



Uckfield Town Council
'Focused' Local Plan (Regulation 18) Consultation
Question 14 - Updating the description of Uckfield

**Sustainability Appraisal Part One –
Uckfield Town Council are asking Wealden Council to update the document with the following:**

23.1 Parish Overview

23.1.1 No changes required.

23.1.2 Uckfield is a large rural market town which has developed at the crossroads between two B roads running north-south, east-west. The historic medieval core of Uckfield is situated at the northern end of the High Street, and Bridge Cottage medieval hall, is located by the River Uck. There is a concentration of Listed Buildings resulting in historic character and a designated Conservation Area.

About Uckfield. Place-name: The name Uckfield is recorded from 1220 and is likely to relate to the area and to predate any nucleated settlement. The first element appears to derive from a personal name, so that the placename probably means Ucca's field. In the Weald, the field (Old English feld) element is strongly associated with ridges and, more specifically, areas of later medieval 'downland' or common. The 'open country' sense of feld suggests that woodland was thinner than elsewhere in the Weald or had been cleared and kept so by grazing. Another popular local theory suggests Uckfield means "Oak in Field". This local interpretation is supported by town crests featuring oaks. The topography, geology, vegetation and history of the Uckfield area are consistent with this.

Uckfield developed as a stopping-off point on the pilgrimage route between Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes. The settlement began to develop around the bridging point of the river, including the locally famous Pudding Cake Lane, where travellers visited a public house for slices of pudding cake; and the 15th-century Bridge Cottage, the oldest house still standing in Uckfield, now a museum run by Uckfield Heritage. The town developed in the High Street and in the New Town areas (the latter to the south of the original town centre).

Prehistoric - Recently found archive records confirm a well-used Mesolithic environment in the north of Uckfield and an archaeological dig started in 1979 and 1980 by M F Hemingway located shelters formed in the large rock outcrops. An estimated 10,000 Mesolithic finds were recovered.

Medieval - Uckfield is mentioned in early 1285 records and the first mention of "Stukkles" appeared - meaning High Weald rock outcrops - these later became known as "Stockles" or "Stocklestones" noted in 16th century archives.

Parts of north Uckfield are a medieval hamlet known as Budletts. Blackhouse Farm 1530 medieval hall includes an intact medieval landscape, complete with an old common, the remains of a moated lodge and mediaeval enclosures related to Ashdown Forest and 9th St Bartholomew's church common, Maresfield. Budletts is believed to mean a place of springs and water.

North and east Uckfield is in the High Weald, South and West Uckfield is in the Low Weald, providing an important transitional landscape between the two national character landscapes.

Historic information is held about Uckfield at the Bridge Cottage heritage archives and written about through the decades through the Uckfield and District Preservation Society Historic Society Booklets "Hindsight. Streatfeild family archives are held at ESCC The Keep, Brighton and custumal maps and records highlight the importance of Uckfield as it transitioned from being a "ville" village of Buxted.

The most well-known Uckfield historic family are the Streatfeilds who created the beautiful Lake Wood, and ran the estate known as "The Rocks". They were friends of the famous Lord Sheffield, of National Trust Sheffield Park. The Streatfeilds created their own unique picturesque landscape believed to be related to William Gilpin designs. The estate and carriage drives were mapped by cartographers "FIGG", father and son, in the late 1700s and early 1800s -

known as the FIGG maps. The Streatfeilds used a canal system connecting Lewes to Uckfield, bringing commercial goods to Shortbridge Wharf, until the trains arrived mid-19th century, replacing the canal system, parts of which, including locks, are under restoration.

There is evidence that 1st century Romans built a corn kiln in north Uckfield. Pottery fragments, burnt flint and the remains of a corn-drying kiln just to the edge of Views Wood, suggest that there was a settlement on the site in Roman times. It is probable that coppicing (cutting back trees to promote growth) was introduced at this time.

By Brian Phillips

On 6 August 1220, the Sheriff of Sussex first learned about the licence granted for Uckfield's market on Wednesdays. As lord of the manor, the Archbishop of Canterbury owed the Crown one palfrey: £3 7s 8d. This was entered on the fine roll kept by the Chancery and the pipe roll kept by the Exchequer. The National Archives preserves both documents: the oldest records of Uckfield's written history.

The early town was along the upper High Street and Church Street. A survey in 1285 listed nearly 100 households in and around the town, as well as 11 shops and 12 burgesses. These were the chief townfolk holding property by burgage tenure. This made Uckfield a borough. Monday was now the market day. An annual fair on 3 May was first took place in 1378.

Uckfield was not empty before 1220. There was Mesolithic occupation of rock shelters in Lake Wood and West Park. The Roman road from London passed through Maresfield and Shortbridge to the west. The place name (meaning Ucca's open land) is Saxon. Records of the manor (South Malling) exist from the early 9th century. One theory gives the manor Celtic origins. It is interesting that a corn-drying kiln from the 1st century (the invasion was in 43) was found close to the edge of Views Wood. It was also close to Tower Ride, the direct route between the centre of Uckfield and the mother church of the parish in Buxted Park.

During World War II, Uckfield provided important facilities and placements for Canadian Troops.

Durrant House, Budletts. Soon after its completion in 1939, the house was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence during World War II, with the roof reinforced to accommodate an anti-aircraft gun. Canadian officers were billeted here before embarking on the ill-fated invasion of Dieppe in 1942.

Belgium pilot Eugene Seghers saved Uckfield from a V1 bomb (doodlebug) but lost his life doing so. Seghers was killed on 26th July 1944 as a Flight Lieutenant attached to 91 Squadron at Deanland. There is a memorial to war hero Eugene Seghers at the Highlands Public House, Ridgewood. An event honouring him takes place each year on Remembrance Sunday, attended by townfolk, veterans, dignitaries and air cadets.

23.2 Transport

23.2.1 No changes required.

23.2.2 No changes required.

23.2.3 Please add:

Uckfield Town Council support the re-opening of the railway line from Uckfield to Lewes and Brighton and safeguarding the infrastructure for the dual track bed.

23.3 Facilities and Services

23.3.1 No changes required.

23.3.2 Community facilities include:

- The Meads Surgery, Bell Farm Road
- Bird In Eye Surgery
- Uckfield Community Hospital
- Boots Pharmacy
- Dental Surgeries
- Uckfield Leisure centre
- Churches
- Public Houses
- Belmont Centre
- Civic Centre, Uckfield
- Foresters Hall
- Ridgewood Village Hall

- Victoria Pavilion
- Recreation spaces
- Allotments
- Harlands Primary School
- Manor Primary School
- Rocks Park Primary School
- St Philip's Catholic Primary School
- Uckfield College and Sixth Form

23.3.3 Business and industrial premises are provided at:

- Bellbrook Industrial Estate
- Ridgewood Industrial Park
- Ashdown Business Park
- Squires Farm Industrial Estate (available for Uckfield businesses)
- Seghers Industrial Area is yet to be constructed. It will sit adjacent to Bellbrook Industrial Estate.

Please add in:

23.3.4 Uckfield Town Council are responsible for

- Running the core services of a town council, and managing a large asset portfolio which consists of:
- 10 buildings including listed buildings, village halls and the heritage signal box in the High Street.
- 17 Open Spaces (Including Priority Habitats & Local Wildlife Sites)
- 8 Play Areas
- 192 Street Lights
- 7 Recreation Grounds (including Sport Pitches)
- 1 Cemetery
- 4 Woodlands (Including 3 Ancient Woodlands – Boothland Wood, West Park and Nightingale Woods)
- 2 Local Nature Reserves (Including Local Wildlife Sites, 1 Local Geological Site and parkland)
- 6 Allotment Sites (245 Plots) with a waiting list for new allotments
- 72 Litter Bins
- Developing Uckfield's nature pledge through "Wilder Uckfield" and supporting nature recovery through the town's green and blue infrastructure

Please add in:

23.3.5 Further Information

- The Town has a Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected each year.
- The Town Council's Strategic Plan is reviewed each year by the Full Council. The latest version (2026-31) is available to view on the Town Council's website:
<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Strategic-Plan-and-Priorities-2026-31-6-compressed-1.pdf>
- Neighbourhood Plan. Uckfield Town Council has re-formed the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. This is an important step for the town's future because neighbourhood plans now sit firmly within the national plan-making framework and carry real statutory weight. The draft National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that neighbourhood plans are a formal part of the development plan and are expected to address local priorities, allocate land where appropriate, and set policies that shape development in ways that reflect the character, needs and constraints of the community. This gives Uckfield a direct and democratic tool to influence how growth is managed, how the environment is protected, and how infrastructure is planned.
- Historic Information. The town's historic information is being updated as new knowledge comes to light to improve on the Historic Character Assessment Report initial report in 2008 more information here [Uckfield EUS Report & maps](#)

23.4 Environmental Designations

23.4.1 Environmental Designations include:

- Some priority habitats and ancient woodland within the town settlement.
- Large blocks of ancient woodland surrounding the town including Woodland Trust sites linked through corridors of priority habitats.
- Wet ancient woodlands, ghylls and alder carr, linking woodlands to Shortbridge Stream.
- A primeval swamp (recognised by Dr Martyn Stenning)
- Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA in north Uckfield linking to Ashdown Forest
- West Park LWS adjoining development in Markland Way, Batchelor Way, Ellis Way, West Park Estate.
- River Uck and its headwaters BOA along the B2102 and covering part of the Bellbrook Industrial Estate functionally links Buxted Park to Uckfield's nature reserves and priority habitats, following the path of the River Uck.
- Nature Recovery. UTC fully supports the work of Sussex Wildlife Trust, Nature Recovery and Wilder Sussex Priorities. Uckfield now has an emerging priority: Wilder Uckfield. SWT link: <https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/about-us/our-wild-sussex>
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. UTC are very protective of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within Uckfield and the adjoining village parishes. <https://www3.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/SP060%20Sussex%20Biodiversity%20Opportunity%20Areas.pdf>
- The River Uck. Uckfield and The River Uck was a known Saxon crossing.
- A conservation area and numerous listed buildings.
- Numerous non-designated heritage assets.
- A beacon. Important national events are celebrated and the beacon forms part of a chain of lit beacons visible across the Southeast of England. When lit, beacons on the South Downs are visible from the site of the Uckfield Beacon at Victoria Pleasure Ground.
- Woodland Trust's 'Lake Wood'. This site contains a rare peat-fed lake. It is a Local Wildlife Site and a Local Geological Site for Earth Science. (Sussex RIGS number TQ42/35) <https://geodiversitysussex.org.uk/geodiversity/siteText.php?siteID=TQ42%2F35&typ=LGS&z=18&y=50.976131439208984&x=0.08346809446811676>
- Woodland Trust's 'Views Wood', also known as 'Williams Wood'. Views Wood is a large ancient wood in the national character area High Weald. It sits between the town of Uckfield (adjacent to the Manor Park Estate) and the Buxted Park Estate, to which it originally belonged. It is one of the remaining fragments of the vast medieval forest of Andredsweald which once stretched across West Sussex to Kent. The 24-hectare (60 acre) wood is a tranquil haven for wildlife and humans alike. It has a great display of spring flowers, plenty of historical interest and a range of walks to suit all abilities. It is interesting to note that a Roman corn-drying kiln from the 1st century was found close to the edge of Views Wood.
- West Park Local Nature Reserve. Parkland and a Local Geological Site for Earth Science and is included in the Weald to Waves (<https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/>) 100 mile nature recovery corridor through Uckfield's Pledge to Nature Recovery working towards "Wilder Uckfield". (Sussex RIGS number TQ42/02) known as Rock Park. <https://geodiversitysussex.org.uk/geodiversity/siteText.php?siteID=TQ42%2F02&typ=LGS&z=16&y=50.97529220581055&x=0.08345740288496017>
- Harlands Pond. A Local Wildlife Site.
- Snatts Road Cemetery. A Local Wildlife Site and a hot spot for nationally rare waxcaps fungi.
- Hempstead Meadows. A Local Nature Reserve and flood plain.
- Priority areas. Parts of Uckfield fall within the Sussex Wildlife Trust "Wild Sussex" priority areas <https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/about-us/our-wild-sussex> .
- Uckfield Nature Pledge [Uckfield Town Council Nature Pledge to Weald to Waves](#)

23 UCKFIELD



23.1 Parish Overview

- 23.1.1 Uckfield is located within the middle of the District, to the south of Ashdown Forest on the border of the High Weald and Low Weald landscape areas. The town is located approximately 6.8 miles north east of Lewes, 8.1 miles south of Crowborough and 8.1 miles west of Heathfield. The A22 (which runs between London and Eastbourne) and the A26 (which runs between Lewes and Tunbridge Wells) is located directly to the east of the town. The cross country A272 route (which runs from Winchester to Heathfield) is situated to the north of the town.
- 23.1.2 Uckfield is a large linear town which has developed at the crossroads between two B roads running north-south, east-west. The historic core of Uckfield is situated at the northern end of the High Street, with a concentration of Listed Buildings resulting in historic character and also a designated Conservation Area.

23.2 Transport

- 23.2.1 The catalyst for development in the town, especially the southern part of Uckfield, was the arrival of the railway in 1858 providing a twin tracked line from Lewes to Uckfield. The line was later extended from Uckfield to Groombridge, providing access to Tunbridge Wells and London in 1965. In 1969, the line between Uckfield and Lewes was closed and in 1985, the line between Eridge and Tunbridge Wells. Today Uckfield benefits from a rail link to London.
- 23.2.2 A centrally located bus station, adjacent to the railway station, provides a transport hub with a wide range of services to neighbouring towns and villages. The town is on a designated cycle route and walking trail.

23.3 Facilities and Services

- 23.3.1 Uckfield has the largest town centre in the District serving both its residents and acting as a hub and service centre for a wide catchment of surrounding villages and settlements. The town centre has a good range and variety of shopping with a number of retail outlets and leisure facilities including an independent cinema and a leisure centre as well as financial services.
- 23.3.2 Community facilities include:
 - The Meads Surgery Bell Farm Road
 - Bird In Eye Surgery
 - Uckfield Community Hospital
 - Pharmacy
 - Dental surgery
 - Leisure centre
 - Church
 - Pubs
 - Uckfield Civic Centre
 - Recreation spaces
 - Allotments
 - Harlands Primary School
 - Holy Cross Church of England Primary School
 - Manor Primary School
 - Rocks Park Primary School
 - St Philip's Catholic Primary School
 - Pre-school/nursery
 - Uckfield Community Technology College
- 23.3.3 Business and industrial premises are provided at:
 - Squires Farm Industrial Estate
 - Bellbrook Industrial Estate
 - Ridgewood Industrial Park
 - Ashdown Business Park.

SITE ASSESSMENTS : UCKFIELD

23.4 Environmental Designations

- 23.4.1 Environmental designations include
 - Small pockets of ancient woodland within the town
 - Large blocks of ancient woodland scattered throughout the Parish
 - Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA on the north western edge of town
 - West Park LWS adjoining development in Markland Way, Batchelor Way, Ellis Way etc.
 - River Uck and its Headwaters BOA along the B2102 and covering part of the Bellbrook Industrial Estate (follows the path of the River Uck)
- 23.4.2 There is a Conservation Area and numerous listed buildings.