UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held
on Monday 29 June 2026 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:
Cllr. K. Bedwell (Town Mayor)
Cllr. K. Butler
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. S. Mayhew (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. B. Reed
Cllr. P. Selby
Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:
Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
James Hollingdale Facilities & Compliance Manager
Louise Slaughter Hospitality Manager
Thomas Woollard Estates Manager
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

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. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent.

Councillors Love and Mayhew declared a personal interest in agenda item 18.0 as a result of being former Mayors. The Town Clerk advised that they could speak but not vote.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION

None received.

3.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FC.26.06.26 Members **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable the County and District Councillors to speak.
County Councillor P. Griffiths provided an update on his first few weeks as an elected member. He visited Lewes Road and agreed with the concerns raised. The overflowing drain within Lewes Road should now have been fixed. Negotiations had commenced on the renewal of the contract for Uckfield Leisure Centre. He had also attended a recent meeting regarding the A26.

Councillor Reed noted the celebration of the Winnie The Pooh Centenary and associated work on the Ashdown Forest. The Local Nature Recovery Strategies had now been published, which the council had contributed to. She had attended a Wilder Sussex Workshop, as well as participating in a tour of Arlington Reservoir. District Councillors had also been invited to attend the A26 workshop.

Councillor French had also attended the meeting relating to the A26, as well as the most recent meeting of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest alongside Councillor Reed. Councillor French had picked up on a recent visit to Crowborough Camp, that only part of the sewage was going into the main sewer network. Some was being pumped out and taken away, and this needed to be investigated further.

Councillor Bedwell advised that she would raise this with the Home Office.

FC.27.06.26 Members **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors D. Bennett, Manvell, McClafferty and Ullmann due to sickness, and work commitments.

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council on 20 May 2026 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

FC.28.06.26 Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting of the Council be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

5.2 To receive and note the minutes of the Annual Town meeting on 15 April 2026

This item was deferred

5.3 Action List

A query was raised in relation to Our Parks. The Town Clerk advised that unfortunately the trainer had been unwell, and the bid for grant funding had not been successful on this occasion, which meant other sources of funding would need to be identified. Members subsequently noted the report.

5.4 Forward plan

Members noted the forward plan.

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

(a) Plans Committee of the 1 June and 22 June 2026

FC.29.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 1 June and 22 June 2026.

FC.30.06.26 (b) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 26 May 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 26 May 2026.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 8 June 2026

FC.31.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committees of the 8 June 2026.

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(none received)

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Uckfield – Events Working Group

An update was provided on the preparations for the Weald on the Field event on Saturday 8 August 2026. This year, the working group were going to recruit volunteer marshals to assist with overseeing the event throughout the day, and assisting with set up and pack away. Members were asked to support the event, and provide help even if only for an hour. Members noted the report.

9.0 TO APPROVE PERIODIC POLICY REVIEWS

(i) IT, Email and Social Media Policy – No. 18

Members noted the importance of utilising good quality and authorised AI software when managing note taking for meetings (e.g. Microsoft).

FC.32.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the revision of the IT, Email and Social Media Policy.

(ii) Handling ‘Access to Information Requests’ Policy – No. 16

FC.33.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the revision of the Handling ‘Access to Information Requests’ Policy.

(iii) General Data Protection Policy – No. 87

FC.34.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the revision of the General Data Protection Policy.

10.0 TO APPROVE PERIODIC POLICY REVIEWS

(i) Ratification of AGAR Assertion 10 Compliance

Members were provided with a table which set out the work that had been progressed by the Town Council in line with the criteria set out within AGAR Assertion 10.

FC.35.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the work undertaken by the Town Council to meet Assertion 10 requirements.

11.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL’S ASSET REGISTER

Members reviewed the Town Council’s asset register and more specifically purchases and disposals recorded at financial year end. This consisted of Estates machinery. Members noted the update provided.

12.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

Members were directed to the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2025/26 which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), aswell as the contents within the detailed Internal Audit Report from the Town Council’s Internal Auditor.

Members received, considered and noted the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 within the AGAR.

13.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 1 – THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement for the period 2025/26 which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The Assistant Town Clerk referred members to the AGAR report, which would be sent to the External Auditor to be authorised. Section 1 showed that we had put the necessary processes and controls in place to ensure good governance and finance.

FC.36.06.26 Members reviewed the contents of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2025/26) and **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26, and authorised for the Chair and the Town Clerk to sign and date this statement on behalf of the Town Council.

14.0 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND APPROVE SECTION 2 – THE TOWN COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

Members reviewed a summary of the Town Council's accounting statements, as presented in Section 2, in the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return ending 31 March 2026, and a set of financial statements prepared by the Town Council's accountants at the end of March 2026.

The Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the report(s) to members. Members thanked the Assistant Town Clerk and RFO for their hard work on the completion of year end and preparation of the AGAR.

FC.37.06.26 Members **RESOLVED** to receive, consider and approve the draft annual governance and accountability return, and financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2026, and authorised for the Town Mayor as Chair of the meeting to sign and date this return, on behalf of the Town Council.

15.0 TO CONSIDER APPENDIX B OF THE MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY: MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Town Clerk reminded members that the development of this protocol which was already standard practice in district and county authorities and formed part of their Constitution. The creation of this protocol had been a recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee, approved by General Purposes Committee on 5 May 2026. It would assist with clearly outlining the roles of both members and staff, and the key expectations in working practices, as well as how any issues or breaches should be handled.

The Town Clerk talked through the key elements of the protocol, which would form an appendix to the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy, and asked members to read the paper in detail over the summer. The Town Clerk would be arranging refresher training for a variety of topics for members in the autumn months.

Members noted the draft protocol, and request for them to read the contents.

16.0 TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (CONTRACTORS/TENDERS)

The Town Clerk picked up the need to provide clarity on how decisions were made on the appointment and procurement of contractors, and what factors were considered during that process. A few queries had been raised recently at General Purposes Committee.

Both the Facilities & Compliance Manager, and Town Clerk clarified the key considerations, which were outlined in paragraph 1.8.

FC.38.06.26 Members **RESOLVED** to support the addition of these considerations within the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

17.0 TO NOTE CURRENT DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS

The report highlighted the current supplier invoices paid by direct debit. Councillor Macve wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO on the preparation of the BACs payment run twice a month, and preparation of the direct debit information once a month. This was much welcomed. Members subsequently noted the report.

18.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MAYORAL CHAIN AND FORMER MAYOR PIN BADGES

The report presented, advised that the new Mayoral Chain was on order and would be ready for the next meeting of Full Council on 7 September 2026.

Members discussed the creation of pin badges for former Mayors, and were asked how many should be ordered and who should these be presented to.

FC.39.06.26 With six members voting in favour, and one abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the order of 10 former Mayor pin badges and that these be presented to all living former Mayors. A presentation would be held prior to a future Full Council meeting.

19.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL LEASE AGREEMENTS

None.

20.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Members noted the report.

21.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

One deed of grant was received:
Shirley Fuller

FC.40.06.26 It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deed of grant.

22.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None received.

23.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk provided an update on staffing matters, and confirmed that the casual vacancy for the former seat of Councillor Val Frost was now being advertised.

24.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor, Councillor Bedwell, wished to thank the team for their hard work, and also wished to congratulate the Estates Manager on the birth of their new baby boy.

The Town Mayor advised that she was fundraising for two charities this year (i) EGFR + (Lung Cancer) and (ii) PHAB. A Just Giving page had been set up, and activities would take place during the year to assist with raising funds, which would include abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth in September.

25.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

To consider whether to RESOLVE to exclude the press and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted:

25.1 <u>To consider the draft Emergency Plan</u>

Members reviewed the contents of the plan. It was noted that Ridgewood Village Hall was also a designated rest centre and could be added. Further clarity was required on road closures in the event of flooding, and it was suggested that signage be obtained to be placed up when HMLNR was at risk of flooding.

Members noted the contents of the report and continuing work on this prior to its adoption.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm.