



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE
Tel: (01825) 762774
e-mail: townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk
www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk
Town Clerk – Holly Goring

Meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** to be held on
Monday 7 July 2025 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 27 May 2025
- 4.2. Action list – for information only
- 4.3. Project monitoring list – for information only

5.0. FINANCE

- 5.1. Bills paid

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1 To award the contract for the upgrade of Victoria Play Area and replacement of the zip line at Hempstead Recreation Ground
- 6.2 To confirm members for the working groups of Environment and Leisure Committee
- 6.3 To consider the revised Tree Policy no.48 (with comments)

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates
- 7.2 To receive an update on the provision of future burial space at Snatts Road Cemetery and memorial inspections

8.0. LEISURE

- 8.1 To consider installing a bench at the Ridgewood Recreation Ground Orchard

9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- 9.1 To receive an update from the Allotment Working Group

10.0. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
10.2 Biodiversity links - Ashdown Forest and Weald to Waves
10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group
10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee
10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee
10.6 Uckfield Youth Club Trust Board
10.8 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group
10.9 Uckfield & District Twinning Association

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



Town Clerk

1 July 2025



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Tuesday 27 May 2025 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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Peter Selby
Tom Woollard – Countryside Ranger
Holly Goring – Town Clerk

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.

A declaration of interest was raised by Councillor K. Bedwell in relation to agenda item 6.1. This would be a prejudicial interest as Chair of Ridgewood Village hall. Councillor Bedwell would therefore leave the meeting for this item.

A declaration of interest was also raised by Vice Chair Councillor B. Reed in relation to item 6.3 (bus shelter on London Road). This was a personal interest, and Councillor Reed would refrain from voting on this item.

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

None received.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Two apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Councillors D. Bennett and S. Mayhew who were both unable to attend due to personal reasons.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 14 April 2025

EL.03.05.25 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 14 April 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2. Action list

Members noted the report and asked for the following item to be removed from the action list:

EL42.03.25 – To consider actions to reduce litter in the vicinity of new food outlets and retail businesses in Uckfield.

The litter bin campaign to address dog fouling in public spaces was in progress with posters and ongoing support from litter pickers, including Brighter Uckfield and community involvement with Uckfield College. Allotment tenants on the Bird in Eye allotment site were also recently advised to keep the entrance gate shut to the site, as it was fitted with a new locking system and code to prevent dog walkers using this growing space as an access route into town.

EL37.01.25 – To consider the commemoration of the VE Day 80th Anniversary. This event was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended and the Chair thanked staff and volunteers for their invaluable help on the day.

EL38.01.25 – To establish a working group to organise a showcase event to promote the various Community groups and activities in Uckfield.

The next Events Working Group would be held in mid-June. The Town Clerk felt that the remit of this event would be picked up by the Health and Wellbeing event organised by the Ageing Well Forum on 18 September 2025.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report and agreed to remove the following actions on:

FC.91.01.25 – Artificial Cricket Wicket Resurfacing/Replacement.

This work was completed.

FC.91.01.25 – D-Day Anniversary activities.

This event was held on the Bank Holiday Monday 5 May 2025 and was a huge success.

4.4. Forward plan – for information only

Members noted the report.

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report.

5.2. To note the Income & Expenditure report ending 31 March 2025

Councillor C. Macve remarked how the income had increased and that expenditure had fallen so this was a positive step.

In relation to tree works, the Town Clerk advised that there had been a more robust programme of surveying and recording the detail of tree surveys during the past year which would protect the Town Council as an authority, going forward. Earmarked reserves had been identified to cover this overspend.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1. To consider further drainage works at Ridgewood Village Hall

[Councillor K. Bedwell left the room at 19:10pm for remaining members to discuss this item in her absence]

Ridgewood Village Hall was still experiencing water ingress from Ridgewood Recreation Ground and a quotation had been presented to E&L Committee from a local contractor. The Village Hall Committee requested the need to get these works carried out prior to the winter season.

Uckfield Town Council had initially offered to split the costs equally, but the Village Hall Committee wished to see the council fund the works in full, as a result of being the landowner. Members acknowledged the full repairing lease agreement and

reasonable amount of charitable grant money awarded for renovation works to the building.

Discussions centred around the difficulties being faced with water ground levels in this particular area. It was hoped that the recent highway works would reduce some of the run-off from New Road into the recreation ground.

Members tried to consider whether surface water run-off and drainage on the recreation ground would have been of impact to the hall after it was first built. It was also recognised that the building was lower in the landscape, and that over the years there had been various concerns which may have altered or impacted the flow of ground water levels.

During the refurbishment works in 2020-21, flooding to the basement was thought to have been caused by works to the car park, and yet it was also discovered that water was also coming off New Road into the Recreation Ground and car park.

The reconfiguration of the Ridgewood Recreation play area in autumn 2016 may have also contributed.

The Town Clerk advised that there were a number of factors that could be contributing to the drainage issues in this particular area and due to the geology of the area, it may never be possible to fully resolve. She also added that members needed to consider their responsibilities as owners of Ridgewood Village Hall, the recreation ground and subsequent impact on the hall.

In relation to the proposed drainage works, Councillor C. Macve said that the proposed shingle drainage system would still not encapsulate the water. He felt that a French drain being installed at a half metre depth may not be adequate enough, as it was not understood if the ground water levels under the recreation ground and basement floor of the building would be more than this, in which case excessive water could still percolate above this level.

An alternative idea could perhaps involve tanking the building to stop water coming into the building, and a french drain along the basement floor level.

In terms of liability, the Town Clerk explained that there should be no blame to any party given that this situation could indicate years of monitoring different water flows, and that whilst things altered on the ground, the structure of the building had also changed. The Town Council may also be responsible for structural repairs to the building within the lease agreement as the owner, so members were being asked to consider if they wished to support this request by making the building watertight.

Whilst discussing the funding, it was clear that the main difficulty members were facing was that this was a large sum of money that had not been budgeted for, whilst the Town Council was also having to look at drainage systems for the adjacent car park that could far exceed existing budget allocations.

Members were inclined to help and to maybe offer funding in place of grant money over the next couple of years, equalling this out.

The Town Clerk agreed that this could be a reasonable suggestion considering this needed sorting out sooner than later, especially if a request was made to extend the building in future.

EL.04.05.25 With seven votes in favour, and one vote abstaining due to a conflict of interest members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to request:

- (i) for more precise and accurate information to be provided within the quotation (*since the surface water levels were not yet fully understood*);
- (ii) to consider the alternative of tanking to stop water coming into the building;
- (iii) to bring this item back to a future committee meeting for members to make a more formal decision in relation to this application for costs, and;
- (iv) for the Estates team to arrange to have test pits installed onsite to assess current drainage and soil conditions on Ridgewood Recreation Ground.

6.2 To request items for the Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) meeting with East Sussex Highways on 1 July 2025

Councillor D. French requested for the disabled parking bays in the High Street to be re-marked and more prominent.

Councillor B. Reed also requested a dropped kerb for wheelchair users.

Local residents had reported that on leaving Batchelor Way on to Bell Farm Road, and Meads Surgery that visibility was poor whilst looking west towards the A22 roundabout. There was also a camber in the road between this area and the A22 bypass Copwood roundabout. This required a swathe cut at these junctions for the purpose of road safety. This would be addressed more urgently via with the Stakeholders at East Sussex Highways.

A query was raised in relation to the new design layout of roads leading towards the A22 Copwood Roundabout and Budletts Roundabout, as it was not clear which lane drivers should be going straight ahead.

A bollard and sign had been introduced towards the lower end of Lewes Road as a new safety feature, although this was thought to be dangerous and not in the correct place for oncoming traffic, and a lack of alternative solutions had been offered for the town.

Some of the pavements were in an appalling condition for and were blocking access routes for wheelchair users and mobility scooters.

Councillor C. Macve was concerned about tree roots just south of the Natwest Bank in the High Street which was a potential trip hazard.

The powder coated paint on the s-shaped seating outside the Card Factory needed to be re-treated as there were a lot of sharp edges and potentially dangerous to sit on.

The Town Clerk pointed out that those last two points raised about the tree and seat in town were part of the old Highways Project Board and that these items could be raised with them directly.

EL.05.05.25 Members noted the report and agreed for those issues and any further items (received no later than 17 June) to be raised at the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting with East Sussex Highways on 1 July 2025.

6.3 To consider the design of a new bus shelter to be installed on London Road

The contractors, Vine Consulting Engineers, were keen to understand if the Town Council had any design preferences and placement for the new northbound bus shelter on London Road associated with the land at Mockbeggars Farm Development.

Members were also being asked to consider if they wished for some signage to be moved and a litter bin adjacent to the bus shelter.

Members were keen on the 'Friend Oak Frames' design for a bus shelter as this was very traditional and in keeping with the bus shelters on Eastbourne Road and at Ringles Cross, and would also be protected from the elements.

However, there were some concerns about there being adequate space within the existing lay-by and if the design suggested needed to be made narrower to ensure good visibility for adjacent residents and businesses to see up the road when leaving their premises (e.g. White House Farm, Spring Cottage etc).

There was also a concern about buses stopping if the space was too narrow and vehicles overtaking, as this was a fast road.

With regard to signage, The Town Clerk advised that this may also be a good opportunity to decide whether or not to move the 'Welcome to Uckfield' and 'Ringles Cross' signage, or to reinstate them exactly where they were.

Members were keen to meet officials from East Sussex Highways onsite, to air any of these concerns and proposals.

- EL.06.05.25** With six votes in favour, members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to:
- (i) meet with East Sussex Highway officials onsite in order to discuss views on visibility and the location of the bus stop;
 - (ii) to ask for a bus stop in a similar style to the one at Ringles Cross (pending further discussion on the final design and in alignment with that proposed by Buxted Parish Council), and;
 - (iii) to support the siting of a litter bin adjacent to the bus shelter.

6.4 To appoint a representative for the Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group

- EL.07.05.25** Members **RESOLVED** to agree for Councillors D. French and B. Reed to continue as the representatives (one and one substitute) for the Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group.

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

The Town Clerk welcomed back the Ranger who was thanked by Councillor B. Reed for arranging the test pits in the balancing pond, which helped with the Nature pledge. More test pits were due at West Park Local Nature Reserve early June.

The Town Clerk reminded members that if there were particular areas of the town that required attention – in terms of a project or clean up, groups such as the Scouts, Guides or Brighter Uckfield could be interested in supporting the delivery of this work. Members were asked to let the Clerk know.

The tree orchards were a working success and the bluebells were also showing that Boothland Wood would eventually revert back to woodlands. Some of the tree trunks were placed across to block access temporarily to prevent access to motorbike riders who were ruining the ancient woodland.

Members subsequently noted the report.

7.2 To consider a request from a local resident in relation to coppiced trees to rear of property

A local resident who lived in Calvert Close, Uckfield had asked about the recently coppiced trees along the perimeter garden line to Hart Close. They understood that these were a low priority in terms of expenditure but were still concerned about the

size and proximity of the trees on the boundary of their garden. They asked about having the trees at the rear of their property, on Town Council land, cut back.

The Ranger had specified that all boundary trees were subject to independent inspections and should any concerns be raised this would have been addressed. As a matter of policy, the Town Council would typically only carry out works on trees which were classified as dead, dying or dangerous.

Even though trees needed to be reduced at times, the Town Council were planting a large number of trees in order to try to mitigate what was disappearing, especially with ash die-back.

The Ranger confirmed that the trees on Town Council land could be coppiced under the recommendation of an approved list of contractors, and as stated any tree works would need to be carried out to British Standards.

As most of the Town Council's trees were already surveyed to determine whether they were veteran or young trees, this may include an administrative cost if those works were not deemed necessary.

It was also vital to understand the effects of local trees on ecology and biodiversity in our designated landscapes, such as nature reserves.

EL.08.05.25 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree for the tree policy to be reviewed and be brought back to the next meeting.

7.3 To provide feedback for the Ashdown Forest Woodland Management Plan Consultation

Members noted the report. Councillor B. Reed would liaise with the Conservators of the Ashdown Forest at their meeting the following day and ask if they had policies for wet woodlands and freshwater migratory species.

EL.09.05.25 Members noted the report and supported the expertise of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest in managing the forest. Councillor B. Reed would find out if they had policies for wet woodlands and freshwater migratory species, and also, if there were any alternative methods of managing the deer population.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To note an update on the Our Parks Fitness Sessions
Members noted the report.

8.2 To consider the feedback from service users for Victoria Play Area and initial designs
The Town Clerk provided a verbal update in relation to the tender process for the play area upgrade. Five companies had responded within the time specified and a public exhibition was due to be held at the Civic Centre that Saturday, with selected companies attending to present their designs to the public.

This upgrade would not include any large additions at this stage but requested the design, supply and installation of a package for a play area that would meet the childrens' needs and get them playing again.

There was a lot of work put in by all these companies for their layouts in terms of age, gender and accessibility. The Town Clerk suggested having a small selection of committee members to look at those designs in more detail, as there would be a lot to digest.

The poster competition with St Philip's Primary School would be revealed on Saturday.

EL.10.05.25 Members RESOLVED to:

- (i) form a working group to review the designs and complete the tender scoring process in more detail, and;
- (ii) appoint Councillors M. McClafferty, D. French and A. Smith to meet with the Estates & Facilities Manager and Town Clerk.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- 9.1 To receive an update from the Climate Change Steering Group

EL.11.05.25 Members RESOLVED to:

- (i) note the content of the story mapping completed, and;
- (ii) approve the incredible work done on the mapping by Councillor B. Reed for the 'Weald to Waves' pledge.

Thanks was given to Councillors A. Smith, D. French and M. McClafferty for their support with this project.

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

Members noted the report and thanked Councillor B. Reed.

- 10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Members noted the report and thanked Councillor C. Macve.

- 10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

Members noted the report and thanked Councillor C. Macve.

- 10.6 Uckfield Youth Club Board

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.7 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link

Nothing to report at this time.

- 10.8 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group

Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Climate Change Steering Group were holding an a Eco Expo on Saturday 27 September whereby local businesses and community groups would be able to promote products that support local people in tackling climate change and considering environmentally friendly alternatives. If anyone knew anyone who wished to have a stall, they were asked to pass their details to Councillor K. Bedwell for her to make the initial contact.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

- EL.12.05.25** 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 consider a report on the Marketing programme
Members noted the report.

The meeting finished at 20:54pm

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	The Ranger is sourcing external quotes for installation of the pathway. These works are not going to be carried out in-house due to workload.

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 RESOLVED 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.35.01.25</u>	<u>To revisit the Cemetery working group and review options available for cemetery provision</u> Members resolved to agree to revisit the Cemetery working group, and to ask all Councillors (not just on this committee), to compare costs and facilities in comparison with other local service providers, and to share ideas for future cemetery provision.	20.01.25	RN	Cemetery working group to meet in 2025 and compare ideas for improvement to the cemetery. Pending site visit and to discuss options available.
<u>EL41.03.25</u>	<u>To consider the consecration of a section of land at Snatts Road Cemetery to be named the new Y section</u> Members resolved to note the report before requesting, that officers: (i) look into those points raised at the meeting before deciding on the consecration of the new Y-section, and bring these points to the next meeting; (ii) seek advice from the Town Clerk in relation to writing a letter to the Head of Planning with a request for additional cemetery land in line with the amount of housing opportunities coming our way.	03.03.25	RN	An update report has been submitted to E&L on 7 th July.

	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL04.05.25</u>	<p><u>To consider the drainage works at Ridgewood Village Hall</u> With seven votes in favour, and one vote abstaining due to a conflict of interest members noted the report and RESOLVED to agree to request:</p> <p>(i) for more precise and accurate information to be provided within the quotation (<i>since the surface water levels were not yet fully understood</i>); (ii) to consider the alternative of tanking to stop water coming into the building; (iii) to bring this item back to a future committee meeting for members to make a more formal decision in relation to this application for costs, and;</p> <p>(iv) for the Estates team to arrange to have test pits installed onsite to assess current drainage and soil conditions on Ridgewood Recreation Ground.</p>	27.05.25	HG/TW	<p>Onsite visit was carried out on 13.06.25 to discuss options re drainage works. The Estates team are awaiting an updated quote from Thornes including an additional soak away tank.</p> <p>The Ranger is also awaiting a quote back for the test pits on Ridgewood.</p>
<u>EL.06.05.25</u>	<p><u>To consider the design of a new bus shelter to be installed on London Road</u> With six votes in favour, members noted the report and RESOLVED to agree to:</p> <p>(i) meet with East Sussex Highways officials onsite to discuss views on visibility and the location of the bus stop;</p> <p>(ii) to ask for a bus stop in a similar style to the one at Ringles Cross (pending further discussion on the final design and in alignment with that proposed by Buxted Parish Council), and;</p> <p>(iii) to support the siting of a litter bin adjacent to the bus shelter.</p>	27.05.25	HG	<p>The Town Clerk contacted Vine Consulting Engineers. The initial siting of the bus shelter has been moved just south of the layby and gate, so this matter has already been addressed. The Town Clerk has advised the consultants of the preferred bus shelter design, and support for a litter bin.</p> <p>Information to be sent on location of signage. NFA at this stage.</p>
<u>EL.08.05.25</u>	<p><u>To consider a request from a local resident in relation to coppiced trees to rear of property</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to agree for the tree policy to be reviewed and be brought back to the next meeting.</p>	27.05.25	RN/TW	<p>The Tree Policy has been revised and submitted to E&L on 7th July for approval.</p> <p>NFA</p>
<u>EL.09.05.25</u>	<p><u>To consider the feedback for the Ashdown Woodland Management Plan Consultation</u> Members noted the report and supported the expertise of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest in managing the forest. Councillor B. Reed would find out if they had policies for wet woodlands and freshwater migratory species, and also, if there were any alternative methods of managing the deer population.</p>	27.05.25	RN	<p>A report has been submitted to E&L meeting on 7th July.</p> <p>NFA</p>

EL10.05.25	<p><u>To consider the feedback from service users for Victoria Play Area and initial designs</u></p> <p>Members RESOLVED to:</p> <p>(i) form a working group to review the designs and complete the tender scoring process in more detail, and;</p> <p>(ii) appoint Councillors M. McClafferty, D. French and A. Smith to meet with the Estates & Facilities Manager and Town Clerk.</p>	27/05/25	HG	<p>The working group met on 16 June 2025, to undertake detailed scoring and analysis of the submissions.</p> <p>Action complete. NFA.</p>
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**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2025-26**

Projects in 2022/23 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Speed reduction initiative (already have £3,199.64 in earmarked reserves)		Project Number	69
<u>FC.82.01.22</u>	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.	

Projects in 2024/25 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Roofed compound area for Grounds storage		Project Number	83
<u>FC.91.01.24</u>	£500	10.04.24	This work is not urgent, and will be progressed in due course.	

Projects in 2025/26 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Football Pitch Manoeuvrable posts		Project Number	87
<u>FC.90.01.25</u>	£10,500	08.04.25	These have been purchased in time for the new season July/Aug 2025. The Head Groundsman is working on storage facilities with Uckfield Grasshoppers. NFA	

Project Name	Full football pitch renovations		Project Number	88
<u>FC.90.01.25</u>	£29,000	08.04.25	These works commenced on Monday 19 May 2025. NFA	

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2025-26**

Project Name	Permanent welfare facilities for Harlands Playing Fields		Project Number	89
<u>FC.90.01.25</u>	£12,000	08.04.25	To be progressed in due course.	

Project Name	Conservation and wildlife monitoring (longer-term project)		Project Number	91
<u>FC.90.01.25</u>	£8,000	08.04.25	Wildlife appraisals have been commissioned, alongside a dormouse survey of Boothland Wood. Enquiries are also being made for a bat survey in Boothland Wood. In progress.	

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 7 July 2025

Agenda item 6.2

TO CONFIRM MEMBERS FOR THE WORKING GROUPS OF ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 At each Annual Statutory meeting of the Council, appointments are made to the council's committees, outside bodies, and working groups which sit under Full Council. Any working groups which report to the standing committees of General Purposes or Environment & Leisure are appointed at the first meetings of these committees.
- 1.2 Some working groups are already underway, but it would be prudent to refresh the membership of these working groups and invite councillors to put themselves forward.
- 1.3 The working groups which sit under this committee are:
Allotments Working Group;
Fees & Charging Working Group;
Climate Change Steering Group;
Cemetery Working Group;

2.0 Background to these working groups

- 2.1 The Allotments Working Group have attended two meetings this year, on 17 March and a Joint Allotment Working Group meeting on 1 July with tenants and reps. Current members are also going to kindly assist with allotment checks (deferred to July instead of June this year, running slightly late due to staffing issues) and a town-wide Scarecrow Competition in August in collaboration with Manor Park & Hempstead Fields Residents Association. The Allotment Competition is being judged by Stavertons Nursery during July. It would be useful to work alongside the same committee members this year, for the purpose of continuity.

Previous members included: Councillors K. Bedwell, S. Mayhew and A. Smith.

- 2.2 A Joint Sports Facilities Working Group was previously set up in early 2023 to review the structure of the fees and charges for sports facilities in 2024/25, and associated terms and conditions. There had also been items that had arisen out of the working group, not just solely about the fees and charges. Since local sports clubs have been increasing their intake of participants and training sessions, there has been an increase in requests for sports pitches and community space and there could be increasing interest, with future growth and development in the town.

Further work is required to address current investment in grounds maintenance, the charging schedules for football and cricket clubs, with the potential to create licences where necessary i.e. such as West Park. A number of sports facility improvements are still necessary across all sites including welfare facilities at Harlands.

Previous members incorporated those above from the Allotment Working Group members and Councillor M. McClafferty.

- 2.3 The Climate Emergency Steering Group compiled a response to the Wealden District Council's Climate Change Organisation Survey in April 2024. They previously set out a Climate Change Policy for the Town Council, commissioned a carbon audit for the Town Council's facilities and held a Green Fashion Show in February 2025. Members of the group are currently organising the second ECO EXPO scheduled for 27 September 2025. The Uckfield Green Partnership was formed from this working group but has now become its own entity focusing on town wide initiatives.

Previous members included: Councillors K. Bedwell, A. Smith and D. French.

- 2.4 There is also an outstanding action within the action list for Environment & Leisure Committee for a cemetery working group to compare costs and facilities in comparison with other local service providers, and to share ideas for future cemetery provision.

3.0 Looking ahead

- 3.1 There is potential for at least two of the working groups to combine, especially where there are synergies.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to confirm the appointment of 'no less than three and no more than five members' per working group, as per the working group policy. Members are asked to consider how to proceed with the work required for:
- (i) Allotments;
 - (ii) Sports facilities
 - (iii) Cemetery;
 - (iv) Climate Change Steering Group;

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



TREE POLICY

Policy Number 48		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
01	24.11.08	EL61.11.08
02	24.11.14	EL48.11.14
03	31.10.19	
04	18.11.19	EL.34.11.19
05	08.02.21	Environment & Leisure Committee 8 th February 2021 Additions of sections 8.0 and 9.0
06	07.07.25	Environment & Leisure Committee 7 July 2025 Additions of sections 5.5 and 5.6

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Trees and woodlands have many landscape and wildlife benefits and even dead trees have a high wildlife value.
- 1.2. The Town Council owns significant areas of land within the Town and is responsible for the management of the trees and shrubs in those areas.
- 1.3 The Town Council appreciates the importance of encouraging the planting of native species, but accepts that in certain locations the planting of non-native and ornamental trees could be appropriate. However, wherever possible priority will be given to planting native trees on land owned or land which is donated to the Town Council.

2.0 Tree Preservation Orders

- 2.1. Wealden District Council has a duty, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, when dealing with development proposals, to retain trees and woodland to enhance their contribution to the landscape character of the District. This duty involves the administration of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and other forms of tree and hedge protection.
- 2.2. The District Council actively monitors sites and where a contravention of a TPO occurs formal enforcement action may be considered necessary. Anyone who cuts down, uproots, or wilfully destroys a tree or hedge or tops, lops or wilfully damages a tree or hedge in a way that is likely to destroy it is guilty of an offence. Anyone found guilty of this offence is liable upon conviction, to a fine of up to £20,000.
- 2.3. Many of Uckfield Town Council's trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders and permission must be sought from the District Council before any works can take place.

3.0 Aims

- 3.1 The Council feels it is important that trees, whether protected by TPOs or not, are not felled or lopped unnecessarily on the basis of perceived threats and simple inconvenience.
- 3.2 Uckfield Town Council's policy regarding trees in its ownership is to retain trees and woodlands wherever possible.

4.0 Care of Trees

- 4.1 The Council does, however, have a duty of care to ensure that trees remain safe and will carry out appropriate works if a tree is dangerous.
- 4.2 The Council will carry out a survey of trees in its ownership over a cycle of five years.
- 4.3 Should residents adjacent to woodland feel that tree work is required, they should in the first instance write to the Town Council detailing the problem, e.g. overhanging branches etc. The Council will assess each request individually and respond accordingly, but at all times will have regard to this policy.

- 4.4 Should a resident wish to obtain a professional assessment of the trees from an experienced and qualified tree surgeon or Arboriculturist, the Council would consider such an assessment and may reassess the request.

5.0 Common Law

- 5.1 Under Common Law anyone can prune branches that overhang their boundary, only to the boundary, providing they return the debris to the tree's owner. However, unnecessary pruning can damage a healthy tree and reducing the height can be highly disfiguring and result in decay of structural parts of the tree.

- 5.2 Anyone wishing to exercise this Common Law right should ensure that all works comply with BS 3998: 2010 Tree work recommendations. 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=000000000030089960>

- 5.3 Before carrying out work to any trees, it is up to the individual to check whether or not any Tree Preservation Order or other statutory protection exists. This information can be obtained from Wealden District Council, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham. East Sussex, BN27 2AX. Tel: 01323 443322. Additional information about TPOs can be found at www.wealden.gov.uk

- 5.4 Anyone wishing to prune a tree, under this law, should advise the Council in writing prior to any work being undertaken.

5.5 Any requests in relation to trees owned by Uckfield Town Council that are not deemed a safety issue as recommended external and internal professional tree inspectors – will be addressed on a case by case basis and those recommendations will be approved by the Countryside Ranger or Head Groundsman. Any tree works would need to be carried out to British Standards by an approved contractor, a list can be obtained from Uckfield Town Council.

5.6 In the case of a non-safety related request to carry out works to a tree owned by Uckfield Town Council and following a pre-approved recommendation, those costs will be fully incurred by the resident. This includes an admin charge of £75, where a variation on a TPO (tree protection order) is required and £50 where this is not required.

6.0 Tree Wardens

- 6.1 Tree Wardens are volunteers who are appointed by the Town Council who gather information about their local trees and get involved in local tree matters. They report any concerns regarding dangerous or diseased trees and any unauthorised works on trees under Preservation Orders. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can contact the Town Council for further information. Periodic training can also be arranged for volunteers.

7.0 Tree for a Tree Scheme

- 7.1 Uckfield Town Council has initiated a scheme whereby if a tree is removed due to being dead, dying or decaying, a new tree will be sought and planted on a suitable location, whether it be in the same location, or a more appropriate location across the town, on Uckfield town Council Land.

8.0 Understanding of British arboriculture

- 8.1 Trees in Britain have come under a great deal of stress over the past decades, with numerous pests and diseases affecting many species and some with landscape changing implications.

8.2 Priority of native trees

Britain has a relatively small native tree palate due to the inundation of the channel preceding the succession of forests in post glacial Europe. Moreover, several native tree species are under intense disease pressure, including elm, ash, oak, juniper and alder further reducing options for re-stocking. Whilst it is accepted that re-stocking with exotic trees would be undesirable in Uckfield's woodlands more consideration could be given to non-natives in Uckfield's open spaces.

Britain has a highly suitable climate for the cultivation of conifers, walnuts, maples, and non-native variations of oaks and ash should all be considered. Trees should be selected for their suitability for the Wealden landscape, their resilience and their addition of structural, genetic and landscape diversity.

It should also be recognised that sweet chestnut, elm, sycamore, Scots pine, horse chestnut and many other trees which greatly improve our landscape are considered by some experts non-native to this region.

Priority should be given to native trees in nature reserves and woodlands and consideration given to suitable non-natives on open spaces such as our parks and common lands.

8.3 A more active surveying regimen.

The tree policy is reviewed every five years although trees are checked and monitored on a continual basis.

A tree may be infected and decline due to failure within a five-year cycle and may also develop a mechanical failure within this time frame and also may become dangerous to arborists.

Forestry England are advising Landowners that many climbers are refusing to climb ash trees in advanced stages of decline which has the potential to make removal operations difficult and costly.

Our Countryside Ranger has highlighted that a tiered system should be considered whereby high use areas are surveyed more routinely with less surveying in less used areas. Species that are presently under stress would be ash as a good example and should be monitored more closely.

9.0 Planting

- 9.1 Tree planting is a hot topic amongst arborists and conservationists at present. Government initiatives are welcomed but with reservation.
- 9.2 Any tree planting must factor in aftercare of planted trees for at least five years and mulching, watering, pruning must all be accounted for in planting plans. Tree planting failure rates are recorded as being higher than 50%.
- 9.3 Though the exact mechanism is not presently understood it has been observed that trees that have naturally regenerated are far more resilient than planted trees.
- 9.4 Summary of factors that will be taken in to consideration to include:
 - where suitable, natural regeneration of woodland should be allowed to occur;
 - factor in both time and budget for after care of planted trees as part of planting costs;
 - ensure good biosecurity and purchase stock from reputable sources with preference given to stock grown in the UK.

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 7 July 2025

Agenda Item 7.1

TO NOTE THE CURRENT POSITION WITH THE TOWN 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

The formal invitation to tender process to seek contractors to upgrade the play area is complete and all tenders are now in for consideration.

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.

The newly replaced safety fencing at the top of the slide has been vandalised once again and is being repaired.

West Park/Rocks Park Play Area

The play area equipment is coming to the end of its life. This will therefore be the next play area to upgrade following Victoria. The multi-play toddler piece has been vandalised and will need to be repaired.

West Park Recreation Ground and West Park LNR

The Town Clerk met with a representative of the Uckfield Grasshoppers to understand the drainage issues at West Park recreation ground as part of an application for Sport and Infrastructure grant funding.

Snatts Road Cemetery

A report has been submitted to E&L in relation to the consecration in the new Y section due soon and current memorial checks.

Ridgewood Recreation Ground

As per the action list updates.

Elizabeth Gardens

Nothing to report.

Hughes Way play area

A sink hole has appeared in the play area and this is somewhat larger than previous occasions, and scheduled in to be investigated.

Luxford field and play area

Following on from the three-monthly play inspections, some repairs have been carried out. There are a couple outstanding.

Woodlands

Contractors are due to remove some of the timber during the summer months once the wood has further dried out. This will be completed carefully so as to respect this natural area.

Preliminary ecological appraisals have now commenced for the following areas- Boothland Wood, WPLNR and HMLNR. Alongside this, a dormouse survey is being carried out in Boothland Wood due to the amount of development occurring on the surrounding land.

The Countryside Ranger has investigated the costs of fencing areas of the wood to protect it from footfall and damage during development construction.

Equipment & Vehicles

The new Toyota Hilux has now been delivered. The old Ford Ranger has been retired from service.

Street Furniture & Lighting

Extra works are being scheduled to ensure the infrastructure for the Christmas light display is in place well before installation.

Harlands Pond

The Newt Conservation Partnership carried out some studies by Harlands Balancing Pond (near the Nightingales) and West Park Local Nature Reserve on Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 April. This involved them digging test pit holes of approximately 1 metre square. Investigations are still ongoing.

Any other business

The quarterly and annual playground inspections are going to be carried out by KOMPAN going forward. This includes a cost saving and more regimented system overseen by the Estates team. They will also price up the repairs.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officers: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 7 July 2025

Agenda Item 8.1

TO CONSIDER THE INSTALLATION OF A BENCH AT THE RIDGEWOOD RECREATION GROUND ORCHARD

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 Earlier this year, Councillor B. Reed had made a request to see if the Grounds Team had a spare bench that could be installed within the orchard at Ridgewood Recreation Ground.
- 1.2 This was primarily on behalf of a local ornithologist who had been using this spot over the last few years to observe and identify birds in their natural habitat.
- 1.3 The Head Groundsman has provided a photograph of a bench that is available although it would need to be properly refurbished before installing:



2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report and decide if this bench would be suitable to install at Ridgewood orchard. If so, this would be placed on OTISS (asset mapping software) and monitored.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 7 July 2025

Agenda Item 9.1

REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS: UPDATE FROM THE ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 A joint meeting was held by the Allotment Working Group, members of the Allotment Association and allotment reps on 30 June 2025 at 5:30pm, at the Civic Centre.

Attendees:

Cllr. K. Bedwell (Allotment Working Group member)
Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Vic Oliver (Chairman – Allotment Association and Bell Lane rep)
Louise Tennant and Gerald Bailey (West Park reps)
Stuart Woodham, Graham and Jan Smith (Framfield East reps)
Peter Griggs and Jenny - Manor Park Residents' Association

Apologies received in advance:

Carol Washer (Ridgewood rep) and James Horan (Bell Lane rep)

2.0 General updates

- 2.1 The Head Groundsman confirmed that the taps went back on, on 1st April and they would resume mowing the main paths at the beginning of April as grounds conditions allowed. The Grounds team had received some great feedback about the grass cutting which was positive. The taps were changed a couple of times on the FRW site and were hopefully working ok now.

Waiting list: There were currently 29 people on the waiting list (1 waiting to swap for a different size plot or site, 21 waiting for their first plot, and 7 people waiting for an additional plot). That meant the waiting list had been cut by a third since the last meeting on 17 March which was good news.

There were currently 245 plots with 33 new tenants since Apr 2024 (mostly on the Framfield Road allotment sites), 2 plots split to enable newcomers, and 5 tenants who had swapped plots. A summary of those figures is provided below:

Site	No. of plots onsite	New tenants	New plot created	Tenants who swapped plots
BL	12	2		
FRW	51	14	2	3
FRE	47	12		1
BIE	43	8		1
RW	66	5		
WP	26	3		
TOTAL:	245	33	2*	5*

Allotment waiting list figures between April 2024-April 2025

Thanks were given to the allotment reps, especially Stuart Woodham on the Framfield East site who had helped enormously throughout the year helping to report any issues and concerns.

The next site inspections would be carried out in July (deferred slightly due to staff shortages) with a council official, a councillor and a member of the Allotment Association present on each site. This would only take place twice a year normally in June and November, although the second check would only be on plots where a tenant had already been sent a weeds letter but were still not using their plot.

The working group would continue to support any tenants with health issues, as long as the council was aware and able to work out an action plan.

Tenants have already been asked ahead of the checks if they wished to continue with their plot, to try to be fair to those people who are still on the waiting list.

Allotment invoices: The annual invoices were issued in April and payments were chased up in June. If anyone has any concerns about payments please contact Uckfield Town Council as soon as possible.

3.0 Items raised - issues or concerns

- 3.1 A combination lock is being trialled on the Bird in Eye allotment site (on the entrance gate) to try to prevent dog walkers, parking issues and anti-social behaviour on this particular site. A gate would also be reinstated from Keld Drive onto the allotments to try to prevent dog walkers as there have been reports of a few dogs off leads. Tenants had been asked for their feedback before the Allotment Working Group decided whether to continue with this idea. This was due to be trialled on the Ridgewood allotment site after further engagement with tenants.
- 3.2 Tenants on the Framfield East allotment site asked if they could install an access gate from the southern side of the new hospital car park. The tenants agreed that this would be a real bonus to them, although there may be an insurance liability issue and it was not yet clear if the hospital or developers owned the land. This area was also overgrown with vegetation and lack of weed control, so this would be followed up.
- 3.3 The Framfield East allotment rep asked about dilapidated fencing along the north of the site which had been placed on the works list but has not yet been done. This would also be followed up.
- 3.4 A tree was due to be inspected shortly in this area by the Head Groundsman, which was thought to have signs of ash dieback.
- 3.5 The hedge along the north perimeter of the Framfield West site had been cut back as requested by the hospital contractors last month.
- 3.6 The post was reported as broken at the bottom of the Framfield West allotment site.
- 3.7 The Grounds team were thanked for cutting up ranch fencing on the Framfield East side by the path running parallel with the hospital car park.

- 3.8 A question was raised last year at the Allotment Conference in relation to an area of land on the Bird Eye allotment site being used for saplings. This area has now been designated for allotment use and was due to be cut back to provide one or two additional plots.

4.0 Good news stories

- 4.1 The Allotment Association reported in their newsletter that it was good to see the bees doing well this year with three strong hives in operation as they had to amalgamate two of them due to the lack of a queen. There should be honey this year all being well.

- 4.2 Their next AGM meeting would be on Tuesday 8 July at 7pm and all members of the Allotment Association were welcome to attend. If anyone wished to join then please get in touch!

5.0 Updates on upcoming 'Green' events to join and take part in!

5.1 'Veg Swap Fest' - new

The Plant Swap Fest was held on Saturday 24 May. The next community event would be a 'Veg Swap Fest' at the end of the season (date tbc following the upcoming Allotment Association AGM meeting). One idea was for any surplus veg to be given to the Community Fridge.

5.2 The Allotment Competition 2025

We are very lucky to have Staverton's Nursery sponsor us again this year for the Allotment Competition. An initial meeting was held in April with the Director, Phil Staverton to discuss the chosen categories, which are:

'Best Kept', 'Ecological Award', 'Childrens' Award' (up to 12 years old) and 'Overall Winner'. There will also be a certificate for 'Best Newcomer'!

This competition is automatic entry, except for the Childrens Award (entries are still welcome!).

5.3 Scarecrow Competition – Townwide!

The Scarecrow Competition will be announced shortly (watch out for the next July edition of The Voice in Uckfield Matters magazine!) with judging to take place in early September.

This will be townwide this year in collaboration with Uckfield Town Council and members of the Manor Park Residents Association who will pick a winner on their 'patch' in Manor Park, whilst Uckfield Town Council will pick winners local to each 'patch' - ward around town including East, North, Ridgewood, West and New Town.

We encourage everyone to join in and get creative (usual restrictions will apply of course, we want this to be fun for everyone!).

The meeting finished at 7pm and the next joint Allotment Group meeting and judging panel are due to meet on 3 September 2025.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton