



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 at 7.00pm  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. Angie Smith (Chair)  
Cllr. Duncan Bennett  
Cllr. Val Frost  
Cllr. Spike Mayhew

Cllr. Karen Bedwell  
Cllr. Donna French  
Cllr. Chris Macve

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Peter Selby  
One member of the public  
James Hollingdale – Estates and Facilities Manager

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.  
Councillor K. Bedwell announced a prejudicial interest in relation to item 7.2 as Chair of Ridgewood Village Hall Committee, and would leave the room during those discussions.

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

[Councillor K. Bedwell left the room at 19:05pm]

Members agreed to suspend standing orders to allow a local resident and Booking Officer for Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee, to speak in relation to agenda item 7.2:

*"Ridgewood Village Hall is a small community run charity supported by thirty-two dedicated volunteers and we serve Uckfield and surrounding villages. All our income is generated through hall hire and fund-raising events and we receive no other regular funding or revenue streams. We hold a full repair and maintenance lease with Uckfield Town Council and have consistently met the terms of that lease, and to date we have raised over £110,000 to refurbish and improve the hall and a project that remains ongoing.*

*We are very grateful to the Town Council for its support over the years through grant funding towards essential improvements, including the guttering, windows, doors and solar panels. Also, most recently with the refurbishment of basement storage areas which had fallen into disrepair due to flooding issues, particularly with the adjacent car park.*

*Unfortunately, despite our efforts the largest of our basement storage rooms continues to suffer from water ingress believed to have been caused by drainage*

*issues, originating from the recreation ground. This ongoing flooding not only threatens the structural integrity of the building, but also renders the space unusable despite having invested £10k to make this functional. In an effort to mitigate further damage, the committee funded the installation of french drains in front of the basement doors, even though this area technically lies outside the scope of the lease agreement.*

*We are increasingly concerned by the lack of progress in resolving the persistent drainage and surface issues in the car park, which now sees over three-hundred users per week with the hall, and in its current condition poses a significant health and safety risk.*

*We respectfully urge Uckfield Town Council to take immediate steps to implement the drainage solutions recommended under 7.2 of the agenda, ideally before the winter months which only bring rainfalls and further dampness. We also strongly feel that those costs should not fall to the Ridgewood Village Hall committee. Our financial resources are limited and the root cause of the problem lies on land owned and managed by the council.*

*Finally, we would ask that the Town Council prioritise making the car park surface safer before the winter sets in, to prevent further weather-related hazards and deteriorating conditions.*

*Thank you for your time and consideration.”*

The Chair thanked the resident for bringing those additional matters for consideration and would be discussed later on under item 7.2.

Members agreed to reinstate standing orders.

[Councillor K. Bedwell re-entered the room at 19:08pm]

### **3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Councillors B. Reed and M. McClafferty who were both unable to attend due to personal and work reasons.

### **4.0. MINUTES**

#### **4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7 July 2025**

**EL.19.09.25** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7 July 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4.2. Action list**

Members noted the report and all ongoing items. No actions to be removed.

#### **4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only**

Members noted the report and it was good to see those items moving forward. No actions were to be removed.

### **5.0. FINANCE**

#### **5.1. To note bills paid**

Members noted the report, with no comments made.

#### **5.2. To note the income and expenditure report ending 30 June 2025**

Members noted the report and the Chair was pleased to announce that the income had surpassed its target and expenditure was lower than expected, so we were moving in the right direction.

## **6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

### **6.1** To note the draft minutes of the Strengthening Local Relations (SLR) meeting held on 1 July 2025

Members noted the report. A small typo was amended at item 11.0 to declare that Councillor C. Dowling arrived at 9:24am, not 10:24am.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

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

Members noted the report and the Chair asked if there were any plans to fix the seesaw which was taped off at Ridgewood Recreation Ground.

The Estates and Facilities Manager provided an update regarding recent discussions with KOMPAN, the new compliance contractors. Their aim was to build a structure to deal with any replacements although there were still some teething issues with delays and budget constraints.

To replace each piece of equipment would roughly cost in the region of £4k, whilst the process of sourcing parts, whether in-house or externally, could involve materials not being in stock.

With a previous contractor, it could sometimes take up to six months for a piece of equipment to be produced and another month for it to be shipped over from the manufacturer in Europe.

With this particular part, the seesaw was ordered in April and expected in November, ready to be installed and inspected. The Estates and Facilities Manager had tried a different route to get this sourced but was facing the same issues.

Moving forward, this was a long-term project with a new contractor and once those issues were ironed out, we would try to keep more of the items necessary for repairs in stock.

In terms of safety checks, KOMPAN would be responsible for the three-monthly inspections over our ten sites, including annual inspections and detailed costings for high or medium risk repairs. Then, with any items needing repair we only needed to go through one company rather than several to deal with one issue.

The parts and equipment were also interchangeable on the whole, and KOMPAN could adapt what they had although they could also order from former playground providers if necessary. KOMPAN had a warehouse in the UK and were a smaller company than the Town Council had used previously so would be more likely to try to impress and concentrate on their customer focus and aftercare.

Also, by choosing metal rather than timber products, these should be more durable and easier to maintain.

On a separate matter, in relation to the attendance of Wealden Street Scene Officials at the Weald on the Field event, they had remarked on the areas where dog fouling appeared to be reduced, although this was not entirely the case in some areas such as Harlands Farm Playing Field where dog owners were still not acting responsibly and picking up after their dogs.

### **7.2** To receive a progress update on water ingress into Ridgewood Village Hall [Councillor K. Bedwell left the room at 19:25pm]

Members were keen to choose the most beneficial option in the longer term, and quote two was recommended as most effective of the two options. This included a

soak away *and* a secondary chamber to increase the capacity and accommodation of surface water from the recreation grounds.

There was money in earmarked reserves that could potentially cover the works although this was also for wider car park improvements at this site.

The Estates and Facilities Manager provided a brief update in relation to the water coming in from the field side of the building to the front, whilst the issues to the back of the building had been dealt with.

The car park had a clay surface with minimal drainage and no water discharge outlets, and natural springs on the field were channeling through to the car park.

The idea was to bidesome time to look at longer term solutions for the car park, whilst tackling drainage issues first to future proof the building.

It would never be recommended to tank internally if it could be done externally, as this would trap the water and effect the masonry long term. Also, to tank the side required, a wall would need to be removed first, which would not be viable here.

Members agreed to quote two including these suggestions:

- To increase the depth of the french drains to the full depth of the ground on the southern side of the ramp to the floor level. If they were going to tank the building, they would have to be excavate that area anyway.
- The tanking would need to go below the floor level to the top of the foundations, to prevent any water coming in from under the french drain.
- In relation to tanking internally and externally on that wall, if it was tanked properly on the outside, there would be no point in lining it internally. It would also be detrimental if water got trapped in between for the foundations.
- To consider planting a willow tree on one corner to soak up the excess water, although this could also do a lot of damage to drainage pipes so would need careful planning.

There was also a reference to a manhole in the latest quotation from Contractor A, although it was not clear where this was on their scale drawing and if this was a foul drain. This was a misprint however, as there was a manhole on the original soak away, although there was no surface water or foul drain nearby.

**EL.20.09.25** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to:

- (i) proceed with Quotation 2 from Contractor A to minimise the impact and ensure the safety of our leaseholders, and;
- (ii) enable leeway of an additional expense of fifteen percent just in case this goes slightly over budget, and;
- (ii) investigate the suggestions with the company that were raised at the meeting by experienced councillors in this field, and;
- (ii) continue to look into more radical ideas to fix the car park in the longer term.

[Councillor K. Bedwell re-entered the room and local resident, exited the room at 19:44pm. Councillor S. Mayhew also exited the meeting during this time since he had another meeting to attend].

7.3 Update on the Uckfield Station Car Park and electric charging

Uckfield Town Council had been approached by APCOA who managed the Uckfield Station car park. They had installed a number of electric vehicle charging points in

the Uckfield Station Car Park and were keen to explore partnership projects or initiatives in the local area.

Members were keen to support them since they had provided free parking for some events throughout the year, and the demand was also there. However, members wished to arrange a separate meeting this year with APCOA to explore some questions being raised that needed further clarification:

- Would residents have to pay to park in an electric bay, as there was a sign stating an automatic pay to park as you entered?
- Would residents be penalised for using an electric parking bay as a normal parking spot?
- What were the current rates and subsidising rates?
- Was there any security for parking overnight?
- Would there be enough spaces to park?

**EL.21.09.25** Members noted the report and agreed to having a meeting arranged in the next few weeks with APCOA to discuss some questions and ideas to explore with them first.

## **8.0 LEISURE**

### **8.1 To consider a request for a community garden on Town Council land at the end of Hunters Way**

Members liked this idea as a community project and enhancing this space. It would be helpful to send out a questionnaire to local residents in Hunters Way, to see if they want to engage and have any ideas and 'We Grow' could be involved.

The only concern was that the area would need to be designed sympathetically with the nature of the location being an open space and visible.

**EL.22.09.25** Members noted the report and all **RESOLVED** to agree in favour of Town Council land at the end of Hunters Way being transformed into a community garden space, with feedback being sought from local residents and community groups for ideas.

### **8.2 To consider a Seeds library on the Framfield West Allotment site**

A suggestion was made for the resident to contact the Allotment Association who were involved in the Seeds Day in February 2025 and are working with the Town Council to hold a Flower and Veg Fest on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2026, followed by the Plants Swap on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

It was felt that a wooden unit would decompose in time so it might be worth asking the Mens' Shed via the Association for their ideas.

With some recent anti-social behaviour on the allotment sites along Framfield Road, it would be wiser to act with caution and have this in a less obvious area next to the allotment hut (if agreeable), especially as the car park gate would soon be locked every evening.

**EL.23.09.25** Members noted the report and confirmed that the Allotment Working Group were setting seeds and plant swap events next year.

### **8.3 To note Wealden DC's Leisure Consultation**

The Chair asked members to individually complete the online survey by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September and to let others know.

## **9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

Nothing to receive at this time.

## **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 with thanks to Councillors D. French and B. Reed in relation to Weald to Waves and Biodiversity. This group had also signed up to West Park Nature Reserve as part of Weald to Waves.

There were also some considerations for members to make in terms of the budget setting and Section 106 in the future. The six points were listed at the back of the report and involved the completion of habitat assessments in Autumn time.

**EL24.09.25** Members noted the report and voted unanimously to accept all those recommendations within the report.

10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

Members noted the report with thanks to 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**

Nothing was raised.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.25.09.25** 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 8:00pm