UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE
Tel: (01825) 762774
e-mail: townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk
www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk
Chief Officer (Town Clerk) – Holly Goring

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF
UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
on
Monday 7 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.

Presentation of new Mayoral Chain to Town Mayor

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 MAYOR'S DISCRETION

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

(*this part of the agenda should not be used to report day to day issues such as potholes. These should be reported direct to:* https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem)

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To **RESOLVE** that the minutes of the meeting of the Council on 29 June 2026 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor
5.2 To receive and note the minutes of the Annual Town meeting on 15 April 2026
5.3 Action list – for information only
5.4 Forward plan – for information only

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a)	Plans Committees	13 July, 3 and 24 August 2026
(b)	Environment and Leisure Committee	6 July and 1 September 2026
(c)	General Purposes Committee	20 July 2026

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES
(i) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
(also see confidential business)

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS
(i) Events Working Group
(ii) Ageing Well Forum

9.0 TO APPROVE PERIODIC POLICY REVIEWS
(i) CCTV Policy
(ii) Financial Regulations

10.0 TO RATIFY A RECOMMENDATION FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:
General Purposes Committee
Member Audit Policy

11.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON BANKING AND POST OFFICE SERVICES WITHIN UCKFIELD HIGH STREET

12.0 TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR 2026/27

13.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON ANNUAL PRIORITIES AND MAJOR PROJECTS (Q1 2026/27)

14.0 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET, BALANCE SHEET POSITION AND PRIORITIES

15.0 TO RECEIVE THE BUSINESS PLANNING TIMETABLE

16.0 TO SIGN AND SEAL LEASE AGREEMENTS

17.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

18.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TRANSFERS OF DEEDS

19.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED (none received)

20.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

21.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

22.0 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: -

22.1 To consider the proposal and quotation for development of the Neighbourhood Plan

Chief Officer (Town Clerk)
1 September 2026

FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2026/27

STANDING ITEMS FOR FULL COUNCIL AGENDA	REPORT LEAD
Any written reports from District or County Councillors	District/County Councillors
Minutes from the last meeting	Town Clerk
Action List	Town Clerk
Forward Plan	Town Clerk
Reports from outside bodies	Councillor representatives for NPlan and Gatwick
Reports from working groups	Councillor reps
Signing and sealing of lease agreements	Town Clerk/E&F Mgr
Check for any review of service level agreements	Town Clerk
Check for any urgent consultation panel decisions	Town Clerk
Mayor and Deputy Mayor engagements	Administrative Officer
Cemetery deeds of grant (any prepared are usually left in the box for Full Council)	Senior Administrative Officer

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
September 2026	Presentation of new Mayoral Chain	Chief Officer
	Q1 Progress Update for Annual Priorities	Chief Officer
	Financial position prior to budget setting	Deputy Chief Officer
	To confirm the appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2026/27	Deputy Chief Officer
	Update on Banking and Postal Service	Chief Officer
CONFIDENTIAL	Review of quotation for development of Neighbourhood Plan	Chief Officer

FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2026/27

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
October 2026	Note the report of the External Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2026	Deputy Chief Officer
	Q2 Progress Update for Annual Priorities	Chief Officer
	Q2 Snapshot of budget and balance sheet position	Deputy Chief Officer
	Six monthly review of Asset Register	Mgt Team
	Calendar of meetings for 2027	Chief Officer
	Review of Service Level Agreements for 2027/28	Chief Officer
CONFIDENTIAL	Adoption of Emergency Action Plan	Chief Officer

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
December 2026	To consider the Draft Strategic Plan 2027-32	Chief Officer
	To consider the Draft Annual Plan 2027-28	Chief Officer
	To consider the Draft Budget 2027-28	Deputy Chief Officer
	To consider the Draft Asset Management Plan 2027-32	Chief Officer
	Member Allowances	Chief Officer
CONFIDENTIAL		

FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2026/27

To remain on the horizon, subject to changes through LGR and UK Government funding streams/initiatives:
Parking in Uckfield – consideration of a jointly funded traffic warden (only possible when accreditation given);
Affordable housing – keep a close watch on the levels of need for affordable homes in Uckfield.

Registered Assets of Community Value in Uckfield

Site/Location	Date current registration expires	Nomination made by
The Dene, Manor Park	15 July 2026	Residents' Association. Now in ownership of Town Council. *Have recommended that RA renew registration to ensure future protection.*
Land at Selby Road (Selby Meadows)	16 September 2026	Town Council. In ownership of Town Council. Licenced to Newtown Action Group to cultivate until December 2030.
Uckfield Leisure Centre	20 November 2028	Town Council
Ridgewood Post Office & Stores	7 December 2028	Town Council
Uckfield Family Hub	9 September 2030	Town Council
Uckfield Rugby Club	9 September 2030	Town Council
Highlands Inn	28 September 2030	Town Council
Police Station	-	In progress.

Unsuccessful nominations for Assets of Community Value in Uckfield

Site/Location	Date of removal from list of unsuccessful nominations	Nomination made by
Holy Cross Primary School & Playing Fields	Rejected.	Town Council
Luxfords Car Park	Rejected.	Town Council
Brickmakers Arms	14 December 2028	Town Council Update – planning application has been submitted for this site. Reviewed by UTC Plans Committee on 22.06.26.

<u>Meeting of the Full Council</u>

<u>Monday 7 September 2026</u>

Agenda Item 8.0(i)

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS: UCKFIELD EVENTS WORKING GROUP

Weald on the Field – Saturday 8 August 2026
The event took place as planned on Saturday 8 August 2026 and was a great success with an excellent turn out, and a high number of stallholders.

This annual day festival 'Weald on the Field' is a real example of team work.

Working with Food Rocks, this was our 10th event and lived up to its reputation as a key date in the town's calendar. Volunteers, councillors and staff members helped from early until late to keep the site clean and safe for which we are very grateful.

The Town Council would like to thank all suppliers - Airstream Stages, ALS Repatriation (Medical) Services, AM Plant & Skip Hire, Biffa, Brighter Uckfield, C J Thorne, Dragon Event Services, Luxford Centre, Pitch Black Lighting, Ridgewood Village Hall, Southern Events, Sussex Party Bales and Truloo.

To APCOA, Network Rail and Wealden District Council for providing free parking for the event.

To Ashdown Radio, Dukes Lettings, Michelle Wallis Photography and Uckfield Matters for support with our marketing.

To our key sponsors - CPJ Field, Downlands Architectural Design & Surveying, Dropped Pin Residential Sales, EMC, Jimmy the Painter, Lawson Commercial, Lawson Queay, Lydfords' Care Home, Phoenix Health Hub, Pots of Love, Uckfield Chamber of Commerce and Uckfield Logistics Training Services. They helped us provide such a talented line up on the airstream stage.

And talking of talent - thank you to The Tannens, The Kytes, Venn 5, The Midnight Project and the Kavemen, who were supported by interval acts The Pentacle Drummers and Dominic Uppiah.

It was our fullest field yet of stalls offering samples of artisan produce, crafts , street food, local breweries, distilleries, and vineyards.

This year we were also pleased to welcome Poppet along as part of the district tour to celebrate the Big 100 anniversary of Winnie the Pooh, as well as numerous activities for children.

The key organisers have since met to, to review learning points for next year, and set a date for 2027 – Saturday 14 August.

Contact Officers: Will Hugall/Holly Goring

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 7 September 2026

Agenda Item No 8.0(ii)

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS:
AGEING WELL FORUM

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is the latest press release from the Ageing Well Forum in relation to their upcoming event:

More than 20 stands confirmed for Uckfield Community Wellbeing Event
Residents are invited to discover the wide range of local services, activities and support available at the free Uckfield Community Wellbeing Event on Friday 18 September 2026, from 10am to 1pm, in the Weald Hall at the Civic Centre, Uckfield.

With more than 20 stands now confirmed, the event will bring together local charities, community groups, care providers, public services and wellbeing organisations. Visitors will be able to meet the people behind these services, ask questions and find out about opportunities to stay active, connected, independent and well. Information bags containing useful resources and details of local services will be handed out during the event.

The event is open to everyone but will be particularly helpful for older residents, carers, family members and anyone looking for information about health, care, wellbeing, social activities, volunteering and community support.

Organisations attending include:

- Sussex Support Service CIC
- Freedom Leisure
- Uckfield Baptist Church
- Engage Clubs, including TN22 Club
- Stay Connected Club
- Bowes House, Care UK
- East Sussex County Council
- Age UK East Sussex
- Uckfield U3A
- GoodOaks Homecare Mid Sussex & Wealden
- Home Instead Lewes District and Uckfield
- Home & Company Ltd
- Homeward Bound Hypnotherapy
- Wealden Volunteering
- Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association
- King of the Woods
- Uckfield PHAB
- Ridgewood Village Hall
- Lydfords Care Home

Further organisations and activities will also be represented on the day.
Margaret Dode-Angel, Chair of Uckfield Ageing Well Forum, said:
"We are delighted that so many local organisations will be joining us. There is a great deal of support available in and around Uckfield, but people do not always know what is out there or who to ask. This friendly event brings everything together in one accessible place.

"Whether you are looking for advice, activities, support for yourself or a family member, or simply want to find out what is happening locally, we warmly invite you to come along, enjoy the demonstration and collect one of our information bags."

Uckfield Ageing Well Forum brings together local health and care providers, charities, community groups, businesses and public services. Members share information, identify gaps in local provision and work together to promote wellbeing, independence and social connection.

The Community Wellbeing Event is being led through the Forum by Sussex Support Service CIC, Ridgewood Village Hall, Uckfield Town Council, Barchester Healthcare and Home Instead, working together to coordinate the event.
Entry is free.

EVENT DETAILS
Date: Friday 18 September 2026
Time: 10am–1pm
Venue: Weald Hall, Civic Centre, Uckfield
Admission: Free

Free refreshments and cake will be available throughout the event, giving visitors an opportunity to relax, meet others and talk informally with the organisations attending.

There is still time for local organisations, community groups and businesses to take part by booking a stand. The closing date for stand bookings is Wednesday 16 September. Further information and booking are available at www.sussexsupportservice.com/events.

Contact Officers: Will Hugall/Holly Goring

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

CCTV POLICY

Policy Number 2		
Issue No.	**Date completed**	**Details of amendments**
1		Agreed (internally) in 2003
2	02.03.15	GP.62.03.15 - Review and update
3	05.05.26	GP Committee - Review and update
4	18.05.26	FC.16.05.26Ratification by Full Council
5	07.09.26	Addition of Luxford Field Camera - FCouncil

1.0 Background

1.1 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) is installed on two of the Town Council's buildings - the Civic Centre and Victoria Pavilion. These are static cameras.

1.2 These cameras are for the main purposes of preventing, detecting and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. This is in the public interest in order to provide safety to our visitors, staff, members and contractors.

1.3 Some examples of how we use the CCTV footage from these cameras, are:

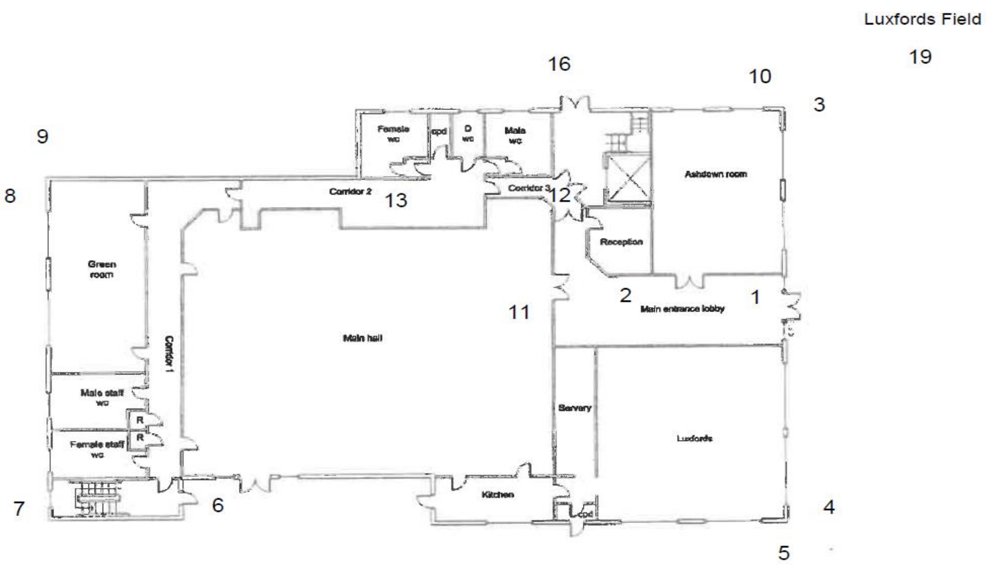
- to help identify, apprehend and prosecute offenders
- to provide Sussex Police with evidence to enable criminal and/or civil proceedings to be brought in the courts;
- and to maintain public order to provide evidence in criminal proceedings (police and criminal evidence act 1984 and criminal procedure and investigation act 1996)
- providing evidence in civil proceedings
- the prevention and reduction of crime and disorder
- the investigation and detection of crime
- identification of witnesses
- maintaining public order

1.4 In all locations, signs are displayed notifying you that CCTV is in operation, the reason for the CCTV along with details of who to contact for further information about the scheme.

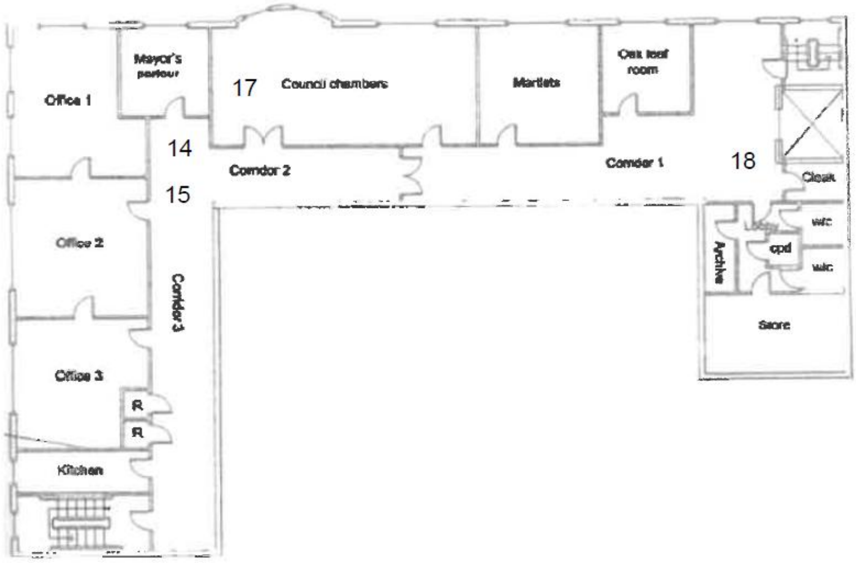
2.0 Civic Centre

2.1 There are nineteen cameras installed at the Civic Centre. Ten cameras monitor the exterior of the building (one is located at the bottom of Luxfords Field) and seven monitor areas inside.

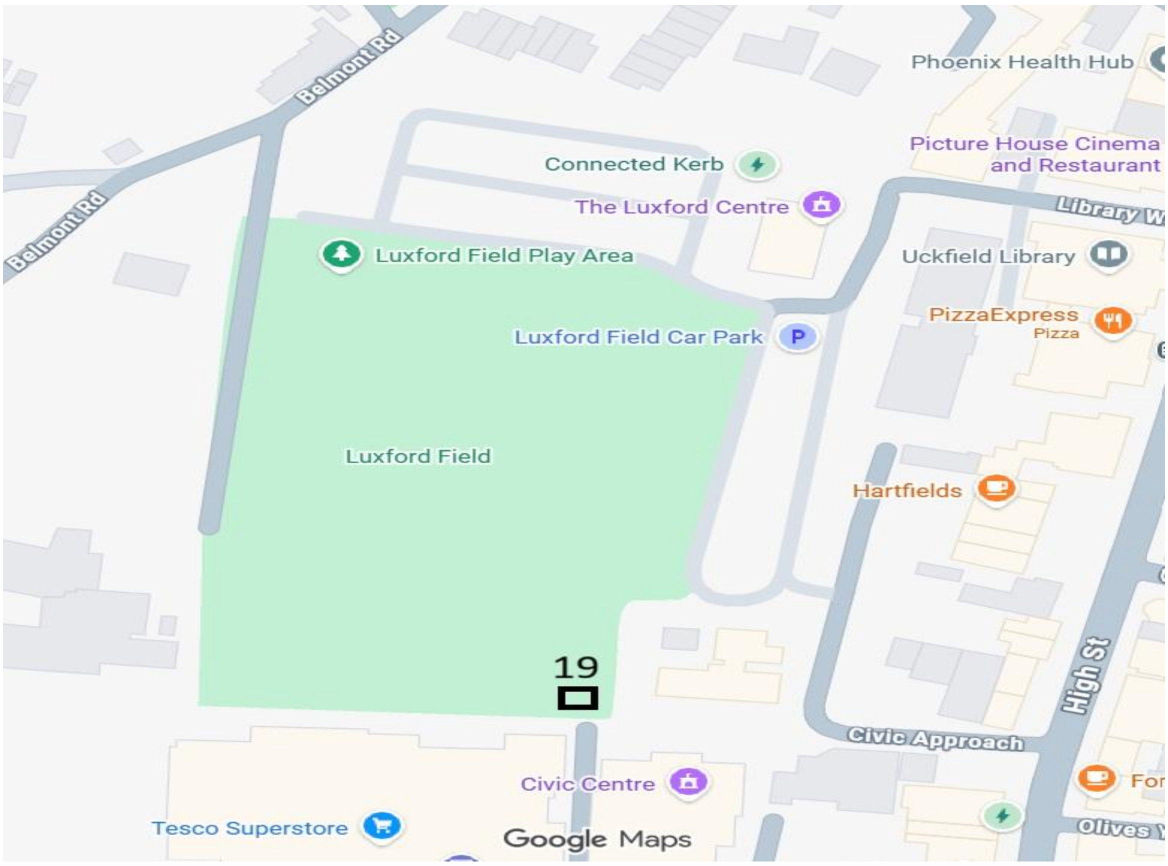
<u>Ground Floor</u>



First Floor



Luxfords Field

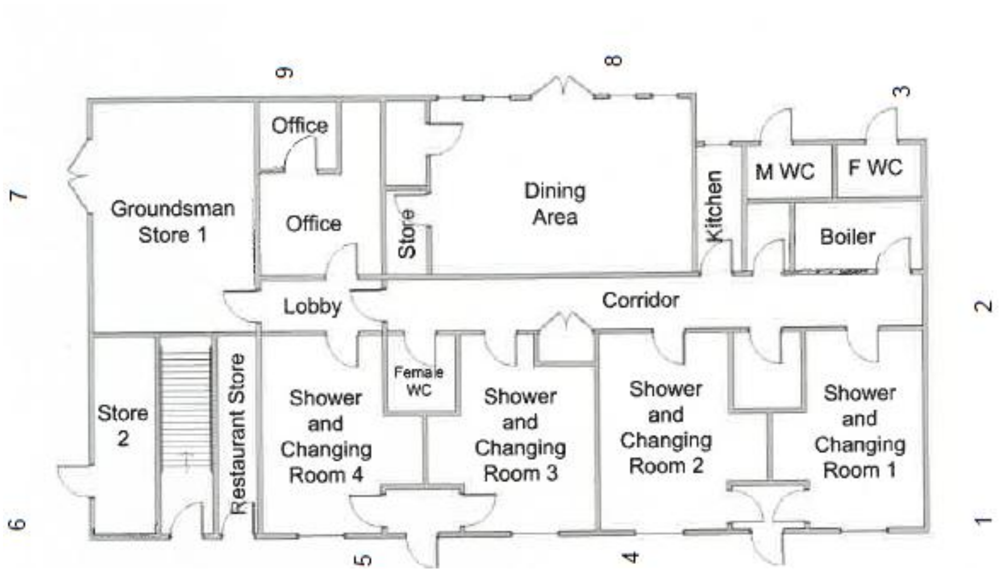


This camera is a standalone pole mounted camera located next to the electric box.

3.0 Victoria Pavilion

3.1 There are nine cameras at Victoria Pavilion. All nine cameras monitor the exterior of the building.

Ground floor



4.0 Information collected

4.1 Data from all the cameras is recorded live 24 hours a day and recordings include the time and date.

4.2 The data/images captured is transferred onto a computer hard-drive at the Civic Centre and is stored for 30 days, after which time it is over-written. Images that are not requested/downloaded will be automatically deleted on a 30-day rolling basis.

4.3 Should any incidents occur and be recorded by the CCTV system, it is essential that they are downloaded from the hard drive within 30 days of occurring, otherwise the data and information will be lost.

5.0 The basis for processing the data

5.1 The lawful bases for processing the data captured by the CCTV system on the Town Council buildings of the Civic Centre and Victoria Pavilion, are set out in Articles 6 and 9 of GDPR:

Personal Data

- **Vital interests -** 6(1)(d): Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of a data subject or another person
- **Performance of a task -** 6(1)(e): Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller
- **legitimate interests** - 6(1)(f): Necessary for the purposes of legitimate interests pursued by the controller or a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests, rights or freedoms of the data subject.

Special Category Data

- **Vital interests -** 9(2)(c): Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of a data subject or another individual where the data subject is physically or legally incapable of giving consent.

  Data is collected and processed in line with all applicable laws concerning the protection of personal data, including but not limited to, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 as well as the following legislation relating to crime and disorder or information governance:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Terrorism Act 2000
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
- Investigatory Powers Act 2016/RIPA
- Home Office Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

6.0 Who your information will be shared with

- A small number of authorised members of Uckfield Town Council staff
- Agencies such as Sussex Police for the prevention and detection of crime
- In emergency situations, information may be shared with other agencies such as the emergency services and other relevant agencies as required

Uckfield Town Council would never sell this footage however it will be shared with third parties to:

- comply with legal obligations and legislative requirements
- to help prevent fraud and/or tackle crime
- to advise agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.

7.0 Internal procedure for processing the data

7.1 (i) Any incidents revealed (by a customer, colleague or Police Officer) should be brought to the attention of the Head Caretaker responsible for the service/premises in question. If the Head Caretaker is not available, another authorised member of staff should be notified. The member of the caretaking team should be provided with an approximate date and time that the incident occurred (if known).

(ii)The Head Caretaker has authority and access rights to search the system to locate the incident. This may involve making a copy of the storage media or a screen print, which may be used as evidence in any subsequent civil/criminal court proceedings or in the course of other regulatory proceedings or disciplinary hearings.

(iii)In cases of suspected criminal activity the storage media will normally be passed to Sussex Police for investigation and possible prosecution.

(iv)Disclosure may also be made to other law enforcement agencies and other public bodies with regulatory functions.

(v)The police and other law enforcement agencies may, on showing good cause, request copies of storage media or access to monitoring screens. In general such requests will be complied with.

7.2 Only footage relevant to the incident (exact period in which the incident occurred) can then be downloaded from the system to a secure drive.

It should be noted that the incident <u>must</u> be downloaded within 30 days of occurring otherwise the images and data will be lost.

7.3 Using the main CCTV software press the record button when playing the footage and this save to the CCTV footage folder of the Facilities & Compliance Manager, as a Media Player File. The footage captured must be labelled with the date and time of the event but no other details.

7.4 This download must be retained by the Town Council as its own record of data shared with Sussex Police or to solicitors as necessary. Footage should only be released where a formal request has been made in writing.

7.5 Authority is to be given by a senior member of Town Council staff, before the footage is shared with the emergency service or public authority. This would include the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Facilities & Compliance Manager or Head Caretaker).

7.6 Details of where the clips have been sent or to whom they were given must be recorded in the CCTV incident log with the time and date of when the clip was handed over. A covering email should be sent to the requesting company and should be retained along with a copy of their request. A review should be undertaken at 12 months to consider whether the data capture is required to continue being stored securely any longer or if the case has concluded.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Members of the public have the right to access the personal information Uckfield Town Council holds about them. These access requests are free of charge.

8.2 If the information held is inaccurate, they have a right to have this corrected and a right to request completion of incomplete data. They also have the right to ask the Town Council to erase their personal data in certain circumstances ('right to be forgotten').

If a member of the public has an enquiry of this nature, please direct it to, the Town Clerk:

- Email: townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk
- Phone: 01825 762774
- Letter to:

  Town Clerk
  Uckfield Town Council
  Civic Centre
  Uckfield
  TN22 1AE

Associated documentation:
Privacy Notice: CCTV Operations – Uckfield Town Council website
Legitimate Interest Assessment

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Issue No.	Date Agreed	Details of amendments
1	11 October 2005	Reissued in new format
2	27 May 2008	General Purposes Minute No. GP.010.05.08
3	17 August 2009	General Purposes Minute No. GP.017.08.09
4	18 April 2011	General Purposes Minute No. GP.104.04.11 Full review undertaken
5	13 April 2015	GP.70.04.15 Review and Update
6	15 August 2016	Amendment in response to updated model financial regulations
7	5 November 2018	Amendment in line with revised Standing Orders – GP Committee
8	9 March 2020	Proposed amendments in line with changes to NALC's Model Financial Regulations in 2019
9	25 April 2022	GP41.04.22 Approval of amendments presented to GP Committee in line with NALC Model Regulations
10	15 May 2023	Annual review – Annual Statutory meeting of the Council
11	20 May 2024	Annual review – Annual Statutory meeting of the Council FC.18.05.24
12	9 Sept 2024	FC.47.09.24 - Review in line with scheme of delegation
13	28 April 2025	Review by GP Committee – changes to Section 6 in line with recent changes to Procurement legislation
14	19 May 2025	FC - Ratification of Financial Regulations
15	5 May 2026	Review by GP Committee
16	18 May 2026	FC.17.05.26 – Ratification at Full Council

17	7 September 2026	Addition to para. 6.1 subject to prior discussion.

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These Financial Regulations are designed to demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities.

1.2 The post of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is a statutory office under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and shall be appointed by the Council. The RFO, acting under the policy direction of the Council, shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices. The RFO shall determine on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems. The RFO shall ensure that the accounting control systems are observed and that the accounting records of the Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices. The RFO shall assist the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

1.3 The RFO shall produce financial management information as required by the Council.

1.4 In these Financial Regulations:

- 'Accounts and Audit regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
- 'Approve' refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
- 'Authorise' refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
- 'Proper practices' means those set out in the Practitioners Guide.
- Practitioners Guide refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England
- 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
- 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff;
- 'Value for money' means the public sector definition of value for money. Value for money is based not only on the minimum purchase price (economy) but also on the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the purchase (the three 'E's') plus equity. Achieving value for money can be described as using public resources in a way that creates and maximises public value.

1.5 Section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 which governed the stewardship of money held by local councils has been repealed. It required that ‘every cheque or other order for the payment of money be signed by two members of the Council’. Although this requirement has been repealed it is felt that it still remains good practice and will be retained by the Council, for the relevant method of payment.

1.6 Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.7 Members of the council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.8 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
-procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct lost records;
-identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
-procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off expect with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records, and measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.9 **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**
- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls;
-approving accounting statements;
-approving an annual governance statement;
-borrowing;
-writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence, and’
-addressing recommendations in any report from the internal and external auditors, shall be a matter for General Purposes Committee/Full Council accordingly.

1.10 In addition, the council shall:
- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000;
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to the recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

2.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

2.1 The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

2.2 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The RFO or appropriate Officer shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the General Purposes Committee, for ratification by the Council at least annually.

2.3 When considering any new activity, the RFO or appropriate Officer shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the General Purposes Committee.

2.4 At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, and annual accounts, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

2.5 The council's accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:

- ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
- ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
- prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud;
- allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
- identifying the duties of officers dealing with transactions and;
- ensure division of responsibilities;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;

3.0 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

3.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.2 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time.

Accounting records shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council, and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of assets and liabilities of the council, and;
- wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to the claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.

3.3 The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

3.4 The RFO shall be responsible for completing and certifying the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the accounting statements, the RFO shall submit them to and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.5 Anti-Fraud and Corruption

3.5.1 In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations the separation of duties of Officers dealing with financial transactions shall be carried out wherever practical, thus reducing the risk of fraud or suspicion of fraud.

3.5.2 Wherever possible arrangement shall be made to ensure that the same two Officers carry out no more than two of the following:-

(a) The ordering of works, goods or services.

(b) The acknowledgement of their receipt,
and

(c) The examination and certification of invoices and accounts.

3.5.3 Wherever possible, Officers responsible for the examination and checking of records of cash transactions shall not be engaged in any of these transactions.

3.6 Audit

3.6.1 The RFO shall complete the Annual Accounts of the Council and shall submit the accounts for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.6.2 **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control systemin accordance with proper practices.**

3.6.3 **Any Officer or Member of the council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, Internal Auditor or External Auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

3.6.4 The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out the work required by the Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners Guide.

3.6.5 The council shall ensure that the Internal Auditor:
- shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council,
- shall report to the General Purposes Committee in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, the Internal Auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships, and;
-have no involvement in the management or control of the Council.

3.6.6 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal, or other advice including in relation to any future transactions'; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor

3.6.7 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.6.8 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to accounts including the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers, and associated documents for the display or publication of any notices and statements of account required by the relevant Acts and Regulations.

3.6.9 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all Members any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative nature.

3.7 Members' Audit
On a monthly basis one Member of the Council will carry out an audit in accordance with the Members' Audit Policy No. 63 and will report their findings to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee. This audit incorporates spot checks of supplier invoices, customer invoices, timesheets, and bank reconciliation and verification to nominal code, as well as the petty cash for both Uckfield Town Council and Luxfords Restaurant.

3.8 At least once a quarter and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and be noted by General Purposes Committee when they review the member audits. This can form part of the existing member audit procedures.

4.0 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

4.1 **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2 Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by General Purposes Committee at least annually in the autumn, for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the relevant committee.

4.3 Each committee shall formulate and submit draft annual budget proposals to the Council in respect of revenue and capital expenditure for the following financial year, not later than the end of December each year.

4.4 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services and receipts and payments on capital accounts shall be prepared as part of this, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement in any forecasts.

4.5 The draft budget (with committee proposals and forecast), including the recommendations for the use and accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Finance Sub-Committee for recommendation to the Council.

4.6 Having considered the proposed budget and forecast, the Council shall review the estimates not later than the end of January each year and shall determine the council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the middle of January.

4.7 **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**

4.8 **The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February**, and supply each Member with a copy of the agreed budget.

4.9 The annual capital and revenue expenditure shall form the Council's budgets and the basis of financial control (monitoring progress and comparing actual spending and income against what was planned) for the ensuing year.

4.10 In considering its annual estimates the Council shall have regard to its current five-year Strategic Plan, and Annual Plan.

4.11 Any withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or General Purposes Committee, or Environment & Leisure Committee. Any re-allocation of existing earmarked reserves, must be agreed by the council.

5.0 BUDGETARY CONTROL

5.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included in the approved budget, and detailed in the regulations.

5.2 No expenditure may be incurred that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that item of expenditure, unless first approved by the General Purposes Committee or the Urgent Consultation Panel. Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a new financial year, unless moved to other budget headings or placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the General Purposes Committee.

5.3 The RFO shall regularly provide each committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose “material” shall be in excess of [15%?] of the budget.

5.4 The Estates Manager, Facilities & Compliance Manager, Assistant Town Clerk & RFO or Town Clerk may authorise expenditure which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement, Health and Safety or other work, which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for expenditure. This is subject to a limit of £5,000 (exclusive of VAT). If time allows, the Clerk shall report the action or request for funding to the Urgent Consultation Panel. The outcome of the action taken by senior officers or decision taken by Urgent Consultation Panel, should be reported to the relevant committee.

5.5 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with Regulation 3.4 above such sums shall be approved by the General Purposes Committee at the next available meeting.

5.6 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure, unless the relevant committee is satisfied that it is contained in the capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained. Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk and where necessary also by the appropriate Chair.

5.7 All capital works relating to contracts shall be administered in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations/

6.0 PROCUREMENT

6.1 All Members of the Council and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An Officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure as far as reasonable and practicable, ensure that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers. A review of quotations received should specifically consider:

(i) Specialist knowledge/experience;
(ii) Quality/track record of past work;
(iii) Provision of relevant health and safety/risk management documentation;
(iv) Value for money;
(v) Maximising public benefit/social value;
(vi) Location of supplier/contractor;
(vii) Commitment to sustainability;

6.2 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the legal power being used shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised so that the minutes can record the power being used.

6.3 Every contract, whether made by the Council or by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated, shall comply with the Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exception from any of the following provisions of these Regulations shall be made other than in an emergency.

6.4 For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the legislation") must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

6.5 Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of the items listed below in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:

6.6 For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the Council, or advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

6.7 **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**

6.8 For any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works or specialist services with an estimated value greater than £10,000 but not exceeding £30,000, the Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, Estates Manager or Facilities & Compliance Manager shall invite quotations from at least three appropriate firms from a preferred list of contractors as set out in the Financial Regulations.

6.9 Where the value is of £10,000 or less in value, the Town Clerk or a duly approved Officer shall have authorisation to obtain such goods or services from an appropriate firm, but try and obtain three estimates to evidence online prices or recent prices from regular suppliers

6.10 For smaller purchases, the Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.

6.11 Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.

6.12 The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:-

(i) For specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes (solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants or other services) identifies to be of a specialist nature by the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, Estates Manager or Facilities & Compliance Manager;

(ii) For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;

(iii) For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;

(iv) for goods or materials that are only available from one supplier and/or are only sold at a fixed prices

6.13 When applications are made to waive this financial regulations s to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be set out in a recommendation to the Council or General Purposes Committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

6.14 Neither the Council, nor any committee is bound to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

6.15 Only the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, Estates Manager & Facilities & Compliance Manager or Hospitality Manager, may initiate orders which shall be endorsed by a second Officer. No individual member or group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

6.16 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference, except in an emergency or approval granted through the Urgent Consultation Panel.

6.17 In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the Estates Manager, Facilities & Compliance Manager, Assistant Town Clerk & RFO or Town Clerk may authorise expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement, Health & Safety or other work, subject to a limit of £5,000 (exclusive of VAT). If time allows, the Clerk shall report the action or request for funding to the Urgent Consultation Panel. The outcome of the action taken by senior officers or decision taken by Urgent Consultation Panel, should be reported to the relevant committee.

6.18 No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council or relevant committee is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

6.19 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate, e.g. petty cash purchases. Where an order number is given verbally, a written order must be raised. Copies of all orders issued shall be retained.

6.20 Goods and services received shall be checked against the relevant copy of the purchase order. Access to the ordering programme shall be controlled by the RFO.

6.21 Invitations to tender shall state the period and the general nature of the intended contract and the Town Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. In addition, the invitation shall state that tenders must be addressed to the Town Clerk and the last date by which such tenders should reach the Town Clerk. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specially marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

6.22 All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by either the Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk & RFO or Estates Manager or Facilities & Compliance Manager in the presence of at least two Members of the Council.

6.23 The Officer shall record the details of the tender, the names and addresses of each tenderer, the amount or price of the tender, the time and place of opening, and the names and signatures of those present at the opening of the tenders. The above details shall be reported to the Council, or where the tenders have been sought by a committee to that committee.

6.24 If fewer than three tenders are received for contracts valued above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical, the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

6.25 Any invitation to tender issued under this Regulation shall contain a statement of the effect of Standing Orders Nos: 25.1. 25.2 and 25.3.

6.26 Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, that the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was undertaken.

7.0 BANKING AND PAYMENTS

7.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

7.2 The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error.

7.3 All invoices for payment shall be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified and certified by the Officer issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice, the Officer shall be satisfied that the works, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

7.4 Duly certified invoices shall be examined in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation, and shall be coded to the appropriate expenditure head. The RFO or appropriate Officer shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices or statements submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt, or earlier, or in such manner, (e.g. standing order, direct debit etc), if such payment results in benefit to the Council, subject to any initial instruction forms or letters being signed by two Members of the Council.

7.5 Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing personal information.

7.6 With the exception of the arrangements set out in Regulation 6.1, all certified invoices and payments shall be paid by BACs, drawn on the Council's accounts and all BACs payments shall be signed by two members of the Council. A schedule of payments, listed by committee heading, and signed by the same two Members of the Council, shall be provided and presented at the next meeting of the committee. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

7.7 Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5, the council, a duly delegated committee or the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

7.8 Apart from petty cash, payments shall be effected by BACs or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

7.9 All duly certified invoices will then be entered on the schedule of payments made and presented to the next meeting of the appropriate committee in accordance with Regulation 5.3.

7.10 All monies received by the Council, including Luxford's takings, shall be banked daily and a full record made on the reverse of the paying-in slip. The paying-in and withdrawal of funds is now processed through the Post Office. The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk were issued with debit cards for withdrawing funds from the Clerk account, in addition to 'change giving' cards to authorise the withdrawal of monies for petty cash purposes only.

7.11 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have disclosable prejudicial interest or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

7.12 The council will aim to rotate the duties of member in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

8.0 PAYMENT CARDS

8.1 Corporate credit card accounts must be set up to operate within defined limits and be specifically restricted to use by Senior Management Team, or in the case of the card for Luxfords Restaurant, appointed members of staff. The credit cards will be subject to automatic payment by direct debit in full from the main bank account each month Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

9.0 PETTY CASH

9.1 The RFO or other appropriate Officer may authorise petty cash to Officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers, relevant receipts or other supporting documentary evidence for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.

(a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of no more than £400 across the two tins for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses incurred by the Council.

(b) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of no more than £250 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses incurred by Luxfords Restaurant.

(c) Re-imbursement for sums over £50 from any petty cash float shall only be made by cheque.

(d) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked as provided in Regulation 9.

(e) Management of petty cash will be in accordance with internal audit procedures.

10.0 ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

10.1 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACs or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to the council as made. The approval of the use of BACs or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

10.2 If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

10.3 Where a computer requires use of a PIN number or other passwords, for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the ~ PIN and passwords, and shall be handed to and retained by the Chair of the Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened, other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN/or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

10.4 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or duly delegated committee.

10.5 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer and preferably off site.

10.6 The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

10.7 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as Service Administrator, alongside the Town Clerk. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be presented to two authorised signatories.

10.8 In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator, the Clerk shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.

10.9 Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system. Evidence shall then be retained showing which members approved the payment online.

10.10 A full list of all the payments made will then be presented to the next relevant standing committee.

10.11 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page, and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved password facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

10.12 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by two signatories (Town Clerk/RFO or authorised member signatory). This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

10.13 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by ~ variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to the relevant committee. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution by the relevant committee at least every two years.

10.14 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

10.15 Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

11.0 PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND WAGES

11.1 **As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the**

statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by the Council.

11.2 **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**

11.3 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, National Insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

11.4 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of General Purposes Committee.

11.5 All time sheets where applicable shall be in a form prescribed by the RFO and certified as to their accuracy by the member of staff and countersigned by the appropriate manager.

11.6 Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise), other than:
(a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
(b) by the internal auditor;
(c) by the external auditor;
(d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

11.7 Appropriate Officers shall notify the RFO as soon as possible of all matters affecting the payment of salaries and wages and in particular:-

- Appointments, resignations, retirements, dismissals, suspensions, secondments and all other staff movements.
- Absences from duty for sickness or other reasons.
- Information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax and national insurance.
- Changes in remuneration, allowances or working times.

11.8 The RFO and the Town Clerk are authorised to make payments of salaries and wages through 'Bankline' subject to such initial permission being signed by two Members of the Council. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

11.9 In the event of emergencies where no two authorised Officers are available to make such payments, the RFO or Town Clerk shall request two Members of the Council to be present.

11.10 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time. This forms part of the annual budget setting process.

11.11 An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

11.12 Termination payments shall only be authorised by General Purposes Committee and before employing interim staff, General Purposes Committee must consider a full business case.

12.0 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

12.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council, and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with any appropriate Council Policy. Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the General Purposes Committee at the earliest opportunity.

12.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by General Purposes Committee. In each case a report in writing shall be provided, in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

12.3 The Council's Investment Policy (No. 45) in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, shall be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance and shall be reviewed by the council at least annually. Prior to the receipt of the precept instalment every six months, the Finance Sub-committee may if required, provide information to the General Purposes Committee on the possible investment of these funds.

12.4 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

12.5 All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council. The terms and conditions of borrowings shall be reviewed at least annually.

12.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

12.7 Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13.0 INCOME

13.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of, and under the supervision of the RFO.

13.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be ultimately responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.

13.3 Appropriate committees will review their fees and charges annually following a report by the RFO or other appropriate Officer.

13.4 All accounts due will be collected in accordance with these Regulations and any sums found to be irrecoverable or any subsequent bad debts shall be reported to the General Purposes Committee:

Overdue accounts and bad debts shall be treated in the following manner:-

(i) Customers with outstanding accounts at 90 days shall be passed to a registered debt collector following a final seven day warning at the discretion of the RFO or appropriate Officer of the Town Council.

(ii) Any bad debts that cannot be recovered shall be referred to the General Purposes Committee for authorisation to be written off or for authorisation to make arrangements to collect the debt in other ways.

13.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall either be submitted to the RFO for banking or to the appropriate Officer collecting the money as directed by the RFO. In all cases all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers in accordance with Regulation 5.2 or in such manner as subsequently directed by the Council's Internal Auditor.

13.6 A reference to the related invoice, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each receipt, shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

13.7 All sums received by BACS will be made available for scrutiny for subsequent audits.

13.8 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another shall be checked and signed for by the receiving Officer.

13.9 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

13.10 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the General Purposes Committee to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

13.11 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

14.0 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

14.1 Where contracts provide for payments by instalments, the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract, by the RFO upon receipt of authorised certificates issued by the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract and a valid claim for payment from the contractor. (Subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

14.2 Any variation to a contract, or addition to, or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Town Clerk to the contractor in writing. The Council or appropriate committee should be informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15.0 STOCKS, STORES AND EQUIPMENT

15.1 The Officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and security of all relevant buildings, furniture, equipment, cash, stocks and stores in that section.

15.2 Appropriate Officers shall ensure that all conditions of insurance are complied with in respect of cash, valuables and property.

15.3 Delivery notes or invoices must be obtained in respect of all goods received, and goods must be checked as to quantity and quality against the purchase orders at the time delivery is made.

15.4 Stocks and stores shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

15.5 The RFO or appropriate Officer shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

16.0 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

16.1 The Town Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties owned by the Council.

16.2 The Estates Manager, Facilities & Compliance Manager and RFO shall ensure an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, (where possible), nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with the current Accounts and Audit Regulations.

16.3 The continued existence of tangible assets shown on the register shall be verified at least annually with a safety inspection of assets.

16.4 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consent required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

16.5 No property (interests in land) shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

17.0 INSURANCE

17.1 Following the annual risk assessment (Financial Regulations 16.1 and 16.2), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk

17.2 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances affected by the Council and the property and risks covered and annually review the Council's insurance requirements.

17.3 The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report to the appropriate committee at the next available meeting.

17.4 The appropriate Officer shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations effecting existing insurances.

17.5 All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council or duly delegated committee.

18.0 SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

18.1 Records of a financial nature shall be retained in accordance with a schedule of minimum periods to comply with tax and insurance requirements or other instructions or advice received from the appropriate authorities. Regardless of the above all records must be retained, as a minimum, until after the completion of each year's external audit.

18.2 The Council will comply with information governance legislation and any other appropriate Council policy or other applicable legislation that may be introduced or amended from time to time.

19.0 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

19.1 It shall be the duty of the General Purposes Committee to review these Financial Regulations from time to time and following any change of Clerk or RFO. The Town Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the General Purposes Committee of any requirement for a consequential amendment to them.

19.2 The council, may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of the council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of the council. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

19.3 The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk & RFO or Estates & Facilities Manager in the presence of at least two members of council.
4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [34.5] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

MEMBERS AUDIT POLICY

Policy Number 63		
Issue No.	**Date completed**	**Details of amendments**
1	24.05.10	GP 24.05.10
2	29.07.13	GP 15.07.13
3	13.04.15	GP 70.04.15 General Review of policy
4	01.06.21	GP07.06.21 – General review in line with move to BACS payments
5	23.10.23	GP26.10.23 – adoption of updates to policy
6	04.11.24	Review of policy by General Purposes Committee
7	20.07.26	Review to reflect recent changes (GP Committee)
8	07.09.26	Ratification of General Purposes Committee approval

1.0 Introduction

1.1. In accordance with its Annual Governance Statement, Uckfield Town Council is required to review its system of internal control. This is generally by the continuing review of existing policies and implementation of new policies, compliance with such policies, procedures, laws and regulations in order to improve governance. The Members' Audit is part of this process.

2.0. Procedures

2.1. On a monthly basis one member of the Council will carry out a Members' Audit by completing the form at Appendix A using the following format.

2.2. At each Annual Statutory Meeting, the Chief Officer (Town Clerk) will provide a schedule of Members who will be required to undertake the Members' Audit for a particular month. Members will be required to make an appropriate appointment with the Deputy Chief Officer (RFO) accordingly.

2.3 Should any Member not be able to make the date set out for them in the schedule, it will be their responsibility to make alternative arrangements with another Member to fulfil their obligations for that month.

3.0. SAGE AUDIT TRAIL (DETAILED)

3.1. The purpose of this exercise is to follow the process of completing specific exercises relating to supplier invoices, customer invoices and payroll timesheets. The member will be able to spotcheck and follow a payment or invoice from start to finish, to check that all aspects of the process were followed correctly.

3.2. **Supplier Invoices:**

The Member will choose random invoices from the suppliers paid files.
They will check:

a) That the invoices have been stamped with the authorisation stamp.
b) That the correct nominal code has been used and goods receipted by an authorised member of staff.
c) That a purchase order is attached and corresponds with the invoice.
d) That the payment method is present on the invoice and a review of the report from Bankline to confirm BACS payment has been made.(BACs payment report). .
e) That the two Members that authorised payment have also signed the invoice.

3.3. **Customer Invoices**:

The Member will choose random invoices from the 'customer paid' files from the month that they are auditing.
They will check:

a) That the invoice details correspond with the customer booking form attached to the invoice.
b) That the prices charged are in accordance with the current fees and charges.
c) That the date the invoice was paid is on the invoice.

d) That a cross-check is made with the customer's method of payment to check that the funds have been received (either bank statement or paying in book if cash/cheque).

3.4. **Timesheets:**
The Member will choose random timesheets from the file, preferably one from Uckfield Town Council and one from Luxfords Restaurant.
They will check:
a) That the time sheets add up correctly.
b) That the pay detail on the payslip for that person corresponds with the time sheet;
c) That payment was made into their account correctly by checking the payslip amount against the BACs records for payment.

4.0. BANK RECONCILIATION AND VERIFICATION TO NOMINAL CODE

4.1. The purpose of this exercise is to monitor movement between accounts and account balances.

4.2. The Member will carry out the following checks:
a) The bank statements correspond with the bank reconciliation.
b) The bank statements and reconciliations have been signed by the Deputy Chief Officer (Responsible Financial Officer).
c) Any discrepancies (bank errors) are fully detailed.
d) The nominal codes are correct in SAGE.

4.3 As outlined in the Town Council's Financial Regulations, at least once a quarter and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. This will be carried out as part of the monthly member audit procedures. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and be noted by the Council.

5.0. PETTY CASH

5.1. The Town Council hold two petty cash floats, one for the Town Council and one for Luxfords restaurant. These are 'topped up' by cash withdrawn from the Clerk's bank account. The only two officers that can withdraw cash from the Clerk's bank account to top up the petty cash floats are the Chief Officer (Town Clerk) and the Deputy Chief Officer (RFO).

5.2 The Member will carry out the following:
a) Check that the month's reconciliation is correct, signed and dated.
b) Select random vouchers from the reconciliation and check that they have been entered correctly onto SAGE.
c) Count the money, at the time of their visit, in both petty cash tins to ensure the balance matches the SAGE balance.
e) Check that vouchers are authorised by a member of staff and details entered in the petty cash books.
d) Check that, where applicable, reimbursements of funds are signed for in the petty cash books.

6.0. IRREGULARITIES

In cases of suspected serious breaches of the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Policies, the matter will be referred to the Urgent Consultation Panel immediately.

7.0. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it fully covers the Council's Governance requirements.

Appendix A

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

MEMBERS AUDIT FORM

MONTH:

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 Petty Cash	☐
Luxfords Petty Cash	☐

Signed ………………………………….

Print Name ……………………………..

Dated ……………………………………

Members comments:-

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.

Customer invoices checked

Customer Name	Invoice No.	Are hire charges correct?	Payment date on invoice	Bank Statement Date/Pg No.

Timesheets checked

Staff Name	Are hours correct?	Is payment correct?	Payslip date	Ref code on BACS payment record

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				
General Account				
Business Reserve				
35 day account				
95 day account				
Luxfords account				

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			
Luxfords			

<u>Meeting of the Full Council</u>

<u>Monday 7 September 2026</u>

Agenda Item 11.0

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON BANKING AND POST OFFICE SERVICES

1.0 Background

1.1 The Town Council heard the news on 27 July 2026 that TG Jones would be closing its larger High Street store on Uckfield High Street. The Town Council learnt of the news via social media and staff working in store. The proposed c closure would affect both the services of TG Jones and Post Office. This information was immediately shared with Town, District and County Councillors as well as our local MP.

2.0 Post Office Services

2.1 We have since been informed that the Uckfield High Street Post Office scheduled is scheduled to close after its last operating day on Tuesday 8 September, Uckfield Town Council has been seeking urgent answers from the Post Office on the future of its services in the town centre.

2.2 On the second communication with Post Office Headquarters, the Town Council received correspondence from a Post Office representative, who confirmed several important pieces of information:

1). They confirmed that due to TG Jones tendering its resignation, when the store closes on 9th September, the Post Office will also be forced to close.

2). they confirmed that the Post Office is *"in the process of identifying a replacement operator to run the service".*

3). they also stated that the opportunity was initially advertised publicly, but due to receiving *"several expressions of interest, the advert for Uckfield has now been removed".* They added that they are currently *"working through this interest from potential new operators".*

2.3 They clarified that as soon as they have further updates, they will reach out to local stakeholders such as the Town Council so they can be shared with the community.

2.4 From Wednesday 9 September postal services will only be available at the branches of Five Ash Down Post Office (Monday to Sunday) and Ridgewood Post Office (Monday to Saturday).

3.0 Clarification on the Uckfield Banking Hub

3.1 The timing of the new Banking Hub's opening and the use of Post Office branding on the building's new frontage has understandably led to confusion about the services that the Banking Hub will provide.

3.2 The opening of the new permanent Banking Hub at the same time, has caused some confusion amongst service users.

Banking Hubs are owned by Cash Access UK, who are funded by the UK's biggest banks, including AIB NI, Bank of Ireland UK, Barclays, Danske Bank, HSBC UK, Lloyds Banking Group, NatWest Group, Santander, TSB and Virgin Money. They are a response to downward trends in in-person customer interactions and the dwindling number of high street branches of banks and building societies, pooling resources in one location to still provide key services.

3.3 Banking Hubs are operated by the Post Office, but they do not offer Post Office postal services, only monetary services. Members of the public, and local businesses can therefore pay money into the new Banking Hub but not post a parcel for example.

3.4 The official Post Office website states about Banking Hubs: *"While they're operated by Post Office, Banking Hubs aren't regular Post Office branches." "This means services like posting letters and parcels, insurance products, travel money as well as identity services like passports, aren't available in our hubs."*

3.5 More information about the Uckfield Banking Hub is available here: **https://www.cashaccess.co.uk/hubs/uckfield-east-sussex/**

3.6 As soon as further information is received from The Post Office Headquarters, members will be informed.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note the update and advise the Clerk if they wish any further action to be taken.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

<u>Meeting of the Full Council</u>

<u>Monday 7 September 2026</u>

Agenda Item No. 12.0

TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR

1.0 Background

1.1 The Town Council is required to appoint an Internal Auditor to review its financial and governance arrangements and ensure the procedures, policies and practices followed by staff and elected members, are sound.

1.2 An internal audit reviews the following, and for Uckfield Town Council involves three visits (two interim audits usually November and March, followed by the year end audit in June). In these onsite audits, the following is covered:

<u>Table I – Internal Control Objectives</u>

Source: *Annual Return for Local Councils in England*

A	Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year
B	The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
C	The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these
D	The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.
I	Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.
K	Exemption from limited assurance review (smaller councils only)
L	Transparency Code (smaller councils compliance)
M	Inspection - Council met responsibilities to allow public inspection of the accounts
N	Publication requirements AGAR
O	Digital and data governance
P	Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

1.3 The Town Council appointed the Internal Auditor – April Skies Ltd to complete this service for the years ending 31 March 2024, 2025 and 2026 and has been impressed with the level of detail and thorough approach to these reviews. The Town Council has made a number of improvements as a result of recommendations identified through these audits, to enhance current practices.

2.0 Confirming the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2027

2.1 Based on the experience of the Internal Auditor services used during the past three financial years, Town Council officers would like to confirm the appointment of the same company for this current financial year (2026/27).

2.2 An engagement letter from the Internal Auditor has been attached as a background paper for members, and available to the public on request.

2.3 Officers feel that the service provided meets the necessary requirements for the size of Uckfield Town Council, and associated level of accounting. This Internal Auditor confirms their independence from the Town Council. They have also demonstrated their competence through their services during the past three years.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to:

(i) confirm they were satisfied with the service provided by the current Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2026;

(ii) confirm that the Internal Auditor (April Skies Ltd) is independent from the Town Council and has no links to staff or elected members;

(iii) confirm that the Internal Auditor (April Skies Ltd) is competent and has the relevant level of professional indemnity to undertake Internal Auditing Services for the size of Uckfield Town Council, and;

(iv) conclude that we are pleased to confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor (April Skies Ltd) for the year ending 31 March 2027;

Contact Officer: Sarah D’Alessio

Holly Goring

Uckfield Town Council

28 July 2026

Dear Holly

Internal Audit 26-27 - Terms of Engagement

I am writing to confirm terms of engagement for the 26-27 financial year. April Skies Accounting Ltd is able to supply Mike Platten to act as internal auditor to Uckfield Town Council. April Skies Accounting is able to carry out the internal audit for the Council for 26-27 financial year at a cost of £2205 plus travel from Farnham in Surrey. This covers the cost of

- An interim audit, to be completed in November
- second interim audit in February or March
- The year end audit, to be completed at the Council's convenience after 1 April and in time to permit the Council to approve the AGAR before 30 June.

We are writing to confirm the terms of our appointment. This engagement letter sets out the basis on which we are engaged to act as internal auditors and our respective areas of responsibility.

1. Responsibilities of the Council

1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that it maintains an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. For clarity, responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the Council and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with the Council.

1.2 The Council is also responsible for ensuring that accounting statements are prepared in accordance with the requirements of accounting regulations applicable to parish councils.

1.3 The Council should make available to internal audit, as and when required, all accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings. We are entitled to obtain from the Council's members and employees any information or documentation we think necessary for the performance of our duties as internal auditors.

07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

1.4 We, as your internal auditors cannot absolve management of responsibility for internal controls and must ensure that we are not involved in the operation of controls or making management decisions as such activities may compromise our objectivity.

2. Responsibility of Internal Audit

2.1 It is our duty to complete and sign off section 4 of the Annual Return for Local Councils in England. We must report on the following assertions:

Table 1 – Internal Control Objectives

Source: *Annual Return for Local Councils in England*

A	Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year
B	The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
C	The Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these
D	The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.
I	Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.
K	Exemption from limited assurance review (smaller councils only)
L	Transparency Code (smaller councils compliance)
M	Inspection - Council met responsibilities to allow public inspection of the accounts
N	Publication requirements AGAR
O	Digital and data governance
P	Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

2.2 We will carry out any audit testing we deem necessary to complete section 4 of the Annual Return for Local Councils in England. Internal Audit has a responsibility to report any evidence of what we judge to be material non-compliance with any of the assertions set out in table 1 above via the annual report.

2.3 We will also report to you in writing any areas where we judge your systems of internal control may need to be strengthened, on completion of our audit work.

3. Scope of Audit

3.1 Our internal audit will be conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines, specifically those set out in section 4 of "Government and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners Guide."

3.2 The scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We will not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council in the course of the financial year.

3.3 In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements and management information.

4. Communication

4.1 We will contact you by email in order to confirm arrangements for the audit.

4.2 We will set out any matters arising from the audit in the following formats:

- by email, on conclusion of the audit, to enable discussion of recommendations
- a report will be issued by email, in time to enable you to complete the Annual Return

4.3 We will, of course, contact you regularly in the course of the financial year with regard to audit and other matters.

4.4 Our fees do not include attendance at meetings of the Council. If this is required, an additional charge will be incurred.

• 07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

5. Electronic Publication

5.1 Where audited financial information is published digitally by the Council, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that any such publication properly presents the financial information and auditor's report.

5.2 It is your responsibility to ensure there are controls in place to prevent or detect quickly any changes to electronically published information. The maintenance and integrity of electronically published information is the Council's responsibility and we accept no responsibility for changes made to audited information after it is first posted.

6. Limitation of liability

6.1 The work carried out under the terms of this engagement letter is solely for the use of Uckfield Town Council. We neither owe nor accept any duty of care to any other third party.

7. Competence

7.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd provides the services of Mike Platten to Uckfield Town Council in respect of the above assignment. Mike Platten is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). CIPFA maintains a professional disciplinary scheme under which complaints of misconduct by CIPFA members will be investigated. The client has a right to refer to CIPFA any matters affecting professional conduct or competence.

8. Continuity and Substitution

8.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd may, with the prior written approval of the Client, appoint a suitably qualified and skilled substitute to perform the services instead of the individual, provided that the substitute shall be required to enter into direct undertakings with the Client, including with regard to confidentiality. If the Client accepts the substitute, the Consultant Company shall continue to invoice the Client and shall be responsible for the remuneration of the substitute.

9. Insurance

9.1 April Skies Accounting Limited holds professional indemnity insurance cover to a limit of £250K. The professional indemnity insurer is Simply Business Insurance. The certificate of insurance is attached.

• 07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

10. Independence

10.1 April Skies Accounting Ltd has no relationship with staff or Councillors of Uckfield Town Council, beyond that required to carry out a professional internal audit. Furthermore, in line with NALC guidance, April Skies Accounting Ltd will not take on any form of consultancy work with the Council.

10.2 It is recommended that the Council records the independence of internal audit in a Full Council minute.

11. Period of engagement

11.1 This letter is effective for accounting periods ending on or after 31-03-2027. Any matters arising in respect of prior periods will be dealt with in accordance with best practice.

12. Fees

12.1 We calculate our fees using a standard hourly rate plus expenses. Mileage will be charged at 55p mile, in line with HMRC mileage rates. All other expenses will be charged at cost.

12.2 Invoices should be settled within 30 days of submission to the Council.

12.3 Our fee assumes a robust level `of internal controls at the Council and documented procedures of a high standard. If additional work is required, this is charged at £65 per hour.

13. Agreement of terms

13.1 If, having considered the terms of this engagement letter, you conclude they are reasonable, and you wish to engage us on these terms, please let us have your written agreement to these arrangements by returning to us a signed copy of this engagement letter.

Yours faithfully

M. Platten

Mike Platten

• 07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Uckfield Town Council agrees the appointment of April Skies Accounting Limited subject to the terms of this engagement letter.

Signed: ______________________________________

Printed Name: ________________________________

Position: ______________________________________

Date:____

07958 990310
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Simply Business

Certificate of Insurance

Issue date: 22 June 2026

Simply Business certifies that the information for April Skies Accounting Limited shown here is correct, as of the issue date above.

For full policy terms and conditions, please refer to the policy wording document.

Company name	April Skies Accounting Limited
Policy number	CHBS3589971XB
Trade/Business	Accountant
Professional indemnity	up to £250,000
Policy start date	01 July 2026
Policy end date	30 June 2027

David Summers
Group CEO, Simply Business

• **07958 990310**
mike@aprilskies.co.uk
Company Registration Number 14174016
6 Uplands Road. Farnham GU9 8BP

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 7 September 2026

Agenda item 13.0

QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES (Q1 2026)

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides a review at the end of quarter one on the Town Council's priorities for 2026/27 (end of June 2026).

1.2 The priorities identified for delivery in 2026/27 consisted of initiatives which are often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but demonstrate that by working together with colleagues and partner agencies, we can achieve a great deal for the town and its residents.

1.3 Organisations often spend time producing plans or lists of priorities, but do not review progress until the end of the year. With this paper, the Town Clerk provides an update to members to explain the progress being made to deliver these priorities.

2.0 Q1 2026/27: Progress Update

2.1 Of the 12 priorities, 9 have made good progress and are on schedule for completion, one has seen some progress and two have yet to commence. This is excellent progress for the end of the first quarter.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to review this progress report, and note the work undertaken to date.

Appendices: Appendix A: Q1 2026/27 Progress Report
Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Key:

= Progress behind schedule	= Some progress has been made
= On schedule for completion	= Completed

APPENDIX A: Q1 - 2026/27 Progress Update

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
UNDERSTANDING OUR NATURAL HABITATS We will commission wildlife appraisals and monitoring of our ancient woodlands and local nature reserves. We will continue to enhance Harlands Pond. We will develop biodiversity action plans for delivery with partner agencies, and the voluntary and community sector, to restore and protect our wildlife corridors.		Wildlife appraisals were completed and shared with members of Environment & Leisure Committee in the Spring. A local Ecology company has prepared a proposal and quotation for the preparation of three biodiversity action plans for the two nature reserves and Boothland Wood, with one overarching strategy.	Environment & Leisure Committee	Estates Manager
PROTECTING AND RESTORING OUR ANCIENT WOODLANDS We will address the remainder of ash dieback, and undertake works to restore specific areas of woodland to allow for the re-establishment of flora and fauna and restoration of priority habitats.		Fencing works commenced around Boothland Wood/New Barn in April 2026. Sadly the proximity of adjacent soil movements associated with a large development next to Boothland Wood has created dust coverage and impact to the woodland. Further expenditure will therefore be required to assist and protect the flora and fauna. A formal complaint has been raised with Planning Enforcement.	Environment & Leisure Committee	Estates Manager
ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY We will feed into consultation on the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and planning applications to seek improvement to walking and cycling within the town. We will review signage and mapping of existing footways and facilities. We will explore opportunities to develop a River Walk.		Despite chasing, we have yet to hear any more at present from East Sussex on the draft Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. We have however held discussions with the landowner nearest Hempstead Lane to start conversations in relation to a possible extension to Hempstead Meadows LNR footpath (and creation of a River Walk).	Environment & Leisure Committee	Chief Officer/ Estates Manager

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE We will host an Eco EXPO to promote alternative technologies to local residents, a Green Shoots Fashion Show to promote the reuse and recycling of textiles. We will commission a review of our previous carbon audit to create a clear and up to date action plan for our asset portfolio.		The Eco EXPO was organised and hosted on Saturday 21 March 2026 in the Weald Hall of the Civic Centre. Around 20 organisations attended and presented their alternative technologies and services to members of the public. The Facilities & Compliance Manager is currently working with the company commissioned to undertake the review of our previous carbon audit. Once complete, the results will be shared with members.	Environment & Leisure/ General Purposes Committee	UTC Members and Mgt Team
UPGRADING OUR BUILT ASSETS We will continue to improve the condition, safety and decoration of buildings we manage day to day – Civic Centre, Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion. We will upgrade car parks adjacent to our built assets. We will seek professional expertise to explore and deliver options for creating a new community facility on Town Council land.		Good progress is being made towards the delivery of the Town Council's Annual Building Maintenance Programme – with solar panels replaced on the Civic Centre, replacement works undertaken to emergency lighting and heating systems, and decorative works completed within the Civic Centre, Foresters Hall and Victoria Pavilion.	General Purposes Committee	Facilities & Compliance Manager
UPGRADING OUR SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES We will design and install new welfare facilities at Harlands Recreation Ground. We will pursue our application to the Football Foundation for the design, supply and installation of a 3G pitch at Victoria Pleasure Ground. We will seek expertise and funding to strengthen sports pitch renovations. We will also explore options for undertaking improvements to the Skate Park and identify new ideas to broaden the range of recreational facilities available within the town.		Work continues to prepare the full application to the Football Foundation for a new 3G Pitch at Victoria Pleasure Ground. This involves two key workstreams (i) the preparation of a planning application by consultants SSL. Details on Biodiversity Net Gain are being finalised prior to the submission of the planning application to the local planning authority in September. The second workstream involves preparing the full application to the Football Foundation, the project plan, timetable of usage and stakeholder engagement. This work is on schedule as planned. Revisions have been made to the machinery used to improve access to grass football pitches during wet weather. Grant funding has been obtained from the Football Foundation to assist with funding additional renovation works to the pitches. Drainage works have been completed at the skate park, and a pump track has been commissioned for the October half term, which will provide a perfect opportunity to engage with the local community on what they would like to see in this area for the future.	Environment & Leisure Committee	Estates Manager

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
COMMUNITY GRANTS We will award up to £19,000 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations for the period 2026/27, alongside the provision of £24,500 to Wealden Citizen's Advice, £9,000 to Wealden Volunteering and £3,500 to Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society.		The first instalments have been made to the Wealden Citizens Advice and Wealden Volunteering for their service level agreements. The full payment has been made to the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society for their annual weekend of events. The first instalments were issued to those awarded community grant funding for 2026-27, in May 2026. The second instalments for the larger amounts will be issued in October 2026.	General Purposes Committee	Deputy Chief Officer (RFO)
PUBLIC EVENTS AND ANNIVERSARIES IN THE TOWN We will organise and deliver a variety of indoor and outdoor events including the annual day festival Weald on the Field, and support the organisation of the Remembrance Parade and Services.		Weald on the Field took place on Saturday 8 August 2026 and was a great success. Our highest attendance yet, a sunny although hot day, saw around 70 stallholders and a fabulous line up of live music on the airstream stage entertain those in attendance from 11.30am until 7.30pm. Poppet from the Big 100 Winnie the Pooh anniversary also participated in the event, at the upper part of the field. Preparations are now underway for this autumn's remembrance services.	Full Council /Environment & Leisure Committee	Chief Officer (Town Clerk)
PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE We will utilise the assistance of professional expertise to manage delivery of major projects and assist with the review of specialist policies and procedures.		We have sought the professional expertise in this first quarter to assist with the following services: - Event Management and consideration of risk/threat/incident response; - Review of our Emergency Action Plan; - Neighbourhood Planning; - HR Support;	General Purposes Committee	Chief Officer/ Deputy Chief Officer
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT We will focus on developing our existing, and introducing new revenue streams.		Due to other larger projects this has not yet been given our full attention, but a draft communications plan has been prepared to plan for room hire promotion, and further work will be undertaken in this area in quarters two and three.	All	Mgt Team
REVIEWING GOVERNANCE We will launch a community governance review.		This has yet to be progressed by the Chief Officer and will be actioned during quarter two.	Full Council	Chief Officer (Town Clerk)

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
FORWARD PLANNING We will work with local partner agencies, residents and local businesses to understand the infrastructure requirements for Uckfield, in regards to sport, leisure, recreation and community facilities. We will also consider the future impact of growth on the Town Council's provision of allotment and cemetery space. This information will also be utilised to inform the finalisation of an Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan.		A quotation and proposal has been prepared by a company specialising in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans to support Uckfield in the development and consultation process. This is due to be presented to Full Council on 7 September 2026. Members continue through stakeholder engagement opportunities, planning applications and planning appeals to express the needs of the town in relation to infrastructure.	Full Council	Chief Officer (Town Clerk)

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

BUDGET SETTING FOR 2027-28 (UTC)

DATE		Purpose or key deadlines
Aug-26		
20	Fees & Charges Working Group	*Initial review of income and expenditure and ground conditions*
Sep-26		
7	Full Council	*Setting the scene*
21	General Purposes	*Deadline Tuesday 15 September*
22	Fees & Charges Wrking Group	*Deadline Thursday 17 September*
23	Meet with Hosp Mgr & Marketing Officer	*Initial review of all budget lines*
Oct-26		
2	Meet with Estates Mgr	*Initial review of all budget lines*
6	Hospitality Review Working Group	*Deadline 1 October*
12	Environment & Leisure	*Deadline 6 October*
15	Finance Sub	*Deadline 8 October*
19	Full Council	*Deadline 13 October*
	Interim Audit?	
Nov-26		
2	Personnel Sub	*Deadline 28 October*
6	Meet with Facilities & Compliance Mgr	*Initial review of all budget lines*
7	*VAT return deadline*	
9	All Member Workshop	*Booked in and on calendar*
18	Hospitality Review Working Group	*Deadline 11 November*
23	General Purposes	*Deadline 17 November*
30	Environment & Leisure	*Deadline 24 November*
Dec-26		
14	Full Council (Draft Budget)	*Deadline for agenda papers (8 December)*
15	*Consultation to commence on Bus Pl. docs*	
Jan-27		
11	*Deadline for consultation responses*	
12	Finance Sub	*Deadline for agenda papers (7 January)*
18	Full Council (Budget)	*Deadline for agenda papers (12 January)*
31	*Have business planning docs on website*	

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 7 September 2026

Agenda Item 17.0

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

1.0 Summary

1.1 The report sets out the engagements of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor between 29 June 2026 to the 7 September 2026.

1.2 Please note that Councillor K. Bedwell was re-elected as Mayor and Councillor S. Mayhew re-elected as Deputy Mayor on 20 May 2026.

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

01.07.26	Attend Wealden Young Speakers Challenge. Civic Centre, Hailsham.
03.07.26	Attend BLOOMQUAKE art exhibition launch. The Lounge, Uckfield.
04.07.26	Guest at 20yr Celebration of Uckfield Chiropractic Clinic. Uckfield.
10.07.26	Attend VPA Exhibition Opening Event. Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield.
11.07.26	Proms on the Pitch, Uckfield Rugby Club
14.07.26	Presentation of lifting chairs to First Responders. Civic Centre, Uckfield.
18.07.26	Attend Chamber of Commerce Meeting. Horsted Place, Uckfield.
22.07.26	Guest at ESCC Chairman's Civic Summer Reception. Hendall Manor Barns
24.07.26	Attend Soul Survivors Concert. Holy Cross Church, Uckfield.
27.07.26	Visit Total Performance Football Summer Club, Blackboys Primary School.
28.07.26	Girlguiding Sussex East County. Blacklands Farm, Wych Cross.
05.08.26	Meeting with Suzanne Hartfield. Good Oaks Quality Care, Uckfield.
05.08.26	Attend Community Lunch with Fr John Wall. Holy Cross Church, Uckfield.
08.08.26	Mayor at Weald on the Field and Mayor's Refreshments. Luxford Field and Civic Centre, Uckfield.
13.08.26	Family Fun Day, Care for Carers. Victoria Pleasure Ground, Uckfield.
29.08.26	VIP Guest at 'Ghana be a Good Night' Celebration. Community House, Peacehaven.
03.09.26	Attend 5yr Celebration Evening. Lydfords Care Home. East Hoathly.
04.09.26	Attend Larger Parish Forum. Community Centre. Heathfield.
05.09.26	Uckfield Carnival (Children's and Evening Procession). Uckfield.

T**O NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

03.07.26	Attend BLOOMQUAKE art exhibition launch. The Lounge, Uckfield.
10.07.26	Attend VPA Exhibition Opening Event. Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield.
11.07.26	Proms on the Pitch, Uckfield Rugby Club
05.08.26	Meeting with Suzanne Hartfield. Good Oaks Quality Care, Uckfield.
08.08.26	Deputy Mayor at Weald on the Field. Luxford Field, Uckfield.
04.09.26	Official Launch of the new Banking Hub. High Street, Uckfield.
05.09.26	Uckfield Carnival (Children's and Evening Procession). Uckfield.