

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 22 September 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)
Cllr. J. Love

Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. A. Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Town Mayor – Cllr Karen Bedwell
Louise Slaughter – Hospitality Manager
James Hollingdale – Estates & Facilities Manager
Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

The Town Clerk was approached by Councillor Manvell that day, to advise that he had a personal interest in agenda item 12.1 under confidential business, as a result of his role as a District Councillor.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors K. Butler, V. Frost, P. Selby, P. Ullmann and D. Ward due to a mix of personal, work commitments and mainly sickness.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 21 July 2025

GP19.09.25 Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 21 July 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members agreed to remove item GP.06.06.25 (cages to the pillar lighting) as this work had now been completed. Members subsequently noted the action list.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the report.

- 4.4 Forward plan
Members noted the forward plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

- 5.2 To note the income and expenditure reports up to 30 June 2025
Members discussed the income levels for the Civic Centre within the General Purposes Committee income and expenditure report. Room hire income was down for the first quarter, although the Town Clerk later explained that the current figures appeared on target up to Month 5 of the year.

Members reviewed the income and expenditure report for Luxfords Restaurant and discussed the recent review of menu pricing with the Hospitality Manager, before noting both reports.

Councillor D. Manvell arrived and joined the meeting at 7.04pm.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
Members were presented with a detailed update on the current condition of the Town Council's buildings and the compliance work undertaken. Members noted the report.

- 6.2 Update on the Signal Box
The Estates & Facilities Manager explained the work that had been undertaken to date, to understand the structural condition, general building condition and compliance measures required to bring it back up to standard.

The interested commercial enterprise had already invested in the region of £6,000 in commissioning the various reports, surveys, and assessments in the preparation of a change of use planning application. Planning permission had been granted. They had now submitted an application to Building Control, which was expected to take a couple of months.

Discussions between members and staff focused on:

- (i) commercial rental value and seeking an initial indication;
- (ii) requirements of Uckfield Town Council as a landlord in making the building safe, before considering any new lease arrangement;
- (iii) looking at the opportunities from this arrangement – in terms of improving the area next to the station, and press coverage for a local business and the town.

GP20.09.25

Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) approve the use of allocated earmarked reserves to the sum of £21,500 to undertake the proposed works to the Signal Box as required as owner and landlord of the property, and;
- (ii) arrange for the interested commercial enterprise to meet with members prior to Full Council on 20 October 2025.

- 6.3 To consider the installation of an EV Charger in the Source Car Park
The Estates & Facilities Manager explained the type of EV Charger being proposed for installation in the Source Car Park, and clarified that the power would be supplied from the power box at the bottom (south eastern corner) of

Luxford Field.

One member asked whether it would affect the space available within the car park, for activities such as the Farmers Market. The Estates & Facilities Manager explained that the supply would be trenched in from the far corner of Luxford Field, and into the grassed area of the car park by the knee rail fencing, so it would not affect the car parking area itself.

Clarification was sought on why the charging point would not be placed on the side of the Civic Centre. It was explained that this was due to a number of factors including vehicular access for the grounds vehicles, security when charging overnight (the source car park could be closed off), and it being in a more protected location, to reduce the risk of ASB.

The £350 grant funding allocation towards the initiative was the UK Government Electric Vehicle Charge Point Grants Scheme.

Members also discussed that if the electric supply became available to staff, for personal use, a system/procedure would need to be created for associated use and fees and charges. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that the point would be managed by an app, so the Town Council could control usage. Initially the main purpose was for the Grounds vehicles and Pool van to be used by the Caretaking team as well.

Members discussed CCTV coverage of the area, to which the Town Clerk explained that staff were currently exploring options for this.

It was also asked whether the unit was moveable, if the site were to be reconfigured or redeveloped. The Estates & Facilities Manager explained that yes it could be disconnected from the board, and the unit could be moved. It was also confirmed that the supply would be on a separate sub meter, so separate readings to that of the field usage and Community Fridge usage.

GP21.09.25 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the purchase and installation of an EV charging point within the Source Car Park, funded by earmarked reserves 'Climate Change Initiatives.'

7.0 POLICY

None.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

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

Members noted the report.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports

Members noted the completed audit reports for May, June and July 2025.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from: -

(i) Wealden Citizen's Advice

Nothing to report.

(ii) Wealden Volunteering

Nothing to report.

- (iii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee
Nothing to report.
- (iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel
Nothing to report.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk referred to Osborn Hall, and reminded members that the lease was due to expire shortly.

Due to prior and current discussions requiring the need to look longer term at the provision of a safe, accessible and practical building which could accommodate the Guides and other community organisations, it was suggested that the current lease agreement be extended whilst these considerations be progressed in more detail with external project management support.

GP22.09.25 Members **RESOLVED** to request the Town Clerk to approach the Town Council's solicitors to create an extension to the existing lease agreement for a further two years. This would provide the necessary breathing time for the Town Council and associated partner organisations to explore funding opportunities and draw up plans for a new community space.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP23.09.25 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 note bad debts

Members discussed the bad debtor being handled separately, with the Town Clerk providing an update. Members subsequently noted the full report.

12.2 To consider the terms of the lease agreement for the storage garages at Victoria

GP24.09.25 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree to a term of 5 years for a lease arrangement for the double garages at Victoria, and;
- (ii) request the Town Clerk to negotiate a stepped increase in rental income per annum, over the first half of the lease term.

12.3 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members noted the report.

12.4 To receive the minutes from Personnel Sub-Committee on 28 July 2025

Members were happy to receive the minutes from Personnel Sub-Committee on 28 July 2025.

12.5 To ratify any outstanding actions from Personnel Sub-Committee on 28 July 2025

GP25.09.25 Members **RESOLVED** to ratify the proposals for the Town Clerk to commission the necessary and identified expertise, as identified in agenda item 5.4

The meeting closed at 8.16pm.