

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 28 April 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Ward (Chair)

Cllr. C. Macve (Vice Chair)

Cllr. J. Love

Cllr. P. Selby

Cllr. A. Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Karen Bedwell

Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO

Holly Goring – Town Clerk

Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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. None received.

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

No statements were received.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Manvell and Ullmann.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 17 March 2025

Councillor Smith wished to make a point of clarification. The minutes advised that the Uckfield Green Partnership had disbanded. The bank account had now been closed, and all remaining funds returned to Uckfield Town Council, but the group itself had not officially disbanded.

GP52.04.25 Subject to this change in wording, which the Town Clerk would hand write on the minutes, members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 17 March 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Action list

Members noted that action GP41.03.25 had been completed. Members subsequently noted the report.

- 4.3 Project list
Members noted that project 83 had been completed and could be removed, before noting the report.

- 4.4 Forward plan
Members noted the items detailed within the Forward Plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 5.1 To note bills paid
Members noted the bills paid.

- 5.2 To note the income and expenditure reports up to 28 January 2025
Members discussed the detail within the reports, first looking at General Purposes. The figures were encouraging, and members noted the strong level of interest earned over the course of the year, which the RFO clarified had been as a result of moving bank accounts.

Members asked a couple of questions with regards to salary costs, and function income. Councillor Macve requested if the stock levels could be re-introduced to the report, as this was considered helpful. Members subsequently noted the reports.

- 5.3 To receive and note the Internal Audit report from March 2025
Members referred to the report of the Internal Auditor. A query was raised with regards to the procurement guidance, and the current procedures for project management. Members noted the findings of the March internal audit, and wished to thank the RFO for their hard work.

- 5.4 To note the End of Year Statement for Community Infrastructure Levy funding for 2024/25
Members were provided with a report which detailed the funds received through community infrastructure levy funding in the financial year 2024/25.

Members subsequently noted the report.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
Members considered a useful update provided by the Estates & Facilities Manager. The Town Clerk provided clarity on the current situation with regards to the Cemetery Chapel and Signal Box.

The Town Clerk advised that signage was being placed up on the entrance to the Source car park, to clarify that the parking area was owned by Uckfield Town Council and not for general public use. Members were asked if they were supportive of the current leaseholder for the Source placing signage on the building to give it a name but also reference the Food Bank etc.

Members were supportive of the signage, and noted the report and verbal updates.

7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 To consider the updated Financial Regulations
Members reviewed the amendments to the regulations made in response to

changes in procurement guidance. These changes ensured the Town Council's financial regulations aligned with the NALC model regulations.

GP53.04.25 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Financial Regulations.

7.2 To consider the updated Standing Orders

For the same reason as the above financial regulations, the Standing Orders needed to be updated in response to the changes in procurement guidance, and align with the financial regulations. References to code of conduct, were also simplified.

GP54.04.25 Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee to approve the revised Sickness Absence Policy (No. 14).

7.3 To consider the updated Publication Scheme

Members noted the revised scheme, and reasons for having the scheme. Members discussed the need to align revised printing/photocopying costs with that of the local Library. Lamination was also suggested for inclusion as well as an update to postage costs.

GP55.04.25 Subject to these changes, members **RESOLVED** to approve the Publication Scheme.

7.4 To consider the updated Equality Policy

Members reviewed the revised Equality & Diversity Policy which had been updated to align with the NALC model policy, and subsequent changes to the Town Council's HR policies. One member suggested more clarity was required on the method used for reporting concerns.

GP56.04.25 Subject to these changes, members **RESOLVED** to approve the revised Equality & Diversity Policy

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council

Members noted the update.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the reports for January and February 2025.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from: -

(i) Wealden Citizen's Advice

The Town Clerk tabled a bi-annual impact report which had been received that week. Hard copies of the update were shared with members.

(ii) Wealden Volunteering

Nothing to report.

(iii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee

Nothing to report.

(iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel

Nothing to report.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Councillor Ward, wished to thank committee members, as this would be her last meeting as Chair of General Purposes. She wished to especially thank her right-hand man (who sat on her left-hand side in his role as Vice Chair), and wanted to give her best wishes to whoever would take on the role next.

Vice Chair, Councillor Macve, expressed that committee members owed her a huge vote of thanks, as the Chair had led the committee through some tricky items in the past three years.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP57.04.25 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 note bad debts

Members noted the bad debts listed, and were pleased to see the list reducing.

12.2 To consider the lease of the Victoria Storage Garages

GP58.04.25 Members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk with obtaining an up to date valuation on the garages to inform the review of existing lease agreements.

12.3 To receive an update on the Signal Box

Members noted the update provided.

12.4 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members wished to thank the Hospitality Manager and her team for their hard work and support in hosting the Mayor's event on 26 April 2025. Members subsequently noted the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.