UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Monday 6 July 2026 at 7.00pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. Angie Smith
Cllr. Karen Bedwell
Cllr. Donna French
Cllr. Chris Macve
Cllr. Bernadette Reed (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Kathy Butler
Cllr. Mike McClafferty

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.
None were forthcoming.

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

Apologies for absence were received prior to the meeting from Councillors Spike Mayhew and Duncan Bennett due to work commitments.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 26 May 2026

EL.13.07.26 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 26 May 2026, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2. Action list

Members queried the length of time some actions had remained outstanding, particularly an item dating back to 2016. Officers agreed to review long-standing actions and provide an update.

Members subsequently noted the Action list and to remove the following item:

EL18.09.24 – Proposed re-routing of the Public Right of Way from Ridgewood Farm into Boothland Wood as part of the development – no further actions outstanding.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report with no items to be removed.

4.4 Forward plan – for information only
Members noted the Forward Plan.

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid
Members noted the report. Officers confirmed that recent purchases from P P Estates Ltd related to new pedestrian mowers.

Members raised no further questions.

5.2 To consider the procurement of the ISUZU D-Max 2.2 Single Cab Tipper Vehicle
Members considered a report seeking approval to purchase a replacement tipper vehicle following the cancellation of the previously approved Toyota Proace order after it was established that a suitable tipper conversion was not available.

The Estates Manager outlined the alternative options considered and advised that an Isuzu D-Max single cab tipper was the most suitable vehicle currently available to meet the operational requirements of the Estates Team. Members discussed the specification, value for money, availability of replacement parts, expected lifespan, security arrangements and delivery timescales.

Following the discussion, Members agreed that loading ramps and galvanisation of the tipping body should be included within the vehicle specification to maximise its operational lifespan.

EL.14.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to:
(i) approve the purchase of the Isuzu D-Max single cab tipper, and;
(ii) to include loading ramps and galvanisation of the tipping body within the specification, and;
(iii) authority for officers to proceed with the purchase as a matter of urgency due to the limited availability of suitable vehicles.

6.0 ADMINISTRATION

6.1 To note the draft minutes from the Strengthening Local Relations (SLR) meeting held on 22 June 2026
Members noted the report.

The Committee expressed continued concern regarding the response from East Sussex Highways to several long-standing highways issues, including road surface defects, damaged footways, disabled parking bay markings, the lack of stock of matching replacement paving slabs, and the overall effectiveness of the Strengthening Local Relationships process.

Members considered that the current arrangements were not delivering satisfactory outcomes and discussed the Council's responsibilities under the Equality Act in relation to disabled parking provision.

EL.15.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to request that officers seek an urgent meeting with senior representatives of East Sussex Highways to discuss:
(i) the effectiveness of the Strengthening Local Relationships process, and;
(ii) the Council’s outstanding highways concerns, and;
(iii) the condition of local roads and footways, including ensuring that replacement paving slabs match the original materials and appearance, and that an adequate stock of matching paving slabs is maintained for future repairs, and;
(iv) concerns relating to disabled parking provision and the Council’s duties under the Equality Act, including the need for clearer road markings.

[Councillor B. Reed arrived at the meeting at 07:25pm]

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

Members noted the report.

Members thanked the Estates Team for the excellent presentation of the High Street planters.

The Estates Manager advised Members that the large slide at Hempstead Play Area had developed a structural defect. As the slide had previously been repaired, there were concerns regarding the integrity of the material, and it had therefore been closed on safety grounds.

Members discussed options for replacing or removing the slide and requested that officers obtain quotations for a replacement slide. It was noted that any replacement could potentially be considered alongside future improvement works at the play area. Officers were authorised to progress the matter under urgent consultation, if necessary, before the next Committee meeting.

Members also agreed that a working group should be established to assist with the development of proposals for the refurbishment of the Victoria Pleasure Ground skate park, including consultation with young residents.

EL.16.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to request quotations for a replacement slide at Hempstead Play Area and supported establishing a working group for the skate park refurbishment.

7.2 To consider opportunities arising from the Cemetery of the Year Awards (CYA) Entry Questionnaire, including the Green Flag Award scheme and corporate membership of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends

Members considered the report and welcomed the detailed feedback received through the Cemetery of the Year Awards application process.

The Committee discussed opportunities to further enhance the Council's burial grounds, including greater community involvement, biodiversity improvements and future accreditation schemes.

EL.17.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to:
(i) note the Council's submission to the Cemetery of the Year Awards and the provisional assessment score, and;
(ii) approve Corporate Membership of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, and;
(iii) support the establishment of a local Cemetery Friends Group to assist with the continued enhancement and promotion of the Council's burial grounds, and;
(iv) request that officers obtain further information and associated costs relating to participation in the Green Flag Award Scheme, and;
(v) defer consideration of a future Green Flag Award application until further information and costings have been received.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To consider temporary Pump Track Hire and Consultation on Victoria Skate Park Improvements

Members considered a report regarding the hire of a temporary pump track during the October half-term holiday.

The Estates Manager advised that the proposal would provide a recreational activity for young people whilst also enabling consultation on the future redevelopment of the Victoria Pleasure Ground skate park.

Members welcomed the proposal and agreed that it would provide an opportunity to engage directly with young people, encourage participation in the design process and provide additional activities during the school holiday period.

EL.18.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to agree to:
(i) approve the hire of a temporary 'World Cup Pump Track' layout as set within the quotation for one week during the October half-term holiday on the cricket outfield, and;
(ii) approve the use of the event as the principal public consultation exercise for the proposed Victoria Pleasure Ground skate park improvements, and;
(iii) request that the Estates Manager confirm that the Council's public liability requirements are fully covered within the supplier's quotation and associated insurance arrangements prior to the event proceeding.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 Climate Emergency Steering Group update
Members received a verbal update from the Chair regarding the recent meeting of the Climate Emergency Steering Group.

Members noted that the Steering Group had agreed to:

- prepare Terms of Reference to facilitate the future involvement of members of the public;
- commission an updated carbon audit of the Council's estates; and
- review the Council's Climate Policy.

Members also noted the publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategies and welcomed the inclusion of the Brown Long-eared Bat and Barbastelle Bat as priority species.

EL.19.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to:
(i) note the publication of the consultation reports for the East Sussex and West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and;
(ii) note the amendments made following consultation, and;
(iii) note publication of the final strategies, and;
(iv) support officers in reviewing the priority habitats and species against the Council's emerging Biodiversity Management Plans.

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
Nothing to report at this time.

10.2 Biodiversity links – Ashdown Forest and Climate Change
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
Members noted the report, with thanks to Councillor K. Butler for the update.

10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee
Members noted the report, with thanks to Councillor C. Macve for the update.

Members were advised of recent discussions relating to the A22 and A26 corridor studies and agreed that continued representations should be made regarding the safeguarding of future rail infrastructure.

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 advised Members of the forthcoming screening of the *People's Emergency Briefing*, to be held on 16 July 2026 at Cornerstone Church. Members were encouraged to attend if available, and officers were requested to publicise this free event through the Council's communication channels.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.20.07.26 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.

The Committee discussed opportunities to strengthen the Council's communications, particularly in promoting positive environmental projects and raising public awareness of the financial impact of vandalism on Council assets.

Members also discussed the distinction between marketing and public relations and agreed that the Marketing and Community Engagement Officer should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to explore the development of a communications strategy in support of the Council's environmental objectives.

The Committee thanked the Marketing and Community Engagement Officer for the report.

The meeting finished at 08:12 pm.