



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00pm  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. Angie Smith (Chair)  
Cllr. Karen Bedwell  
Cllr. Donna French  
Cllr. Chris Macve

Cllr. Bernadette Reed  
Cllr. Duncan Bennett  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Spike Mayhew

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Peter Selby

Thomas Woollard – Estates 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.

A declaration of interest was made by Councillor D. Bennett, who declared a prejudicial interest in relation to an amendment to the Allotment Agreement and rent review notice on the agenda at item 5.3. The Chair proposed that this conflict was a personal rather than prejudicial interest, and it was agreed that he would not be excluded from those discussions during the meeting.

**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**

None received. The committee endorsed the absence of Councillor Val Frost due to health reasons, and wished her a full and fast recovery.

**4.0. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 24 November 2025

**EL.42.01.26** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 24 November 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. No items to be removed.

- 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 and expenditure report ending 30 November 2025  
Members noted the report - no comments were received.

- 5.3 To consider an amendment to the Allotment Agreement and rent review notice

**EL.43.01.26** Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to the amended report and rental agreement to be revised before issuing a letter to allotment tenants before 6 April 2026, which provides 12 months' notice of the revised charging schedule.

**6.0. ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1 To note a new method statement for the dressing of Graves in the X-section and Garden of Remembrance at Snatts Road Cemetery

This item had been raised previously under this committee whilst improvements were being made to the cemetery grounds. Some fly-tipping had been cleared from the woodlands, and some hedging by the north entrance had been reduced, which was a good start.

In some parts of the cemetery, there was an increasing number of small memorials and trinkets on graves, which were not allowed. The X section was meant to remain a lawned area with a headstone only, allowing for the planting of bulbs or placing a vase within the permitted nine inches from the headstone.

Due to the delicate nature of the area, an action plan was set to begin after the Christmas period. This plan involved contacting each deed holder affected, asking them to remove any items made of glass, tin, plastic (including fake grass and artificial aggregates), wire mesh fencing, or other prohibited items, as outlined in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

It was acknowledged that this was not an easy task, but if anyone had concerns or needed further information, they could contact Uckfield Town Council directly.

**EL.44.01.26** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the new standard operating procedures for the dressing of graves in the X-section and Garden of Remembrance at Snatts Road Cemetery.

- 6.2 To note an update to the Memorial Safety Policy – No. 33

**EL.45.01.26** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to an update to the Memorial Safety Policy – No. 33.

- 6.3 To note the draft minutes from the Strengthening Local Relations (SLR) meeting held on 15 January 2026

Members noted the report. A separate enquiry was raised by Councillor Reed in relation to the synchronisation of traffic lights since developers were supposed to pay towards updating them. This would be included on the agenda ahead of the next meeting, to be arranged.

**7.0 ENVIRONMENT**

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

Members noted the report. The Chair asked the Estates Manager if there was any method involved for Himalayan Balsam control in the Hempstead Lane Play Area and Hempstead Meadows nature reserve, just to ensure there was an allocation of resources for this.

Himalayan Balsam was easily spread, especially if it reached a nearby water course, so it was important to try to pull it out wherever possible, although this would not eradicate it. They were easy to pull out.

One suggestion was made to look into a bamboo membrane, which may help to suppress any further growth, after pulling it out this year. This material was often used in hot countries like Spain for riverside restoration projects. This was certainly a route being looked at together with Sussex Wildlife Trust and Ecologists for their views on this.

The Estates Manager added that there would be an increased budget set for communications and engagement in that area, and an article had recently been submitted in The Voice with the idea of setting dates for Balsam picking and asking for any volunteers to join us if they wished to help, including Brighter Uckfield..

In relation to a previous request for a kissing gate at the nature reserve, this was considered but was not essential, and a normal wooden gate would only be required as a visual deterrent, going forward.

The Estates Manager announced a five-year plan for playgrounds coming up that would provide a different concept or theme for each one, including an outdoor gym. This was being discussed with the vision of this being available to all residents and age groups.

One member asked if we could speak with Buxted Parish Council in relation to an area of land between Manor Park and Views Wood (opposite 42 Nevill Road), which was not developed on, with a view to looking into using this space as a play area, with more wooden-themed equipment. Members agreed, and even if it was a non-starter, it may be worth having a verbal discussion about this first.

## **8.0 LEISURE**

(Nothing to report).

## **9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

### **9.1 To note an update from the Climate Emergency Steering Group** Members noted the report.

Councillor Reed wished to declare that Wealden District Council would soon be announcing its Draft Local Plan Consultation, which was due to launch in February, and would be open to the public for six weeks to provide any feedback.

Councillor Bedwell wished to raise a couple of upcoming events, including the Green Shoots Upcycled Fashion Show on 26<sup>th</sup> February and The Uckfield Eco Expo on 21<sup>st</sup> March and requested volunteers who could either assist and/or wished to take part.

The Chair offered to provide an activity for younger children to create 'No Mow May' signs and announced that these events were currently being advertised across social media websites and posters.

## **10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

### **10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group**

Members noted the report and thanked Councillor C. Macve for his welcome efforts.

- 10.2 Conservators of Ashdown Forest  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 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  
Nothing to report at this time.
- 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 Chair had none, although a Councillor had suggested that there were some gaps on the boundary of Victoria Play Area and the new development, that needed to be closed up. A separate walk-through would be arranged for this with the Estates team.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**EL.46.01.26** 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 and were pleased to see an increase in event ticket sales for all events.

The meeting finished at 7:50 pm.