

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 15 December 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)

Cllr. K. Butler

Cllr. D. Manvell

Cllr. P. Selby

Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO

James Hollingdale – Facilities & Compliance Manager

Louise Slaughter – Hospitality 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. None were forthcoming.

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 J. Love and A. Smith due to sickness and a personal commitment.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 3 November 2025

GP33.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 3 November 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members agreed to remove the following items which had now been completed:
GP22.09.25 – Solicitor engagement

GP27.11.25 – Finance Sub Committee (i) to (iii) completed.

Members 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 and discussed with service managers, areas of under and over spend. Overall, the picture was balanced.
Members reviewed the income and expenditure report for Luxfords Restaurant and discussed the recent stocktake with the Hospitality Manager, who explained this had gone well, and with a new till system to be introduced in 2026, this would further improve the management of stock levels and pricing.
Members subsequently noted the reports.

5.3 **To confirm the fees and charges for room hire for 2026/27**
The Town Clerk provided an overview of key competitors and charging structures, as well as highlighting key aspects of the report which identified increases in utility and staffing costs.

GP34.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** to:
(i) set a rate of £15.00 per hour for non-commercial, and £18.00 per hour for commercial hire of the restaurant space after service, and;
(ii) agreed to increase the room hire fees in the Civic Centre, Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion by CPI +1% (rounded to the nearest 50p or £1) for 2026/27.

5.4 **To consider a draft service level agreement for Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society for 2026/27**
At Full Council on 20 October 2025, a proposal was put forward to establish a new service level agreement between Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society and Uckfield Town Council.
Members of General Purposes Committee were asked a number of points for consideration, in relation to the draft service level agreement. This included the length of term, the financial contribution attached to the agreement and requirements for reporting/evaluation.

GP35.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** to:
(i) set the length of the service level agreement to 12 months in line with other existing SLAs;
(ii) allocate funds of £3,500 to the service level agreement for 2026/27, and;
(iii) stipulate within the agreement that a report be provided by the end of November 2026, which provides an evaluation of the event, as well an update on how the funds were spent.

6.0 BUILDINGS

6.1 **To note the current position with the Council's buildings**
The Facilities & Compliance Manager provided an update on works to the Signal Box. A question was also answered in relation to the Civic Centre defibrillator.
Members noted the report.

7.0 POLICY

7.1 To review the Town Council's Risk Management Policy

Members were presented with a revised version of the Town Council's Risk Management Policy.

GP36.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the revised Risk Management Policy for ratification by Full Council.

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 (September and October 2025)

Members noted the completed audit reports for September and October 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

No meetings have taken place.

(iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel

No meetings have taken place.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Councillor C. Macve, wished all those present a very Happy Christmas.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk referred to a matter that needed to be addressed fairly imminently to reduce the impact of water ingress at Osborn Hall. There continued to be issues arising at Hempstead Recreation Ground and particularly from the car park, with surface rain water.

The Facilities & Compliance Manager recommended running a new drainage channel alongside the building, with soakaway, to redirect the water away from the building and south into the recreation ground. This would assist with protecting the integrity of the building.

GP37.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** to utilise funds within earmarked reserves 'Building Maintenance' to cover the cost of the works required (in the region of £2,500).

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP38.12.25 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 matter of the bad debtor being handled separately. There were mixed views from committee members.

GP39.12.25 With three votes in favour, and two abstentions, it was **RESOLVED** to task the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO with:

- (i) sending a written invitation to a face to face meeting, and;
- (ii) obtaining an update on the current situation with a view to reporting back to GP Committee at the February 2026 meeting.

12.2 To consider the draft lease agreement for Osborn Hall

Members were provided with a draft lease agreement which would seek to provide security for the current leaseholders for a further two years, whilst options for future accommodation be explored.

GP40.12.25 With three votes in favour and one abstention, members **RESOLVED** to approve the contents of the draft lease agreement.

12.3 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members wished to thank all of the staff in Luxfords for their hard work during the past year, and leading up to Christmas.

The Hospitality Manager answered a query relating to reservations, before members noted the report.

12.4 To consider a high-level options analysis on community facilities

The Facilities and Compliance Manager introduced the report, and explained the current position of existing built assets and the pressing need for further community space to meet the needs of a number of groups/organisations within the town. The report identified three options for consideration by the Town Council.

GP41.12.25 Members **RESOLVED** for the Town Council to proceed with further investigations into Option 2.

The meeting closed at 8.33pm.