



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Tuesday 1 September 2026 at 7.00pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. Angie Smith (Chair)
Cllr. Karen Bedwell
Cllr. Mike McClafferty

Cllr. Bernadette Reed (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Donna French
Cllr. Spike Mayhew

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Peter Selby

Holly Goring – Chief Officer (Town Clerk)
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

Members agreed to suspend standing orders to allow Councillor D. Ward, who was not a member of this committee, to speak in relation to item 7.2.

Councillor Ward addressed the Committee in relation to agenda item 7.2, concerning a request for tree reduction works.

Councillor Ward explained that she had been approached by residents regarding a large tree outside their property in Rocks Park. The residents did not wish for the tree to be removed but were seeking some reduction/thinning of the tree due to concerns regarding light, branches extending over paths and squirrels accessing their solar panels.

The Committee was advised that the tree had been planted approximately forty years ago, following the storm of 1987.

Councillor Ward acknowledged the Town Council's Tree Policy and suggested that, if the Town Council could not undertake the works at its own expense, the resident might be advised to explore whether suitable tree surgery training providers could assist.

Members agreed to re-instate standing orders.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received prior to the meeting from Councillors Kathy Butler and Chris Macve due to personal commitments. The committee was also advised that Councillor Duncan Bennett was unable to attend due to illness.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 6 July 2026

EL.21.09.26 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 6 July 2026, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2. Action list

Members reviewed the Action List and agreed that the following matters could be removed:

EL.28.09.16 and **EL.26.01.19** – relating to bylaws for the nature reserves, as no further information had been received and no further action was currently proposed.

EL.53.04.26 This item related to the review of the memorial policy, which had been brought forward for consideration at this meeting.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report. There were 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. No comments were raised.

5.2. To note the income and expenditure report to 31 July 2026

Members noted the report.

It was confirmed that the receipt of approximately £33,500 related to the disposal of the vehicle and was income rather than an expenditure item.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1. To consider a policy update in relation to the Y section and future improvements for Snatts Road Cemetery

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Snatts Road Cemetery Rules and Regulations, including provisions relating to memorials, headstones and kerb sets.

Members discussed the circumstances which had prompted the review and whether a survey should be undertaken to establish residents' views regarding the provision of kerb sets and other memorial arrangements. It was agreed that this matter could be considered further by the relevant Working Group, including whether a survey would be appropriate.

The Committee was advised that the Y Section would be managed in accordance with the revised Rules and Regulations following its consecration on 29 September 2026.

The Committee also considered the proposed internal operational policy relating to kerb sets.

Councillor S. Mayhew requested that consideration of the matter be held pending a meeting of the working group.

- EL.22.09.26** With five votes in favour, and one absention, members **RESOLVED** to:
- (i) approve the revised Snatts Road Cemetery Rules and Regulations and to approve the internal operational policy relating to kerb sets, and;
 - (ii) agree to a Working Group to be arranged following the consecration of the Y Section to consider the revised arrangements and future improvements, including whether a deedholders' survey would be appropriate.

Members also noted that the cemetery contains areas of ecological interest, including local wildlife and areas of long-established woodland. It was suggested that these matters should be taken into account in future work relating to the Town Council's land and biodiversity.

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey:

The Committee considered a proposal to commission a ground-penetrating radar survey of areas within the existing cemetery (south side).

Members noted the proposed survey areas shown in Appendix D and a recent quotation for the works to be carried out.

The survey would assist in identifying areas which may potentially be available for future burial use.

Members discussed the accuracy of the survey and the potential for the survey to identify previously unknown features. It was noted that the survey would not involve excavation.

- EL23.09.26** Members **RESOLVED** to commission a ground penetrating radar survey.

- 6.2 To receive a preliminary update following Strengthening Local Relations discussions with East Sussex Highways and the Transport and Development Planning Team
The Committee noted the report and received a preliminary update on communications with East Sussex Highways and the Transport and Development Planning Team.

It was noted that highways-related matters could be reported directly to East Sussex Highways and that it was not necessary to wait to raise such matters separately with the Transport and Development Planning Team.

The Committee was advised that a meeting with the relevant officers had not yet been arranged, although further information was expected. Members expressed significant concern regarding the condition and safety of several local roads, including New Road and the approach to Fernley Park, and the perceived lack of progress in addressing concerns.

Members also discussed the wider relationship between highway maintenance, development-related traffic and planning decisions. It was noted that a number of matters raised through the Strengthening Local Relations meetings were more strategic in nature and would require consideration through the appropriate processes.

The Chief Officer advised that the Town Council had previously submitted input in relation to a Phase 4 of highway improvements. This focused on the main access corridors into town. This was a number of years ago and in her role, would be following up on this shortly. She further advised that, whilst several matters raised

through the Strengthening Local Relations meetings overlapped with other ongoing work, she would follow up with the relevant officers to establish the current position and clarify what action was being taken.

Councillor S. Mayhew emphasised that East Sussex Highways' responsibility was to protect residents' lives and that action should not be delayed until a serious incident or loss of life occurred.

The request for disabled parking road markings to be repainted had been resolved.

The Committee emphasised that its intention was not to create additional difficulties, but to develop a more positive and constructive working relationship with the relevant authorities, with the overall aim of achieving the best outcomes for Uckfield.

The Committee agreed that the Town Council should investigate what legal options may be available to pursue its concerns regarding the condition and safety of local roads.

[Councillor K. Bedwell left the room briefly at 19:40 and returned at 19:42]

EL.24.09.26 Members **RESOLVED** that the Town Council investigate its legal options in relation to the concerns raised regarding the condition and safety of local roads, and that the relevant representatives at East Sussex County Council be informed.

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

Members considered the Estates Manager's report and noted the range of works being undertaken by the Estates Team.

Members raised concerns regarding works associated with development near Boothland Wood, particularly the amount of dust being generated, the large earth mounds on the development site and the potential impact on the Town Council's woodland and nearby residents.

Members discussed concerns regarding the protection of ancient and irreplaceable habitats and the apparent lack of engagement with the Town Council during the construction management process.

The Committee noted that complaints had been made to the relevant authorities and that environmental health concerns had also been raised.

It was agreed that enquiries should be made regarding whether the Health and Safety Executive should also be contacted in relation to the concerns raised about dust and potential impacts on residents.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Estates Team for the work undertaken during the summer, including work at Nightingale Wood and Snatts Road Cemetery.

EL.25.09.26 The Committee noted the dust complaints and agreed that a letter be sent to the Health and Safety officials requesting that the matter be investigated and addressed as appropriate.

The Committee also considered a late question received from a resident regarding a vehicle which had been stored for an extended period in the Victoria Pleasure Ground car park.

Members discussed the circumstances surrounding the vehicle and the need for a clear deadline for its removal. It was agreed that the vehicle should be removed by the end of September and that the resident should be advised accordingly.

7.2 To consider a request for tree reduction works

The Committee considered the request for reduction works to a Norwegian maple tree in Rocks Park, adjacent to 7 Streatfield Road.

The Estates Manager advised that two professional tree inspections had been undertaken. The tree was considered to be in good physiological and structural condition. Recommendations included a crown raise and removal of dead wood to address the tree's relationship with the public footpath.

Members considered the concerns raised by the residents, including light and the size of the tree, but noted that the requested works were not considered necessary for tree safety purposes.

Members discussed the Town Council's tree policy and, in particular, the provisions concerning works requested for non-safety reasons.

It was agreed that the Council would adhere to the tree policy. The resident could arrange for the recommended works to be undertaken, but the associated costs would be borne by the resident.

Members also noted the wider point that the location and species of trees should be considered carefully when undertaking future tree planting.

EL.26.09.26 Members **RESOLVED** to adhere to the Town Council's tree policy and to advise the resident that any approved works undertaken for non-safety reasons would be at the resident's expense.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To receive an update on the application for a new 3G Pitch

The Committee received an update on the application for the proposed new 3G pitch.

The Estates Manager advised that an ecologist was undertaking the outstanding baseline survey and that this was expected to provide the final information required to progress the planning application.

Members discussed the intention to provide an on-site biodiversity net gain contribution rather than an off-site contribution. It was noted that the application area had been amended slightly to facilitate this.

Members also discussed drainage and measures to prevent rubber and plastic infill material from entering nearby watercourses.

Members noted the report.

8.2 To consider contributing to a District-wide Springle Festival

The Committee considered a request for financial support towards a district-wide Springle Festival.

Members expressed concerns about the use of Town Council funds for a District-led initiative and considered that the Council's limited resources would be better directed towards local priorities and activities.

Members also noted that Uckfield already had a number of established community events and activities, and a busy town event calendar.

EL.27.09.26 Members **RESOLVED** to refrain from contributing up to £5,000 towards the district-wide Springle Festival.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 To receive an update from the Allotment Working Group

Members received an update from the Allotment Working Group and noted the report.

9.2 To receive an update from the Fees and Charges Working Group

Members received an update from the Fees and Charges Working Group and noted the report.

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group

Members noted the report with thanks to Councillor C Macve for the update.

10.2 Biodiversity links – Ashdown Forest and Climate Change

Nothing to report at this time.

10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group

Councillor B. Reed provided an update on biodiversity and woodland matters.

Members were advised of the importance of considering long-established woodland and priority habitats when considering planning applications. Reference was also made to the presence of priority habitats within and around Council-owned land.

Councillor Reed highlighted the importance of considering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and relevant habitat information when assessing future proposals.

Members noted the report with thanks to Councillor Reed for the update.

10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Members noted the report, including the progress being made towards plans for an extension to the Luxford Centre.

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 no announcements.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.28.09.26 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
The Committee noted the report with thanks.

The meeting finished at 8:55 pm.