

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Centre on Monday 19 May 2025 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. K. Bedwell	Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. D. Bennett	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. D. French	Cllr. P. Selby
Cllr. V. Frost	Cllr. B. Reed
Cllr. J. Love	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. M. McClafferty	Cllr. P. Ullmann (observed online)
Cllr. C. Macve	Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:

4 members of the public.

Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

Before the meeting commenced, the Town Mayor wished to say a big thank you to Councillor Ben Cox for his commitment to the role of Town Councillor, in particular with his work on Finance Sub-Committee and his support to residents with community initiatives. Councillor Ben Cox had been a Town Councillor for a period of six years (since May 2019). We would now await further information from the Wealden DC Elections team to understand if the vacancy would be filled by election or co-option.

1.0 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Eight nominations were received in advance of the meeting for the position of Town Mayor. The councillor nominated for Town Mayor were:
Councillor K. Bedwell

The Town Clerk asked if any further nominations wished to be made from the table. No other nominations were received.

FC.01.05.25 With no further nominations, members **RESOLVED** for Councillor Karen Bedwell to be re-elected as Town Mayor for a second year.

- 1.1 The Town Mayor to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Councillor K. Bedwell thanked members for their support and accepted the chain of office for a second year.
Councillor K. Bedwell then signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Proper Officer (Town Clerk).

2.0 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

The Town Clerk advised that two nominations had been put forward for the role of Deputy Mayor.

The names put forward for Deputy Mayor, were:
Councillor S. Mayhew

The Town Clerk asked again if any further nominations wished to be made at the meeting. None were received.

FC.02.05.25 With ten votes in favour, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor S. Mayhew be re-elected for a second year as Deputy Town Mayor.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor P. Ullmann due to work commitments, but Cllr Ullmann was able to observe the meeting online.

4.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent. None were forthcoming.

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

None.

6.0 MINUTES

6.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of the 7 April 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC.03.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on the 7 April 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

6.2 Action List

The action list was a reminder of matters outstanding from previous Full Council discussions.
Members subsequently noted the report.

6.3 Forward Plan

Members noted the forward plan and advised that they found it helpful.

7.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 14 April 2025
FC.04.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 14 April 2025.

(b) Plans Committee of the 22 April and 12 May 2025
FC.05.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 22 April and 12 May 2025.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 28 April 2025
FC.06.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 28 April 2025.

Councillor D. Manvell arrived at 7.14pm.

8.0 TO CONSIDER THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Members were presented with the Scheme of Delegation (and Committee Terms of Reference). This would be presented to members on an annual basis, to ensure adequate opportunity to review the contents.

The terms of reference had been updated with minor amendments to ensure delivery of the Strategic Plan aligned with the governance structure of the organisation.

FC.07.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated Scheme of Delegation and Committee Terms of Reference.

Councillor P. Selby arrived at 7.21pm.

9.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED STANDING COMMITTEES

General Purposes - 9 members

FC.08.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that eight of the nine seats of the General Purposes Committee be as follows:-

Councillors V. Frost, J. Love, C. Macve, D. Manvell, P. Selby, A. Smith, P. Ullmann and D. Ward.

The vacant seat would be filled by the newly elected or co-opted Town Councillor in the summer months.

Environment and Leisure - 9 members

FC.09.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the nine members of the Environment and Leisure Committee be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, D. French, V. Frost, M. McClafferty, C. Macve, S. Mayhew, B. Reed and A. Smith.

Plans - 7 members

FC.10.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that five of the seven seats of the Plans Committee be as follows:-

Cllrs. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, J. Love, C. Macve, S. Mayhew.

This left two seats vacant. One seat would be filled by the newly elected or co-opted Town Councillor. The last seat remained vacant.

Councillor P. Selby advised that he would consider taking the position, and this would need to be discussed prior to the next Full Council meeting.

GP.01.05.25 In considering the appointment of Chair of the General Purposes Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. C. Macve be appointed as Chair.

GP.02.05.25 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the General Purposes

Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. D. Ward be appointed as Vice-Chair.

EL.01.05.25 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. A. Smith be re-appointed as Chair.

EL.02.05.25 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. B. Reed be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

P.01.05.25 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. J. Love be re-appointed as Chair.

P.02.05.25 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. C. Macve be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

10.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED SUB-COMMITTEES AND THE VOICE EDITORIAL PANEL

In considering the appointment of members to the sub-committees, the Clerk reminded Members of Standing Order No. 19.1.8 which stated that the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or in their absence the Vice-chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it, unless they signified that they did not wish to serve.

The Town Clerk asked the Chair of General Purposes Committee, Councillor C. Macve, if he wished to sit on Personnel Sub-Committee. Councillor C. Macve felt this wasn't necessary.

Further to the addition to the Standing Orders in 2024 to invite the Town Mayor (Chair of Full Council) to sit on Personnel Sub-Committee, this invitation had already been met through committee preferences.

Personnel - 5 members

FC.11.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Personnel Sub-committee be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, J. Love, M. McClafferty, A. Smith and D. Ward.

Finance – 5 members

Four seats were automatically filled, with a further two members interested. Councillor C. Macve wished to rescind his interest in the sub-committee.

FC.12.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Finance Sub-committee be as follows:-

Councillors K. Bedwell, D. Manvell, S. Mayhew, P. Ullmann and D. Ward.

The meeting then adjourned to allow the sub-committees to meet and elect a Chair and Vice-chair.

PS.01.05.25 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor M. McClafferty be appointed as Chair.

PS.02.05.25 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D. Ward be appointed as Vice-Chair.

FS.01.05.25 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Finance Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D. Ward be appointed as Chair.

FS.02.05.25 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D. Manvell be appointed as Vice-Chair.

The Voice Editorial Panel

The Clerk advised that two Members had expressed an interest in the Editorial Panel. Further interest was offered by Councillor M. McClafferty.

FC.13.05.25 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** that the three members of the Voice Editorial Panel would be as follows:-
Councillors. D. French, M. McClafferty and P. Selby.

11.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

FC.14.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed as the Council's representatives to the following outside bodies:-

FULL COUNCIL

Organisation	No. Required	
Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee	2	Cllr Jackie Love Cllr Diane Ward
Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee – Substitute Members	2	Cllr Donna French Cllr Peter Selby
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	Up to 4	Cllr Jackie Love Cllr Bernadette Reed Cllr Angie Smith
Gatwick Airport Consultation Group	3	Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Bernadette Reed Cllr Peter Selby Cllr Peter Ullmann

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wealden Citizens Advice	1	Cllr Donna French/ Cllr Angie Smith
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Emergency Planning Co-ordinators	4 (two south of river/two north of river)	Cllr Karen Bedwell Cllr Duncan Bennett Cllr Donna French
Wealden Volunteering	1	Cllr Peter Selby
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Cllr Diane Ward
Wealden District Association of Local Councils Parish Planning Panel/Local Plan Engagement Cluster	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Cllr Karen Bedwell

AGM meetings only:

East Sussex Association of Local Councils	1	Cllr Diane Ward
Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

All Weather Pitch Operational Advisory Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Chris Macve
Biodiversity links: Conservators of Ashdown Forest and Weald to Waves	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Donna French/ Cllr Bernadette Reed
Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	<i>To be appointed at first E&L Committee after Annual Stat meeting</i>
Luxford Centre Management Committee	1	Cllr Val Frost
Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee	1	Cllr Chris Macve/ Cllr Val Frost
Uckfield Youth Club Trust Board	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Dan Manvell
Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link Forum	1	Cllr Angie Smith/Town Clerk
Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group	1	Cllr Angie Smith

AGM meetings only:

Uckfield & District Twinning Association	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew
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12.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Members considered a report which sought to confirm membership of Full Council working groups for the year ahead. This agenda item would confirm the members appointed to:

Civic Centre Working Group
Ageing Well Forum
Events Working Group

FC.15.05.25 Members **RESOLVED to:**

(i) confirm appointments to:

Civic Centre Working Group –
Councillors Bennett, French, Frost, Mayhew and Ward

Events Working Group -
Councillors Bedwell, French, Frost, Love, Mayhew.

(ii) and, appoint Councillor K. Bedwell and P. Selby as Town Council representatives on the Ageing Well Forum.

13.0 TO RATIFY REVISED DOCUMENTATION FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

(i) Standing Orders

(ii) Financial regulations

(iii) Equality & Diversity Policy

These documents had already been reviewed by General Purposes Committee

(i) Subject to changing references to his/he/him within the contents of the Standing Orders, members

FC.16.05.25 **RESOLVED to adopt the updated Standing Orders;**

FC.17.05.25 (ii) Members **RESOLVED to adopt the Town Council's updated Financial Regulations;**

FC.18.05.25 (ii) Members **RESOLVED to adopt the Town Council's updated Equality & Diversity Policy.**

14.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY, AND CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Town Councillors were provided with a copy of the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy for reference and review alongside the Civility and Respect Pledge. There were no changes, but provided an opportunity for members to review the contents.

Councillor D. Ward advised that NALC were looking at civility and respect in more detail, and were in talks with the UK Government to review Standards to address poor behaviour. She also spoke of the varying views of members' home address details being in the public domain.

The Town Clerk advised that there were two places that personal details could be shared – contact details on the Town Council website, and the details in the Member Register of Interest forms. At present, there was no blanket redaction of home address within Wealden District.

Councillor D. Manvell advised members of a talk that had been arranged at Wealden DC the previous week which referenced the 'debate not hate' campaign. He advised of the Police 'Operation Ford' which could be stated via 999 if a member was ever at risk.

FC.19.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy.

15.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ASSET REGISTER

This was being reviewed as part of financial year end, the annual review by the Internal Audit and in the preparation of the AGAR process (Annual Governance and Accountability Return).

This would be shared with members.

16.0 TO NOTE MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER BODIES AND ANNUAL FEES

Members were presented with a short report which provided details of annual subscriptions, memberships and associated fees. These were categorised by advisory bodies on legislation, guidance and best practice (e.g. National Association of Local Councils), specialist memberships such as those relating to cemetery or allotment management and other.

Members noted the contents of the report, and the annual subscriptions and memberships in place for 2025-26.

17.0 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2025-26

Members were provided with a calendar of meetings up until May 2026, for all standing committees, full council meetings, the annual town meeting, allotment conference, and annual finance sub-committee meeting where they reviewed the community grants programme.

Members noted and received the calendar of dates for 2025-26.

18.0 TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMPLETE AUDITS UNTIL THE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING IN MAY 2026

Members were presented with a report which confirmed that audits had been completed for 2024-25. A new schedule had been drawn up for 2025-26 which members were asked to approve.

FC.20.05.25 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed schedule for member audits for the financial year 2025-26.

19.0 TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

20.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Members noted the report.

(ii) Ageing Well Forum

Members noted the report.

(iii) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

21.0 TO NOTE THE ENGAGEMENTS OF THE MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR AND TOWN CRIER

Members noted the engagements.

22.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

No questions were received by the deadline.

23.0 TO CONSIDER THE DESIGN OF A NEW BUS SHELTER TO BE INSTALLED ON LONDON ROAD

This item was deferred to Environment & Leisure Committee the following week.

24.0 TO CONSIDER HOW TO RESPOND TO THE DRAFT EAST SUSSEX FREIGHT AND RAIL STRATEGIES CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk welcomed suggestions from members to consider how best to respond to the consultations. There were mixed views on whether this should fall under Full Council or Plans and members noted that the Plans Committee had a number of major applications to consider during May and early June so would not have capacity.

FC.21.05.25 With nine votes in favour, members **RESOLVED** to set up a working group to review the contents of the consultations and prepare a response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council. The working group would consist of Councillors Bennett, Frost, Love and Reed.

25.0 UPDATE ON A NEW BANKING HUB FOR UCKFIELD

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting had taken place in April, with Cash Access UK. Two members were present, along with the Director of Uckfield Chamber of Commerce. The meeting sought to provide background on how Banking Hubs worked. It could be triggered by the last bank leaving the village/town, or through community support. The requirement for a hub in Uckfield was triggered by the planned closure of Santander.

Members were informed that Cash Access UK allowed for up to 12 months to get the hub up and running, and would be looking for a minimum of a 10-year commercial lease. They looked within a small radius and they would look for somewhere they could make or already was DDA compliant. The details of the local commercial estate agents were provided to them as a result. They had specific branding and marketing ready to issue in the lead up to the opening of a hub but until further details were known about the location, it would be premature to promote at this stage.

Cash Access UK was a not-for-profit company, but the setup of the banking hubs was financially supported by the five national banks and associated businesses. It would be a walk-in service with a glass meeting pod, for private conversations. They normally had two counter staff (post office and community banker). At present they didn't intend to provide an additional ATM, but it was suggested this would be important within the High Street.

145 banking hubs were already open across the country. The Town Clerk reminded members that Halifax and Lloyds were running community banking services from the Civic Centre each week. Members noted the update provided.

26.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEED OF GRANT

Three grave certificates had been received:

Mrs Tracey Doherty

Maria Wren

Robert Dean

FC.22.05.25 Members **RESOLVED** for three members to sign these deeds of grant.

27.0 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

28.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk spoke on:

(i) Member Register of Interest forms – members needed to include the full name and address of employers, the details of their personal address whether renting or owning the property, and completed forms needed to be returned by 27 May 2025;

(ii) a Joint meeting had been called with Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council and Uckfield Chamber of Commerce to explore all options relating to the dangerous structure and associated traffic management;

(iii) The next SLR meeting was due to take place early July. Members were asked to make the Senior Administrative Officer aware of potential agenda items;

(iv) the suggestion that Councillor Manvell and relevant officers from Wealden DC, liaise with Uckfield Town Council's Plans Committee members to explain the changes to the Planning Committee governance arrangements at Wealden DC;

(v) how upsetting it was to read the comments on social media in relation to lack of Beacon lighting for VE Day. The Town Council purposely held an event on the Bank Holiday as staff/councillors were unable to accommodate and host the event on the day itself. There were also a large number of events taking place on the weekends and day itself. The Town Clerk reminded members that a number of Councillors and staff were experiencing some serious and difficult personal issues at the current time. People tended to forget that public servants were human too. It was also very sad to feel unsupported by former Councillors. The Town Clerk advised that she had wanted to respond to some of those comments to state "you might want to reach out to your former colleagues because some of them aren't doing so great right now." The Town Mayor added, that based on the comments online, she felt she needed to make a statement. Not just Councillors but staff took a bashing and this was not ok. To see comments from ex councillors, was very upsetting. Staff should not have been treated in that way and for people to be so unpleasant.

The Town Clerk wished to thank those who helped on the Bank Holiday Monday, and spoke of what a lovely day the veterans who attended had, with positive feedback received.

The feedback had been taken on board, and the Council would do the best it could to carry out beacon lightings in the future.

The meeting closed at 8.46pm.