



# THE UCKFIELD VOICE

APRIL 2026

EDITION 278

thevoice

## UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

BY THE MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

The Annual Town Meeting is one of the two most significant dates in Uckfield Town Council's calendar of meetings each year.

All Town Councils throughout England are required, by law, to hold an Annual Town Meeting, which must take place between 1 March and 1 June every year.

There is often confusion between the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Town Council. Annual Town Meetings are a meeting of the electorate and cannot start before 6:00pm. Anyone may attend but only registered electors of Uckfield may speak during the meeting.

### When are where is this year's Annual Town Meeting?

This year's meeting will be held in the Weald Hall at The Civic Centre Uckfield on Wednesday 15th April. The meeting will open to the public at 6:30pm, with tea and coffee facilities available, and will officially commence at 7pm.

### What subjects will be discussed?

The meeting will start with a reflection on the minutes of the previous year's Annual Town Meeting, and a discussion of any matters arising. This will be followed by the Town Council's Annual Report for 2025-26, including statements from the Chairs of Uckfield Town Council's four main Committees; Cllr. Karen Bedwell (Full Council), Cllr. Chris Macve (General Purposes), Cllr. Angie Smith (Environment & Leisure), and Cllr. Jackie Love (Plans).

**7 PM START**

**WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL**

**CIVIC CENTRE UCKFIELD, TN22 1AE**

## Annual Town Meeting

All Uckfield residents encouraged to attend  
More info at [www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk](http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

### How can I ask a question?

There are two ways of asking a question at the Annual Town Meeting. Following the Annual Report, the meeting will focus on questions that have been submitted in advance, which can be done by emailing [admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk) or visiting the Town Council Office. There will then be time for questions from the floor.



Contact us through:  
[admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)  
[@uckfieldtowncouncil](https://www.facebook.com/uckfieldtowncouncil)

### WHAT'S INSIDE

- Protecting Boothland Wood
- Response to Draft Wealden Local Plan
- Managing Himalayan Balsam
- Upcoming Meetings

# PROTECTING BOOTHLAND WOOD

BY CLLR. DONNA FRENCH

Boothland Wood is one of three ancient woodlands owned and managed by Uckfield Town Council.

Located to the south of the town, adjacent to the New Barn Playing Field and close to Victoria Pleasure Ground, the wood covers 3.5 hectares and is home to several veteran trees and some spectacular carpets of bluebells each spring.

## What is happening at the site?

Footfall through the woodland has increased significantly following new housing developments in the Ridgewood area.

With plans for a further 850 dwellings on neighbouring sites, Boothland Wood will require additional care and protection. Its southern boundary adjoins the Ridgewood Farm (Redrow Homes) development, where groundworks are currently underway.

Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable and highly protected habitat. Planning policies require that harm is avoided and that appropriate buffer zones are provided between new developments.

To prepare for increased visitor numbers, Uckfield Town Council is taking proactive steps to safeguard this special ecosystem.



## New Protective Measures

The first phase of work includes installing 1.2-metre-high stock fencing along the New Barn field side of the wood. This will help guide walkers to the official public footpath (10a, annotated to the right), which will remain open throughout the duration of the works.

New pedestrian gates will be added, along with dedicated badger gates to ensure wildlife can continue to move freely.

A section of the south west corner of the wood will be closed to allow the habitat to rest and recover.

A temporary footpath will create a looped walking route, guiding visitors around the western edge and back toward Victoria Pleasure Ground.

Developers Redrow Homes are currently applying for a temporary diversion of the official Public Footway across the site (footpath 10b, annotated right) while groundworks continue on their site.

## Ecological Oversight and Future Plans

Uckfield Town Council's Estates Manager, Thomas Woollard, is overseeing these important protection measures.

An ecological survey has already been completed, while a dormouse survey is ongoing and results from a bat survey are expected soon.



Boothland Wood will continue to host St Philip's Catholic Primary School's forest school sessions. Future plans include adding natural play features - such as balance poles and stepping stones - along designated pathways. Environmentally sustainable dead hedges will help define the official footpath, and new information boards and signage will be installed. Work is also underway to explore ways of improving path conditions during wetter months.

Ancient woodlands make up less than 3% of the UK landscape. We all share a responsibility to care for and protect these precious habitats. More information is available here: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/habitats/ancient-woodland/>

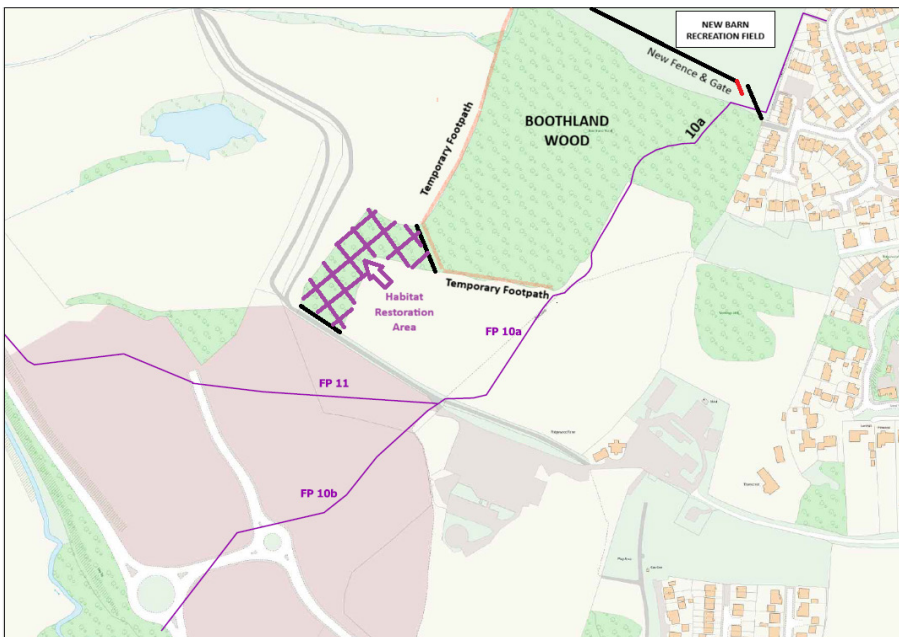
**How will Uckfield Town Council keep residents updated?**

Updates regarding all important stages of the works will be posted as soon as



possible on the Town Council's website and social media channels during the next few months. Signage to notify residents and explain the nature of the works will also be displayed on site.

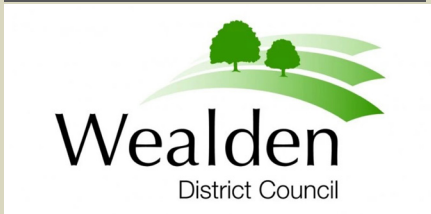
You can follow updates on our website here: <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/> You can receive updates from our Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/uckfieldtowncouncil/>



*Diagrammatic proposal of the temporary footpaths and habitat restoration area that are set to be in place, as well as the existing public footpaths 10a, 10b and 11.*

# RESPONSE TO DRAFT WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN

BY THE TOWN CLERK



Further to a full public consultation exercise (known as Regulation 18) undertaken in March 2024, Wealden District Council recently consulted again on a revised and focused Draft Local Plan. This saw the plan's lifespan extended to 2042, reflecting changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and subsequent changes in housing need calculations.

## What is a Local Plan?

A local plan is a spatial strategy for the district – focusing not just on housing, but also the the natural and historic environment, climate change, infrastructure, design and the local economy in terms of employment space, tourism and village and town centres. For further info, visit: <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/new-local-plan/>

## Our response

The consultation ran until 27 March 2026. Uckfield Town Council prepared a response, which can be found on our website: <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/community/have-your-say/>

# MANAGING HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Himalayan Balsam is a non-native invasive plant that smothers native vegetation, reduces biodiversity, and increases the risk of riverbank erosion. It is pulled or bashed before flowering in early summer to prevent it from launching thousands of seeds. We are looking into covering areas with tarpaulin to see what are the most effective methods to manage the Balsam. Works will commence in April and continue through to June.



Photo: Flickr

Volunteers are very much welcome to assist in this task throughout these months. To express interest in taking part, email [ranger@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:ranger@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

# UPCOMING MEETINGS

Agendas and minutes can be viewed on the Town Council website at <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>. Meetings are held in

person in the Council Chamber at The Civic Centre and all start at 7pm. All questions should be sent to the Town Clerk at: [admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

MON 13 APR	- ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE
WED 15 APR	- ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MON 20 APR	- PLANS
TUES 5 MAY	- GENERAL PURPOSES
MON 11 MAY	- PLANS

## COMING NEXT MONTH

- Councillor Soapbox
- Town Council Building Portfolio Review
- Community Grant Recipients Announcement
- Weald on the Field 2026

