

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 17 March 2025 at 7.00pm

## **PRESENT:**

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Karen Bedwell  
Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO  
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.

In relation to agenda item 5.4 - recommendations from Finance Sub-Committee for community grant allocations, there were a few members who had declarations of interest.

Councillor Cox - prejudicial interest in Uckfield Youth Trust;  
Councillor Manvell – personal interest in Uckfield Youth Trust;  
Councillor Ward - personal interest in St. Peter & St. James Hospice;  
Councillor Macve - prejudicial interest in The Luxford Centre;  
Councillor Love – prejudicial interest in Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society, and a personal interest in Sussex Support Services as an employee;

In those circumstances it wouldn't leave many councillors to vote on the grant allocations, and as a result the Town Clerk further reviewed the detail of each of these interests. Based on the interests being personal for both Councillor Manvell and Councillor Ward, and these councillors having no financial gain, they were given a dispensation to participate and vote on the recommendations set out.

Councillor Love's personal interest in Sussex Support Service required her to leave the room for confidential business agenda item 12.1.

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

No statements were received.

### **3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillors V. Frost and P. Ullmann due to personal and work commitments respectively. Councillor B. Cox advised that he

would be arriving late due to running late from a personal commitment but did not make the meeting.

#### **4.0 MINUTES**

##### **4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 3 February 2025**

**GP40.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 3 February 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

##### **4.2 Action list**

Members noted that action GP38.02.25 had been completed and the new accountant notified. Members subsequently noted the report.

##### **4.3 Project list**

Members noted the updates within the report.

##### **4.4 Forward plan**

Members noted the items detailed within the Forward Plan.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

##### **5.1 To note bills paid**

Members noted the bills paid.

##### **5.2 To note the income and expenditure reports up to 31 January 2025**

Members discussed the detail within the reports.

Councillor Manvell, as Chair of Finance Sub-Committee advised that the Sub-Committee had set out to undertake a review of the Town Council's hospitality services this year, in preparation for the 2026/27 budget setting. The Town Clerk advised that the sales figures were on track which represented the hard work of the team, but rising food prices were impacting expenditure alongside salary/NI costs.

Councillor Macve noted the positive set of figures under GP Committee. Members noted the content of both reports.

##### **5.3 To receive the minutes of Finance Sub-Committee on 26 February 2025 and 10 March 2025**

Members received the draft minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 26 February and 10 March 2025.

##### **5.4 To consider the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 26 February and 10 March 2025**

Members were presented with three recommendations which they were required to ratify, to ensure completion:

- (i) ratification of the proposed withdrawal of some funds from the 35 day account;
- (ii) ratification of the proposed allocation of community grant funding for 2025/26;
- (iii) cancellation of the return of the final remaining funds, from a past awardee, that had since disbanded;

**GP41.03.25** (i) Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the withdrawal of the required amount (£100k was determined by the RFO) from the 35 day account to ensure adequate funds were available until the first half of the annual precept was received at the end of April 2025.

Councillors Love and Macve left the room for discussions on the Community Grant funding allocations.

Councillor Selby sought clarification on the funds proposed to be allocated to Uckfield College Counselling Service.

Councillor Smith sought clarification on the three organisations that had not been allocated funding. Councillor Manvell advised that the sub-committee prioritised applicants who were utilising the funds towards the provision of their services. They were concerned that the project identified for Selby Meadows couldn't be achieved within the year, and there were potentially more cost effective ways of delivering this project. The Town Council didn't have the funds available to invest the amount requested.

The Chair reiterated how difficult the Finance Sub-Committee meeting had been. 28 applications had been received for 2025/26 requesting £56k, and there were many discussions on how to prioritise the spread of the £22k funding available.

Members also noted that some of the frequent recipients of grant funding would need to be reviewed in more detail for future years – i.e. whether the receipt of grant funding would be better served through the format of a service level agreement.

**GP42.03.25** (ii) After much discussion, and clarification, three members voted in favour, and **RESOLVED** to:  
 (a) write to all applicants to thank them for their attendance and for their patience, and;  
 (b) ratify the proposed allocation of grant funding for 2025/26.

Community Grant Funding under the General Power of Competence		
	Organisation	Allocation
1	Family Support Work	£750
2	Uckfield and Area Community First Responders	£1,000
3	Ashdown Radio Ltd	£500
4	Uckfield Music Club	£500
5	Wealden Works	£1,000
6	Uckfield Food Bank	£750
8	Uckfield Youth Trust	£1,100
9	Uckfield College	£3,000
10	St Wilfrid's Hospice (Eastbourne)	£1,000
11	Imago Community East Sussex Young Carers	£595
12	Care for the Carers	£2,000
13	Uckfield Camera Club	£500
14	Uckfield Proms on the Pitch	£500
15	Uckfield Community Orchestra	£320
16	Friars Gate Archers	£250
17	St Peter & St James Hospice	£1,000

20	Uckfield Bonfire and Carnival Society CIC	£3,000
21	2530 Uckfield Squadron RAF Cadets	£600
22	Sussex Support Service	£750
23	Royal British Legion Uckfield	£200
24	Uckfield Phab Club	£793
25	Uckfield Theatre Guild	£583
26	Bluebell Railway Preservation Society	£250
27	PDA Sense	£559
28	Ridgewood Village Hall	£500
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£22,000</b>

Councillors Love and Macve were invited back into the meeting.

Councillor Smith left the room for consideration of the final recommendation from the Finance Sub-Committee relating to the Uckfield Green Partnership.

The Town Clerk explained the situation and monies that had been returned by the now disbanded organisation, but that a small amount was outstanding, which would have left individuals personally liable.

**GP43.03.25** (iii) Members **RESOLVED** to write off the final figure and to strengthen the annual review of grant allocation spend, starting with the following actions:

- (a) The Town Council should strengthen its review of grants spent. A letter should be sent to all successful applicants within the first 6 months to check in on how the funding was being utilised.
- (b) Once the annual review report by Wealden Volunteering was received, any outstanding amounts would be reviewed again.

Councillor Smith returned to the meeting.

## **6.0 BUILDINGS**

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

Members sought clarification on the Signal Box, and 2A Vernon Road.

Councillor Selby enquired about the placement of a bench on the entrance to Mallard Drive, and correspondence he had received from a local resident. The Town Clerk was in the process of handling the enquiry.

Members noted the report.

## **7.0 POLICY**

### **7.1** To consider the Annual Leave Policy (No. 81)

Members reviewed the draft policy.

**GP44.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee to approve the Annual Leave Policy (No. 81).

### **7.2** To consider the revised "Management of Sickness Absence Policy" (No. 14)

**GP45.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendation of the Personnel Sub-Committee to approve the revised Sickness Absence Policy (No. 14).

7.3 To consider the Annual Investment Strategy (No. 45)

Members noted that the reference made to the UK Central Government department was still not relevant to today's current structure, albeit the reference made related to when the guidance notes were adopted and updated. It was therefore suggested that a more general reference be given to UK Government guidance.

**GP46.03.25** Subject to this change, members **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee, for the adoption of the Annual Investment Strategy (No. 45).

**8.0 ADMINISTRATION**

8.1 To receive a report on Health and Safety within the Council

Members noted the update.

8.2 To receive Members' audit reports (none)

**9.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

9.1 To consider reports from: -

(i) Wealden Citizen's Advice  
Nothing to report.

(ii) Wealden Volunteering  
Councillor Selby, the Town Council representative, advised that the organisation had renewed their lease for the property on the High Street for a further five years. The lease agreement had a three-year break clause, so provided some flexibility. Members thanked Cllr Selby for the update.

(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 Ward, reminded everyone that it was the Annual Town meeting that Wednesday. The meeting would be taking place in the Council Chamber and start promptly at 7.00pm.

**11.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised members that they had been approached by landowners LCP, regarding the open space south of Fuller & Scotts Funeral Director, and behind the flats from the High Street. The initial intention of the landowner was to provide a commercial car park. When asking the landowners for their ballpark figure for the site, they quoted £140k.

Members requested that the Clerk obtain more information through a land registry search, of:

- the exact size of site;
- any covenants or restrictions;
- any wayleaves;

The landowner would also need to make a formal offer to the Town Council, and set out the above.

**GP47.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders and extend the meeting by 15 minutes to allow time for the items still needing to be addressed under confidential business.

**12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

**GP48.03.25** 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 terms of the lease agreement for the first floor of Victoria Pavilion  
**GP49.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk with liaising with the leaseholder, to update them on the valuation range for the premise. Members agreed to a 10-year term for the premise, but agreed that legal advice would be required on whether to do one rent review period at five years, or a staircase approach.

12.2 To consider the terms of the lease agreement for the Cemetery Chapel  
**GP50.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to task the Town Clerk with liaising with the leaseholder, to update them on the valuation for the premise. Members agreed to a 5-year term for the premise, with three year break clause, which would be beneficial for both parties based on this being a new lease.

12.3 To note bad debts  
Members discussed and noted the bad debts listed.

12.4 To receive the minutes from Personnel Sub-Committee on 11 March 2025  
Members received the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 11 March 2025.

12.5 To consider the recommendations from the Personnel Sub-Committee on 11 March 2025  
The policies had already been considered above. Following that, the Town Clerk presented an update on progress made towards the staffing proposals set out within the budget for 2025/26.

**GP51.03.25** Members **RESOLVED** to agree to give authorisation for the members of Personnel Sub-Committee (*which aligned with the Urgent Consultation Panel group*), to sign off the consultation paper on the forthcoming staffing proposals before circulating to affected staff.

12.6 To consider an update on Luxfords Restaurant  
Members noted the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 21.07pm.