

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 10 June 2024 at 7.00pm

## PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Ward (Chair)	Cllr. J. Love
Cllr. C. Macve (Vice-Chair)	Cllr. D. Manvell
Cllr. P. Selby	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. V. Frost	Cllr. P. Ullmann

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Holly Goring – Town Clerk

Minutes taken by Holly Goring

### 1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

Councillor J. Love arrived at approximately 7.01pm.

Councillor A. Smith raised a prejudicial interest for agenda item 5.6 as a result of her position as Chair of the Uckfield Green Partnership. Councillor A. Smith would be asked to leave the room for this item.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

### 3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor B. Cox due to sickness and the Town Clerk had been advised that Councillor D. Manvell would be arriving late to the meeting.

### 4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 29 April 2024

**GP03.06.24** Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 29 April 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action list

Members noted the action list.

4.3 Project list

Members noted the report and agreed to remove project 82 (Computer upgrade

phase 2) as this project had been completed. Councillor C. Macve also suggested removing reference to the Osborn Hall Car Park in project 68 as this project was focused purely on Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park. Members noted this suggestion.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

### 5.1 To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

Councillor D. Manvell arrived at approximately 7.10pm.

### 5.2 To review the draft financial position for the financial year ending 31 March 2024

Members were presented with the income and expenditure for all three areas – Environment & Leisure, General Purposes and Luxfords Restaurant.

The Chair, Councillor D. Ward, wished to thank all staff for their hard work.

It had been a challenging year, with a number of unforeseen costs and increase in utilities, materials, food stock, salaries and fuel costs. This naturally had had an impact on all three budget areas, in terms of actual spend versus that budgeted.

It was suggested that members keep a close watch on specific areas, and for a Finance Sub-Committee meeting to be arranged after the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been approved along with the draft financial statements which would be published at the end of June.

Members subsequently noted the position outlined in the reports.

### 5.3 To consider carry forwards of unspent revenue budget from 2023/24

Members were provided with a list of funds which had been set aside in 2023/24 for specific activities but funding was either left over after completion of the project, or funding had yet to be spent.

**GP04.06.24** Members **RESOLVED** that the following unspent sums be carried forward from the 2023/24 financial year to earmarked reserves in 2024/25:

## 3.0 Specific Budget Request for the Environment & Leisure Committee

### 3.1 Revenue budget 2023/24 – funds unspent

Project	Amount	Reason
Playing fields and pitches (5100)	£8,000.00	Unspent revenue funding in 2023-24 due to not carrying out football pitch renovations. Would recommend carry forward into the existing earmarked reserve named 'Playing fields & pitches' for future renovations.
HMLNR & WPLNR (5033)	£150.00	This funding remains unspent, and would be useful to contribute to planned works in the nature reserves in 2024/25. We would therefore recommend that the funding is transferred to existing the earmarked reserve named 'HMLNR & WPLNR Supporters Group donation'.

### 3.2 New initiatives 2023/24 – projects not yet complete

Project	Amount	Reason
Tree for a tree planting programme	£1,000.00	This funding remains unspent. We would therefore recommend that the funding is transferred to existing the earmarked reserve named 'Tree planting'.
New gazebo and trestle tables for events	£300.00	This funding remains unspent and has been utilised in May 2024, so this funding needs to be transferred to a new earmarked reserve named 'Gazebo and trestle tables.'
Wildflower areas	£150.00	This funding remains unspent and will be utilised in 2024/25. We would therefore recommend that the funding is transferred to a new earmarked reserve named 'Wildflowers and horticulture.'
Vehicle replacement	£7,500.00	This funding remains unspent, and will be utilised in 2024/25. We would therefore recommend that the funding is transferred to an existing earmarked reserve named 'Vehicle replacement'.

## 4.0 Specific Budget Request for the General Purposes Committee

### 4.1 New initiatives 2023/24 – projects not yet complete

Project	Amount	Reason
262 Saturday Bus Service Contribution	£1,800.00	These funds remain unspent from 2023/24. These funds should be transferred into the existing earmarked reserve '262 Saturday bus service' to contribute to services in 2024/25.

### 5.4 To write off small under and over payments on the Town Council's accounts

The Town Clerk explained that under and over payments often occurred when a customer/person had left a company or they hadn't returned as a hirer of the facilities for some time, so it was difficult to attach a credit to any future invoices. There was also one case of underpayment, whereby the company had gone into insolvency.

One member asked whether for such small amounts, if these could be written off by the officers. The Town Clerk explained that the Financial Regulations did not currently allow this but it was something that could be explored within the scheme of delegation. The Clerk would also ask the Internal Auditor at their visit on 18 June 2024.

**GP05.06.24** Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and agreed to write off the amounts detailed (four overpayments in pence and one underpayment whereby the company had dissolved).

### 5.5 To note the end of year statement of Community Infrastructure Levy funding for 2023/24

Members were provided with a report which detailed the funds received through community infrastructure levy funding in the financial year 2023/24. No funds were spent during 2023/24 as a result of a number of streetlighting repairs being identified as suitable to be funded through these means, but the works were then delayed by the change in East Sussex Highways contractor from Costain to Balfour Beatty.

Members of the committee, discussed with the Town Clerk, alternative ways of maintaining the stock. The Clerk advised that Polegate Town Council used a different contractor and it was suggested that this be further investigated.

Members subsequently noted the report.

Councillor A. Smith left the room for agenda item 5.6.

5.6 To consider a request by the Uckfield Green Partnership

Members considered a request by the Uckfield Green Partnership to retain the funds unspent which were awarded through the Town Council's community grants programme in 2023/24. The Partnership had managed to source a free venue for their meetings which had substantially reduced their costs.

The criteria set out within the grant application form, did advise that any unspent funds should be returned by awardees, but members respected the direct approach of the partnership to understand what was possible.

The views of members were polarised, with some feeling that the partnership could retain the funds, and then these monies be taken into account in any future application. Other members felt the partnership should return the funds.

A proposal was put forward by Councillor Macve and seconded by Councillor Councillor Ward, which proposed that the Partnership refund the balance.

**GP06.06.24** With three votes in favour, one abstaining, and three votes against (Councillors Manvell, Selby and Ullmann), the Chair took the casting vote and **RESOLVED** for the unspent balance to be returned to Uckfield Town Council.

Councillor A. Smith returned to the meeting.

5.7 To consider the re-allocation of earmarked reserves for the purpose of creating an online event ticketing system for the Civic Centre events programme

Members were presented with a report which set out three options for creating an online event ticketing system within the existing Civic Centre website, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

**GP07.06.24** Subject to the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO being satisfied with the back office functions of the selected payment gateway, members **RESOLVED** to re-allocate 'the booking system' earmarked reserves and proceed with Option A.

**6.0 BUILDINGS**

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

Members were presented with a detailed update on the current condition of the Town Council's buildings and the compliance work undertaken.

The Town Clerk provided further information on the current work of the Estates & Facilities Manager to investigate options for the Signal Box and Osborn Hall.

One member wondered whether the Signal Box could be re-purposed as a community facility, but the Town Clerk advised that the costs would be the same, due to the works required.

Councillor P. Selby departed the meeting at approximately 8.13pm.

Members noted the report.

## 7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 To consider the draft Scheme of Delegation for Uckfield Town Council  
A copy of the draft would be sent to members in advance of the Full Council meeting on 26 June 2024.

## 8.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council  
Members noted the report.

- 8.2 To receive Members' audit report  
Members noted the completed audit report for March 2024.

- 8.3 To consider the renewal of the existing Insurance contract for public liability, employer liability and vehicle insurances

**GP08.06.24** Members **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Zurich, for a three-year period.

## 9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 9.1 To consider reports from: -

- (i) Wealden Citizen's Advice  
Nothing to report.
- (ii) Uckfield Volunteer Centre  
Nothing to report.
- (iii) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Mgt Committee  
Nothing to report.
- (iv) Wealden District Association of Local Councils – Planning Panel  
Nothing to report.

## 10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Councillor D. Ward wished to welcome new members of the council to the committee, and wanted to thank everyone involved in the organisation of the D-Day celebrations on 6 June 2024.

## 11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

## 12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

**GP09.06.24** It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

- 12.1 To consider the revised quotations for Stage 1 of the improvement works to Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park  
Members were not satisfied with the variation in the quotations received, and requested that further information be obtained, before presenting the report to Full Council on 26 June 2024.

12.2 To consider the draft lease agreement for Foresters Chapel  
**GP10.06.24** Members **RESOLVED** to accept the terms of the draft lease agreement, and to proceed with the tenure with the existing leaseholders.

12.3 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant

Members were pleased to see the income levels doing well, and Councillor Love commented on how amazing the Weald Hall looked for the Murder Mystery event in May. The way everything was set out, and the attention to detail was just wonderful. Members subsequently noted the report and supported a review of the stock take arrangements.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.