on removing some trees on the south side as per the suggestion with the Great Crested Newts report (attached in appendix A).

It has also been suggested to carry out a tulip planting day around Harlands pond as a way of getting the community involved. The idea is that members of the public can bring along tulip bulbs to add some colour to Finn Field, this could be done on a day in January and advertised through the Town Council's communications.

## 4.0 **External Report**

4.1 Report from Newt Conservation Partnership (see appendix A).

## 5.0 **Recommendations**

5.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Appendices: GCN (External Report)  
Contact Officer: Rachel Newton








Newt Conservation Partnership  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Bury Knowle House  
 North Place  
 Oxford, OX3 9HY  
 16/09/2024




## Site Notes for Uckfield Town Council Sites

### Introduction

The purpose of this visit was to ascertain the site suitability for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) District Licensing compensation scheme, wherein ponds are created or restored to enhance suitability for wildlife, most notably the great crested newt (GCN).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> September Maia Wellbelove (Sussex Project Officer) met with Bernadette Reed (Town Councillor) and the Uckfield Town Ranger, Tom.

Location	Grid reference	Notes	Photo
Mallard Drive	TQ 47995 20102	This existing pond does not qualify for NCP work as GCN could complete a life cycle. I would suggest de-silting and felling a few of the larger branches on the northeastern side to allow for more light to enter where the public footfall is lower.	
Balancing pond	TQ 4824820152	This area may qualify as a <b>restoration</b> as no water was held at the time of visit. I would need to see this again in the winter to take water quality samples and understand if the outflow could be permanently blocked.	
The Jackdaws Rd	TQ 48053 19924	A late successional pond which may count for <b>restoration</b> . A Lot of mature tree work is required to increase the light alongside de-silting. Access and spoil location may be an issue. Water quality and history need to also be understood.	

Ridgewood	TQ 4702320020	Unfortunately, NCP is unable to restore this pond due to the public footfall of the woodland, proximity to allocated land and the number of mature trees (oak) shading the pond.	
West Park pond	TQ 4621121494	Existing fenced off pond, with floating sweet grass and a good amount of light. I would consider this as good GCN breeding habitat. I would suggest <b>managing</b> it by removing one branch to the east to prevent too much leaf litter.	
Wet meadow – west Park	TQ 46284 21482	This area is fenced off and locked for nesting bird season. Largely dominated by bracken, there is potentially room for <b>three new ponds</b> here. Test pits would be required due to questionable substrate.	
Hampstead meadows	TQ 47394 21002	Unfortunately, this area is not suitable due to high public footfall and the area being within our modelled flood zone.	

**Next steps:**

- View the balancing pond and Jackdaws Rd pond during wetter weather to test the water quality.
- Put in trial holes at West Park wet meadow.

Please let me know your thoughts on the above, and we can move onto the next steps.

Kind regards,

Maia Wellbelove

**Sussex Project Officer**

**Newt Conservation Partnership**

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda Item 9.1**

#### **TO NOTE AN UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ALLOTMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS**

##### **1.0 Allotment Working Group meeting with The Allotment Association**

- 1.1 A Joint Allotment Working Group meeting was held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 5:30pm at the Civic Centre, to receive updates, and to discuss how to increase our community of volunteers and to help with the allotment checks.

##### **2.0 Updates**

- 2.1 In October, members had agreed that recent income showed that we were now on target to meet basic running costs. It was therefore thought that the proposed 2% increase to the allotment fees and charges was satisfactory to go some way towards inflation and anticipated increases in materials, fuel and staffing. It was agreed that the admin fee would remain at £15 per plot.

- 2.2 There are currently 244 plots and 31 new tenants (with mostly joiners to the three sites along Framfield Road), with 4 plots split to accommodate newcomers and 4 tenants who have swapped plots. This is the first year that has seen a faster turnaround since the end of the pandemic and has ultimately brought down the waiting list. The regime for allotment checks and communications with our amazing site representatives has really helped.

##### **3.0 The role of reps – engaging with our tenants for more help with allotment checks**

- 3.1 The allotment site representatives were asked if they could try to engage more with other tenants on each of the six allotment sites. They were also asked to seek more reps to join the Allotment Association and help with the allotment checks going forward, since those on site have the expertise and knowledge and are at the allotments most of the time. If there were any tenants who were happy to help out they were asked to get in touch with their site rep or Rachel at the Civic Centre – 01825 762774.
- 3.2 The Grounds team had a large asset portfolio, and had to prioritise all of the maintenance works in and around the town, not just the allotments, so it would be useful to try to make the allotments more self-led by those who were already available on site, to report any issues or concerns back to the local council, whilst giving the allotmenters a bit more autonomy to run their sites themselves. The Grounds team currently spent 13 manhours each month grass cutting on allotments, in addition to mowing and strimming in parks, the cemetery and prioritising sports pitches for games. They also had to make sure play areas and open spaces were all kept safe for local residents. The Allotment working group were therefore keen to see more volunteers join the Allotment Association to increase membership, to help with the checks and for allotment holders to adhere to their part in line with the Allotment agreement. Lots of the allotment tenants were doing a great job by themselves, but there were also quite a few plot holders who needed to be reminded more than once to keep on top of cultivation. This was time consuming.

##### **4.0 Oak Trees – amendment to the Allotment Rules and Regulations**

- 4.1 The Head Groundman raised a concern in relation to trees on allotment plots in case allotment tenants decided to undertake the work themselves and not to British Standards, contrary to our own tree policy.



- 4.2 The Grounds team stated that oak trees could become infected if they were not reduced back correctly, and some oaks were showing signs of Acute oak decline in some areas. Also, if allotment holders were to cut back lower limbs of a tree, this would put all the weight in the top making it much more likely to fail in high winds.

If an oak tree on an allotment plot would benefit from a crown lift this would need to be assessed first by the Grounds team.

It was currently stated in the Allotment Rules and Regulations that 'All trees...over 2.5 metres in height were in breach of allotment rules and would lead to a notice and possible termination'. However, this implied that allotment holders could be evicted if they had an oak tree on their allotment and didn't reduce the tree. But staff noted that there was no guidance provided to allotment holders to ensure any works on trees are carried out in compliance with British Standards: BC 3998: 2010 Tree work recommendations from the British Standards Institution.

Fruit trees do need to be kept under 2.5 metres, but all other trees needed to be checked by the Ranger and/or Head Groundsman before any works could be authorised and carried out under the correct guidelines.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

- 5.1 Members are asked to accept the proposed amendments at item 3.1 (in red) in the Allotment Rules and Regulations (App A) to be sent to all allotment tenants.

Appendices: Appendix A: Revised Allotment Rules and Regulations

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

# **Uckfield Town Council Allotment Rules**



**APRIL 2024** (Updated)

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## **1 Assignment / Sub-letting**

- 1.1 Priority will be given to parishioners of Uckfield and will be dependent on the numbers on the waiting list at the time.
- 1.2 The tenancy of an allotment is personal to the tenant named in the agreement.
- 1.3 The tenant may not underlet, assign, sublet or part with possession or control of all or any part of their allotment without written consent from the council. (Agreement c)
- 1.4 Within the first three months the tenant is within a probationary period if the tenant chooses to return the allotment to the council during this period the tenant will have rental returned minus a £10.00 administration fee. If the tenant undertakes no significant work (no less than 40% cultivation) to a plot within the first three months of receiving the plot then the tenancy will be terminated and the plot returned to council for re-letting.
- 1.5 New tenants will be required to submit a deposit of such amount as the Council decides which will be refunded at the time of cessation of the allotment tenancy (provided the plot is left in a satisfactory and rentable condition).

That for the 2023/24 season this deposit shall be £52.00.

## **2 Cultivation and weed control**

- 2.1 The cultivated area is defined as the area that is cultivated for vegetable or fruit crop or flower production. Cultivation requires the tenant to regularly dig or mulch, or prune and weed 75% of the plot. Compost bins, glass houses, water butts, poly-tunnels and fruit cages are also included within the cultivated area, as are ornamental flower crops. Areas of lawn or meadow are not included within the cultivated area. (Agreement a)
- 2.2 Allotments must be kept clean and maintained in a good state of cultivation (minimum 75% in cultivation) and fertility throughout the year. An area that is annually cleared of weeds yet remains un-cropped or un-planted during any one year will be considered as non-cultivated. The whole plot, including any uncultivated/leisure areas, must be kept tidy, safe and free from flowering weeds. (Agreement a)
- 2.3 Allotments that have areas that are unsuitable for production - such as heavily shaded areas, excessively sloping land or impoverished or polluted soils - may be allowed extended lawn and wildflower conservation areas. Extended grass areas must be agreed in writing with a council officer.
- 2.4 It is the tenant's responsibility to keep the plot free of weeds that cause a nuisance to adjoining tenants. Nuisance weeds must be controlled or suppressed, otherwise this will lead to termination of the tenancy. Where on inspection or as the result of complaints, a plot with weeds is identified the tenant will be sent a weed notice letter, a further inspection will be carried out up to 8 weeks after the notice period has expired, and if there are no improvements in cultivation a notice of termination will be sent. (Agreement a)
- 2.5 Carpet and black plastic must not be used for weed control on allotments.
- 2.6 Use of Pesticides, herbicides, vermicides and fertilisers:

Where these are used, manufacturer's instructions must be followed at all times. Particular care should be taken to avoid drift or spillage on paths and neighbouring plots. Tenants should generally only use weedkillers over winter or in the spring, and not in the vicinity of crops.

Glyphosate must not be used as this is known to be a particular environmentally damaging weedkiller.

Slug pellets: There was a ban of metaldehyde announced by Defra in September 2020, which is found in slug pellets. Garlic (garlic wash recipe) is the cheapest, easiest and most effective way to deter slugs.



### 3 Trees and invasive plants

- 3.1 All fruit trees, bushes and hedging over the absolute height of 2.5 metres (or 8 feet) ~~in height~~ are in breach of allotment rules and ~~will could~~ lead to a notice and possible termination.
- 3.2 ~~For deciduous trees, e.g. oaks on allotment plots a oak must be assessed in the first instance by the Head Groundsman and Ranger, and any works must be carried out by an arboriculturist, as this can otherwise lead to tree damage. All tree works must comply with BS 3998: 2010 Tree work recommendations. For reference purposes, a copy of which can be obtained from the British Standards Institution, 389, Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL by Tel: 0208 996 7000 or downloaded from their website: <http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000089960>~~
- 3.13.3 ~~Anyone wishing to prune any tree, under this law, should advise the Council in writing prior to any work being undertaken.~~
- 3.23.4 Tenants must not, without consent of a Council officer, cut or prune trees outside of their own allotment or plant any trees which will exceed an absolute height of 2.5 metres (or 8 feet) and/or allow self-seeded trees to grow on their allotment, including any that are growing through perimeter fencing. (Agreement d)
- 3.33.5 Fruit trees are permitted but will normally be included within the 25% of non-cultivated area. Where fruit trees are planted outside of the 25% non-cultivated leisure area, the soil beneath fruit trees must be planted with productive crops or other plants in accordance with cultivation rules.
- 3.43.6 Tenants who have fruit trees that have grown above 2.5 metres will be served a notice instructing them to prune trees to an acceptable height. Where trees are not pruned back to an acceptable height then the council reserves the right to prune back trees and charge the cost to the tenant.
- 3.53.7 All fruit trees must be selected so as to avoid breaching the height rule, with trees being selected to grow to around 2 metres but no higher than the absolute height of 2.5 metres. Trees should be grown on dwarfing or semi dwarfing rootstocks and pruned so as not to exceed 2.5 metres in height.
- 3.63.8 The council reserves the right to enter any plot, with or without the consent of the tenant, to remove oversized trees and plants over 2.5 metres (or 8 feet) in height as well as cut down excessive and seeding weed growth or overgrown grass. If the removed vegetation has been planted by the tenant then removal costs will be charged to the tenant. Failure to pay for removal costs will result in tenancy termination.
- 3.73.9 Invasive plants such as Bamboo, all types of willow and fast growing conifers (including Christmas trees) are not permitted. If the invasive plants are not removed by the tenant then the tenancy will be terminated and plants removed at cost to the tenant.

### 4 Hedges and ponds

- 4.1 Tenants are responsible for maintaining any hedge on or abutting their plot. They should be kept to a height of around 2 metres with an absolute maximum height of 2.5 metres (8 feet). Hedge sides shall be trimmed at least once per year so as not to obstruct pedestrian or vehicular access. (Agreement e)
- 4.2 Where hedges abut a perimeter boundary, road or vehicular haulage way, the council is responsible for maintaining the outside and top.
- 4.3 Hedges should not be cut back during the bird nesting season, which runs from 1st March - 1st September.
- 4.4 No fast-growing conifers or invasive screening plants such as bamboo or willow may be planted as hedging on allotment land.
- 4.5 The maximum surface area for a pond is 1.5 square metres and will be no deeper than 50cm deep. The pond area will be included as part of the non-cultivated area.
- 4.6 Ponds must be temporary and should not be constructed out of concrete or any other

hard landscape material. All ponds should be sited at least 2 metres distance from any haulage way or path. Tenants are advised to provide secure fencing.

- 4.7 The use of sunken baths as ponds or for water storage is not permitted on safety grounds. Baths being brought onto the allotment space by an existing tenant will be seen as unwanted waste and will result in a tenant being put on notice. Historical baths brought on site before the 2011 rule review that are both functional and above ground will be exempt.

## **5 Plot use and storage**

- 5.1 Tenants must use their allotment and any structures on it for their own personal use and must not carry out any business or sell produce from it (unless sold for the benefit of charity or the allotment association) Tenants may not use their allotment as a place of residence and/or sleep overnight.
- 5.2 The allotment is rented to the tenant for the purpose of cultivation of herb, flower, fruit and vegetable crops.
- 5.3 Only materials for use on the plot may be stored there, such as beanpoles, cloches, pots and netting for seasonal use.
- 5.4 Construction materials, paving and timber for infrastructure work must be used within 12 months.
- 5.5 Quantities in excess of the above will be regarded as unacceptable and the tenant ordered to remove them. Failure to do so will result in the materials being removed by the council, the tenant charged with the cost and notice of termination given.

## **6 Water, Bonfires & Other Restrictions**

- 6.1 Sprinklers are prohibited. Hose pipes may be used to water directly if hand held or to fill water butts, provided this does not prevent other tenants having access to water supplies.
- 6.2 Mains water will be available from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> October. Water supply is subject to season restrictions and hosepipe bans.
- 6.3 Any form of unattended mains connected irrigation - be it open hose food irrigation or seep hose irrigation - is forbidden and will lead to notice of termination.
- 6.4 All stand pipes and water butts beneath standpipes will be considered as a common resource to be shared with surrounding tenants. Any tenant who uses excessive quantities of water, or who is seen to consistently monopolise the water supply to the detriment of fellow tenants, will be put on notice. Where possible, tenants are encouraged to collect rainwater for use on their allotments.
- 6.5 Bonfires are permitted for the burning of un-treated or un-painted woody waste only. The burning of any other materials – such as plastics, tyres, carpet, MDF, laminated wood - is strictly prohibited and will lead to immediate termination and referral for prosecution.
- 6.6 All open fires between 1st April and 1st November must be contained within an incinerator barrel, however small contained fires will be permitted for barbequing.
- 6.7 Smoke from a bonfire, which could be a nuisance to neighbours by interfering with the use and enjoyment of their garden or property, or could affect the comfort or quality of life of the public, could result in action under the Environment Protection Act of 1990. Tenants who light a fire within 50ft (15.24m) of the centre of a highway may be guilty of an offence under the Highways Act 1980.
- 6.8 Fires must be attended at all times until all material has burnt and the fire extinguished. Fires must be kept to a manageable size to ensure safe burning and a minimum of smoke production. Any fire managed in an unsafe manner or producing excessive smoke will result in an instant notice and may lead to tenancy termination.
- 6.9 All potentially toxic materials should be removed from the allotment site and disposed of in the relevant civic amenity site. Failure to remove said materials will lead to termination

and recovery of removal costs.

- 6.10 The council reserves the right to prohibit bonfires on a specific plot and/or group of plots.
- 6.11 Tenants may not remove any mineral, sand, gravel, earth or clay from the allotment gardens without the written permission from the council. (Agreement d)

## **7 Waste materials and pollutants**

- 7.1 Waste regulations apply to materials brought on site by existing tenants. It is the responsibility of the new tenant to instruct the council to take away waste left on site within the first month of taking a plot. The new tenant may also gather photographic evidence of any potential polluting materials on site when they take on the plot.
- 7.2 Waste from external sources, including green waste, may not be deposited on the allotment or any other part of the site. Abuse will result in immediate tenancy termination and prosecution.
- 7.3 The bringing on site and use of polluting materials such as tyres, asbestos, glass and carpet shall be treated as illegal disposal of waste and will result in immediate notification and referral for prosecution.
- 7.4 The bringing on site and use of rubble and hardcore for paths and other forms of construction is prohibited. The bringing on site of tyres, plastic or metal materials such as shelving, angle iron or bath tubs - as well as other timber and plastic materials not relating to crop production is prohibited. Bringing such materials on site will result in a notice and possible termination.
- 7.5 The creation of concrete pad footings for sheds or green houses, or concrete pads for paving, or any solid brick and cement structures is prohibited. Narrow concrete and brick footings will be allowed for a glass house.
- 7.6 The use of glass bottles for any form of construction or raised bed is forbidden and will result in a notice and possible termination.
- 7.7 All non-diseased vegetative matter shall be composted and used on the tenant's allotment. Diseased plants and perennial weeds can be burned in an incinerator.
- 7.8 The council reserves the right to clear overgrown plots that are currently tenanted and are causing a nuisance. The tenant will be charged the full cost on each occasion that this occurs.
- 7.9 In the event that a tenant is put on notice for excessive materials such as timber, metal, carpet or tyres being left on plot, and if the tenant does not clear such materials, then the council reserves the right to clear such materials and reclaim costs from the tenant.
- 7.10 If tenants witness someone illegally fly tipping rubbish onto allotment land they should contact Wealden District Council Streetscene at [street.scene@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:street.scene@wealden.gov.uk) or 01323 443322.

## **8 Structures and fences**

- 8.1 Sheds and sided structures shall be included within the 25% area allowed for non-cultivation. Poly tunnels, glasshouses and fruit cages will be included within the cultivated area.
- 8.2 Any structure on the allotment must be temporary and maintained in safe order with an appropriate external appearance and condition. If the council is not satisfied with the state of the structure the tenant must either repair it to the council's satisfaction or remove the structure within one month of instruction to do so. If the structure is not removed, the council may remove it and charge the tenant the full cost of removal and disposal. (Agreement e) (Agreement f)
- 8.3 Tenants may put up one shed and no more than two greenhouses (including poly-tunnels) on their plot. Glasshouses and poly-tunnels should cover no more than 20% of the allotment. Permission from the site representative or council officer is required for poly tunnels, with tunnel size and layout agreed. No tunnel or glasshouse should exceed

2.13 metres in height.

- 8.4 Where a tenant is given a plot with a structure then the tenant should take photographs of structures to disprove liability if structures are seen to be unsafe.
- 8.5 Any structures erected on the allotment shall not be made from hazardous materials (e.g. asbestos) and the colour shall be in keeping with the natural environment.
- 8.6 The maximum size of a shed is 3 metres long x 2metres wide x 2.13m high, (9 feet x 6 feet x 7 feet).
- 8.7 N.B.West Park allotments maximum size of shed is 6' x 4' provided guttering and water butts are installed.
- 8.8 All structures must be adequately secured to the ground to prevent uplift with sheds and glass houses requiring a footing on slabs bedded on sand.
- 8.9 All structures must be kept within the boundary of the allotment and must not be constructed over underground utilities (e.g. water supply pipes). All structures must be removed before the end of the expiration of the tenancy.
- 8.10 Solid fences adjacent to neighbours' plots should not exceed 1 metre in height and wire and trellis fences should not exceed 1.5 metres in height. (Agreement e)
- 8.11 It is an offence to attach or hang any materials to any council fencing.

## **9 Paths & haulage ways**

- 9.1 Paths within allotments must be kept free from flowering weeds and long overgrown grass that exceeds 15cm (over 6 inches high). (Agreement b)
- 9.2 A single main path no wider than 75cm, as well as narrow internal paths (being spurs from the main path and being no wider than 50cm) will also be included within the cultivated area. Wider paths will be allowed on steeply sloping plots where raised beds require wider access.
- 9.3 Paths that exceed the dimensions stated above shall be included within the non-cultivated area.
- 9.4 Shared paths between two allotments must be maintained, and kept cut and clipped up to the nearest half width by each adjoining tenant; paths must be kept clear of obstructions at all times.
- 9.5 All paths should be wide enough for easy pedestrian access to neighbouring tenants' plots.
- 9.6 Where car parking or vehicle access is permitted on an allotment site, the tenant must ensure that all haulage ways have free access for other users.
- 9.7 Haulage ways must not be obstructed - or parked on - by vehicles. Haulage ways may be parked upon for loading and unloading only. Vehicles which frequently and persistently block haulage ways may be barred from allotment sites.(Agreement b)

## **10 Dogs, livestock and Bees**

- 10.1 Dogs must not be brought onto allotments or any part of the site unless they are kept on a short lead or otherwise restrained at all times. Tenants who fail to keep dogs on leads will receive a notice.
- 10.2 Tenants with persistently barking dogs or dogs that harass allotment tenants will be put on notice and shall have dogs barred from allotment sites.
- 10.3 The burial of any pets or animals on any allotment land is strictly forbidden and will result in termination.
- 10.4 No animals or livestock may be kept overnight on allotment land, except hens with permission sought and agreed.
- 10.5 Any tenant that wishes to keep hens on their allotment must advise the Town Council in writing and complete an Undertaking (see Appendix 1) which requires the following:-

- that the hens will be kept in accordance with the RSPCA Guidelines
  - defines the minimum number of two hens (no cockerels allowed) and maximum number of hens not exceeding coop capacity
  - and confirms that all eggs from these hens are for personal consumption
- 10.6 The keeping of bees is not allowed on any allotment land. The Uckfield Allotment Bee Club are based along Framfield Road and currently look after five bee hives. Please contact the Town Council if you are interested and require any further information.

## **11 Rent**

- 11.1 The tenant must pay the invoiced rent within 40 days of the due date and may, if qualified, claim any special discounts the council offers only at the time of invoicing.
- 11.2 The rent year runs from the 1st April to 31<sup>st</sup> March each year. A tenant may voluntarily relinquish their allotment at any time, or have their tenancy terminated for breach of the tenancy agreement before year end but no rebate will be payable unless the plot is surrendered within the initial 3-month probationary period.
- 11.3 New tenants will be responsible for recording initial plot condition by taking photographs of the plot at the time of accepting tenancy.
- 11.4 All tenants over the age of 60 will be eligible for a concessionary 20% discount on submission of documented proof of date of birth. Concessionary evidence must be provided prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April in order to receive concession for the following year.
- 11.5 The departing tenant shall remove any items or derelict structures from their plot before the end of the tenancy. Inspections will be carried out on final hand over with a bill given if necessary. The council will dispose of any such material not removed by the tenant. The full cost of disposal shall be charged to the outgoing tenant.
- 11.6 Rent may be increased at any time provided the council takes reasonable steps to give at least six months' notice by way of signs on notice boards and gates, or by newsletters etc. Failure to give notice to any individual tenant will not invalidate the tenant's rent increase.
- 11.7 An administration fee will be charged per annum to the amount of £15 per plot. This is subject to any slight increase on an annual basis.

## **12 Observance of Rules**

- 12.1 Tenants must observe and comply with current rules, regulations and policies, and those which the council may make at any time in the future (e.g. statutory law changes, local restrictions - such as bonfire restrictions).
- 12.2 Rules will be posted online on the council website [www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk](http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk), and may be displayed either on notice boards, gates and/or sent with rent invoices/new tenancy agreements/newsletters. Failure to observe rules will lead to tenants being put on notice and possible tenancy termination. In certain extreme instances a breach of site rules can lead to immediate termination of tenancy.
- 12.3 Tenants must comply with any reasonable or legitimate directions given by an authorised officer in relation to an allotment or site.
- 12.4 Tenants shall, as regards to the allotment plot, observe and perform all conditions and covenants contained in the lease (if any) under the council hold the land.
- 12.5 Any Member or Officer of the Council shall be entitled at any time to enter and inspect the allotment plot.

## **13 Site safety, security and duty of care**

- 13.1 Tenants must not discriminate against, harass, bully or victimise any other person/s on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, social origin, language, religion, political or other opinion, belief, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, sexuality, medical condition, disability, or disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown

to be justified.

- 13.2 No tenant must cause another tenant harassment, alarm or distress. Any use of violence or threats of violence or damage to another's property will be grounds for immediate termination of tenancy and possible prosecution. (Agreement b)
- 13.3 The allotments and site or any structures thereon may not be used for any illegal, immoral or anti-social purpose. Tenants found to have committed an illegal or immoral act will be subject to immediate tenancy termination.
- 13.4 In the case of two tenants having an unresolved dispute and no one party can be proven as being in breach of any site rules then the council reserves the right to end the tenancy of both parties. The council reserves the right to consult with the site representative and the Uckfield Allotment Society regarding any such disputes.
- 13.5 Tenants have a duty of care to everyone, including visitors, trespassers and themselves.
- 13.6 Any structure or any other item considered hazardous should be removed after instruction from a council officer. Failure to do so will see the council remove the structure or item with costs charged to the tenant and may result in termination.
- 13.7 Storage of fuels and hazardous materials is prohibited only chemicals necessary for gardening purposes can be stored. All chemicals must be locked away and out of reach of children. Manufacturer's instructions regarding safety, storage, mixing, disposal and use must be followed at all times. The Council recommends the use of organic alternatives wherever possible. Usage of fuels and hazardous materials should be undertaken with caution. If hazardous materials such as asbestos are found on your allotment then please inform your site representative or a council officer. (Agreement i, in part)
- 13.8 Particular care should be taken when using strimmers, rotavators and other mechanical/powered equipment both in relation to the user and any third-party person. Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times.
- 13.9 Unsafe working practices may result in plot termination and the tenant shall be liable for any damage or injury caused by unsafe working practices.
- 13.10 Tenants may not bring, use or allow the use of barbed or razor wire on the allotment. (Agreement L)
- 13.11 The council is not liable for loss by accident, fire, theft or damage of any structures, tools, plants or contents on allotment. Tenants are advised not to store any items of value on the allotment, and to insure and mark any items kept at the allotment. Tenants should report incidents of theft and vandalism to their site representative and the police.

## **14 Unauthorised persons**

- 14.1 Only the tenant, or a person authorised or accompanied by the tenant is allowed on the site.
- 14.2 The authorised officer or other authorised persons may order any unauthorised person on the site in breach of these rules to leave immediately.
- 14.3 The tenant is responsible for the behaviour of children and adults visiting the allotment. In an instance where a visitor breaches site rules then the tenant will be held equally responsible.
- 14.4 Allotments are not suitable for large private gatherings of 12 people or more. The playing of amplified music is forbidden.

## **15 Vehicles, tents and caravans**

- 15.1 Motor vehicles may not be parked overnight or deposited on the allotment so as to cause a blockage except in the car parking areas provided, other than for short-term loading/unloading. Obstruction of paths and drives is not permitted.
- 15.2 Caravans and live-in vehicles are not permitted on any allotment land.

- 15.3 Overnight erection of tents, yurts and other temporary structures, as well as overnight camping, are not allowed on allotment land.

## **16 Plot numbering, plot splitting and notices**

- 16.1 Tenants must mark the allotment number on the outside of a shed or greenhouse, or on a post, and keep it clean and legible to be visible from the haulage way or main access path.
- 16.2 Where plots do not have numbers clearly on display the council reserves the right to paint numbers on sheds, water butts or fencing. Plots without suitable numbering are in breach of tenancy and can be put on notice by a council officer or authorised person.
- 16.3 Council or Allotment Society information may be displayed on notice boards where provided. No other notices or advertisements are allowed on the site except with written consent of the authorised officer.
- 16.4 Allotment plots may be reconfigured or divided at the discretion of the town council.

## **17 Change of address and notices**

- 17.1 Tenants must immediately inform the council, in writing, of changes of address or status.
- 17.2 If a tenant moves to an address outside of the boundary of the Uckfield Town Council, they would need to relinquish their allotment, although this could be reviewed with the possibility of termination being an option.
- 17.3 Notices to be served by the council on the tenant may be:
- a) Sent to the tenant's address in the Tenancy Agreement (or as notified to the council under these rules) by email, post, registered letter, recorded delivery or hand delivered; or
  - b) Served on the tenant personally; or
  - c) Placed on the plot.
- 17.4 Notices served under paragraph 17.3 will be treated as properly served even if not received
- 17.5 Written information for the council should be sent to: Uckfield Town Council, Civic Centre, Uckfield or by email: [rachel@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:rachel@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

## **18 Site reps**

Who can help with your allotment? Who to contact and how we can help if you have any issues with your allotment?

Your site representative is an allotment tenant who volunteers as a communication link between tenants, the local council and Allotment Association. They can ensure that a helpful, fair and consistent service is maintained on all sites across the local allotment community. They can also pass on information to the council and help with things like security, water supply, showing vacant plots, signing up new tenants to the waiting list, giving advice, support and encouragement to tenants if requested and monitoring the need for repairs and rubbish collections.

Details of site reps can be found on allotment noticeboards. If you need any further information, please contact: [rachel@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:rachel@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

## **19 Allotment Association**

Most allotment sites have an association run by volunteer tenants. The Allotment Association hold meetings every few months to discuss any issues and are hoping to encourage new members to join.

Please email the Secretary of the Allotment Association, David Newbery at [newsletteruckfield@gmail.com](mailto:newsletteruckfield@gmail.com) for more details.

## **20 Application**

- 20.1 These rules are made pursuant to Allotment Acts 1908 to 1950 and apply to all rented allotments.

## **21 Terms and interpretation**

In these rules the words used are to have the following meaning:

- 21.1 Allotment: A plot of land that is let by the council for the cultivation of herb, flower, fruit and vegetable crops.
- 21.2 The Council: Uckfield Town Council.
- 21.3 Tenant: A person who holds an agreement for the tenancy of an allotment.
- 21.4 Site: Any area of allotments that are grouped together at one location
- 21.5 Rent: The annual rent payable for the tenancy of an allotment.
- 21.6 Review notice: Any notice of reviewed rental charges.
- 21.7 Site representative: An allotment tenant who works as a middle person between the council and the tenants and helps oversee the allotment.
- 21.8 Tenancy agreement: A legally binding written document which records the terms and conditions of letting, of a particular allotment(s), to an individual tenant or group.
- 21.9 Haulage way: A common route within the site for vehicular and pedestrian access to allotments.
- 21.10 Headland: The area of land between an allotment plot and any haulage way or perimeter fence.
- 21.11 Authorised officer: A member of staff of Uckfield Town Council.
- 21.12 Other authorised person: The tenant or invited guest.
- 21.13 Cultivation: Keeping the plot in good productive order by: the maintenance and improvement of soil; the control and prevention of flowering weeds, ornamental plants, and herb, flower, fruit and vegetable crops.
- 21.14 Paths: Dividing paths between allotments.
- 21.15 The non-cultivated leisure area: Small area (no larger than 25% of plot) of grass, patio or built structures, for pastimes, eating and/or relaxing.

## **22 The Council's responsibilities**

- 22.1 Administration
- d) Keeping waiting lists, letting plots, rent collection, terminations and enforcement of rules.
- 22.2 Repairs and Maintenance
- e) Repairs to site perimeter fences, gates and water infrastructure; maintenance of haulage ways; vacant plot management; hedges and tree management.
- 22.3 Rubbish clearance
- f) To remove rubbish which has been fly-tipped.
- 22.4 Liability
- g) The council is not liable for loss by accident, fire, theft or damage of any structures, tools, plants or contents on allotment.

## **23 The complaints procedure**

- 23.1 The council aims to provide a high quality of allotment service. If, however, you are unhappy with the service, in the first instance telephone or write to the Council. If you are dissatisfied with the response then follow the procedure below.



- 23.2 The council's corporate complaints procedure is available from the Council Office.

## **24 Tenancy termination**

The council may terminate allotment tenancies in any of the following ways:

- 24.1 By giving 12 months written notice to quit expiring at any time between 29 September to 6 April inclusive.
- 24.2 At any time after three calendar months written notice by the council that the allotment is required for a purpose other than agriculture to which it has been appropriated under any statutory provisions, or for building, mining or any other industrial purpose, or for roads or sewers necessary in connection with any of these purposes. Where possible, the Council will consult tenants and arrange relocation and appropriate compensation.
- 24.3 By giving one month's written notice to quit if:
- a) The rent is in arrears for 40 days or more (whether formally demanded or not); or
  - b) The tenant is in breach of any of these rules or of their tenancy agreement; or
  - c) Automatically on the death of the named tenant, (normally there would be no objection, in the first case, to a family member taking on the tenancy). (Agreement m)
  - d) If the tenant becomes bankrupt or compounds with creditors
  - e) 22.4 The tenancy may also be terminated by the council or the tenant by twelve months previous notice in writing expiring on or before 6<sup>th</sup> day of April or on or after 29<sup>th</sup> September in any year. (Allotment Act 1922. Section 1(1) (e).

## **25 GDPR – using your personal information and data protection**

Changes to the current Data Protection legislation came into effect from May 2018, as a result of the 2016 EU Directive (GDPR).

Tenants must be over 18yrs to apply (data protection).

### **Using your personal information**

Personal information which you supply to us may be used in a number of ways:

- To provide you with an Allotment and manage your tenancy; retaining your personal data supplied on both paper and electronic records.
- For statistical analysis.
- For fraud prevention.
- For audit and debt collection.

We will not disclose any information to any company or organisation outside Uckfield Town Council except to help prevent fraud, or if required to do so by law.

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

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Agenda Item 9.2**

#### **REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS: CLIMATE EMERGENCY STEERING GROUP UPDATE**

##### **1.0 Overview**

1.1 The Climate Emergency Steering group last met on 29 October 2024.

##### **1.2 River Walk**

Whilst this remains an aspiration, the Group is putting this project on hold until further notice and more information is available from Bird in Eye North.

1.3 New Event 'Upcycled Fashion Show' - February 21st, 2025 - booked at Civic Centre - Weald Hall:

- In support of the Family 2 Family charity;
- To coincide with London Fashion Week;
- Two categories for children and young people from Year 6 and over; one adult category;
- Participants upcycle a garment purchased in a charity shop;
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in each category, with one overall winner;
- Entry fees and ticket sales will cover costs, with a potential donation tbc

##### **1.4 Eco Expo 2025**

The Group plans to hold a second Eco Expo in September/October 2025, following on from the successful event two years ago.

##### **1.5 Biodiversity**

The Group has agreed that biodiversity is included in its remit. Members are pursuing various projects to improve and protect nature within the town, and to educate residents.

##### **1.6 Sustrans**

Whilst the Group would like to see the 2018 Sustrans report updated, it is important to ensure that this aspiration does not add to the burden of the Council's officers. No work will take place towards this, until after the outcome of the Organisational Review is known.

Councillors Angie Smith/Karen Bedwell

##### **2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton