



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre
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Chief Officer (Town Clerk) – Holly Goring

A meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** to be held on
Monday 21 September 2026 at 7.00pm
in the
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield
AGENDA

Under The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public are able to film or record during a committee meeting.

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers are reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Should any Member consider that they require a dispensation in relation to any prejudicial interest that they may have, they are asked to make a written application to the Clerk well in advance of the meeting.

Notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration. The nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

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

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4.0 MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 20 July 2026
- 4.2 Action list – for information only
- 4.3 Project list – for information only
- 4.4 Forward plan – for information only

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 5.1 To note bills paid
- 5.2 To review income and expenditure reports
- 5.3 To note the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee on 27 July 2026
- 5.4 To approve the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee on 27 July

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings

7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 To review the Media Policy – No. 26
- 7.2 To review the Social Media Policy – No. 18
- 7.3 To consider the revised Town Council's Communications Plan – No. 88
- 7.4 To consider the Town Council's Branding Guidelines

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 8.1 To receive Member audit reports

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 9.1 To consider reports from:-
 - (i) Wealden Citizen's Advice
 - (ii) Wealden Volunteering
 - (iii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee
 - (iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

12.0 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: -

- 12.1 To note bad debts
- 12.2 To note a Health & Safety update
- 12.3 To consider an update from Luxfords Restaurant and the Civic Centre
- 12.4 To consider leaseholder enquiries relating to lease agreements



Chief Officer (Town Clerk)
14 September 2026

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 20 July 2026 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Cllr. C. Macve (Chair)
Cllr. K. Butler

Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. P. Selby

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Karen Bedwell (Town Mayor)
Holly Goring – Chief Officer (Town Clerk)
James Hollingdale – Facilities & Compliance Manager
Louise Slaughter – Hospitality Manager
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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 received.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received prior to the meeting from Councillors J. Love, D. Manvell and A. Smith.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 8 June 2026

GP08.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 8 June 2026 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.2 Action list

The action list remained unchanged.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the update provided.

4.4 Forward plan

Members noted the forward plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

- 5.2 To review early drafts of income and expenditure reports
Members reviewed the early picture of income and expenditure for quarter one for General Purposes and Luxfords. Members noted the accounts to date.

6.0 BUILDINGS

- 6.1 To note the current position with the Council's buildings
The progress on the Signal Box was discussed. The final works to be delivered by the Town Council included the replacement of the steps and the windows. Officers were awaiting a date from the appointed contractors to undertake these works. A draft lease would be prepared with Solicitors for consideration by the interested party.
Members noted the contents of the report.

7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 To review the Member Audit Policy (No. 63)

GP09.07.26 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the updates to the Member Audit Policy, and recommend to Full Council for ratification.

- 7.2 To consider proposals for improvements to Website Accessibility (WCAG 2.2)
The Chief Officer presented a powerpoint presentation to members which outlined the requirements around Website Accessibility Guidelines and specifically WCAG 2.2. These guidelines looked at improving digital accessibility on websites, for those with impairments (visual, hearing, mobility and thinking and understanding).

Contact had been made by Officers with a company who specialised in this work, who would run compliance tests across the website, as well as identify every PDF that required upgrading. They proposed a phased programme of work over three years due to the material on the Town Council website. This would run in quarterly cycles. As improvements were made to the site, the accessibility statement would be updated.

Members discussed the work involved and the quotation received.
It was agreed that quotations needed to be sought from at least two other companies, not only to review value for money, but also the method used to approach this work.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 8.1 To receive Member audit reports

Members noted the reports received for February and March 2026.

9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

(iii) Wealden District Association of Local Council (Mgt Committee)
Councillor Ward provided members with a verbal update on the items shared at the most recent meeting. Members thanked her for her report.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair expressed that it was lovely to see the Chief Officer (Town Clerk) back in the office, and once again thanked the Deputy Chief Officer and wider managers for their additional work and support in her absence.

11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Officer advised members that Buxted Parish Council were currently looking at future options for a piece of land located adjacent to Uckfield Town Council's parish boundary, off Nevill Road. This was a small triangular area of land, mainly wooded.

The Estates Manager had visited the site, along with the Head Groundsman to review what works may be required and their advice was presented to members.

Members were happy for the Chief Officer to pursue an enquiry in regards to the land, and obtain more information such as value, utilities etc.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

GP10.07.26 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 note bad debts

Members were very encouraged to see such a short list of bad debtors and wished to record their thanks to office staff for their hard work on credit control.

12.2 To note the Health & Safety update

Members noted the update.

12.3 To consider an update from Luxfords Restaurant and the Civic Centre

The Hospitality Manager updated members on how the new EPOS till system was working, the recent stocktake and staffing. The pre-school holiday Roller Disco had been at full capacity and very successful. The Hospitality Manager informed members of the plans for Late Night Shopping. Members received and noted the update, and recorded their thanks to staff for the success of these recent events.

12.4 To consider leaseholder enquiries relating to lease agreements

The Chief Officer talked members through two recent enquiries:

- (i) Community Fridge – works to the exterior and the granting of a licence;
- (ii) Source – agreement of proposed terms plus works required to interior of building and car parking area, to improve safety

GP11.07.26 Members **RESOLVED**, to:

(i) Community Fridge

- (a) agree to the preparation of a licence for a period of 5 years, with a 2.5 or 3yr break clause term, as recommended by Solicitors;
- (b) agree to the extension of the lean-to roof up to the boundary of the planter (under permitted development, and as a temporary structure);

(ii) The Source

- (a) agree to the Facilities & Compliance Manager investigating the options available and costs associated for the requested interior and exterior improvements identified. This should be reported back to GP Committee in September.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

General Purposes Committee

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Completed
<u>GP04.06.26</u>	<u>5.4 Consider renewal insurance contract for public liability, employer liability and vehicle insurances</u> (i) check the sum-insured figure for the Victoria area (including the tennis courts) in the Zurich insurance proposal and confirm whether the £138,427 amount was appropriate, reporting back to the committee, and;	08.06.26	Mgt Team	In progress.

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL - PROJECT MONITORING
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Outstanding/ongoing initiatives from 2025/26 and before

Project name Civic Centre Signage			Project Number 71
Resolution No.	Funds	Date	Commentary
<u>FC82.01.22</u>	£2,000.00	28.04.26	Officers are exploring options for the front signage of the Civic Centre. This project will be delivered during 2026/27.

Project Name New parish noticeboards for new developments			Project Number 89
Resolution No.	Funds	Date	Commentary
<u>FC.90.01.25</u>	£2,000	28.04.26	To be progressed shortly.

Projects for 2026/27

Project Name	Building Maintenance Programme		Project Number	90
Resolution No.	Funds	Date	Commentary	
<u>FC.86.01.26</u>	£68,000	28.04.26	Full list of Building Maintenance Fund...	
			Legionella remedials	£4,000
			Fire safety works Phase 2 - Civic Centre	£15,000
			Replacement hot water supply - Civic Centre	£20,000
			Replacement showers - Vic Pavilion	£2,000
			Replacement hall lighting - Fhall	£4,000
			Upgrade of security - Vpav	£3,000
			Replacement emergency lighting - Green Shed	£1,800
			Solar panel improvements - Civic Centre	£2,800
			Flooring improvements - Civic Centre	£3,200
			Replacement heating in Weald Hall	£6,000
			Lightnening protection upgrade	£5,000
				£66,800
			Works have already begun to deliver this programme of works:	
- legionella remedial works have commenced at Foresters Hall;				

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL - PROJECT MONITORING

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

			- a full audit has been undertaken of the fire doors at the Civic Centre to quote for Stage 2; - the emergency lighting has been replaced at the Green Shed; - the old solar panels have been removed and new solar panels installed on the Civic Centre; - new carpets are being laid in rooms of the Civic Centre from mid September onwards;
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Project Name		Professional expertise for major projects and policy reviews		Project Number	91
Resolution No.	Funds	Date	Commentary		
<u>FC.86.01.26</u>	Carry forward of £23,250 from 2025/26 Plus £15,000 for 2026/27 = £38,250	28.04.26	Consultants commissioned at present: - feasibility study for extension of West Park Pavilion/new community facility; - Land registration audit; - new HR contract; - event management and incident response; - data protection/communication assistance; - review of emergency plan; - Neighbourhood Plan.		

Project Name		Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park		Project Number	93
Resolution No.	Funds	Date	Commentary		
<u>FC.86.01.26</u>	£25,000	28.04.26	Formal tender process is due to commence shortly.		

GENERAL PURPOSES FORWARD PLAN – 2026/27

STANDING ITEMS FOR GENERAL PURPOSES AGENDA	REPORT LEAD
Minutes from the last meeting	Chief Officer
Action list	Mgt Team
Project list	Mgt Team
Bills paid	Chief Officer
Bad Debts	Deputy Chief Officer
Income and expenditure reports	CO/Deputy CO
Buildings Update	F&C Manager
Health & Safety Update	Deputy CO/F&C Mgr
Member Audit reports	CO/Deputy CO
Reports from outside bodies	Councillor representatives
Draft lease agreements for consideration under confidential business	CO/F&C Mgr
Luxfords report	Hospitality Manager

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
21 September 2026	New Branding Guidelines	Marketing & Com Eng Officer
	Review of Media Policy	Marketing & Com Eng Officer
	Review of Social Media Policy	Marketing & Com Eng Officer
	Review of Communications Plan	Marketing & Com Eng Officer
	Minutes and recommendations from Finance Sub Committee	Deputy Chief Officer
	CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS	
	Any outstanding lease arrangements	Chief Officer

GENERAL PURPOSES FORWARD PLAN – 2026/27

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
23 November 2026	Budget Considerations for 2027/28	Deputy Chief Officer
	Internal Audit report	Deputy Chief Officer
	Minutes and recommendations from Finance Sub Committee	Deputy Chief Officer
	Review of Risk Management Policy - 2027	Chief Officer
	Policy reviews	Chief Officer
	Review of Service Level Agreements	Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Off
	Fees and Charges for 2027/28	Chief Officer
	Proposals for West Park	Facilities & Compliance Mgr
	CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS	
	Any outstanding lease arrangements	Chief Officer
	Minutes and recommendations from Personnel Sub Committee	Deputy Chief Officer
	Review of tenders for Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park	Facilities & Compliance Mgr

GP Committee at 31 July 2026

	Apr 26 Actuals £	May 26 Actuals £	Jun 26 Actuals £	Jul 26 Actuals £	Actuals at 31 Jul 26 £	Budget at 31 Jul 26 £	Aug 26 Budget £	Sept 26 Budget £	Oct 26 Budget £	Nov 26 Budget £	Dec 26 Budget £	Jan 27 Budget £	Feb 27 Budget £	Mar 26 Budget £	Antici- pated yr end	Total 2026/27 Budgets
Sales																
Training and Administration (4410)	0	330	0	0	330	417	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	354	1,413	1,500
Festive Light Income (4530)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	3,000	3,000
Bank Interest - Business Reserve (4580)	86	514	372	251	1,223	800	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	2,823	2,400
Bank Interest - Capital Reserve (4581)	1,111	1,014	1,340	2,248	5,713	5,200	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	16,113	15,600
Interest Misc. (Fixed Rate Bond) (4583)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,715	0	0	0	0	0	10,715	10,715
Civic Centre (4610-4676)	16,337	11,387	9,711	7,633	45,067	43,827	10,957	10,957	10,957	10,957	10,957	10,957	10,957	10,957	132,721	131,480
Feed-in Tariff Payments (4677)	0	0	2,684	0	2,684	2,500	0	2,500	0	0	2,500	0	0	2,500	10,184	10,000
Quickborn Suite rent (4690)	750	750	750	750	3,000	3,000	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	9,000	9,000
West Park Pavilion (4710)	0	0	1,208	1,034	2,242	1,800	0	1,800	0	0	1,800	0	0	1,800	7,642	7,200
Victoria Pavilion (4719-4723)	1,056	1,374	1,011	1,016	4,457	5,850	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,462	1,462	16,157	17,550
RHI - C.Centre Boiler (4724)	4,042	0	0	1,816	5,858	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	4,000	0	0	1,000	14,858	13,000
Victoria Storage Garages (4726)	0	50	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	100	500
Cemetery Chapel workshop (4730)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,000	6,000	6,000
Foresters Hall (4760-4762)	1,310	1,755	2,723	364	6,151	6,525	1,631	1,631	1,631	1,631	1,631	1,631	1,631	1,631	19,201	19,575
Foresters Chapel (4770)	0	0	288	0	288	288	0	288	0	0	288	0	0	288	1,150	1,150
2a Vernon Road, rent (4771-4773)	800	800	800	800	3,200	3,200	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	9,600	9,600
Signal Box (4775 & 4776)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000	5,000
Osborn Hall (4780)	0	0	0	672	672	800	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	772	900
Ridgewood Village Hall (4781)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,100	0	2,100	2,100
Bridge Cottage (4783)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,965	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,965	4,965
The Source & Com Fridge (4795&98)	0	0	874	0	874	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	1,250	0	0	2,375	5,499	5,625
Town Crier (4436)	0	0	63	0	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	63	0
Community Toilet Scheme (4673)	0	525	0	0	525	525	525	0	0	525	0	0	525	0	2,100	2,100
Wealden Lottery grant funding (4534)	15	10	13	15	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	0
Total Sales	25,507	18,508	21,836	16,598	82,449	79,781	21,730	27,757	27,920	17,730	27,142	20,205	19,830	36,467	281,228	278,960
Purchases																
Administration (5410/5412-13/5415-16)	1,814	2,644	1,353	2,322	8,132	5,940	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485	1,485	20,012	17,820
General Advertising (5420)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250	250	250
Recruitment Advertising (5425)	0	230	0	0	230	250	0	250	0	0	250	0	0	0	730	750
Data protection (5428)	0	73	0	0	73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73	0
Office Equipment/Computers (5430)	1,859	2,489	4,376	1,111	9,835	7,500	0	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	17,335	15,000
Hospitality (5435)	9	12	0	13	34	133	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	301	400
Health & Safety (5455)	75	0	0	0	75	1,000	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	2,075	3,000
Insurances (5460)	0	0	10,161	0	10,161	11,000	0	0	43,000	0	0	0	0	0	53,161	54,000
Public Works Loan Costs	0	0	0	18,740	18,740	18,500	0	0	0	0	0	18,500	0	0	37,240	37,000
Mayor's Allowance (5465)	0	0	529	0	529	525	0	525	0	0	525	0	0	525	2,104	2,100
Grants Section142 (SLA - WCA) (5480)	0	0	0	12,250	12,250	12,250	0	0	12,250	0	0	0	0	0	24,500	24,500
Grants - Power of Competence (5485)	0	18,999	0	0	18,999	19,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,999	19,000
SLA - Wealden Volunteering (5487)	0	0	0	2,250	2,250	2,250	0	2,250	0	0	2,250	0	0	2,250	9,000	9,000
SLA - Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival (5488)	0	3,500	0	0	3,500	3,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,500	3,500
Clothing - Corp & Prot (5490)	0	0	0	33	33	333	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	700	1,000
Internal Audit Fees (5494)	0	0	800	0	800	800	0	0	800	0	0	0	0	900	2,500	2,500
(External) Audit Fees (5495)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,200	0	0	0	0	0	2,200	2,200
Accountant fees (5475)	0	0	0	3,950	3,950	4,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,950	4,800
Professional Fees (5497)	5,185	1,419	930	500	8,034	1,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	28,034	30,000
Festive Lights (5530)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16,500	0	0	16,500	16,500
Festive Light Electricity (5532)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	0	0	500	500
Office Staff - Salaries (5540)	26,613	27,195	27,143	27,182	108,134	111,991	27,998	27,998	27,998	27,998	27,998	27,998	27,998	27,998	332,115	335,972
Office Staff - National Insurance (5541)	3,429	3,516	3,508	3,505	13,959	14,548	3,637	3,637	3,637	3,637	3,637	3,637	3,637	3,637	43,056	43,645
Office Staff - Pensions (5542)	4,817	4,922	4,913	4,909	19,561	20,382	5,096	5,096	5,096	5,096	5,096	5,096	5,096	5,096	60,326	61,147
Members Allowances/Expenses (5543 - 45)	0	0	3,902	0	3,902	4,603	0	4,593	0	0	4,593	0	0	4,593	17,679	18,370
Newsletter (5577)	670	400	400	400	1,870	1,800	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	5,470	5,400
Bank Charges (5581)	65	58	79	68	270	317	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	904	960
Civic Centre Running Costs (5609-5660)	14,216	11,446	6,328	6,927	38,917	39,433	9,071	9,071	9,071	9,071	12,221	9,271	8,471	5,271	110,434	110,950
Caretakers - Salaries (5860)	7,526	8,810	7,463	8,744	32,543	36,389	9,097	9,097	9,097	9,097	9,097	9,097	9,097	9,097	105,321	109,167
Caretakers - National Insurance (5861)	816	1,008	807	999	3,629	3,958	990	990	990	990	990	990	990	990	11,546	11,875
Caretakers - Pension (5862)	1,398	1,332	1,143	1,325	5,197	6,623	1,656	1,656	1,656	1,656	1,656	1,656	1,656	1,656	18,443	19,868
Casual caretakers (5686)	274	384	215	111	985	1,250	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	4,318	5,000
West Park (5711/5713/5716)	0	288	0	0	288	2,067	517	517	517	517	517	517	517	517	4,421	6,200
Victoria Pavilion (5721-23/5725-26)	2,135	922	4,913	1,687	9,657	9,967	2,492	2,492	2,492	2,492	2,492	2,492	1,892	1,892	28,391	28,700
Cemetery Buildings (5730-5732)	121	116	90	113	441	500	100	100	100	100	100	100	0	750	1,791	1,850
Signal Box (5735 & 5755)	337	332	197	346	1,212	0	0	1,250	0	0	0	0	0	1,250	3,712	2,500
The Source & Com Fridge (5743 & 5744)	626	629	1,094	1,138	3,487	3,147	787	787	787	787	787	787	167	167	8,541	8,200
Foresters Hall (5760-5766)	1,473	325	1,608	1,160	4,567	6,768	1,072	1,072	1,072	1,072	1,072	1,072	802	802	12,604	12,325
2a Vernon Road (5772 and 5774)	0	0	0	63	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,063	1,000

GP Committee at 31 July 2026

	Apr 26 Actuals £	May 26 Actuals £	Jun 26 Actuals £	Jul 26 Actuals £	Actuals at 31 Jul 26 £	Budget at 31 Jul 26 £	Aug 26 Budget £	Sept 26 Budget £	Oct 26 Budget £	Nov 26 Budget £	Dec 26 Budget £	Jan 27 Budget £	Feb 27 Budget £	Mar 26 Budget £	Antici- pated yr end	Total 2026/27 Budgets
Subscriptions (5793)	3,418	0	0	260	3,678	3,500	0	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	250	5,928	5,750
Training (5794)	425	0	0	381	806	333	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	7,473	10,000
WPA Top Up (5547)	26	(1,054)	801	(341)	(568)	1,500	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	2,432	4,500
All Building Cleaning Materials (5750)	96	227	23	205	552	1,333	333	333	333	333	333	333	333	333	3,218	4,000
Total Purchases	77,425	90,223	82,776	100,352	350,776	359,190	69,350	82,717	127,600	69,350	80,117	105,050	67,160	80,727	1,032,848	1,051,199

New initiatives 2026/27

Building Maintenance Fund (5778)	20,980	1,116	4,177	4,597	30,871	N/A										68,000
Professional expertise	0	3,500	0	0	3,500	N/A										15,000
New tables/trolleys - CC (Phase 2)	9,945	0	0	0	9,945	N/A										10,000
Ridgewood Car Park	0	0	0	0	0	N/A										25,000
Contingency	0	0	0	0	0	N/A										10,000
	30,925	4,616	4,177	4,597	44,315	N/A										128,000

Earmarked reserves						
Nominal code recorded on Sage						
Civic Centre (New Website) (5565)	0	1,560	0	0	1,560	
Civic Centre (office reconfig) (5629)	1,176	0	0	0	1,176	
Insurance Reintatement Valuations (5780)	0	7,590	0	0	7,590	

Luxfords at 31 July 2026

	Apr 26 Actuals £	May 26 Actuals £	Jun 26 Actuals £	Jul 26 Actuals £	Actuals at 31 Jul 26	Budget at 31 Jul 26	Aug 26 Budget £	Sept 26 Budget £	Oct 26 Budget £	Nov 26 Budget £	Dec 26 Budget £	Jan 26 Budget £	Feb 26 Budget £	Mar 26 Budget £	Anticipated at year end	Year End 2026/27 Budgets
Sales																
Restaurant Food Sales	14,404	12,632	10,039	10,597	47,672	62,167	14,250	15,542	17,000	15,542	16,200	14,668	15,590	15,542	172,005	186,500
Restaurant Bar Sales	1,681	2,222	3,706	4,148	11,757	3,617	904	904	904	904	904	904	904	904	18,991	10,850
Function Food Sales	3,549	1,518	941	2,039	8,047	13,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	3,333	34,714	40,000
Function Bar Sales	565	2,494	1,320	912	5,291	6,875	2,292	2,292	2,292	2,292	2,292	2,292	2,292	2,292	23,625	27,500
Hire of Urn	290	35	105	38	467	400	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,267	1,200
Hire of Luxfords Restaurant	0	0	0	0	0	333	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	667	1,000
Sundry Income	0	0	0	0	0	167	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	333	500
Total Sales	20,489	18,901	16,111	17,734	73,235	86,892	21,004	22,296	23,754	22,296	22,954	21,422	22,345	22,296	251,601	267,550
Total stock held: Bar					2,353	July Stocktake 2026										
Total stock held: Food					2,665											
Purchases																
Food Purchases	5,746	4,075	4,704	5,190	19,716	22,500	4,750	5,625	7,500	5,625	5,750	4,500	5,625	5,625	64,716	67,500
Bar Purchases - non-alcoholic	114	327	407	43	891	1,167	292	292	292	292	292	292	292	292	3,224	3,500
Bar purchases - alcoholic	606	379	476	456	1,918	2,233	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	558	6,384	6,700
Consumables	188	113	72	204	578	933	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	2,444	2,800
Cleaning	10	46	56	36	147	200	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	547	600
Maintenance & Repairs	0	0	640	763	1,403	1,000	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	3,403	3,000
Equipment - New/Replacements	246	67	46	333	691	400	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,491	1,200
Equipment Hire	0	0	144	158	302	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	600	902	1,200
Rates	669	669	669	669	2,675	3,000	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	8,675	7,500
Electricity	931	766	778	699	3,174	4,017	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	11,207	12,050
Gas	178	262	251	217	909	1,000	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	2,909	3,000
Water	92	0	0	78	169	400	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	969	1,200
Refuse Collection	457	390	423	412	1,682	900	225	225	225	225	225	225	225	225	3,482	2,700
Stocktaking	230	0	0	0	230	238	238	0	0	238	0	238	0	0	943	950
Uniforms/Protective clothing	63	0	0	0	63	125	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	125	188	250
Salaries	9,854	14,159	11,142	13,479	48,634	45,856	11,464	11,464	11,464	11,464	11,464	11,464	11,464	11,464	140,346	137,568
National Insurance	817	1,495	1,062	1,400	4,774	4,425	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	13,624	13,274
Pension	1,514	2,395	1,945	2,373	8,228	8,346	2,086	2,086	2,086	2,086	2,086	2,086	2,086	2,086	24,919	25,037
Casual wages	734	1,037	814	1,137	3,721	1,667	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	417	7,054	5,000
Credit charges	48	121	180	208	556	667	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	1,890	2,000
Total Purchases	22,495	26,300	23,810	27,855	100,461	99,672	24,040	24,677	26,552	24,915	24,802	23,790	24,677	25,402	299,317	297,028

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee**,
on Monday 27 July 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield.

PRESENT: Cllr. D. Manvell (Chair) Cllr. D. Ward (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. K. Bedwell Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. P. Ullmann

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah D'Alessio – Deputy Chief Officer (RFO)
Holly Goring – Chief Officer (Town Clerk)

Minutes taken by Sarah D'Alessio.

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda
None received.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3.0. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee held on the 12 March 2026.

FS.03.07.26

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee of the 12 March 2026 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.0 SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INVESTMENTS

Members were presented with an extract of the Town Council's bank accounts and amounts within these on 30 June 2026. Members were reminded that the precept was paid across two instalments within the year (end of April and end of September). The Business Reserve account had a sum of £327,000 on the day of the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Officer informed members that:

- (i) the 12 month fixed term account was up in October, so required consideration prior to the end date, and;
- (ii) the Lloyds Treasurer Account was currently charging the Town Council a fee of £8.50 per month to hold the account open and there was currently a sum of £20,922.65 within this account.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of having business accounts with one or a range of banks. Ultimately, they agreed it was about getting the best interest rate for the funds available.

FS.04.07.26

Members **RESOLVED** to task the Deputy Chief Officer with:

- (i) arranging a meeting with the NatWest Business Bank Manager to understand the current options available for the Town Council's investments;
- (ii) to understand the smallest amount able to remain in the Lloyds Treasurer account and to look at whether there was another account available that would gain interest, without a monthly fee.

Members noted that they were happy to resolve any proposals out of the above investigations, should timescales be restricted.

5.0

TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES

The Internal Auditor had noted that although the Town Council had sound reserves, a large proportion of its reserves were earmarked for specific projects and initiatives and the amount was decreasing year on year as a result of the delivery of large projects. The Town Council needed to keep a close eye on the general reserve pot, and the recommended requirement to hold the equivalent of three-months of running costs, in case something happened.

Within their discussions members noted the impact of:

- Local Government Reorganisation and potential for assets or services to be devolved to the parish/town sector in future years, placing additional burden on the Town Council's finances;
- the location of a number of new developments in the Uckfield area sitting just outside of the parish boundary, and therefore seeing a limited amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) due to Uckfield Town Council;
- the development of the Neighbourhood Plan would however see the CIL contribution increase from 15% to 25%;

FS.05.07.26

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) a presentation be given to all members at Full Council highlighting the current financial position, priorities of the Town Council as outlined within the Annual and Strategic Plans, and;
- (ii) to recommend to Full Council, the re-allocation of funds from within the Earmarked Reserve – Town Centre Regeneration Masterplanning, into Contingency, and;
- (iii) for members to further consider the setting aside of contingency funds within the budget setting process for 2027-28.

6.0

MATTERS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIR

Members discussed the concern of the recent news received regarding the closure of TG Jones and Post Office.

FS.06.07.26

Members **RESOLVED** for contact to be made with the Post Office to express the Town Council's concerns and to remain engaged in this process.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm.

Meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Monday 21 September 2026

Agenda Item 5.4

TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JULY 2026

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee from their recent meeting on 27 July 2026.
- 1.2 The report also sets out further recommendations in relation to the Town Council's Annual Investment Strategy, and how we prioritise and review our strategic projects.

2.0 Recommendations of Finance Sub-Committee on 27 July 2026

4.0 SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INVESTMENTS

Members were presented with an extract of the Town Council's bank accounts and amounts within these on 30 June 2026. Members were reminded that the precept was paid across two instalments within the year (end of April and end of September). The Business Reserve account had a sum of £327,000 on the day of the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Officer informed members that:

- (i) the 12 month fixed term account was up in October, so required consideration prior to the end date, and;
- (ii) the Lloyds Treasurer Account was currently charging the Town Council a fee of £8.50 per month to hold the account open and there was currently a sum of £20,922.65 within this account.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of having business accounts with one or a range of banks. Ultimately, they agreed it was about getting the best interest rate for the funds available.

FS.04.07.26

Members **RESOLVED** to task the Deputy Chief Officer with:

- (i) arranging a meeting with the NatWest Business Bank Manager to understand the current options available for the Town Council's investments;
- (ii) to understand the smallest amount able to remain in the Lloyds Treasurer account and to look at whether there was another account available that would gain interest, without a monthly fee.

Members noted that they were happy to resolve any proposals out of the above investigations, should timescales be restricted.

- 2.1 The meeting with the NatWest Business Bank Manager has taken place, as well as investigations into current interest rates, and options. The Deputy Chief Officer (RFO) will report back to members of Finance Sub Committee at the scheduled meeting in October;

5.0 TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES

The Internal Auditor had noted that although the Town Council had sound reserves, a large proportion of its reserves were earmarked for specific projects and initiatives and the amount was decreasing year on year as a result of the delivery of large projects. The Town Council needed to keep a close eye on the general reserve pot, and the recommended requirement to hold the equivalent of three-months of running costs, in case something happened.

Within their discussions members noted the impact of:

- Local Government Reorganisation and potential for assets or services to be devolved to the parish/town sector in future years, placing additional burden on the Town Council's finances;
- the location of a number of new developments in the Uckfield area sitting just outside of the parish boundary, and therefore seeing a limited amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) due to Uckfield Town Council;
- the development of the Neighbourhood Plan would however see the CIL contribution increase from 15% to 25%;

FS.05.07.26

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) a presentation be given to all members at Full Council highlighting the current financial position, priorities of the Town Council as outlined within the Annual and Strategic Plans, and;
- (ii) to recommend to Full Council, the re-allocation of funds from within the Earmarked Reserve – Town Centre Regeneration Masterplanning, into Contingency, and;
- (iii) for members to further consider the setting aside of contingency funds within the budget setting process for 2027-28.

- 2.2 A presentation was given to Full Council on 7 September, outlining the current financial position, the council's priorities and funding earmarked for delivery. As part of that agenda item, members resolved to support the re-allocation of funds from within the earmarked reserves of 'Town Centre Regeneration Masterplanning' to 'Contingency.'

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the above recommendations and confirm that they:
- (i) ratify the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee, on 27 July 2026;
 - (ii) support the arrangement of a Finance Sub Committee in October 2026 to review the current rates and options available, for re-investment and;
 - (iii) having consideration for 'contingency' within the budget setting process for 2027-28.

Contact Officer: Sarah D'Alessio

Meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Monday 21 September 2026

Agenda Item 6.1

TO NOTE THE CURRENT POSITION WITH THE COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the current position with the Council's buildings.

2.0 The Buildings

2.1 The Civic Centre

- Following on from the managers audit of the Civic Centre, various works have been carried out such as painting touch ups, removal of clutter, additional notice boards, replacement clocks and the refresh of the members tea trolley;
- Works to refurbish the ground floor toilets are still underway. New energy efficient lighting and flooring has been installed and painting will follow later in the year;
- Works to refurbish the Oakleaf, Martlets and Council Chamber rooms are still underway. Painting has been completed and new flooring is scheduled to be fitted late September;
- The disabled platform lift has been repaired following its annual insurance inspection;
- The lift has had its six-monthly service;
- The evacuation chair has had its annual service and a cost to replace it has been requested due to the chair coming up to being ten years old;
- The water coolers have had there six-monthly services carried out;
- New heatpumps have been installed to the biomass boiler and the full system cleaned out, ready to restart for the autumn/winter period;

The Source and nearby vicinity

- A meeting has been undertaken with the leaseholder to discuss potential maintenance upgrades. If viable these will be added to the works list;

The Signal Box

- This building is being inspected on a weekly basis, as instructed by our insurance provider;
- The new stairs and windows have been installed to ensure the building meets current building regulations;
- The building rubbish and foliage has been removed from site;
- The site is now ready for the draft lease to be drawn up with a view to let the building on a long-term lease;

Victoria Pavilion

- The outside toilet has been repaired following a leak caused by anti-social behaviour;
- The Gas safety service has been carried out on the gas boiler;

Foresters Hall

- The six-monthly fire alarm service and emergency lighting run down has been carried out;

Snatts Road, Chapel

- This building is still being inspected on a weekly basis, as instructed by our insurance provider;

West Park

- The Facilities & Compliance Manager is working with the leaseholders in relation to health and safety, compliance and providing support to maintain the updated compliance inspections. Contractors are now carrying out compliance services managed by the Facilities & Compliance Manager;
- A repair to leaking toilet has been carried out;
- Two broken lights have been replaced;

2A Vernon Road

- The Gas safety service has been carried out on the gas boiler;

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: James Hollingdale

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy Number 26		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1.	January 2007	GP 15.01.07
2.	GP.011.07.10	Addition of Chairman of the Town Centre Steering Group as additional contact with the media.
3.	20.06.16	Amendment to Contact with the Media
4.	GP – 21.09.26	Complete revision of existing Media Policy.

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Uckfield Town Council recognises that effective communication is essential to maintaining an open, accountable and transparent relationship with residents, businesses, community organisations, partner authorities, the media and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for how Uckfield Town Council communicates and engages with its audiences. It aims to ensure that official communications are accurate, accessible, timely, appropriate, inclusive and politically impartial.
- 1.3 The Council welcomes constructive engagement with the media and recognises the important role that journalists and media organisations play in informing the community and holding public bodies to account.
- 1.4 This policy is not intended to restrict freedom of speech or prevent Councillors from expressing personal views. It establishes a clear distinction between communications made on behalf of Uckfield Town Council and those made by individual Councillors in a personal or political capacity.
- 1.5 This policy should be read alongside the Council's Social Media Policy, Branding Guidelines, Communications Plan, Members' Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies and procedures.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to Councillors, employees, volunteers and any other person authorised to communicate on behalf of Uckfield Town Council.
- 2.2 It applies to official Council communications across channels including, but not limited to:
 - press releases and media statements;
 - interviews and responses to journalists;
 - Council websites;
 - social media;
 - email communications and newsletters;
 - printed publications, posters and leaflets;
 - noticeboards;
 - photography and video;
 - signage and displays;
 - public information campaigns;
 - presentations and promotional materials;
 - communications relating to Council services, facilities and events.
- 2.3 Detailed requirements relating specifically to social media and corporate branding are contained within the Council's Social Media Policy and Branding Guidelines respectively.

3.0 Communications Principles

3.1 Uckfield Town Council's official communications should be:

Accurate – information should be factually correct and appropriately checked before publication.

Accessible – communications should be designed so that as many people as reasonably possible can access and understand them.

Timely – information should be communicated at an appropriate time and unnecessary delays avoided.

Transparent – the Council should communicate openly about its services, decisions and responsibilities, subject to legal and confidentiality requirements.

Inclusive – consideration should be given to the different needs, circumstances and communication preferences of the community.

Impartial – Council resources must not be used for party-political purposes and official communications should distinguish clearly between Council positions and individual opinions.

3.2 Communications should use clear and understandable language appropriate to the intended audience. Unnecessary jargon, technical terminology and unexplained abbreviations should be avoided.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

4.1 All Council communications must comply with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and codes of practice in force at the time of publication.

4.2 This includes, where applicable:

- the Local Government Acts 1972, 1986 and 1988;
- the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity;
- the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- legislation and regulations relating to public access to and reporting of Council meetings;
- copyright and intellectual property law;
- electoral legislation and guidance relating to periods of heightened sensitivity.

4.3 Council publicity should be objective, balanced and appropriate. Public resources must not be used to promote party-political interests or improperly seek to persuade the public to hold a particular political view.

4.4 Where a proposed communication presents a significant legal, regulatory or reputational risk, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk and, where appropriate, professional legal advisers before publication.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Council's official communications comply with relevant legislation, Council policy and decisions of the Council. The Town Clerk should be consulted on communications involving significant legal, political, reputational, confidential or organisational matters.

5.2 Communications and Marketing

The officer(s) responsible for communications and marketing may manage routine communications activity on behalf of the Council within their delegated responsibilities. This may include preparing and issuing press releases, updating official digital channels, responding to routine media enquiries, producing public information and coordinating campaigns.

5.3 Council Officers

Officers may provide factual information concerning services and areas for which they are responsible. Where an enquiry is sensitive, contentious or outside an officer's authority, it should be referred to the Town Clerk or appropriate communications officer.

5.4 The Mayor and Committee Chairs

The Mayor and relevant Committee Chairs may provide official quotations or comments concerning matters within their respective roles, where appropriate. Official statements should reflect agreed Council decisions and should not present personal or party-political opinions as the position of the Council.

5.5 Councillors

Individual Councillors are entitled to communicate with the media and public in their own capacity. Where doing so, Councillors should make clear when they are expressing a personal or political opinion rather than an agreed position of Uckfield Town Council. Councillors must comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and should have regard to confidentiality, accuracy and the reputation of the Council.

6.0 Official Council Communications

6.1 Official communications should clearly identify Uckfield Town Council as the source and comply with the Council's Branding Guidelines.

6.2 Communications should accurately represent decisions made by the Council or its committees and should not imply that a decision has been made where one remains under consideration.

6.3 Information should be checked by an appropriate officer before publication. Specialist, technical or service-specific information should, where appropriate, be verified by the relevant officer or service manager.

6.4 Routine communications may be approved and published by authorised communications staff without individual approval from the Town Clerk, provided they fall within agreed responsibilities and Council policy.

- 6.5 Sensitive communications involving legal proceedings, significant reputational risk, confidential information, major incidents or contentious Council matters should be referred to the Town Clerk before publication.

7.0 Media Relations and Enquiries

- 7.1 Uckfield Town Council will seek to maintain constructive and professional relationships with local, regional and other relevant media organisations.
- 7.2 Media enquiries received by Councillors or employees should be referred to the appropriate officer where an official Council response is required.
- 7.3 Routine factual enquiries may be answered by an authorised officer. More complex or sensitive enquiries should be coordinated with the Town Clerk and relevant officers or Councillors.
- 7.4 Responses should be accurate, proportionate and provided within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of journalists' deadlines where practicable.
- 7.5 No Councillor or employee should disclose confidential, exempt or otherwise restricted Council information to the media without lawful authority.

8.0 Press Releases and Statements

- 8.1 Press releases may be issued to communicate Council decisions, services, events, consultations, projects, achievements, public information or the Council's position on matters of legitimate public interest.
- 8.2 Councillors and officers are encouraged to identify matters that may warrant proactive communication and raise these with the officer responsible for communications.
- 8.3 Press releases should be written in clear language, be factually accurate and distinguish between factual information, Council decisions and attributed quotations.
- 8.4 Routine press releases may be prepared and issued by authorised communications staff. Where a release concerns a significant policy position, sensitive issue or substantial reputational risk, approval should be sought from the Town Clerk.
- 8.5 Where a quotation is attributed to a Councillor or external individual, that person should normally be given the opportunity to approve the wording attributed to them before publication.

9.0 Councillors and the Media

- 9.1 Councillors may speak to journalists and other media organisations in their individual capacity.

- 9.2 Where an individual Councillor's view differs from an agreed Council position, this distinction should be made clear.
- 9.3 Councillors should not use Council resources, branding or official communication channels in a manner that could reasonably imply Council endorsement of a personal or party-political position.
- 9.4 When commenting on Council matters, Councillors should take reasonable steps to ensure that factual information is accurate.
- 9.5 Nothing within this policy removes or replaces the responsibilities of Councillors under the Members' Code of Conduct.

10.0 Accuracy, Corrections and Misinformation

- 10.1 Uckfield Town Council recognises the importance of maintaining public confidence through accurate communications.
- 10.2 Where the Council publishes materially inaccurate information, it should correct that information promptly and transparently through an appropriate channel.
- 10.3 The Council is not required to respond to every criticism, opinion or inaccurate statement made publicly or online.
- 10.4 Where misinformation presents a significant risk to public understanding, safety, Council services or the Council's reputation, the Town Clerk and appropriate communications officer should consider whether a factual correction or clarification is necessary.
- 10.5 Any response should be proportionate and should seek to provide accurate information rather than prolong unnecessary public disagreement.

11.0 Accessibility and Inclusive Communications

- 11.1 The Council will seek to make its communications accessible to the widest reasonable audience and will consider accessibility when producing both digital and printed material.
- 11.2 Communications should use plain English and appropriate formatting wherever practicable.
- 11.3 Digital communications should consider accessibility requirements including:
- alternative text for meaningful images;
 - captions or subtitles for video where appropriate;
 - sufficient colour contrast;
 - readable typography;
 - meaningful hyperlink text;
 - accessible documents and document structures;
 - avoiding unnecessary reliance on images containing essential written information.

11.4 The Council recognises that not all residents use digital communications. Where appropriate and proportionate, alternative methods such as printed information, noticeboards, telephone contact and face-to-face communication should continue to be considered.

11.5 Reasonable requests for information in an alternative accessible format should be considered in accordance with relevant legislation and Council procedures.

12.0 Data Protection, Privacy and Confidentiality

12.1 Personal information must only be used within Council communications where there is an appropriate lawful basis for doing so.

12.2 Employees and Councillors must take particular care when communicating information relating to individuals, including contact information, employment matters, health information, complaints and other confidential or sensitive information.

12.3 Confidential Council documents, exempt reports and minutes, private correspondence and other restricted information must not be disclosed without appropriate authority.

12.4 Suspected unauthorised disclosures or data breaches should be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's relevant procedures.

13.0 Photography, Video and Content

13.1 Photography and video may be used to communicate and promote Council services, facilities, events and community activity where appropriate.

13.2 The Council should ensure that it has an appropriate basis for capturing, storing and publishing images and video and should take additional care where children, young people or vulnerable individuals are identifiable.

13.3 Where consent is required, it should be obtained and recorded appropriately.

13.4 Copyright, licensing and intellectual property rights must be considered before third-party photographs, graphics, music, video or other content are published through Council channels.

13.5 Images and other media assets should be stored securely and retained in accordance with relevant Council procedures.

14.0 Crisis and Emergency Communications

14.1 During an emergency, serious incident or significant disruption to Council services, communications should prioritise public safety, accuracy and timely information.

- 14.2 Where practicable, information should be verified before publication. The need to communicate quickly should not override the requirement to avoid publishing information known or reasonably suspected to be inaccurate.
- 14.3 The Town Clerk, or an appropriately delegated officer, will coordinate the Council's official response to significant incidents.
- 14.4 Relevant communication channels should be selected according to the nature and urgency of the incident.
- 14.5 Where another authority or emergency service is the lead organisation, Uckfield Town Council should avoid issuing conflicting information and should direct residents to authoritative sources where appropriate.

15.0 Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology

- 15.1 The Council recognises that artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies may support communications activity, including research, drafting, analysis and content development.
- 15.2 Any communication produced with the assistance of artificial intelligence remains the responsibility of the Council employee or authorised person who reviews and publishes it.
- 15.3 AI-assisted content must be reviewed by a person before publication for factual accuracy, appropriateness, accessibility, political impartiality and compliance with Council policy.
- 15.4 Confidential, commercially sensitive, personal or otherwise restricted Council information must not be entered into an artificial intelligence system unless that system has been appropriately authorised for such use by the Council.
- 15.5 AI-generated images, audio or other synthetic content should not be used in a way that could materially mislead the public as to the authenticity of an event, person, statement or Council activity.
- 15.6 The Council will keep its approach to emerging technologies under review as technology, regulation and recognised good practice develop.

16.0 Elections and Periods of Heightened Sensitivity

- 16.1 The Council will comply with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and relevant electoral guidance during election periods and other periods of heightened sensitivity.
- 16.2 Council communications must not provide, or reasonably appear to provide, electoral or party-political advantage to any candidate, Councillor, political party or group.
- 16.3 Particular care should be taken regarding:
- Councillor quotations and photographs;
 - launches and publicity events;
 - controversial issues;

- campaign-style communications;
 - social media content;
 - use of Council resources by elected Members.
- 16.4 Essential service information, statutory communications and necessary public information may continue to be published during these periods where appropriate.
- 16.5 Where there is uncertainty about whether proposed communications are appropriate, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk before publication.
- 17.0 Council and Committee Meetings**
- 17.1 The Council will provide public and media access to Council and Committee meetings, agendas, reports and minutes in accordance with applicable legislation.
- 17.2 Members of the public and media may report, photograph, film, record or otherwise communicate proceedings from meetings where permitted by law and subject to any lawful restrictions applying to a particular meeting or item.
- 17.3 The Council may establish reasonable arrangements to ensure that recording or reporting does not materially disrupt proceedings.
- 17.4 Confidential or exempt business will be handled in accordance with applicable legislation and Council procedures.
- 18.0 Branding and Corporate Identity**
- 18.1 Official Council communications should comply with Uckfield Town Council's Branding Guidelines.
- 18.2 The Council's logo, colours, typography and other elements of its corporate identity should be used consistently to help residents recognise official Council communications.
- 18.3 Council branding must not be used without appropriate authority in a way that implies Council endorsement, partnership or support.
- 18.4 Detailed requirements concerning visual identity, tone of voice and application of the Council brand are contained within the Branding Guidelines.
- 19.0 Social Media**
- 19.1 Social media is an important part of Uckfield Town Council's wider communications activity.
- 19.2 Official Council social media content must comply with the principles contained within this Media and Communications Policy.

19.3 Detailed requirements relating to account administration, security, content, moderation, comments, interaction with users, Councillor use and management of social media channels are contained within the Council's Social Media Policy.

19.4 Where information is particularly important to residents, the Council should consider whether social media alone provides sufficient communication or whether additional channels should also be used.

20.0 Sustainable Communications

20.1 The Council will consider environmental, social and financial sustainability when planning communications activity.

20.2 Digital communications should be used where they provide an effective and appropriate alternative to unnecessary printing.

20.3 The Council should nevertheless consider digital exclusion and should not move information exclusively online where doing so would create an unreasonable barrier to accessing important Council information or services.

20.4 Where printed materials are required, consideration should be given to appropriate quantities, responsible procurement, recyclable materials and avoiding unnecessary waste.

20.5 Reusable or durable materials should be considered for recurring events, signage and promotional activity where practical and cost-effective.

21.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

21.1 The Council will monitor the effectiveness of its communications through appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures.

21.2 These may include website usage, social media engagement, campaign reach, media coverage, consultation responses, event feedback, resident enquiries and other appropriate measures.

21.3 Communications data should be interpreted in context. High reach or engagement alone does not necessarily demonstrate successful communication, and consideration should also be given to whether communications reached the intended audience and achieved their intended purpose.

21.4 Lessons identified through evaluation should inform future communications planning.

21.5 This policy will be reviewed periodically and sooner where significant legislative, technological or organisational changes make this necessary.

22.0 Related Policies and Documents

22.1 This policy should be read alongside relevant Uckfield Town Council documents, including:

- Social Media Policy;

- Branding Guidelines;
- Communications Plan;
- Members' Code of Conduct;
- Data Protection Policy and associated procedures;
- Freedom of Information arrangements;
- Equality and accessibility policies or procedures;
- Standing Orders;
- relevant employment and information-security policies.

Where there is any conflict between this policy and legislation or statutory requirements, the applicable legislation or statutory requirement will take precedence.

Review date: September 2027

Responsible Officer: Chief Officer (Town Clerk)

Version: v2

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Number 18		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	GP.19.07.15	General Purposes Committee – 13.07.15 Complete revision of original Internet, E-mail and Social Media Policy.
2	GP - 21.09.26	Complete revision of original Social Media Policy

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Uckfield Town Council recognises social media as an important means of communicating and engaging with residents, businesses, community organisations, visitors and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 Social media enables the Council to share information quickly, promote services and events, encourage participation, receive feedback and engage in two-way communication with the community.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to establish how the Council will use and manage social media safely, effectively, professionally and consistently while protecting the Council, its employees, Councillors and members of the public.
- 1.4 This policy should be read alongside the Council's Media and Communications Policy, Branding Guidelines, Communications Plan, Members' Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy, relevant employment policies and other applicable procedures.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - official social media accounts operated by or on behalf of Uckfield Town Council;
 - employees authorised to manage or contribute to those accounts;
 - Councillors when using official Council social media;
 - Councillors' use of social media where their role as an elected representative is relevant;
 - other individuals authorised to publish content on the Council's behalf.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy, "social media" means online platforms that enable users to create, publish, share or interact with content and communities.
- 2.3 This definition is deliberately platform-neutral and applies to current and future social media platforms rather than being limited to named services.

3.0 Principles of Social Media Use

- 3.1 Official Council social media activity should follow the principles established within the Media and Communications Policy and should be:

Accurate – information should be factually correct.

Accessible – content should be designed so that as many people as reasonably possible can access and understand it.

Respectful – communication should remain professional, courteous and constructive.

Responsive – reasonable enquiries should be acknowledged or answered within an appropriate timeframe.

Consistent – information should be consistent with Council decisions, policies and other official communications.

Impartial – official accounts must remain politically neutral.

- 3.2 Social media should support two-way communication. Where appropriate, the Council should encourage constructive engagement, feedback and participation rather than treating social media solely as a broadcasting tool.

4.0 Official Council Social Media Accounts

- 4.1 Official Council social media accounts may only be established with appropriate authorisation.
- 4.2 All official accounts must:
- be created using an appropriate Council-controlled email address;
 - be clearly identifiable as an official Council account;
 - use approved Council branding;
 - have appropriate administrative access arrangements;
 - comply with this policy and relevant Council procedures.
- 4.3 Ownership of official accounts, usernames, followers, content and associated data remains with Uckfield Town Council rather than any individual employee or Councillor.
- 4.4 Where an employee responsible for an account leaves or changes role, administrative access should be reviewed promptly.

5.0 Account Security and Access

- 5.1 Access to official social media accounts should be limited to authorised individuals.
- 5.2 Strong, unique passwords should be used and multi-factor authentication should be enabled wherever available and appropriate.
- 5.3 Passwords and authentication information must be stored and shared securely in accordance with the Council's information-security arrangements.
- 5.4 Council social media passwords must not be reused for personal accounts or unrelated systems.
- 5.5 Access permissions should be reviewed periodically and whenever responsibilities change.
- 5.6 Suspected unauthorised access, compromised passwords or other security incidents should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or other designated officer.
- 5.7 Where an account is believed to have been compromised, the Council should take prompt action to secure the account, preserve relevant evidence and communicate with the public where necessary.

6.0 Responsibility for Content

- 6.1 Employees authorised to manage official accounts may publish routine content within their delegated responsibilities.
- 6.2 Content concerning sensitive, legal, contentious, confidential or significant reputational matters should be referred to the Town Clerk before publication.

- 6.3 Where content concerns a specialist Council service or project, relevant officers should be consulted where necessary to verify factual information.
- 6.4 Official social media accounts must represent Council decisions and positions accurately and must not be used to express the personal opinions of employees or individual Councillors.
- 6.5 Mistakes should be corrected promptly and transparently where they could materially affect public understanding.

7.0 Content Standards

- 7.1 Content published through official accounts should be appropriate for a public-sector organisation and consistent with the Council's Branding Guidelines.
- 7.2 Official accounts must not knowingly publish or share content that:
- is unlawful;
 - is defamatory;
 - unlawfully discriminates against an individual or group;
 - contains confidential or unlawfully disclosed personal information;
 - infringes copyright or other intellectual property rights;
 - constitutes party-political campaigning;
 - is knowingly false or materially misleading;
 - could reasonably compromise safeguarding or public safety.
- 7.3 Humour and informal language may be appropriate where consistent with the ~ Council's tone of voice and the subject matter, but should not undermine professionalism or public confidence.

8.0 Accessibility

- 8.1 Social media content should be made accessible wherever reasonably practicable.
- 8.2 This should include consideration of:
- alternative text for meaningful images;
 - captions or subtitles for video;
 - clear and concise language;
 - appropriate use of hashtags and capitalisation;
 - sufficient colour contrast;
 - avoiding excessive use of emojis or decorative characters;
 - avoiding images containing large amounts of essential text;
 - providing links to accessible information where social media itself presents limitations.
- 8.3 Important information should not rely exclusively on social media where doing so could unnecessarily exclude residents who do not use those platforms.

9.0 Responding to Comments, Messages and Enquiries

- 9.1 The Council will seek to respond to reasonable questions and enquiries received through social media within an appropriate timeframe, subject to available resources.
- 9.2 Not every comment requires a response.

- 9.3 Where an enquiry requires specialist information, constitutes a formal complaint, concerns personal information or cannot appropriately be resolved publicly, the user should be directed to an appropriate Council contact or formal process.
- 9.4 Employees should not become involved in prolonged arguments or personal disputes through official Council accounts.
- 9.5 Where misinformation is likely to materially affect public understanding, Council services, safety or reputation, a factual clarification may be provided in accordance with the Media and Communications Policy.

10.0 Moderation and Community Standards

- 10.1 The Council welcomes constructive comments, questions, criticism and debate on its social media channels.
- 10.2 The Council will not remove comments merely because they are critical of the Council, its decisions, employees or Councillors.
- 10.3 The Council may hide, remove or report content where it:
- contains unlawful material;
 - contains threats or incites violence;
 - contains discriminatory abuse or harassment;
 - reveals personal or confidential information;
 - constitutes targeted harassment;
 - contains excessive profanity or sexually explicit material;
 - constitutes spam or repetitive commercial promotion;
 - impersonates another person or organisation;
 - compromises safeguarding;
 - is clearly unrelated repetitive content intended to disrupt discussion.
- 10.4 Where appropriate, users may be warned before further moderation action is taken.
- 10.5 Blocking or restricting a user should be proportionate and normally reserved for repeated or serious breaches of published community standards.
- 10.6 Where content may constitute evidence of a criminal offence, safeguarding concern, threat or other serious incident, it should be preserved and reported through the appropriate procedure before removal where practicable.

11.0 Complaints and Customer Service

- 11.1 Social media should not replace the Council's formal complaints procedure.
- 11.2 Where a user appears to be making a formal complaint, they should be directed to the appropriate Council process.
- 11.3 Employees should avoid discussing individual complaints, cases or personal circumstances publicly.

11.4 Where possible, general questions should be answered publicly where the response may also be useful to other residents, provided no personal or confidential information is disclosed.

12.0 Councillors and Social Media

12.1 Councillors are entitled to use social media to communicate with residents and express their own views.

12.2 Councillors are personally responsible for content published through accounts under their control.

12.3 Where an account identifies an individual as a Uckfield Town Councillor, reasonable care should be taken to distinguish between:

- the official position of Uckfield Town Council;
- the Councillor's personal views;
- any party-political position.

12.4 Councillors must comply with the Members' Code of Conduct where it applies to their use of social media.

12.5 Councillors must not disclose confidential or exempt Council information through social media.

12.6 Council branding should not be used on a Councillor's personal or political account in a way that could reasonably cause it to be mistaken for an official Uckfield Town Council account.

12.7 Councillors should consider that online content may be copied, shared, quoted or retained after its original publication or deletion.

12.8 The Council's official social media channels will not normally promote individual Councillors' personal, political or commercial social media accounts. The exception to this rule will be any official account related to the Town Mayor, provided it is used strictly for duties performed by the incumbent Town Mayor.

13.0 Employees' Personal Use of Social Media

13.1 The Council recognises employees' right to use social media in their personal lives.

13.2 Employees should nevertheless be mindful that publicly available content may identify them as employees of Uckfield Town Council.

13.3 Employees must not:

- disclose confidential Council information;
- present personal opinions as official Council positions;
- use official Council accounts for personal purposes;
- use Council branding in a way that falsely suggests official endorsement;
- act in a way that breaches relevant employment policies or legal obligations.

13.4 Personal social media use during working time should not interfere with an employee's duties, except where use forms part of their role or has otherwise been authorised.

14.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 14.1 Personal data collected, received or published through social media must be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant Council policies.
- 14.2 Personal or sensitive information should not normally be requested or discussed through public comments.
- 14.3 Where personal information is required to resolve an enquiry, the individual should be directed to an appropriate private and secure communication channel.
- 14.4 Employees should be aware that private or direct messages received through Council social media accounts may constitute Council records and should be handled accordingly.

15.0 Safeguarding

- 15.1 Safeguarding considerations apply to social media in the same way as other Council activities.
- 15.2 Particular care should be taken when publishing content that identifies children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 15.3 Where consent is required for photography, video or other content, it should be obtained and recorded in accordance with Council procedures.
- 15.4 Any safeguarding concern identified through social media should be reported promptly through the Council's safeguarding arrangements and, where appropriate, to the relevant statutory authority or emergency services.

16.0 Copyright and Intellectual Property

- 16.1 Copyright and intellectual property requirements apply to social media content.
- 16.2 Employees must ensure that the Council has appropriate permission, licence or other lawful authority before publishing third-party photographs, graphics, video, music or written material.
- 16.3 Where appropriate, creators or sources should be credited in accordance with licence requirements.
- 16.4 Content created for Uckfield Town Council should be managed and retained in accordance with the Council's intellectual property and information-management arrangements.

17.0 Artificial Intelligence and Synthetic Content

- 17.1 Artificial intelligence tools may be used to support social media activity where their use has been appropriately authorised.
- 17.2 AI-assisted content must be reviewed by an authorised person before publication for accuracy, appropriateness, accessibility, political impartiality and compliance with Council policies.

- 17.3 Personal, confidential, commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted Council information must not be entered into unauthorised AI services.
- 17.4 AI-generated images, video, audio or other synthetic media must not be published in a manner that could materially mislead users into believing that fabricated content represents a genuine person, event or Council activity.
- 17.5 Where appropriate, the Council should be transparent about significant use of synthetic or AI-generated content.

18.0 Misinformation, Impersonation and Fake Accounts

- 18.1 The Council will take reasonable steps to protect the integrity of its official online identity.
- 18.2 Suspected impersonation or fraudulent accounts purporting to represent Uckfield Town Council should be reported to the relevant platform and escalated internally.
- 18.3 Where a fake account or materially false information presents a significant risk of public confusion, the Council may use its official channels to clarify which accounts or information are authentic.
- 18.4 The Council should avoid amplifying minor misinformation unnecessarily and should respond proportionately to the level of risk.

19.0 Cybersecurity, Phishing and Malicious Content

- 19.1 Employees and Councillors authorised to access Council accounts should remain alert to phishing, malicious links, fraudulent login requests and social-engineering attempts.
- 19.2 Suspicious links, attachments or requests for authentication information should not be opened or acted upon.
- 19.3 Suspected cyber incidents involving an official account should be reported immediately through the Council's appropriate information-security arrangements.

20.0 Evidence, Records and Retention

- 20.1 Social media content may constitute a Council record and should be retained where required by law, Council policy or legitimate operational need.
- 20.2 Where posts, comments or messages may be relevant to a complaint, safeguarding concern, disciplinary matter, legal proceeding, threat or other investigation, appropriate evidence should be preserved.
- 20.3 Evidence should be captured in a manner that records sufficient context, including the content, account, date and time where practicable.
- 20.4 Any retained information should be stored securely and retained only for as long as required under the Council's applicable retention arrangements.

21.0 Elections and Periods of Heightened Sensitivity

- 21.1 Official Council social media accounts must remain politically impartial at all times.

- 21.2 Particular care must be taken during election periods and other periods of heightened sensitivity.
- 21.3 Council accounts and resources must not be used to promote candidates, political parties or electoral campaigns.
- 21.4 Communications during these periods should comply with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and relevant electoral guidance.
- 21.5 Where there is uncertainty over whether proposed social media content is appropriate, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk before publication.

22.0 Paid Social Media Advertising

- 22.1 The Council may use paid social media advertising where it represents an appropriate and cost-effective method of reaching an identified audience.
- 22.2 Paid campaigns should have a clear objective, intended audience, budget and method of evaluation.
- 22.3 Audience targeting should be lawful, proportionate and consistent with the Council's equality, data-protection and political-impartiality responsibilities.
- 22.4 Campaign performance should be reviewed using appropriate measures such as reach, engagement, click-throughs, conversions or other relevant outcomes.

23.0 New and Emerging Platforms

- 23.1 The Council should not establish an account on a new social media platform solely because that platform is popular or widely discussed.
- 23.2 Before establishing an official presence, consideration should be given to:
- the intended audience;
 - communications objectives;
 - staff resources required;
 - accessibility;
 - security and data protection;
 - moderation requirements;
 - reputational risks;
 - expected benefits;
 - whether existing channels already meet the identified need.
- 23.3 Accounts that no longer provide sufficient organisational or community value may be reviewed, archived or closed where appropriate.

24.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 24.1 The Council should monitor social media activity to understand whether its communications are achieving their intended objectives.
- 24.2 Measures may include:
- reach and impressions;
 - engagement;

- audience growth;
- link clicks;
- video views;
- enquiries generated;
- event or consultation participation;
- paid campaign performance;
- qualitative feedback and sentiment.

24.3 Metrics should be considered in context. High follower numbers or engagement alone do not necessarily demonstrate successful communication.

24.4 Evaluation should inform the Council's Communications Plan, content priorities and future use of platforms.

25.0 Breaches of this Policy

25.1 Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to action under relevant Council employment or disciplinary procedures.

25.2 Concerns regarding a Councillor's conduct on social media should be considered through the appropriate Code of Conduct arrangements where applicable.

25.3 Serious incidents involving potential criminal activity, safeguarding, data breaches or cybersecurity should be referred to the appropriate authority where required.

26.0 Review and Related Documents

26.1 This policy will be reviewed periodically and sooner where significant technological, legislative or organisational changes make this necessary.

26.2 The Council recognises that social media and digital communications develop rapidly and will keep its practices under review between formal policy revisions where necessary.

26.3 This policy should be read alongside:

- Media and Communications Policy;
- Branding Guidelines;
- Communications Plan;
- Members' Code of Conduct;
- Data Protection Policy and procedures;
- Safeguarding arrangements;
- relevant employment policies;
- information-security and records-retention procedures.

Policy Number: 26

Date adopted: 19 October 2026

Review date: September 2027

Responsible Officer: Chief Officer (Town Clerk)

Version: v2

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Policy Number 88		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	21.09.26	Document created by Marketing & Community Engagement Officer. Draft presented to GP Committee before Full Council ratification.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Communications Plan sets out how Uckfield Town Council will communicate and engage effectively with residents, businesses, community organisations, partners, visitors and other stakeholders during 2026–27.
- 1.2 The Plan translates the principles contained within the Council's Media and Communications Policy into practical communications activity. It establishes:
 - who the Council needs to communicate with;
 - what the Council needs to communicate;
 - which channels should be used;
 - how communications activity will be planned and coordinated;
 - how accessibility and inclusion will be considered;
 - how communications performance will be monitored and evaluated.
- 1.3 This is intended to be a flexible working document. Communications priorities, channels and audience behaviour may change during the year and the Plan should therefore be reviewed regularly.

2.0 Communications Objectives

During 2026–27, Uckfield Town Council will use its communications activity to support the following objectives.

Objective 1 – Increase understanding of the Council

Improve public understanding of:

- what Uckfield Town Council is responsible for;
- the services and facilities it provides;
- how Council decisions are made;
- how residents can contact and engage with the Council;
- the distinction between Town, District and County Council responsibilities.

Objective 2 – Improve transparency and accountability

Communicate Council decisions, projects, expenditure and priorities clearly and appropriately so residents can understand how and why decisions affecting the town are made.

Objective 3 – Increase community participation

Create opportunities for residents and stakeholders to contribute to consultations, meetings, events, surveys and other forms of community engagement.

Objective 4 – Promote Council services, facilities and events

Increase awareness and appropriate use of Council services, facilities, open spaces, community initiatives and events.

Objective 5 – Reach a broader range of residents

Use an appropriate combination of digital and non-digital communication to reach different age groups, communities and audiences, recognising that no single communication channel reaches everyone.

Objective 6 – Build trust and recognition

Develop a consistent, accessible and recognisable Council identity across communications, supported by the Council's Branding Guidelines.

Objective 7 – Improve communications through evidence

Use communications data, feedback and evaluation to understand what is working and make informed decisions about future communications activity.

3.0 Our Audiences

The Council communicates with a wide range of audiences. Communications should be planned according to the needs and behaviours of the intended audience rather than assuming that the same channel is appropriate for everyone.

Key audiences include:

Audience	Examples of communication needs
Residents	Council decisions, services, consultations, events, local information
Younger residents	Events, recreation, consultations, opportunities to participate
Older residents	Services, community activities, consultations and important public information
Families	Events, play areas, recreation, community services
Businesses	Town-centre matters, events, partnerships, consultations and opportunities
Community organisations	Grants, partnerships, events, consultations and Council support
Allotment tenants	Site information, meetings and service updates
Facility and venue users	Events, bookings, services and operational information
Volunteers	Opportunities, events and community projects
Visitors	Events, facilities and information about the town
Media organisations	Council decisions, projects, public-interest stories and responses
Partner authorities and organisations	Joint initiatives, service information and partnership activity
Councillors	Council communications activity and information relevant to their representative role
Council employees	Organisational information and coordinated communications

The Council should periodically review whether particular groups are under-represented within its communications engagement.

4.0 Communication Principles

All communications activity should follow the principles established within the Council's Media and Communications Policy.

Communications should be:

Accurate – information should be correct and appropriately checked.

Accessible – information should be easy to find, access and understand.

Timely – information should be published at a useful and appropriate time.

Transparent – the Council should communicate openly wherever possible.

Inclusive – communication methods should consider different audiences and needs.

Impartial – Council communications must remain politically neutral.

The Council should also aim to communicate in a way that is clear, approachable and relevant to the community.

5.0 Communication Channels

The Council will use a mixture of communication channels according to the audience, purpose, urgency and type of information being communicated.

5.1 Council Website

The Council website should act as the principal authoritative source for detailed Council information. It should be used for:

- statutory information;
- Council meetings and documents;
- policies;
- news;
- consultations;
- service information;
- Councillor information;
- project updates;
- important public information.

Where appropriate, social media communications should link residents back to more detailed information on the website.

5.2 Social Media

Social media should support timely communication, promotion and two-way engagement.

It may be used for:

- Council news;
- events;
- consultations and surveys;
- public information;
- community initiatives;
- service updates;
- photographs and video;
- reminders;
- emergency or urgent information;
- sharing appropriate partner information.

Social media activity must comply with the Council's Social Media Policy.

The effectiveness and relevance of individual platforms should be reviewed rather than assuming that the Council must maintain a presence on every available platform.

5.3 Press and Local Media

The Council should maintain constructive relationships with relevant local and regional media.

Press releases may be used where there is a clear newsworthy or public-interest purpose, including:

- major Council decisions;
- significant projects;
- community events;
- new or improved services;
- consultations;
- partnerships;
- public-interest information;
- Council achievements.

Media activity should comply with the Media and Communications Policy.

5.4 Email

Email should be used for targeted communication with residents, organisations, stakeholders and defined groups where appropriate.

Consideration should be given to developing the Town Council's existing email newsletter and subscriber list, and adding further newsletters, where these provide an effective means of communicating directly with interested audiences.

Personal data must be handled in accordance with relevant data protection requirements.

Where an email is sent to multiple external recipients and disclosure of recipients' email addresses is not necessary, the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) function should be used to protect personal data and maintain confidentiality, particularly where recipients have not consented to their contact details being shared with others.

5.5 Printed Communications

Printed communication remains important for residents who may not regularly access Council information digitally.

This may include:

- Council publications;
- community magazines including, but not limited to, Uckfield Matters;
- posters;
- leaflets;
- event programmes;
- consultation materials;
- statutory notices;
- information displayed at Council facilities.

The Council should balance accessibility and digital inclusion with environmental and financial considerations when deciding whether printed material is required.

5.6 Noticeboards

Council noticeboards should continue to provide statutory information and appropriate community-facing communications.

Their purpose and effectiveness should be reviewed periodically as part of the Council's wider communications mix.

5.7 Face-to-Face Communication

Face-to-face engagement remains an important part of Council communications.

Opportunities may include:

- Annual Town Meetings;
- regular Town Council meetings;
- Council events;
- consultations;
- forums;
- conferences;
- community meetings;
- engagement activities;
- conversations through Council facilities and services.

Feedback received through these channels should be considered alongside digital communications data.

5.8 Video and Photography

Photography and video should be used where they help make Council communications more engaging, accessible or informative.

Potential uses include:

- Council events;
- project updates;
- facility promotion;
- community initiatives;
- short explanatory videos;
- interviews;
- public-information campaigns.

Content must comply with the Council's requirements concerning accessibility, safeguarding, data protection and copyright.

6.0 Communications Content

Council communications should be planned around a number of broad content areas.

Council and Democracy

Examples include:

- Council and committee meetings;
- key decisions;
- elections;
- Annual Town Meeting;
- consultations;
- Councillor information.

Services and Facilities

Examples include:

- recreation grounds;
- play areas;
- allotments;
- Council-owned facilities;
- maintenance activity;

- environmental initiatives.

Community

Examples include:

- community grants;
- local organisations;
- volunteering;
- consultations;
- partnerships;
- community achievements.

Events

Examples include:

- Council-organised events;
- civic occasions;
- community activities;
- event announcements;
- reminders;
- post-event communications.

Projects and Improvements

Residents should be kept informed about significant Council projects from initial proposal through to completion where appropriate.

Communications should explain not only what is happening, but where useful:

- why it is happening;
- when it will happen;
- what it will cost;
- how it has been funded;
- what benefits are expected;
- how residents may be affected.

Public Information

The Council should communicate information that residents reasonably need to know, including service disruption, closures, deadlines and urgent information.

7.0 Planned Communications

Where practicable, communications should be planned in advance rather than relying predominantly on reactive activity.

A forward communications calendar should identify:

- Council meetings;
- consultations;
- Council events;
- civic occasions;
- seasonal campaigns;
- statutory deadlines;
- project milestones;
- service announcements;
- community-grant periods;
- budget and Council Tax communications;
- election-related communications;

- major external events relevant to the Council.
- The communications calendar should be updated throughout the year as new activity is confirmed.

8.0 Suggested Communications Rhythm

The Council should avoid setting rigid publishing targets purely to increase output. Quality and relevance should take priority over volume. However, a broad working rhythm may include:

Weekly

- review forthcoming Council activity;
- schedule planned social media content;
- identify potential media stories;
- monitor enquiries and community feedback;
- update website information where necessary.

Monthly

- review upcoming events, meetings and campaigns;
- coordinate information with relevant officers;
- identify significant project updates;
- review communications performance;
- prepare content for the following month.

Quarterly

- evaluate communications performance against objectives;
- review audience and channel performance;
- identify gaps in engagement;
- discuss communications priorities with relevant senior officers;
- adjust the Communications Plan where necessary.

Annually

- undertake a formal evaluation of communications performance;
- review major campaigns and events;
- review platform relevance;
- review communications expenditure;
- agree priorities and KPIs for the following year;
- update this Communications Plan.

9.0 Campaign Planning

Significant communications campaigns should, where proportionate, identify:

Objective

What are we trying to achieve?

Audience

Who needs to receive or respond to the communication?

Message

What is the key information or action?

Channels

Which communication methods are most appropriate?

Timing

When should communication begin and how frequently should it be repeated?

Responsibility

Who will produce, approve and publish the communication?

Budget

Is paid advertising, printing or other expenditure required?

Measurement

How will success be evaluated? This approach should be proportionate. Routine announcements will not require a formal campaign plan.

10.0 Paid Advertising

Paid communications may be used where they provide an effective and proportionate means of reaching an identified audience.

This may include:

- social media advertising;
- search advertising;
- print advertising;
- other appropriate promotional channels.

Decisions should consider:

- intended audience;
- expected reach;
- cost;
- measurable objective;
- previous campaign performance;
- alternative communication methods.

Campaign performance should be evaluated so future expenditure can be based on evidence rather than historical practice.

11.0 Internal Communications and Coordination

Effective external communication depends on good internal communication.

Officers responsible for projects, services and events should provide appropriate information to the communications lead early enough for communications to be planned effectively.

Relevant information may include:

- key dates;
- decisions;
- project milestones;
- changes to services;
- consultations;
- public meetings;
- potential media interest;
- emerging issues.

The communications lead should maintain regular contact with appropriate officers and the Town Clerk to identify upcoming communication requirements.

12.0 Reactive Communications

Not all communication can be planned.

The Council may need to respond to:

- breaking local issues;
- inaccurate public information;

- significant media enquiries;
- unexpected closures or disruption;
- emergency situations;
- reputational issues;
- rapidly developing community concerns.

Reactive communications should follow the approval and escalation arrangements contained within the Media and Communications Policy.

The Council should avoid responding simply because criticism has occurred. Responses should be based on whether communication would provide useful factual information, correct significant misunderstanding or protect public safety or Council services.

13.0 Accessibility and Digital Inclusion

Accessibility should be considered at the planning stage rather than after communications have been produced.

This includes consideration of:

- plain English;
- accessible documents;
- alternative text;
- captions and subtitles;
- typography and colour contrast;
- accessible website content;
- readable printed materials.

The Council should also recognise that not all residents have equal access to digital technology.

Important information may therefore require a combination of digital and non-digital channels.

14.0 Branding and Consistency

All official communications should comply with the Council's Branding Guidelines.

Consistency should apply across:

- logo use;
- typography;
- colour;
- imagery;
- tone of voice;
- digital communications;
- printed communications;
- signage;
- presentations.

Where the Council operates or promotes distinct facilities, services or events, their relationship with the Uckfield Town Council corporate identity should be clearly defined within the Branding Guidelines.

15.0 Partnership Communications

The Council regularly works with external organisations and public bodies.

Where communications involve partners, consideration should be given to:

- which organisation is leading communications;

- approval of joint messages;
- use and positioning of logos;
- media enquiries;
- photography and content ownership;
- data protection;
- publication timing.

Joint communications should not imply Council endorsement beyond the nature of the agreed partnership.

16.0 Sustainability

The Council should consider the environmental, social and financial impact of communications decisions.

This includes:

- avoiding unnecessary printing;
- using appropriate print quantities;
- selecting responsible materials where practicable;
- reusing signage and promotional materials;
- making greater use of targeted digital communications where effective;
- continuing to provide non-digital alternatives where necessary to prevent exclusion.

17.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Communications should be evaluated according to their intended purpose rather than relying on a single headline measure such as social media followers.

Potential quantitative measures include:

- website visits;
- page views;
- social media reach;
- impressions;
- engagement;
- follower growth;
- video views;
- link clicks;
- email subscribers;
- email open and click-through rates;
- consultation responses;
- event attendance;
- media coverage;
- advertising cost and performance.

Potential qualitative measures include:

- resident feedback;
- survey responses;
- Councillor and officer feedback;
- comments received at events and meetings;
- community group feedback;
- media relationships;
- recurring enquiries or misunderstandings.

Quantitative and qualitative evidence should be considered together to build a more reliable picture of communications performance.

18.0 Key Performance Indicators

Initial KPIs for 2026–27 should establish a baseline rather than setting arbitrary targets without sufficient historic evidence.

Suggested areas for measurement are:

Area	Suggested measure
Website	Traffic to key Council information and campaign pages
Social media	Reach, meaningful engagement and link activity
Consultations	Number and diversity of responses
Events	Attendance and participant feedback
Media	Relevant positive/neutral coverage and accuracy of reporting
Accessibility	Compliance with agreed accessibility standards
Campaigns	Achievement of campaign-specific objectives
Paid advertising	Cost, reach, clicks and relevant conversions
Community engagement	Qualitative feedback and participation
Communications enquiries	Common topics and recurring information gaps

During the first year, baseline data should be gathered so that realistic targets can be established for future Communications Plans.

19.0 Communications Action Plan

The following framework should be maintained as a working action plan throughout the year.

Activity	Audience	Channel	Frequency	Measure
Council Meeting Information	Residents	Website / Social Media	In line with meeting cycle	Website engagement
Council Decisions	Residents / Stakeholders	Website / Social Media	Following decisions	Reach / Feedback
Community Consultations	Relevant Audiences	Multi-channel	As required	Responses
Events Promotion	Residents / Visitors	Website / Socials / Print / Advertising	Campaign-based	Attendance
Community Grants	Community Organisations	Website / Socials / Email	Annual cycle	Applications
Project Updates	Affected Residents	Multi-channel	At key milestones	Reach / enquiries
Public Information	Residents	Appropriate channels	As required	Reach / understanding
Council Services	Relevant users	Website / socials / print	Ongoing	Engagement / use
Annual Town Meeting	Residents	Multi-channel	Annual campaign	Attendance / feedback

Communications Evaluation	Internal	Reporting	Quarterly	Action identified
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This table should be expanded and updated as operational requirements develop.

20.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Town Clerk

Provides strategic oversight and advises on significant, sensitive, legal or reputational communications.

Communications Lead

Coordinates the Communications Plan, develops communications activity, manages relevant channels, advises colleagues, monitors performance and evaluates campaigns.

Council Officers

Provide accurate and timely information concerning their services, projects and activities and work with the communications lead where public communication is required.

Councillors

Support effective community engagement and provide appropriate feedback concerning residents' information needs while observing the distinction between personal and official Council communications.

21.0 Review Arrangements

This Communications Plan should be treated as a living document.

Quarterly review

A light-touch review should consider:

- performance data;
- forthcoming priorities;
- campaign results;
- changing audience behaviour;
- emerging communication issues;
- effectiveness of channels;
- changes required to the action plan.

Annual review

A fuller review should consider:

- performance against objectives and KPIs;
- annual quantitative data;
- qualitative feedback;
- communications expenditure;
- effectiveness of paid advertising;
- accessibility;
- audience reach;
- platform performance;
- lessons from major campaigns and events;
- communications priorities for the following year.

The annual review should inform development of the next Communications Plan.

22.0 Related Documents

This Plan should be read alongside:

- Uckfield Town Council Media and Communications Policy;
 - Uckfield Town Council Social Media Policy;
 - Uckfield Town Council Branding Guidelines;
 - Members' Code of Conduct;
 - Data Protection Policy and associated procedures;
 - relevant accessibility and equality arrangements;
 - relevant information-security procedures;
 - Council Corporate Plan and annual priorities where applicable.
- The Communications Plan is an operational document. Where there is any conflict between this Plan and an adopted Council policy, the adopted policy will take precedence.

Plan period: 2026–27

Responsible Officer: [Marketing & Community Engagement Officer]

Approved by: General Purposes Committee/Full Council

Date approved: September/October 2026

Next formal review: September 2027

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



MEMBERS AUDIT FORM

MONTH: **APRIL 2026**

Documents will be chosen at random by members carrying out the Audit.

SAGE AUDIT TRAIL (DETAILED)

Check source documents including nominal code and authorisation.

Supplier Invoices	☒
Customer Invoices	☒
Timesheets	☒

BANK RECONCILIATION AND VERIFICATION TO NOMINAL CODE:

Check bank reconciliation to SAGE print outs, bank statement and nominal codes.

Clerks Account	☒
Current/General Account	☒
Business Reserve	☒
35 day account	☒
95 day account	☒
Luxfords account	☒

BANK RECONCILIATION QUARTERLY VERIFICATION

Clerks Account	☐
Current/General Account	☐
Business Reserve	☐
35 day account	☐
95 day account	☐
Luxfords account	☐

PETTY CASH

Check cash balance and vouchers

Town Council	☒
Luxfords	☒

Signed

Print Name **BARRY MAYHEW**

Dated **14-09-26**

Supplier invoices checked

Supplier Name	Invoice No. and Date	P. Order No	Confirmed stamped, signed, correct nominal code	Confirmed signed by two Cllrs	BACs payment no.
Parish Online	17-04-26	19615	5430 ✓	Yes	123844 2212
KFF	21-4-26	695257	Yes	Yes	123837 3079

Customer invoices checked

Customer Name	Invoice No.	Are hire charges correct?	Payment date on invoice	Bank Statement Date/Pg No.
Alliance for BCC	S1860	—	23-07-26	Page 6 of 8 July 26
James Boyden	S1847	Special rate	07-05-26	Page 3 of 4 May 26

Timesheets checked

Staff Name	Are hours correct?	Is payment correct?	Payslip date	Ref code on BACS payment record
Jeff Comar	Yes	Yes	24-04-26	1413896827
Wend Sayer	Yes	Yes	24-04-26	1413896827

Bank reconciliations checked

Bank Account	Bank statement date/ Pg. no.	RFO has signed both records	Amount reconciled and if not, reasons noted	Nominal Code
Clerks Account	1 of 2	Yes	Yes	1210
General Account	9 of 10	Yes	Yes	1200
Business Reserve	Bank Line	Yes	Yes	1227
35 day account	1 of 2	Yes	Yes	1225
95 day account	1 of 2	Yes	Yes	1226
Luxfords account	1 of 3	Yes	Yes	1228

Quarterly bank reconciliation verification

Bank Account	Bank statement Date/ Pg. no.	RFO has signed both records	Member has signed both records
Clerks Account			
General Account			
Business Reserve			
35 day account			
95 day account			
Luxfords account			

Petty cash checked

Account Name	Is reconciliation correct?	Selected Voucher name and findings	At time of visit, check petty cash float aligned to Sage
Town Council	Yes	Purchase of stamp	171.36 ✓
Luxfords	Yes	Tesco Real milk	169.88 ✓

