

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Centre on Monday 20 May 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. D. French
Cllr. V. Frost
Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. M. McClafferty
Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. P. Selby
Cllr. B. Reed
Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. P. Ullmann
Cllr. D. Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Councillor K. Williams
3 members of the public including one former councillor.

Sarah D'Alessio Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Holly Goring Town Clerk
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Seven nominations were received in advance of the meeting for the position of Town Mayor. The councillor(s) nominated for Town Mayor were:

Councillor K. Bedwell
Councillor D. French
Councillor C. Macve

Councillors D. French and C. Macve wished to step down due to other commitments.

FC.01.05.24 With no further nominations, members **RESOLVED** for Councillor Karen Bedwell to be elected as Town Mayor.

1.1 The Town Mayor to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Councillor K. Bedwell thanked members for their support and accepted the chain of office from the former Mayor Councillor J. Love.
Councillor K. Bedwell then signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Proper Officer (Town Clerk).

2.0 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

The Town Clerk advised that three nominations had been put forward for the role of Deputy Mayor. The names put forward for Deputy Mayor, were:

Councillor C. Macve
Councillor S. Mayhew

The Town Clerk asked if either member wished to step down from the nominations. Neither wished to. The Town Clerk then asked members whether

they wished to vote by a show of hands or signed ballot. Two councillors requested a signed ballot.

The first signed ballot resulted in six votes in favour of Councillor C. Macve and six votes in favour of Councillor S. Mayhew, with two votes removed due to these being unsigned. Analysis of the unsigned votes, would have also resulted in a tie. This left the newly elected Mayor in a difficult position.

After much consideration, Councillor C. Macve offer to rescind his nomination.

FC.02.05.24 With ten votes in favour, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor S. Mayhew be appointed as Deputy Town Mayor for 2024-25.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor B. Cox, and County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling.

4.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. They were advised that notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration and that the nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest became apparent. None were forthcoming.

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

None.

6.0 MINUTES

6.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of the 8 April 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC.03.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on the 8 April 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

6.2 Action List

Members noted the contents of the action list, and agreed to remove:
FC77.12.23 – Aboricultural report for a Lime Tree in Snatts Road Cemetery (as the work had now been completed)

7.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(a) Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15 April 2024

FC.04.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Environment & Leisure Committee of the 15 April 2024.

(b) Plans Committee of the 22 April and 13 May 2024

FC.05.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 22 April and 13 May 2024.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 29 April 2024

FC.06.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 29 April 2024.

8.0 TO CONSIDER THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Members were presented with a report which highlighted the benefits of having a scheme of delegation in addition to the detail included within the Town Council's standing orders, and financial regulations.

One member confirmed that they felt this would be right and proper, and marginally preferred the style of the Gillingham Scheme of Delegation as a framework to work with, as the contents were presented clearly. A second member also supported their layout.

FC.07.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** for a draft scheme of delegation to be prepared for senior officers and considered by members of General Purposes Committee, prior to Full Council on 26 June 2024. It was suggested that the layout of the Gillingham TC scheme, be followed.

9.0 TO REVIEW THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The terms of reference were shared for each of the Town Council's committees, to enable members to review the contents and assess whether any updates would be required since the last annual review in May 2023.

FC.08.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** to accept the modifications (proposed changes set out by tracked changes), and adopt the Terms of Reference for Uckfield Town Council's committees.

10.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED STANDING COMMITTEES

General Purposes - 9 members

FC.09.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the nine members of the General Purposes Committee be as follows:-

Councillors B. Cox, V. Frost, J. Love, C. Macve, D. Manvell, P. Selby, A. Smith, P. Ullmann and D. Ward.

Environment and Leisure - 9 members

FC.10.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the nine members of the Environment and Leisure Committee be as follows:-

Councillors. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, D. French, V. Frost, M. McClafferty, C. Macve, S. Mayhew, B. Reed and A. Smith.

Plans - 7 members

FC.11.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that six members of the Plans Committee be as follows:-

Cllrs. K. Bedwell, D. Bennett, J. Love, C. Macve, S. Mayhew and P. Ullmann.

This left one seat vacant.

Prior to adjourning to consider the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for the various committees, Members were reminded of the Council's Standing Orders relating to voting on appointments which stated:-

"15.3 - Nor should any Member of the Council be Chairman of more than one committee or sub-committee at any one time."

and

"15.4 - "Neither shall the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be Chairman of a full committee."

GP.01.05.24 In considering the appointment of Chair of the General Purposes Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. D. Ward be re-appointed as Chair.

GP.02.05.24 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. C. Macve be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

EL.01.05.24 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. A. Smith be appointed as Chair.

EL.02.05.24 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. B. Reed be appointed as Vice-Chair.

P.01.05.24 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. J. Love be appointed as Chair.

P.02.05.24 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Plans Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor. C. Macve be re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

11.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE UNDER MENTIONED SUB-COMMITTEES AND THE VOICE EDITORIAL PANEL

In considering the appointment of members to the sub-committees, the Clerk reminded Members of Standing Order No. 19.1.8 which stated that the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee or in their absence the Vice-chairman of the committee shall be members of every sub-committee appointed by it, unless they signified that they did not wish to serve.

The Town Clerk asked the Chair of General Purposes Committee, Councillor D. Ward, if they wished to sit on Personnel Sub-Committee. Councillor D. Ward confirmed that she did wish to have a seat on Personnel Sub-Committee.

Personnel - 5 members

Four of the seats were filled, with a further three members selecting the sub-committee as their third choice (Councillors K. Bedwell, V. Frost and J. Love). These members had an opportunity to take the fifth seat.

The Town Clerk then asked members whether they wished to vote by a show of hands or signed ballot. Two councillors requested a signed ballot. This resulted in a tie between two councillors and the third councillor receiving less votes.

A second signed ballot was undertaken.

FC.12.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Personnel Sub-committee be as follows:-
Councillors. D. French, J. Love, M. McClafferty, A. Smith and D. Ward.

The Chair of General Purposes Committee, Councillor D. Ward had already expressed an interest in Finance Sub-Committee.

Finance – 5 members

Four seats were automatically filled, with a further two members interested. Councillor P. Selby wished to rescind his interest in the sub-committee.

FC.13.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Finance Sub-committee be as follows:-
Councillors B. Cox, D. Manvell, S. Mayhew, D. Ward and P. Ullmann.

The meeting then adjourned to allow the sub-committees to meet and elect a Chair and Vice-chair.

PS.01.05.24 In considering the appointment of Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D. French be appointed as Chair.

PS.02.05.24 In considering the appointment of Vice-Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor A. Smith be appointed as Vice-Chair.

The position of Chair and Vice-Chair would need to be appointed at the first meeting of Finance Sub-Committee, once all members were available to nominate and vote.

The Voice Editorial Panel

The Clerk advised that two Members had expressed an interest in the Editorial Panel. One member wished to withdraw if other interest was put forward. Further interest was expressed by members around the table:

FC.14.05.24 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** that the four members of the Voice Editorial Panel would be as follows:-
Councillors. K. Bedwell, D. French, S. Mayhew and P. Selby.

12.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

FC.15.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed as the Council's representatives to the following outside bodies:-

FULL COUNCIL

Organisation	No. Required	
Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee	2	Cllr Jackie Love Cllr Diane Ward

Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee – Substitute Members	2	Cllr Donna French Cllr Peter Selby
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	Up to 4	Cllr Val Frost Cllr Chris Macve
Gatwick Airport Consultation Group	3	Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Peter Selby Cllr Peter Ullmann

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Wealden Citizens Advice	1	Cllr Angie Smith
Emergency Planning Co-ordinators	4 (two south of river/two north of river)	Cllr Karen Bedwell Cllr Duncan Bennett Cllr Donna French Cllr Val Frost
Wealden Volunteering (formerly UVC)	1	Cllr Peter Selby
Wealden District Association of Local Councils	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Cllr Val Frost Cllr Diane Ward
Wealden District Association of Local Councils Parish Planning Panel/Local Plan Engagement Cluster	(2) 1 member and 1 substitute	Cllr Karen Bedwell Cllr Jackie Love

AGM meetings only:

East Sussex Association of Local Councils	1	Cllr Diane Ward
Ridgewood Village Hall Management Committee	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

All Weather Pitch Operational Advisory Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Chris Macve Cllr Peter Selby
Conservators of Ashdown Forest	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Donna French Cllr Bernadette Reed
Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	<i>To be appointed at first E&L Committee after Annual Stat meeting</i>
Luxford Centre Management Committee	1	Cllr Val Frost
Stakeholder Group exploring provision of Tennis facilities in Uckfield with Uckfield College	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Town Clerk

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee	1	Cllr Chris Macve
Uckfield Youth Club Board	(2) (1 member and 1 substitute)	Cllr Donna French Cllr Dan Manvell
Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link Forum	1	Cllr Angie Smith
Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group	1	Cllr Ben Cox

AGM meetings only:

Uckfield & District Twinning Association	1	Cllr Spike Mayhew
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13.0 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Members considered a report which provided information on four working groups which currently fell under the remit of Full Council. This included the Civic Centre Working Group, Uckfield Dementia Forum (to be renamed Ageing Well Forum), Events Working Group and Infrastructure Working Group.

It was suggested that the Events Working Group continue in its current form, due to two events coming up very shortly – D-Day Beacon Lighting and Weald on the Field. The Ageing Well Forum needed to appoint a new Town Council representative, and it was suggested that as infrastructure was such an important matter in the town’s growth that this be managed through organisation-wide member workshops.

Members were reminded to appoint no less than three and no more than five members to each working group.

FC.16.05.24 Members RESOLVED to:

(i) confirm appointments for the Civic Centre Working Group as:

Civic Centre Working Group –
Councillors Bennett, French, Mayhew and Ward

Events Working Group -
Councillors Bedwell, French, Frost, Love, Mayhew.

(ii) appoint Councillor K. Bedwell and P. Selby as Town Council representatives on the Ageing Well Forum, with the intention that one of these members will take on the role of Chair or Vice-Chair in 2024;

(iii) confirm that the Infrastructure Working Group cease, and that this becomes an organisation-wide initiative, through member workshops.

14.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL’S STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Town Councillors were provided with revised versions of the Town Council Standing Orders, and Financial Regulations. The Standing Orders had only minor changes, whereas the Financial Regulations had needed a substantial update in line with the recent release of the revised model financial regulations (April

2024). Although much of the content was similar, the Town Clerk had moved the Town Council's existing regulations around to ensure that the two documents aligned more closely. The model regulations also included more detail on online banking, security, and changes to procurement guidance once again.

Councillor J. Love wished to query para. 34.5, and why the Estates & Facilities Manager hadn't been listed as opening the tender documents. The Town Clerk clarified that this had not been referenced in the model financial regulations but both the Town Clerk and Estates & Facilities Manager were listed as being present during the opening of the tenders, so would continue to include this. The standing orders would be updated accordingly.

Councillor D. French noted that in the standing orders it still requested that members stood when speaking, and questioned whether this should still be a requirement. The Town Clerk confirmed that this could be removed now, as the members used the microphones so could be clearly heard by members of the public and press (para. 3.12).

FC.17.05.24 Subject to two minor changes on paragraphs 3.12 and 34.5, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's standing orders.

Councillor D. Manvell noted a point in relation to bad debts, 13.4 and noted that this had already been delegated to General Purposes Committee, but there had been discussions elsewhere that this might be a Council matter. The Town Clerk confirmed that the annual write off of under and over payments was taken to General Purposes Committee, unless time didn't allow, and a bad debts report was frequently taken to General Purposes Committee under confidential business. The Town Clerk would therefore ensure that the wording aligned within other documentation.

Councillor Smith referred to paragraph 6.10 and 12.2, and questioned the definition of 'value for money' as this didn't always mean the cheapest product. It was recommended that we provided clarification of the wording; incorporating the public sector definition, within the financial regulations.

Councillor Manvell, also referred to the new procurement guidelines, and mentioned discussed that had taken place at Wealden DC, whereby, there was the opportunity to select suppliers with a local connection. It was suggested that we consider adding this at a later point.

Councillor Smith, questioned whether we needed to reference the newly created scheme of delegation. The Town Clerk confirmed that this could be done, once the scheme had been finalised.

FC.18.05.24 Subject to the above amendments, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Financial Regulations for Uckfield Town Council.

15.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY, AND CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Town Councillors were provided with a copy of the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy for reference and review alongside the Civility and Respect Pledge which the Town Council signed up to in September 2022.

FC.19.05.24 It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Town Council's Code of Conduct Policy.

16.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ASSET REGISTER

This item would be deferred to the next Full Council meeting on 26 June 2024.

17.0 TO NOTE MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER BODIES AND ANNUAL FEES

Members were presented with a short report which provided details of annual subscriptions, memberships and associated fees. These were categorised by advisory bodies on legislation, guidance and best practice (e.g. National Association of Local Councils), specialist memberships such as those relating to cemetery or allotment management and other.

Members noted the contents of the report, and the annual subscriptions and memberships in place for 2024-25.

18.0 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2024-25

Members were provided with a calendar of meetings up until May 2025, for all standing committees, full council meetings, the annual town meeting, allotment conference, and annual finance sub-committee meeting where they reviewed the community grants programme.

Members noted the content, and received the calendar for 2024-25.

19.0 TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMPLETE AUDITS UNTIL THE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING IN MAY 2025

Members were presented with a report which confirmed audits were on track for completion for 2023-24. A new schedule had been drawn up for 2024-25 which members were asked to approve.

FC.20.05.24 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) complete the last audit for 2023/24 and;
- (ii) approve the proposed schedule for member audits for the financial year 2024/25.

20.0 TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee

Nothing to report at present.

(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Panel

Nothing to report at present.

21.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

(i) Uckfield – Events Working Group

Members were asked to support the forthcoming D-Day Beacon lighting event which was taking place on Thursday 6 June, and subsequently noted the report.

(ii) Ageing Well Forum

Nothing to report at present.

(iii) Civic Centre Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

(iv) Infrastructure Working Group

Nothing to report at present.

22.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Councillor Macve wished to acknowledge the work of former Mayor, Councillor Love, who had been an absolute star. He felt Councillor Love had been a shining example, and wished to record his thanks to both Councillor Love in her former role as Town Mayor, and Councillor French in her role as Deputy Mayor.

Members wholeheartedly agreed, supported this statement and noted the report.

23.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

No questions were received by the deadline.

24.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR B. REED

Councillor B. Reed had put forward a motion to request that Uckfield Town Council work with the 'Weald to Waves' initiative and support the mapping of key wildlife corridors, through pledging and mapping local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, and woodland areas. The initiative sought to map 100 miles of nature recovery across Sussex, from the West Sussex coastline to the Ashdown Forest and High Weald.

Councillor Reed also added that local geological sites should be incorporated into the mapping. Councillor Reed referred to the work of the late CEO of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest who was involved in setting up Knepp and this initiative, and the importance of nominating environmental assets around the Uckfield area.

FC21.05.24

Members voted to support the motion put forward by Councillor B. Reed and **RESOLVE** for Uckfield Town Council to sign up to the 'Weald to Waves' initiative and pledge to mapping key environmental assets in the Uckfield area – such as mapping the location of local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, local geological sites and woodland areas.

25.0 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO STABLE GREEN ENERGY'S NEW GRID STABILITY PROJECT IN SAND HILL LANE, FRAMFIELD

Stable Green Energy had sent out correspondence to local District Councillors, relating to a large scheme in the Framfield parish.

One member advised that the principle was welcomed, but the reality was somewhat different as it would see 480 units, the size of shipping containers in a field. Their screening would be ok in time, but the design is shown at maturity, so there would be a period of time, whereby residents would be impacted.

A similar matter had recently been discussed at Wealden District Council for another area. One member wished to see an environmental impact assessment undertaken for this application, and would consult with a District Councillor who had undertaken substantial research in a possible scheme in the Pevensy area.

It was suggested that it would be useful to consult with Framfield Parish Council, and it was also suggested, that members discuss this subject at the next Plans Committee on 3 June 2024, in order to report back to members at Full Council on 26 June.

For the purpose of noting only, Councillor D. Manvell advised that he was about

to be appointed as a member of Wealden DC's Planning Committee North and therefore wished it to be minuted, that he had not participated in the discussion on this agenda item. Members supported this proposal.

26.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEED OF GRANT

No grave certificates had been received.

27.0 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The newly elected Town Mayor, Councillor K. Bedwell thanked councillors for putting their confidence in her. She wished to thank Cllr Macve who stepped aside for Cllr Mayhew and her. It was a privilege and honour to represent Uckfield as Mayor. Councillor Love had been an amazing Mayor for the last three years and represented the town and residents with enthusiasm and passion. She could only hope to continue building on the work of former Mayors.

The Mayor had lived in Uckfield for 30 years. Her children were born and had grown up in Uckfield and she had been involved in many areas of the town from primary schools, secondary schools to volunteering with Ridgewood Village Hall. Uckfield Town Council had an amazingly important role to play as the town grew and developed with the local plan. Councillor Bedwell did not believe in politics at the Town Council level, and instead believed that as a group the council could work together to make resident and business voices heard and shape the plans for the town. It was very important that the council represented the old and the new, and built an inclusive town which benefited all and made all feel a part of. Councillor Bedwell promised to put her heart and soul into representing all the voices and representing all at UTC to the best that she could over the next 12 months.

And to finish the meeting on some positive, news, the Town Mayor asked for members to join her in congratulating Councillor Ben Cox and his partner, on the arrival of a beautiful baby boy. Samuel Austin Matthew Cox was born on 8 May at 10.53pm weighing 8lb 10 ounces. Members wished them well and welcomed Samuel to the world.

28.0 TOWN CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk advised that Wealden DC were running Code of Conduct Training for Chairs, and new Chairs of committees would be invited to attend.

The Town Clerk advised how wonderful it had been to see photographs of Mr Smith and Mr Isaacson of Brighter Uckfield enjoying an afternoon at Buckingham Palace for His Majesty The King's Garden Party. They had been invited to the event following the King's Award for Voluntary Service in February, this year.

Councillor J. Love had arranged a meeting with Southern Water and a representative of Rother & Wealden's Environmental Health Service, and this would hopefully be taking place later in June to review the fly issue from the Uckfield sewage treatment works.

The meeting closed at 8.34pm.