



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
Town Clerk – Holly Goring

Meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** to be held on
Monday 20 January 2025 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

AGENDA

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

1.0. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

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

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4.0. MINUTES

- 4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 25 November 2024
- 4.2. Action list – for information only
- 4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

5.0. FINANCE

- 5.1. To note bills paid
- 5.2. To note the income & expenditure report ending 30 November 2024

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.1. To revisit the Cemetery working group and review options available for cemetery provision
- 6.2. To note a future provision of training resources in relation to matters raised with East Sussex Highways

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1. To receive an update from Wealden District Council's Climate Green Paper
- 7.2. To review the Town Council's Litter Policy – Policy No. 78
- 7.3. To note the current position with the Town Council's Estates

8.0. LEISURE

- 8.1 To consider the commemoration of the VE Day 80th Anniversary
- 8.2 To establish a working group to organise a showcase event to promote the various community groups and activities in Uckfield

9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

None.

10.0. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
- 10.2 Conservators of Ashdown Forest and 'Weald to Waves' initiative
- 10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group
- 10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee
- 10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee
- 10.6 Uckfield Youth Club Board
- 10.8 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group

11.0. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

12.0. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

To consider whether to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted: -

- 12.1 To consider a report on the Marketing programme



Town Clerk

14 January 2025



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Monday 25th November 2024 at 7.00pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

PRESENT:

Cllr. Angie Smith (Chair)
Cllr. Michael McClafferty
Cllr. Spike Mayhew

Cllr. Karen Bedwell
Cllr. Chris Macve

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Peter Selby
Ranger – Tom Woollard
Three members of the public

Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Rachel Newton

1.0. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda. No declarations of interest were provided at this stage in the meeting.

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

Standing orders were suspended in order to enable two local residents who lived in Saunders Close, to speak for two minutes each in relation to item 6.2, raising their views and objections to this request for two parcels of land adjacent to 9 Saunders Close.

EL.26.11.24 Members RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

Resident 1:

The request to purchase land to the front of the property had been refused previously and the vendor was asked not to park on Town Council land because the low chestnut fence was deteriorating, but cars were still being parked in this area. The vendor was also asked not to use this space for bin storage.

In reference to land to the rear of the property, Mr Comber did not believe that this request was justifiable, given that when the property was sold to the current vendor, an extension had been built soon afterwards which reduced the size of the rear garden to about a third of its original capacity. The vendor maintained that brambles and nettles had encroached and invaded his garden, although this would be worse if the vendor was offered additional land. The vendor had also been refused permission in the past to plant trees around his property, as this was a nature reserve.

There was also mention of an oak tree which had a tree preservation order (TPO), and there were other blanket TPOs in this region up towards Downlands Copse so we needed to be cautious.

Resident 2:

She expressed that she also objected to this request and was passionate about the nature reserve and that we all had a duty of care as this land must be protected, especially for wildlife preservation. If people were allowed to purchase land on nature reserves, this could also set a precedent and supermarkets could apply to build on similar land.

EL.27.11.24 Members resolved to reinstate standing orders.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Three apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllr D. Bennett, Cllr D. French and Cllr V. Frost, all owing to personal reasons.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 14 October 2024

EL.28.11.24 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 14 October 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A small typo was corrected to include the Ranger as an attendee at the last meeting.

4.2. Action list

Members noted the report and agreed to remove the actions on:

EL.42.01.24 – To consider proposals to improve safety at the lower end of Luxford Field. Those works were now due to receive reinforcement and a much sturdier solution following vandalism after they had been installed. The posts had been cemented in properly, although the tack welds had been broken apart.

EL.43.03.24 – To consider the ‘We Grow’ Initiative – a Sussex based gardening co-operative. This scheme has since been established on private land near Uckfield College and Uckfield Leisure Centre, which was working well.

EL.07.07.24 – To consider a proposal to limit the number of benches at Snatts Road Cemetery – Procedures were now in place for the purchase of benches and associated licence agreement.

EL.14.10.24 – To consider the quotations received for upgrading two Grounds team vehicles and to select a suitable lease agreement (see item 4.3 below).

4.3. Project Monitoring List – for information only

Members noted the report and agreed to remove the following actions on:

FC.64.01.21 – Green Projects plus £5,000 in earmarked reserves. These funds had been utilised to cover deposit payments for the installation of an air source heating system at Foresters Hall.

FC.86.01.23 – Vehicle replacement. All vehicles had now been ordered with two vehicles due to arrive before Christmas. The diesel pick-up would be ready in Spring 2025.

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the report – no comments.

5.2. To note the Income & Expenditure report up to 30 September 2024

One member praised staff for this report, as the income and outgoing figures were aligned which showed that the Town Council are meeting its targets.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1. To note an update on the Law Commission’s consultation on burial and cremation

Members noted the report and were asked to provide any comments on or before 5 December.

6.2 To consider a request to purchase or rent two parcels of town council land adjacent to 9 Saunders Close, Uckfield

Members objected to this request for various reasons:

A nature reserve should be protected, especially wildlife.

The extension to the rear of the property had reduced the size of the garden space at the rear. The property had been sold to the current vendor with the garden space that was suitable for the size of the property at the time.

The vendor was previously asked not to park on council land. With the increasing number of cars on this property there were likely to be issues with parking. With no law enforcement for those parking on verges, this was always going to be a challenge.

One member asked about the prospect of having a policy set to deter any future requests for the sale of any Town Council owned land, although the Chair reminded the committee that each request should be considered on its own merit. If a policy was ever agreed, this could include a caveat stating that if the Town Council wished to sell any assets, local residents would need to be consulted.

To provide some background information, when the properties were built, the outer fence between the north-side property gardens and nature reserve were brought in by about a fence panel's width (about 8 feet) for the last two properties on the cul-de-sac. The fence itself may have been tapered because water either flowed from the nature reserve westwards through that point, or a gas mains pipe ran through that area. This being the case, the land could not be extended.

Historically, the grounds staff were very limited on manpower to replace the fencing, although it appeared that the fencing was still in reasonable working order.

EL.29.11.24 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to unanimously object to the sale or rent of two parcels of council owned land adjacent to 9 Saunders Close, Uckfield.

6.3 To review the 2025/26 proposal from East Sussex County Council on their Urban Grass Verge Cutting Contract

Members preferred option was to downsize to two basic cuts per year, with the aim of putting aside those savings for future needs. If there were any issues raised, East Sussex County Council would still be responsible for this.

One concern was raised that some areas may need cutting at peak season and that some areas could look unkempt and untidy. A few areas did do their own cuts, although this was not possible in all local towns.

Overall, members agreed that there was always a risk with every decision made and saving money was the better option for this return. If an additional cut was required, this could be subcontracted out with the money saved, and may still be more cost effective in the long run.

EL.30.11.24 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to Option 1 - 2 cuts per year and seeing what effect this had on local verges.

6.4 To consider a letter drafted by the Chair of Westmeston PC to their MP proposing a speed limit on rural roads

Members felt that this kind of approach would make a mockery of the law if it were

brought into force, especially as there were no designated rural roads, so effectively this would be unenforceable. Also, since rural roads were being used alongside the new highways during road works, traffic was naturally self calming.

EL.31.11.24 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree not to take any action with regard to their proposal for a speed limit on rural roads.

7.0 ENVIRONMENT

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

Members noted the report. The Ranger confirmed that repairs to the slide and fencing panel at Hempstead Playing Field were on the planned works list and materials were being sourced and custom made by a local blacksmith to make it sturdier, to prevent it being damaged again from any anti-social behaviour.

A proposal was made for staff to arrange a bulb planting day in January, to raise this on social media and ask local residents if they wished to join forces alongside the grounds team, to make Harlands pond prettier for next springtime.

7.2 To note an update from the Countryside Ranger

The Ranger provided a powerpoint presentation and verbal update on the new digital platform provided by a company called OTISS. This system was being used to offer town council staff the opportunity of a more streamlined approach to overseeing surveys and maps, trees and street furniture around the town, with the aid of GPS handheld tablets.

Members thanked the Ranger for his comprehensive report and site notes regarding remedial tree works and planting, nature reserves and woodland holdings. The conversion process to OTISS was working

The Ranger and the Head Groundsman had recently qualified as professional tree inspectors and all the allotments would be surveyed after recent issues with an oak tree.

All works on the grounds sheet had been actioned to make time to continue with tree works. A veteran tree in Boothland Wood had been ring-fenced and a path re-directed in order to preserve this valuable asset. With the community orchard scheme, there had been a slight delay on planting the saplings.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 Nothing to report

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 To note an update from the Allotment Working Group, with proposed amendments to the Allotment Rules and Regulations

Members acknowledged the report and agreed to accept the proposed amendments at item 3.1 (in red) in the Allotment Rules and Regulations and to be sent to all allotment tenants. An additional clause would be included that trees must be assessed by the Ranger or Head Groundsman prior to any works being carried out to British Standards. Tenants must cut the branches of trees themselves.

EL.32.11.24 Members noted the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to the small amendments made within the Allotment Rules and Regulations at item 3.1 in relation to cutting back trees.

9.2 To receive an update from the Climate Emergency Steering Group

Members noted the report. A date was now set for the ECO Expo Upcycled fashion show and art exhibition taking place on 27 February 2025. The Marketing and

Community Engagement Officer would be using social media platforms to attract interest and sort out the tickets.

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- 10.1 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.2 Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.3 Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.5 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.6 Uckfield Youth Club Board
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.7 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.8 Wealden Food Partnership Advisory Group
Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk had issued a statement on social media about the vandalism of the Luxford Field lighting and local residents also provided some comments. The Town Clerk would monitor CCTV to find out if they had any leads.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.33.11.24 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 a report on the Marketing programme
Members thanked the Marketing and Community Engagement Officer for this report.
- 12.2 To consider the provision of temporary toilet facilities at Harlands Playing Fields
An urgent consultation panel would follow with costings and potential options available.

The meeting finished at 20:20pm.

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST - FOR INFORMATION ONLY Environment and Leisure Committee

Please note no resolutions can be made from the action list. It is for information only.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>EL.28.09.16</u>	<u>To consider revised byelaws for the Town Council's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)</u> Members reviewed the amendments to the byelaws which still require Natural England and DEFRA's approval. It was RESOLVED to accept the revised byelaws.	05.09.16	HG	In progress.
<u>EL.26.01.19</u>	It was RESOLVED that the Supporter Groups for both reserves be consulted with a view to shorten the byelaws in accordance with DEFRA's comments and report back to the Environment & Leisure committee.	28.01.19		
<u>EL73.05.22</u>	<u>To consider a number of improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to: (i) introduce the following ideas for improvements to direct tourism to Uckfield at the next infrastructure working group meeting: better parking facilities for motorhomes in town and improved signage, and to; (ii) consider if there was anything additional that should be explored to be discussed at that next meeting, and; (iii) for the E&F Manager to explore those initiatives put forward already with the various responsible agencies, including any leverage through ES Highways for proper signage from developers.	16.05.22	RN/ HG	In progress.
<u>EL28.10.23</u>	<u>7.3 To consider the installation of a gate to restrict access to the Grounds work area next to Victoria Pavilion</u> (i) install a gate on the main drive (with a pedestrian gate and closer) estimated at £300 to £400, and; (ii) defer the decision to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park to the next E&L Committee in November 2023, after seeking further details on accessibility and funding options.	09.10.23	HG/JH	Members agreed at the E&L meeting on 13.11.23 to bring the path around the edge of the fencing up to the car park and for this work to be carried out in-house. The gate has been installed at Victoria with relevant signage. The path will be looked at when we have staff capacity. This is quite a big job that will be progressed in due course.

<u>EL55.04.24</u>	<u>To consider actions to reduce litter in the vicinity of new food outlets and retail businesses in Uckfield</u> Members resolved to agree for Uckfield Town Council staff to: (i) contact the new Co-op store off Highlands roundabout, to ask them if they would consider contributing to a litter bin in the town, and; (ii) look into other ideas mentioned above, and; (iii) continue to work with Brighter Uckfield on this matter.	15.04.24	RN	To be actioned. NFA - Remove unless raised again.
<u>EL.11.07.24</u>	<u>Climate Change working Group Update</u> Members resolved to agree to request staff to instruct the Town Council's solicitors in relation to the potential purchase of land adjacent to the River Uck and abutting the lane leading to the Sussex Horse Rescue site.	08.07.24	HG	In progress
<u>EL.18.09.24</u>	<u>To initially consider the proposed re-routing of the Public Right of Way from Ridgewood Farm into Boothland Wood as part of the development of this site</u> Members noted the report and RESOLVED to initially agree to the proposal from Redrow, to re-route the Public Right of Way from Ridgewood Farm away from Boothland Wood as part of the development of this site but with further consideration of routes needed to be explored.	02.09.24	HG	In progress
<u>EL.22.10.24</u>	<u>To review fees and charges for Snatts Road Cemetery for 2025/26</u> Members resolved to agree to: (i) the cemetery fees and charges in 2025/26 – rounding up the figures to the nearest £5; (ii) revisit the working group to discuss cemetery maintenance costs, and; (iii) compare prices against Wealden Crematorium for ashes interments.	22.10.24	RN	In progress – Cemetery fees and charges working group to meet in 2025

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2024-25**

Projects in 2022/23 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Speed reduction initiative (already have £3,199.64 in earmarked reserves)		Project Number	69
<u>FC.82.01.22</u>	Plus £2,000 placed into budget in 2022/23	17.01.22	Will be utilised when further research has been undertaken into the various roadside initiatives available.	

Projects in 2024/25 Budget – New Initiatives

Project Name	Tree for a tree planting programme		Project Number	81
<u>FC.91.01.24</u>	£1,000 plus carry forward from 2023-24 (£1,466.35)	10.04.24	This will progress Winter 2024-25. The Town Council was successful with its bid for grant funding through Wealden DC for Community Orchards. We were also successful in receiving a donation of 50 saplings from Eco Green Communities and 15 from another company. Planting is in progress, and should be completed by mid February 2025.	

Project Name	Roofed compound area for Grounds storage		Project Number	83
<u>FC.91.01.24</u>	£500	10.04.24	This work is not urgent, and will be progressed in due course.	

**UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE
PROJECT MONITORING FORM 2024-25**

Project Name	Harlands Pond Management Plan Works		Project Number	85
<u>FC.91.01.24</u>	£950 minus £178.33 (siltex) = £771.67.	19.11.24	The funds were set aside to cover the cost of siltex treatment and nesting tubes for Mallards. The siltex has been ordered and delivered, ready for action in the coming weeks. Siltex is a natural and inexpensive way to reduce organic silt and improve water quality. It is environmentally friendly and harmless to plants and animals, and because it recycles organic material, it is a great benefit to the aquatic ecosystem. A bulb planting day has also been pencilled in for Saturday 8 February 2025, and will be communicated shortly.	

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 6.1

TO REVISIT THE CEMETERY WORKING GROUP AND REVIEW OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR CEMETERY PROVISION

1.0 Overview

1.1 At the Environment and Leisure Committee on 14 October 2024, members resolved to agree to a 2% increase to Snatts Road Cemetery fees and charges for 2025/26, which was based on The Consumer Price Index (CPR) and the Town Council’s rates last year. At that time, income was behind that projected for that period in the year which resulted in members also asking to review the current fees and charges and to review in detail, the cost of preparing interments and maintaining the cemetery grounds. Since that time however members were advised that this stream of income had also caught up.

1.2 Income up to the end of November 2024:

Cemetery income streams	Actuals at 30 Nov 24	Budgeted at 30 Nov 24
Cemetery - Interments (4180)	25,100	27,000
Cemetery - Memorials (4181)	4,920	5,100
Cemetery - Sundry income (4182)	0	0
Cemetery Maintenance Charge (4183)	2,545	3,150

Plus a further £1,133.16 was received in December for memorial bench arrangements on top of income for the above works. We have yet to reconcile the December accounts so have not included as invoices are still awaited for December.

1.3 Members asked to reconvene the Cemetery working group this year to find out if the Town Council were experiencing any hardship in terms of covering its costs, and to also review charging schedules against other local establishments such as Wealden Crematorium for ashes interments.

1.4 This report also identifies further work, that could be explored and instigated.

2.0 Comparisons with local towns and parishes

2.1 Members are aware that historically it has been difficult to compare costs with other local cemeteries, as rates are subject to a number of factors, including the level of demand and space available in the cemeteries, and whether the authority has a grounds team or contractors to undertake the works.

2.2 During the review of the cemetery fees and charges in 2022, this did not include the cemetery maintenance fees and staffing requirements, although the overall costings were not dissimilar to other local towns and parishes at the time. The replacement of vehicles and equipment this year has resulted in an increase in our outgoings, although the increase in expenditure is temporary, whilst we upgrade our machinery and equipment on two or three year payment plans in some cases. We are however considering appointing a contractor to tend to the cemetery, moving forward who can provide greater attention to detail and care in this sensitive environment. This should be able to be funded by revenue within the budget for 2025/26, but will increase expenditure as a result.

2.3 Both staff and members would agree that the cemetery is a facility for the local community, and its therefore important that the grounds are well maintained, and available at a reasonable price whilst space is available.

3.0 Expanding cemetery provision

Research and seeking ideas

3.1 Councillors were keen to investigate what else cemeteries in Kent and Sussex offered

Expanding cemetery provision

3.2 The cemetery is due to be extended this year on an existing piece of unused land within the northern section of the cemetery, sitting to the north west. This would be named the new 'Y' section. This will need to be mapped and consecrated before bringing into use, whilst the 'X' section will remain utilised until such time.

3.3 The 'X' section has a 'headstone only' policy in place. And for the 'Y' section this policy would continue, along with only a desktop tablet with integral vase for any ashes interments. This would ensure a much smarter look to the newer sections of the cemetery, and ability for grounds maintenance to be easily undertaken without damage to personal possessions.

3.4 We are aware that there is a desire to explore more sustainable and ecofriendly ideas similar to natural burial sites but this might be more appropriate in a separate setting, rather than the lawn sections of the cemetery.

3.5 Members previously agreed for officers to explore the costs of installing a columbarium for ashes interments which would enable them to be stored above ground, thus utilising minimal ground space compared to individual ashes plots.

3.6 In view of the recent consultation paper published by the Law Commission on Burial and Cremation, we may also be advised by law to re-think how we use the land in the near future, and look to review best value of the cemetery, although it is clear at this stage that Uckfield Town is very fortunate to have acquired this additional land in order to expand the cemetery options.

4.0 Feedback from local service providers

4.1 Some local funeral directors were contacted recently, to seek their views and to find out if they had experienced any changes in demand and the preferred arrangements of families. Feedback obtained, suggested that local residents were still interested in both burials and ashes interments and there was still interest in, relatives utilising space within Uckfield itself to make these arrangements.

4.2 Only a handful of families had requested the arrangement of ashes interments onsite at local crematoriums. Most families preferred to remain local, or scatter their loved ones' ashes in a meaningful place to them.

4.3 There may also be scope to ask local businesses to express their views on how the service could be improved and to establish if any new facilities could be introduced.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to consider if they wish to revisit the Cemetery working group, to compare costs and facilities in comparison with other local service providers, and to share ideas for future cemetery provision.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 6.2

TO NOTE A FUTURE PROVISION OF TRAINING RESOURCES IN RELATION TO MATTERS RAISED WITH EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 At the Strengthening Local Relations meeting held on Monday 13 January 2025, topics were raised on the agenda and discussed with the team members from Balfour Beatty and East Sussex Highways.
- 1.2 The Highways Steward pointed out that some issues were not being reported enough by the general public, so when a pothole was being temporarily filled in, for example, they were often targeted by a few disgruntled members of the public, either over the telephone or whilst carrying out the works, and there appeared to be a misunderstanding of how the process worked.
- 1.3 Some of the works on their task list were being carried out or had to be monitored and due for completion at a further date. This information was not always being relayed or viewed online, and staff members were often experiencing some abusive calls from local residents and passers-by.
- 1.4 Local residents needed to report any problems via the East Sussex Highways website, through their local Councillor or via the local Town Council offices.
- 1.5 Councillor K. Bedwell recognised the need to raise awareness of this abusive behaviour with other local Councillors and asked if Balfour Beatty and East Sussex Highways had any useful training materials that could help councillors to assist them with resident enquiries and share wider. This could help to reduce this kind of behaviour and prevent any misinformation being escalated on social media platforms.
- 1.6 The main three areas of interest were maintenance issues, road safety and their recently updated Code of Conduct. Staff members at East Sussex Highways and Balfour Beatty advised that they would look into this, and let Uckfield Town Council know what resources they could offer.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 7.1

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CLIMATE GREEN PAPER

1.0 Overview – Help Shape Wealden's Climate Green Paper

- 1.1 This report provides a detailed update in relation to feedback from the Climate Change resident and organisation surveys that Wealden District Council ran in the Spring/Summer of 2024.
- 1.2 The themes that were identified from the survey results have been key to the creation of the draft paper, including: Renewable Energy, Sustainable Transport, Biodiversity and Green Space, Community Engagement, Waste Reduction, Affordable Climate Solutions and Health and Lifestyle.
- 1.3 Three reports were created, (i) to examine how Climate Change was likely to impact Wealden, (ii) to suggest ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and (iii) to explore options for renewable energy.
- 1.4 To view Wealden District Council's Climate Green Paper, please visit their website via the following link: <https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/wealden-climate-green-paper>

2.0 How to participate

- 2.1 The Climate Change Team at Wealden District Council still requires the district's valuable input to help shape Wealden's Climate Green Paper and ensure it reflects the ideas and solutions that matter most to our communities.
- 2.2 If members would like to participate in this consultation, they are asked to follow the weblink above and scroll down the page to complete the survey of questions which directly relate to the Climate Green Paper. If a member or resident require a hard copy, or alternative format of the Wealden Climate Green paper or the survey they need to email: sustainability@wealden.gov.uk. The survey is open for another 5 weeks and will close on **Wednesday 12th February 2025**.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report and consider how they wish to respond, either (i) individually, or (ii) via the Climate Change Steering Group.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 7.2

TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S LITTER POLICY – POLICY NO. 78

1.0 Current waste collection costs

- 1.1 At the present count, we own and empty in the region of 71 bins in the Town (excluding bus stops bins) which are all installed on Town Council land. We are currently spending in the region of £1,200 per month on the waste collection costs, on top of the cost of one Groundsman undertaking the litter runs each week. It's becoming quite a costly task unfortunately and the Town Council will look to review the commercial waste contract in the next few months to see if we can reduce our prices.
- 1.2 Members suggested at the recent Finance Sub Committee last week, that communications be issued to ensure residents were made aware of the costs and be asked to take their rubbish home where they could.
- 1.3 In the meantime, we still receive requests for litter bins, although there is a policy in place, and the Town Council would have to consider each request on its own merit.
- 1.4 Our main priority at present, if we are to install any new bins, would be on Town Council land adjacent to any new developments, as there are obviously pressures from increased footfall in these areas.
- 1.5 The attached litter policy needs reviewing, so this is being presented to the Environment and Leisure Committee with the updated costs for staffing and waste collection (see App A). Those highlighted amendments reflect staff hours at item 4.3 (which is effectively one groundman's salary for five days of bin collections during one week) and the financial implications under the current service provision.
- 1.6 However, this doesn't include other hidden costs including the waste carrier licence, staff training, uniforms and personal protective equipment, as well as vehicle mileage and fuel consumption.

2.0 Provision of and recent requests for litter bins

- 2.1 The Town Council does need to prioritise its resources in terms of future requests for bins. The litter bin provision scoring system is used to evaluate requests for a litter bin (on UTC or ES Highway owned land) using the categories and options agreed and set out.
- 2.2 Two litter bins were granted earlier in the year, one at Harlands Playing Fields, just off Mallards Drive where dog walkers cut through the gap/opening at the hedge, and another in Bell Lane.
- 2.3 Two further requests have been received in recent months for a new litter bin to be placed in various locations in the town (see below).

Resident 1 – request for litter bin in Keld Close:

The resident lives in Keld Close with a small green out the front of the adjacent properties within the cul-de-sac:

“Keld Close is a very well used cut through to the town for residents of Framfield

Road and Selby Road. It is also well used for dog walkers within the area. Unfortunately, due to owners' ignorance there is also quite a lot of dog poo left laying around on the long grass which is understandably quite disgusting but can also be quite dangerous, especially for children. I appreciate that budgets are tight, but was wondering if a multipurpose litter bin could be installed in this area, as well as one of the consideration signs that has disposable bags attached, similar to that at Hempstead Fields and the Harland's Green, just to remind and encourage people to clean up after their dogs."

If we utilised the scoring system, the recent bin that has been requested in Keld Close does not meet the relevant criteria (see App B). There would also be quite high licencing costs for the installation and excavation fee since this is on ESCC owned land.

Resident 2 –

The Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents Association had asked if the Town Council would consider moving a location of one of our general waste bins from Hempstead Park to The Rockery green space in Browns Lane. It was explained that the reason that there are more bins (three) in this location is due to the high usage of the area, having the Guides/ Brownies at Osborn Hall, the footfall from the nature reserve through to Manor Park, and the play area. The Residents Association appreciated that the location they had in mind would not fulfill the criteria and that there is a capital cost and then an ongoing cost for emptying the bin, and retracted this request, although they may enquire with Wealden District Council as to whether they would add any further bins to the Manor Park area,

- 2.4 Wealden District Council do not currently charge for any bin collections in Uckfield, it forms part of the residents' council tax. Wealden District Council via their contract with Biffa are responsible for emptying bins on the main thoroughfares through Uckfield (such as London Road, High Street, Lewes Road etc). Of the two dog waste bins they empty in the Uckfield area, one is paid for by the Woodland Trust as its on their land. The other was being charged to the vets on New Town because it is in their car park and mainly used by their customers. If Uckfield Town Council were to request for Wealden DC to empty a new litter or dog waste bin, the charge would be £286 plus VAT per bin per annum, invoiced quarterly in arrears.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- (i) approve the proposed amendments to the Town Council's Litter Policy no. 78, including costings; and,
 - (ii) confirm how they wish to proceed with the installation of litter bin at Keld Close, whilst taking into account the results of the litter bin score system.

Appendices: Appendix A: Revised Litter Policy – Policy No. 78
 Appendix B: Evaluation of Keld Close bin request

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

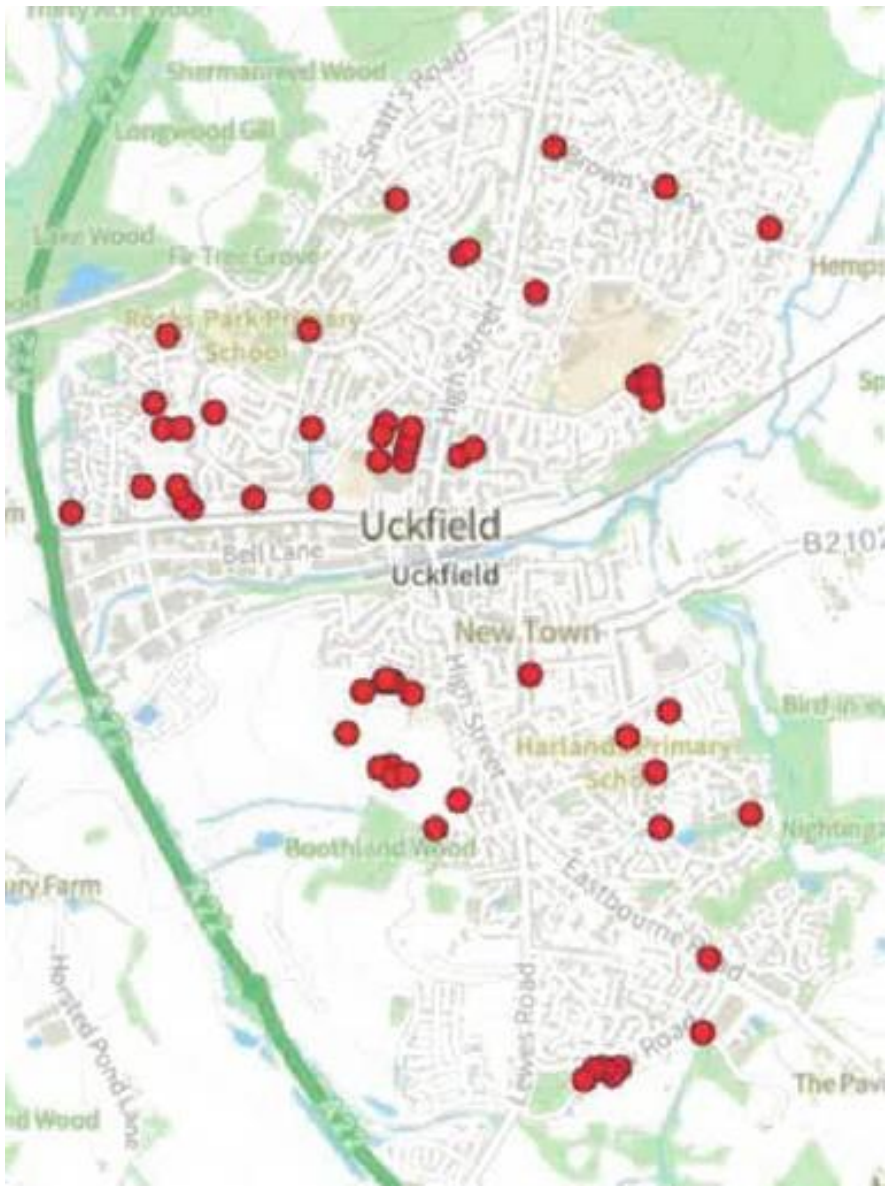


Image 1: Litter bins around town

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



LITTER POLICY

Policy Number 78		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
01	EL.36.10.16	Environment & Leisure 24.10.16
02	E&L Committee	Review of existing policy – 4 April 2022
<u>03</u>		<u>Review of existing policy – 20 January 2025</u>

1.0 Background

- 1.1. Uckfield Town Council has long recognised its responsibility for the environment and is committed to continuous improvements that reflect our concern for the quality of the local and global environment.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1. The primary legislation for litter and refuse is the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990. This Act is supported by further legislation under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 together with the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006 produced by DEFRA. Additionally, the Litter Act 1983 s5 confers powers on Town and Parish Councils to provide and maintain litter bins.
- 2.2. The primary legislation, the EPA, places the principal duty on the District Council for keeping land to which the public have access to, free from litter. The EPA does not confer any powers or duties onto Town and Parish Councils. However, the Town Council is responsible for keeping its own land clear of litter and failure to do so could result in the Principal Litter Authority (Wealden District Council) taking action against the Town Council to ensure land is kept free of litter. For Uckfield therefore we have a duty to keep all of our open spaces including the Nature reserves and playgrounds free from litter.
- 2.3. Town and Parish Councils do have general powers under the Local Government Act 1972 s137 which permits the Town Council to *"incur expenditure which in their opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants"*. *There are limitations to this power including a financial limit however any proposed expenditure under this policy is extremely unlikely to exceed the financial limitations set by the legislation"*.

3.0. Wealden District Council (WDC) (Principal Litter Authority) policy

- 3.1. A copy of the District Councils litter policy is attached at Appendix A. This policy confirms the following approach to litter and dog bin provision by the Principal Litter Authority.

4.0. Current Service Provision

- 4.1. The Town Council provides multi use litter bins at all of its recreation grounds and other open spaces. A total of ~~66~~71 bins are provided and maintained by the Town Council, most are emptied twice weekly or daily if in a children's play area. The Town Council no longer provide dog specific bins and all its bins are dual purpose.
- 4.2. WDC provide and maintain litter bins at various locations in the Uckfield Town area and have advised that they currently maintain and empty a total of ~~xx~~ litter bins and ~~xx~~ dog bins on Town Council land. Wealden's waste collection contractor is required to empty litter bins in the high street on a daily basis and weekly at all other locations within Uckfield. There are also a few litter bins on private land managed by local shopkeepers around Uckfield. The Town Council receives very few complaints regarding lack of emptying of litter bins provided by either the Town or the District Council.

4.3 The cost to the Town Council of providing and maintaining its current stock of ~~6671~~ bins is not easily identified. However, the litter bin emptying task takes on average ~~14-18~~ hours per week depending on weather events and based on current staffing costs equates to ~~£2.97 (2021/22)~~£4.30 (2024/25) per bin per week. In addition, there are costs associated with replacing damaged bins as well as the cost of disposal of waste collections, black sacks, and fuel.

Waste collection and sack costs are in the order of ~~£7,690 (2021/22)~~£14,459 (2024/25) per year equating to an emptying charge of ~~£2.24~~£4.02 per bin per week. The total cost of providing bins on Town Council land is therefore in the order of ~~£5.24~~£8.62 per bin per week. Although this sum excludes fuel costs, it is substantially lower than the proposed costs offered by WDC.

4.4. The cost of replacing/providing a new litter bin is in the region of ~~£400~~£865 + VAT depending on style, including installation costs.

5.0. Demand

5.1 Requests for litter and dog bins could be received from residents, business owners, dog walkers or other local authorities. Permission will have to be sought from East Sussex Highways if a bin is to be placed on land in their ownership.

6.0. Future Service Provision

6.1. The Town Council will maintain a register of request which shall be used in the proposed assessment process.

6.2. WDC has a duty to keep public land clear of litter, as they are the principle litter authority. Provision of litter bins assists compliance with this duty especially in areas where there is significant footfall or close proximity to fast food and other food retail outlets. Uckfield Town Council should continue to report issues identified locally in Uckfield to the District Council, and where litter or dog bins are identified as being part of an overall solution to a local problem, encourage the District Council to consider the provision of additional bins. Similarly, the Town Council should continue to monitor its own land and where any new problems are identified consider any additional provision that may assist in reducing littering and dog fouling.

6.3. The Town Council may also wish to use its general powers through the provision of funding litter bins on land under the responsibility of the District Council. This would be subject to evaluation of need using criteria that forms a robust evaluation method for such an approach.

6.4. An assessment method is set out in Appendix B

7.0. Financial Implications

7.1 WDC current and proposed charging scales for providing new dog/litter bins are:-

Proposed charges

- ~~£5~~£7.00p per bin per emptying (~~£260~~£286 + VAT per year based on a weekly service - charged quarterly in arrears at ~~£65~~£78 + VAT per bin)

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Provision of new bins (dog/litter)

- ~~£750~~~~£865~~ + VAT – price includes supply and installation of the bin plus ongoing maintenance so that if damaged WDC will repair or replace it for as long as it continues to be required at no extra cost.
- Alternatively, UTC can install a bin and just ask WDC to empty if required. UTC would then be responsible to maintain the bin if damaged etc.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Relocation of an existing bin (up to a distance of 200metres)

- ~~£400~~~~£461~~ + VAT – concrete litter bin or plastic or metal, dog or litter bin. For greater distances, individual quotes will be provided.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Currently, WDC does not charge UTC for any bin emptying they undertake in the town. All the litter bins WDC empty are those they either installed or approved as being necessary on the public highway. UTC empty ~~66~~~~71~~ additional bins independent of those serviced by WDC.

- 7.2 Based on these WDC charges, each new chargeable litter bin would cost a maximum of ~~£1010~~~~£1151~~ + VAT for the first year and ~~£260~~~~£286~~ + VAT per year thereafter.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Based on current Town Council figures, the initial cost of providing and emptying a new bin for the first year equates to ~~£870.92~~~~£1313.24~~ and ~~£270.92~~~~£448.24~~ per year thereafter.

- 7.3 These charges, as mentioned at paragraph 4.2, are substantially more than the costs incurred by Uckfield Town Council to provide the same service on its own land. As the Town Council has no responsibility for providing and maintain litter bins on public highways and footpaths the Town Council should continue to lobby WDC to provide litter and dog bins in locations where a need has been identified. The Town Council should also continue to provide its own litter and dog bins for its own land as there is clearly no financial benefit of requesting a service from WDC.

8.0. Policy Recommendations

- 8.1 Subject to consultation with the land owner litter bins may be supplied on land not in the Town Council's ownership.
- 8.2 Where the Town Council provides litter bins, they will be of a design suitable for their location and will, wherever possible, be lockable and of a design that will prevent access by rodents or other wildlife.
- 8.3 The Town Council will respond to complaints regarding the provision of litter bins on land which is under the responsibility of Wealden District Council by reporting such complaints and keeping a record in order to assess future needs. Where a need is identified the Town Council will seek the support of the District Council to provide additional bins to meet established demands. This approach recognises not only the cost of providing and emptying of litter bins but also the impact litter has on resident's perception of a safe and secure community as well as the environmental impacts.
- 8.4 The Town Council will review its' existing litter bin provisions and either remove, replace or provide bins, subject to any budgetary implications at least once every three years.

- 8.5 The provision of new litter bins will be determined after evaluating the need in accordance with the evaluation process as set out in Appendix B and then subject to budget provision.
- 8.6 Litter bins will be emptied at least once every week on Council owned land and more frequently where a need is identified to ensure bins do not regularly overflow.

Appendix A - Wealden District Council Policy on Litter

The District Council's policy and service concerning street cleansing, including litter bins, is formed from the contract it is party to under the East Sussex Waste Partnership.

This is explained by splitting into the constituent parts.

Street Cleansing - through its contractor street cleansing is provided on the public highway, including verges and paths, and Council car parks. This is assessed using the National Indicator NI195 measuring litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting, although this has been extended to include dog waste and weeds. There is no provision for cleansing services on private roads or other land. The contractor is required to provide a mixture of scheduled and reactionary cleansing services to ensure the NI 195 standards are maintained.

Cleanliness is measured by an independent third-party organisation through random sampling three times per year within Wealden and also across the wider waste partnership. This service also includes the clearance of fly tipping.

Litter bins – WDC install and service litter bins on the public highway and other District Council owned areas where it is deemed essential to control the incidence of litter. No charge is levied for this service. Consideration is also given to installing and/or servicing litter bins in other locations upon request, although this additional service will be subject to a charge.

Dog waste bins - WDC will consider installing and/or servicing dog waste bins upon request from Town and Parish Councils or other third parties, although there is a charge for this service.

All litter and dog waste bins are emptied on a schedule that ensures they have a minimum of 15% spare capacity. In reality this means that most will be emptied on a weekly basis however, some in higher use areas will be emptied more frequently while others less frequently.

Appendix B – Uckfield Town Council Litter bin provision evaluation process

Each request for a new bin shall be assessed using the scoring system below. The Environment & Leisure Committee will have a final say on the decision process should any additional factors be found relevant and which are not expressly related to the scoring approach.

Category	Options	Score
Request for bin on main footpaths / local highways	High intensity of use, such as busy public areas or recreation parkland or strategic local highways or footpaths or car parks	20
	Medium intensity of use, such as residential areas, secondary footpaths	10
	Low intensity of use, such as rural or isolated roadways	5
Proximity to existing bins of the same type (dog/litter)	>100 metres to another bin	10
	<100 metres to another bin (The above is subject to consideration of the level of footfall e.g. bus stops on opposite sides of the road)	5
Proximity to facilities or main routes away from facilities	<100 metres to a school	5
	<50 metres to take away outlet	10
	<50 metres to shops/supermarket	10
	<100 metres to sports facilities	5
	Adjacent to a bus stop	5
	<100 metres to other public facilities such as pub, church, community centre etc.	5
Number of separate requests for litter cleaning received within 12-month period	0	0
	1 – 2	5
	3 – 5	10
	6 - 10	20
Number of separate requests for a bin received within a 6-month period from the general public	1	5
	2 – 10	10
	11 - 50	20

Having evaluated each request using the above categories and options, an overall score is calculated and compared to the thresholds shown in the table below to determine if the request should be approved.

Score	Outcome
0 – 30	Unsuccessful
31 - 80	Successful

This scoring system will be subject to review on an annual basis, at the time of setting budgets and will act as a guide to Council setting priorities.

Keld Close

Appendix B – Uckfield Town Council Litter bin provision evaluation process

Each request for a new bin shall be assessed using the scoring system below. The Environment & Leisure Committee will have a final say on the decision process should any additional factors be found relevant and which are not expressly related to the scoring approach.

Category	Options	Score
Request for bin on main footpaths / local highways	High intensity of use, such as busy public areas or recreation parkland or strategic local highways or footpaths or car parks	20
	Medium intensity of use, such as residential areas, secondary footpaths	10
	Low intensity of use, such as rural or isolated roadways	5
Proximity to existing bins of the same type (dog/litter)	>100 metres to another bin (greater than)	10
	<100 metres to another bin (less than) (The above is subject to consideration of the level of footfall eg bus stops on opposite sides of the road)	5
Proximity to facilities or main routes away from facilities	<100 metres to a school	5
	<50 metres to take away outlet	10
	<50 metres to shops/supermarket	10
	<100 metres to sports facilities	5
	Adjacent to a bus stop	5
<100 metres to other public facilities such as pub, church, community centre etc.	5	
Number of separate requests for litter cleaning received within 12 month period	0	0
	1 – 2	5
	3 – 5	10
	6 - 10	20
Number of separate requests for a bin received within a 6 month period from the general public	1	5
	2 – 10	10
	11 - 50	20

Having evaluated each request using the above categories and options, an overall score is calculated and compared to the thresholds shown in the table below to determine if the request should be approved.

Score = 30	Outcome
0 – 40	Unsuccessful
41 - 80	Successful

This scoring system will be subject to review on an annual basis, at the time of setting budgets and will act as a guide to Council setting priorities.

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 25 November 2024

Agenda Item 7.3

TO NOTE THE CURRENT POSITION WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ESTATES

1.0 Summary

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

Victoria Pleasure Ground and skatepark

Play area companies have been visiting the play area, to draw up initial plans and costings for a full upgrade. The formal tender process will commence shortly on Contracts finder, and the play area companies will be notified. This will be followed by consultation with the local primary school, and public consultation during the winter months. The installation a new bench at Victoria park is due shortly, as per the new bench policy.

Hempstead Lane Play Area and Hempstead Meadows LNR

The zip line will be replaced with new equipment at the same time as the upgrade of Victoria play area.

In the meantime, the safety fencing keeps getting pulled down at the top of the slide. This needed to be replaced with a more robust solution or alternative to reduce the risk of vandalism.

The Estates and Facilities Manager will be arranging a replacement in due course.

West Park/Rocks Park Play Area

The play area equipment was coming to the end of its life in this play area also so a potential play area for scheduling for upgrade after Victoria.

Snatts Road Cemetery

Staff are currently working on obtaining quotes for mapping of the new burial section in the north west of the cemetery.

West Park Recreation ground and West Park LNR

Nothing to report.

Ridgewood Recreation Ground

Saplings have arrived in preparation for the community orchard.

Elizabeth Gardens

Nothing to report.

Hughes Way play area

No updates.

Luxford field and play area

Following on from the 3-monthly play inspections, some repairs have been carried out. There are a couple outstanding.

Grant funding of £2,500 had been received from the Police & Crime Commissioner, and a further £2,500 from the Safer Wealden Partnership, towards the project to install pillar lighting at the bottom of the field – installation in progress and to note that this will be completed this week. Due to vandalism, this has had to be repaired twice.

Woodlands

Works were being programmed in for the large-scale ash dieback works in Boothland Wood for this winter. This work will be undertaken in-house. This is the third year of the scheduled work identified within the Woodland Management Plan developed with the support of the Forestry Commission in 2021.

Equipment & Vehicles

All vehicles are on order, with two to be delivered at the end of this month. The diesel pick up will be ready for collection in February, hopefully. The new charging point has been installed at Victoria Pavilion ahead of delivery.

Street Furniture & Lighting

The Estates and Facilities Manager had devised a useful system in order to keep up to date with any pending and authorised works.

Harlands Pond

The siltex has been ordered for treatment of the pond water.

Any other business

The Grounds team are currently working through ROSPA inspections reports, carrying out repairs and replacements.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officers: James Hollingdale

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 8.1

TO CONSIDER THE COMMEMORATION OF THE VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

1.0. Summary – A share moment of Celebration on 8th May 2025:

- 1.1 The Town Council has been invited by the Pageantmaster (Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR) to participate in a VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY event to celebrate/commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of WW2 in Europe.
- 1.2 Events would be taking place on Thursday 8 May 2025.
- 1.3 The 'Guide to Taking Part in VE Day 80,' , can be viewed and downloaded from the official VE Day website – www.VEday80.org.uk. It was hoped that parish and town councils would take part in one or more of the activities planned, using the occasion to pay tribute to those that gave so much from within the local community, to ensure the freedom we all enjoy today.
- 1.4 Participating organisations were being asked to register their involvement as soon as possible by completing the Registration Form on the VE Day 80 website.
- 1.5 Funding has been allocated within the Town Council budget for 2025/26 to the total of £2,250 (£1,420 of revenue, and £830 of earmarked reserves). The beacon lighting event in 2024, cost approximately £2,352.

2.0. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider:-
 - a) if the Town Council wishes to take part in the commemoration and celebrations, and;
 - b) confirm the setting up of a Working Group to organise the event.

Contact officer: Rachel Newton



Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 8.2

TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO ORGANISE A SHOWCASE EVENT TO PROMOTE THE VARIOUS COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES IN UCKFIELD

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 At the last Full Council meeting held on 2 December 2024, members considered a motion from Councillor Macve relating to the Town Council hosting an event to promote the various community groups and activities in Uckfield. It was suggested that a working group be established via the Environment and Leisure Committee.
- 1.2 The motion was a proposal for the promotion of social interaction and community activities and providing an event to advertise all the clubs, societies, groups and facilities that were available in the town; the idea being to improve the social, inclusivity and community life for our residents.
- 1.3 It was understood that there had been a number of recent observations and comments from residents particularly from some of the new developments, who felt isolated and were not aware of what activities were underway within the town. It was expected that this would apply to newer residents who were moving in, and that this would only grow as all the new plans came forward; seeing the town further expand.
- 1.4 A couple of suggestions were given as to how the Town Council could organise or sponsor a showcase event, where all of the clubs and societies could promote themselves. It would show "newcomers" what a huge variety of facilities the town has to offer. It would also be an opportunity for those clubs to encourage new members to join them, as we knew that many were seeking to bolster their numbers.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to establish a working group for the organisation of this event, and identify a minimum of three and maximum of five members who are able to assist with planning and organising this event, and ongoing communication with these communities.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 10.2

REPORT OF OUTSIDE BODIES: CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST and 'WEALD TO WAVES' INITIATIVE

1.0 Summary Report

- 1.1 We continue to actively promote the Knepp event and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and have discussed the Uckfield pledges coming which they are looking forward to receiving.

There are no updates as yet on partnership aspects which were discussed last year at Full Council.

There are no new Ashdown Forest Parish meetings as yet.

Cllr Reed and the Ranger met with the Newt Conservation Partnership to look at Harlands Pond and other potential assessments being made for Priority Pond habitats.

The Forestry Commission have visited Boothland Wood.

A detailed site visit was undertaken back in June 2024, with the Chair of UTC Plans Committee, myself, the Town Clerk and Wealden DC's officer – Graham Keane, who liaised with ES Rights of way on Public Rights of Way (PROW). The visit focused in particular on green connectivity. We are incredibly sad by the sudden passing of Graham, and would like to send heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

Some queries were raised with Wealden Overview and Scrutiny committee following a presentation from the Environment Agency– for water based problems impacting Uckfield.

It has been established that sea trout are spawning and reached the River Uck to Buxted in 2023, which therefore means areas under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) are very likely to need migratory fish species, such as Shortbridge Stream, the River Uck, Framfield Stream and Ridgewood Stream improvement (catchment of North Uckfield and eel migration from North Uckfield to Shortbridge Stream). These rivers and streams are also designated and should be free of surface water/ groundwater contamination. Shortbridge Stream connects Uckfield catchments into the Ashdown Forest upstream, and downstream towards the River Ouse.

There have been some regenerative farming visits to Longman to understand how their initiatives may help us in Uckfield, and Cllr Smith's aspiration of community farming (yet to set up Tablehurst exchange).

Initial discussions have been held with 3VA and the Uckfield Foodbank to provide support for the wider community.

A visit to Sheffield Park was arranged by Councillor Bedwell to review a renovation project 'The Garden for the Future' which supports plants ahead of climate change and received a RAG map review by Kew Gardens of Sheffield Park - of concern as it implicates our woodlands are in need of biodiversity, more species and climate mapping and one species, the Oak tree is in the risk zone, which have an impact on our natural assets.

A meeting is still to be arranged with Clare Blencowe in relation to a follow-up survey of Snatts Road Cemetery.

A visit to Plaw Hatch Farm was arranged in relation to a community project and to understand how they are using land and regenerative initiatives.

Cllr Reed, Cllr Love and Cllr French met up with organisers of the Laughton community woodland project to understand their initiatives and learn from others taking part.

Cllr Reed met the Little Horsted Ward who thanked Uckfield Town councillors for looking at the car park implications of the SANG/Seghers Place.

Cllr Angie Smith visited the Community Farm Project.

The 'Weald to Waves' initiative was providing vital work in all that they do with the wildlife corridor, linking the Ouse and Adur. In our opinion, we hope that one day this will also be connected to all the North Uckfield Wildlife and Geological Sites and designated Nature Reserves, through the Isfield and Little Horsted wards, and link our important water courses and Shortbridge Stream through to Buxted Park SSSI (a potential phase of the Ashdown Forest landscape led nature recovery network (NRN)).

Research continues regarding this important heritage/ environment and the ecologically significant North Uckfield to Buxted nature recovery conservation habitat and wildlife arc described and supported by Dr Stenning (Ecologist to Uckfield of many years and Ecologist to Lake Wood and North Uckfield parish).

Councillor B. Reed.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact: Rachel Newton

Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 10.4

LUXFORD CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

1.0 Summary report

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 22 November 2024, the main topic of discussion was the proposed amalgamation of the Executive and House committees and establishing the procedures and requirements needed to carry this proposal forward after the unanimous approval of members from both committees. The EGM was set for 16 January 2025 at 10.00am.

The general administrative running of the centre was progressing smoothly at present. We are still requiring a new secretary and have had no response from Wealden Volunteer Centre as yet.

Funding for the storage extension is still ongoing with grant applications being made and it was agreed to set up a GoFundMe page and fence banner.

The next meeting of the committee is on 21 March 2025.

Councillor Chris Macve

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 20 January 2025

Agenda Item 10.5

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES: UCKFIELD RAILWAY LINE PARISHES COMMITTEE

1.0 Summary report

At the meeting on 8 January 2025, it was agreed to close the Lloyds bank account to avoid the future account charges and open an account at Santander with no maintenance charges.

The Chairman would arrange to set up a Facebook account for traveller comments on the Uckfield line to obtain both positive and negative comments.

The celebration of the 200th anniversary was still being considered.

We have had no reply on the provision of tri mode trains from the Department of Transport, in view of the aged state of the current stock.

It was generally agreed that the current service was acceptable subject to infrastructure problems from Network Rail and adverse weather. There were less 'turnarounds' at Crowborough although some overcrowding occurs on the service out of rush hours when there is only a three-car unit.

The data showed a 3.9% increase in passengers during April 2023/24.

Comments on TFSE Strategy document to be delivered by 7th March 2025.

The next meeting would take place on 12 March 2025 at 2:30pm.

Councillor C. Macve

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Rachel Newton