

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT: Cllr. S. Mayhew (Deputy Mayor – Chair) Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. D. Bennett Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. V. Frost Cllr. B. Reed
Cllr. J. Love Cllr. D. Ward
Cllr. M. McClafferty

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

None received.

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

Councillor Manvell advised that he had attended a very productive meeting with the Uckfield Rugby Club, to understand their current needs and aspirations for future improvements to the clubhouse and wider site.

Councillor Manvell also referred to the current matter of the former Maidens Head, in the upper section of the High Street, Uckfield.

Councillor Reed, referred to recent meetings that she had attended which included the Conservators of Ashdown Forest Parish Liaison meeting, and a stakeholder group looking at the A22 corridor north of the Boship roundabout.

Councillor Reed referred to the Freight and Rail Strategy consultations and explained that there was reference to the dualling of the A22 in one of the draft documents, which she wasn't aware had been approved. It was likely to be a

typo, and the Town Clerk was investigating. Councillor Reed explained that the Copwood and Blackdown roundabouts were currently at capacity, but there were a number of biodiversity impacts that needed to be considered in any expansion of the existing road network.

She wished to thank the Town Council's Plans Committee on their hard work recently to not only prepare for an appeal for Bird in Eye Farm, but also consider the Owlsbury Farm planning application. Approximately 1300-1400 objections had been received. Councillors French and Reed had put in a combined response.

Councillor Reed also referred to current mowing/maintenance issues at Horsted Green. She had worked with local residents to get these matters raised with Wealden DC, and ensure the management plan was followed.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors K. Bedwell, D. French, P. Selby, A. Smith and P. Ullmann.

5.0 MINUTES

- 5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 19 May 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.23.06.25 Subject to one typo on page 5, members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor (Chair).

5.2 Action List

The Town Clerk asked members to review a couple of matters on the action list, to understand if they were still current. This included action list item FC114.05.19 (motion re: parking warden).

Members discussed the subject – the possible future changes with local government re-organisation, the responsibility to residents to understand the town's position, and whether Sussex Police would change their view on wardens. It was still considered a topical issue, and as a result and without the Councillor present who first put forward the motion (Cllr French), it was suggested by the Town Clerk that the item be placed onto the Forward Plan, but removed from the action list.

Members agreed to remove FC.63.10.24 and FC.64.10.24 from the action list before noting the remaining contents.

5.3 Forward plan

Members noted the forward plan.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-
(a) Plans Committee of the 2 June and 23 June 2025

FC.24.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 2 June and 23 June 2025.

- FC.25.06.25** (b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 27 May 2025
It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 27 May 2025.
- (c) General Purposes Committee of the 9 June 2025
FC.26.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 9 June 2025.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES
(none received)

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Members were asked for their support with two upcoming events – Weald on the Field, and marking the anniversary of VJ Day. Even if members could spare an hour on these dates it would be very much appreciated. Members noted the update.

9.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

Members were directed to the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), and the contents of the detailed Internal Audit Report from the Town Council's Internal Auditor.

Members thought it was a brilliant report which reflected admirably on the hard work of the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, and wider team. After seeking clarification on a couple of the Internal Auditor's recommendations, members received, considered and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 within the AGAR.

10.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 1 – THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement for the period 2024/25 which formed part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) on page four of six.

The Assistant Town Clerk referred members to the AGAR report, which had to be sent to the External Auditor to be authorised. Section 1 showed that we had put the necessary processes and controls in place to ensure good governance and finance.

- FC.27.06.25** Members reviewed the contents of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2024/25) and **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25, and authorised for the Chair and the Town Clerk to sign and date this statement on behalf of the Town Council.

11.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 2 – THE TOWN COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

Members reviewed a summary of the Town Council's accounting statements, as presented on page five of six, in the draft Annual Governance and Accountability

Return ending 31 March 2025, and a set of financial statements prepared by the Town Council's accountants at the end of March 2025.

The Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the report(s) to members.

On behalf of all Town Councillors, the Deputy Mayor (Chair) wished to give a big thank you to the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO for their hard work on this.

FC.28.06.25 Members **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the draft annual governance and accountability return, and financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2025, and authorised for the Deputy Mayor as Chair of the meeting to sign and date this return, on behalf of the Town Council.

12.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON UCKFIELD HIGH STREET

The Town Clerk provided members with an update on the investigations of Wealden District Council's Building Control team, and external contractors. The Town Clerk also updated members on the review of traffic flow from recent monitoring at the Church Street/High Street junction. They were awaiting an update on the findings of the recent more detailed investigations and would keep members updated in due course.

Members were aware that the situation was incredibly complex.

One member asked whether traffic leaving Church Street could be given slightly longer time on the sequencing.

A second member asked whether the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival procession would be impacted. It was advised that they had considered the safety of those within the procession, if the scaffolding and temporary traffic lights were still in situ.

Members also raised queries in relation to this heritage building, within the town's conservation area, the property owner and whether they were receiving support, as well as ensuring businesses adjacent were kept up to date.

Members thanked all involved for the helpful update.

13.0 TO CONSIDER A DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE EAST SUSSEX LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION SURVEY

Members reviewed a draft copy of the response that the Town Clerk planned to send by the deadline on Monday 30 July.

Members discussed the future consideration of green and built assets within the district as part of the re-organisation.

One member advised of the alternative proposals for local government re-organisation in East and West Sussex, and potential geographical boundaries that could be considered, in contrast to the proposed alignment with the existing geographical boundary of East Sussex. The purpose of the Local government Reorganisation (LGR) was to encourage full consideration for public service reform, and provide opportunities for new ideas.

FC.29.06.25 Members **RESOLVED** that with the inclusion of any additional response from members by Monday 30 July, the Town Clerk could proceed with the submission of a response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council.

14.0 TO CONSIDER PROVIDING A RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT EAST SUSSEX RAIL STRATEGY 2025-30

After substantial discussion on whether the Town Council should respond, as a result of GBR coming (Great British Railway) and the working group having yet to meet, members **RESOLVED** to review the response of the Wealden Line Campaign and submit a response along similar lines before the deadline.

FC.30.06.25

15.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TENDER PROCESS FOR THE UPGRADE OF VICTORIA PLAY AREA, AND REPLACEMENT OF THE ZIP LINE AT HEMPSTEAD

The Town Clerk set out the schedule of work that had been undertaken since March to consult with the public, service users, the adjacent primary school, and work with members and play area companies to identify a suitable contractor to undertake the replacement of the zip-line at Hempstead Recreation Ground, and full upgrade of Victoria Play Area. A final decision would be taken by Environment & Leisure Committee on 7 July 2025 between the top two designs/companies.

Members noted the update provided.

16.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the report.

17.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

Six deeds of grant were received:

Mr Andy Boyes

Mrs Carol Ann Carn

Richard Brian Bradley

Ms Mary Freeman

Mrs Heidi Comber

Mr Elias Ridley

FC.31.06.25 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

18.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

19.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk advised that she was on annual leave from 3rd to 11th July inclusive, so any enquiries should be directed to the main office.

20.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

The meeting closed at 8.51pm.