UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 3 November 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)	Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. K. Butler	Cllr. P. Selby
Cllr. J. Love	Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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. Councillor Macve declared a personal interest in agenda item 12.5 as a result of knowing the Chair's family.

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 A. Smith and P. Ullmann due to personal and work commitments.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 22 September 2025

GP26.11.25 Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 22 September 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor D. Manvell arrived to the meeting at 7.02pm.

4.2 Action list

Members agreed to remove the following items which had now been completed:
GP.36.02.24 (RVH car park aco drains);
GP.25.11.24 and GP.20.09.25 (Signal Box feasibility);
GP. 21.09.25 (Installation of EV Charger);
Members asked that the name of the building be added to the last action, and subsequently noted the report.

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
Members first reviewed the income and expenditure report for GP Committee. The Town Clerk highlighted that at the end of August 2025, income for the Civic Centre room hire looked to be £7k down, but on reviewing the figures at the end of October 2025, the figures had improved. With a very busy period up until Christmas, it was anticipated this should remain steady.

Members reviewed the income and expenditure report for Luxfords Restaurant and noted the good level of income recorded. Expenditure for food purchases had exceeded those budgeted. The Hospitality Manager and Town Clerk had already discussed ways to manage these increases which people were seeing both at home and work. Members subsequently noted the report.

5.3 To receive the minutes and approve the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee from 14 October 2025
Members received the minutes of Finance Sub-Committee on 14 October 2025, and sought to ratify the recommendations of the Sub-Committee:

GP27.11.25 After the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee provided more detail on the context of these subject areas, members **RESOLVED** to ratify the two recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee from their meeting on 14 October 2025:

FS.11.10.25 Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to General Purposes Committee, to:
(i) transfer the funds due to mature within the Lloyds fixed term investment account and remaining funds from the Lloyds Treasurer account, to a 12 month fixed rate with NatWest, and;
(ii) to give authority to the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO to transfer a proportion of business reserves to the 35-day and 95 days accounts, to gather interest, subject to any large payments leaving the bank for completed works such as Victoria Play Area.

FS.12.10.25 Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to General Purposes Committee for the Assistant Town Clerk to make the following changes for the 2026/27 grants programme. This would include:
(i) creating an online form for applications;
(ii) incorporating key questions within the form that are typically asked by Finance Sub-Committee at the meeting;
(iii) tick boxes on the scale of the funding being applied for (i.e. up to £500 or £3,000), and;
(iv) for Finance Sub-Committee to review the applications prior to the February meeting.

5.4 To note the Internal Audit report from October 2025
The Vice Chair Councillor D. Ward wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk &

RFO and Town Clerk for their work. There were very few matters outstanding within the Internal Auditor's report, and no major issues, with Finance Sub-Committee already discussing a number.

The Chair, Councillor C. Macve also agreed that the report was very complimentary and wished to offer his congratulations to all involved.

The Chair and Vice Chair didn't agree with the recommendation to remove cash sales from functions. The Town Clerk advised that all recommendations would need to be reviewed in detail, before the Town Council's response be reported back to the Internal Auditor. Members noted the report.

6.0 BUILDINGS

6.1 <u>To note the current position with the Council's buildings</u>

Members noted the report and gave their thanks to the Estates & Facilities Manager on the breadth of work undertaken.

7.0 POLICY

7.1 <u>To review and adopt the revised Complaints Policy (No. 17)</u>

Members were presented with a revised Complaints policy which provided a clearer process for customers, and for staff to manage.

Councillor D. Manvell suggested that metrics on the number of complaints received and resolved would be of interest to members. An annual report would be sufficient for this size of organisation. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be helpful, and added that a generic email inbox for complaints may help with recording the more formal complaints received. In most cases customer feedback and complaints were addressed with almost immediate effect, which led to very few being escalated, but it was recognised that it would still be helpful for members to the types of complaints handled.

<u>GP28.11.25</u> Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Complaints Policy (No. 17) and for the Town Clerk to set up a process for reporting complaints data to Full Council.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 <u>To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council</u>

Members noted the report.

8.2 <u>To receive Members' audit reports (August 2025)</u>

Members noted the completed audit report for August 2025.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 To consider reports from: -

(i) <u>Wealden Citizen's Advice</u>

Councillor D. Manvell commended the WCA on their great work, and wished to formally acknowledge and give recognition for the positive impact they had on the community. They were a valued service. The Chair, Cllr Macve agreed. Members noted the report.

(ii) <u>Wealden Volunteering</u>

Members noted the report and requested that the Town Clerk resend the evaluation of community grants report for 2024-25 to members of Finance Sub-Committee, to inform their reviews for next year.

(iii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee
No meetings have taken place.

(iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel
No meetings have taken place.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
None.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
The Town Clerk referred to a telephone call received that day from the Uckfield Rotary Club. It was their 75th anniversary in 2026, and they wished to assist with the creation, or installation of something within the town, as a gift to the town. Members were asked to consider ideas over the next few weeks. The Town Clerk would feed back to them in December 2025, so members of E&L Committee would also be asked. There was no need for further benches, so the Town Clerk suggested members consider creative and practical ideas for consideration.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP29.11.25 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. Councillor D. Ward suggested that due to the payments that had been made over a substantial period, that consideration be given to writing off the remaining debt. It was confirmed that there were no declarations of interest or personal links to the debtor, but substantial amounts had now been paid. The Town Clerk advised that as noted on the report, the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO still needed to carry out some key enquiries before a proposal could be presented to members for consideration. Members would therefore defer further discussions to the next meeting, and subsequently noted the update.

12.2 To receive the minutes and approve recommendations from Personnel Sub-Committee on 7 October 2025
Members were happy to receive the minutes from Personnel Sub-Committee on 7 October 2025.

GP30.11.25 Members **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendations of Personnel Sub-Committee from their meeting on 7 October 2025:

PS.12.10.25 Members **RESOLVED** to recommend the revision of the Town Council's Complaints Policy, with consideration for:
(i) an informal and formal procedure for handling complaints;
(ii) the creation of a separate vexatious and malicious complaints policy, and;
(iii) an internal mechanism for learning from complaints (i.e. mgt meetings).

PS.13.10.25 Members **RESOLVED** to give authority to the Assistant Town Clerk to commence a contract with her preferred company, subject to the outcome of the meetings scheduled for the following day, and how the company met the aims of the agreement.

12.3 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

The Vice Chair, Councillor D. Ward thanked the Hospitality Manager for their detailed update. They had been in the restaurant over railway weekend and saw how busy it was. Customers were full of compliments about the food and staff. She recognised how hard staff worked that weekend and wished to say thank you to all staff. The Chair, Councillor C. Macve agreed.

Councillor C. Macve asked the Hospitality Manager to clarify a couple of points before the members noted the report.

12.4 To continue to review the terms of the lease agreement for the storage garages at Victoria

Members discussed the feedback received from the current leaseholder.

GP31.11.25 Members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk and Estates & Facilities Manager with securing the best deal possible, over a shorter term.

12.5 To consider an enquiry from the leaseholder of West Park Pavilion

Members discussed the correspondence received from the leaseholder of West Park Pavilion.

GP32.11.25 Members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk with seeking external advice and facilitating the next Fees & Charges Working Group to understand the picture with regards to seasonal pitch hire, before arranging a meeting with the current leaseholder.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.