



# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre  
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE  
Tel: (01825) 762774  
e-mail: [townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)  
[www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk](http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

**Town Clerk – Holly Goring**

## **YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

on

**Monday 7 April 2025 at 7.00pm  
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 MAYOR'S DISCRETION**

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

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To **RESOLVE** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 13 January 2025 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

5.2 Action list – for information only.

5.3 Forward plan – for information only.

#### **6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

(a) Plans Committees – 27 January, 10 and 31 March 2025

(b) Environment and Leisure Committee – 20 January and 3 March 2025

(c) General Purposes Committee – 3 Feb and 17 March 2025

#### **7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES (none received)**

- 8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS** (none received)
- 9.0 TO RATIFY DOCUMENTATION FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:**  
General Purposes Committee  
(i) Management of Sickness Absence Policy (14)  
(ii) Annual Investment Strategy (45)  
(iii) Annual Leave Policy (85)
- 10.0 TO CONSIDER LEGAL ADVICE ON THE VILLAGE GREEN STATUS OF RIDGEWOOD RECREATION GROUND**
- 11.0 TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR D. BENNETT RELATING TO THE TRACKBED OF THE UCKFIELD TO LEWES RAILWAY LINE**
- 12.0 TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S VIEW ON THE SUSSEX AND BRIGHTON DEVOLUTION CONSULTATION**
- 13.0 TO NOTE THE END OF YEAR PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25**
- 14.0 TO REVIEW A SNAPSHOT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND BALANCE SHEET POSITION FOR Q3 OF 2024/25**
- 15.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**
- 16.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**
- 17.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**
- 18.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 19.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**



Town Clerk  
1 April 2025

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of **UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** held  
on Monday 13 January 2025 at 7.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield

**PRESENT:** Cllr. K. Bedwell (Town Mayor)      Cllr. S. Mayhew (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. D. Bennett      Cllr. B. Reed  
Cllr. B. Cox      Cllr. P. Selby  
Cllr. D. French      Cllr. A. Smith  
Cllr. J. Love      Cllr. P. Ullmann  
Cllr. M. McClafferty      Cllr. D. Ward  
Cllr. D. Manvell

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

District Councillor K. Williams  
1 member of the public  
Sarah D'Alessio      Assistant Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Holly Goring      Town Clerk  
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

The Town Mayor, Councillor K. Bedwell, welcomed those in attendance. Councillor Bedwell explained that there was a full agenda so asked for members to try and avoid duplication, and speak if they wished to add value to the discussion or a differing perspective.

Members were reminded that budget setting was and could be a highly emotive subject so they needed to be sensitive to this. Members had had the opportunity to attend three meetings (Full Council and two Finance Sub-Committees) and had the opportunity to ask questions of the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk in the previous 6-8 weeks.

When they reached agenda item 16.0 (the annual budget), the Town Mayor would ask the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee to present the recommendations from their committee on 7 January, and then follow this by asking each individual Councillor to make a short statement (no more than 1 minute) on their thoughts on the budget proposals.

## **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. 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. Councillor Selby declared an interest in agenda item 12.0 as a result of his role as the Town Council representative for Wealden Volunteering.

Councillor Smith also declared an interest in agenda item 12.0 as a result of her role as the Town Council representative for Wealden Citizens Advice. The Town Clerk confirmed that they could participate in the discussion, but not vote.

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

There were no statements from members of the public.

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

**FC.79.01.25** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to enable updates to be provided by County and District Council representatives.

County Councillors Chris and Claire Dowling were unable to attend, but the Town Clerk read out a brief update on their behalf. This featured an update on the six monthly SLR meeting with ES Highways that had taken place that afternoon. This focused on addressing existing issues raised by members. They referred to the previous week's meeting at ESCC around the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority, and local government reorganisation. This was now in the hands of the UK Government in terms of the unitary proposals but also the cancellation of the County Council elections, which would be decided upon by the Secretary of State.

District Councillor K. Williams attended the meeting to provide an update. The proposals around local government reorganisation were also critical to Wealden DC. Wealden DC was now having to reassess its priorities. Wealden DC felt the suspension of the county elections was undemocratic. They were currently looking at what support they could provide to parish and town councils in this process. By taking out a layer of local government, there would be implications for the lower tier.

Equally in their considerations were the physical assets held by Wealden DC, and how the district authority could ensure their protection during this process. They were keen to ensure that funds collected for the benefit of Wealden residents, such as through Community Infrastructure Levy, were still utilised in Wealden.

They were also mindful that they needed to push forward on the Leisure facility contracts, and ensure strong contracts were in place. He also reminded members that they were one of the key funders for local voluntary groups such as Wealden Citizens Advice.

They were being advised by the UK Government that despite the changes, they should continue to progress with the Local Plan, and it would provide some protection for Wealden residents.

Councillor Reed spoke of the priorities around sports and leisure for Uckfield Town Council and improvements required to existing assets within the town.

Councillor Love raised her concerns in relation to the County Council's position on the Leisure Centre contracts, to which Councillor Williams reminded members that it would not be the County Council's decision, but a new Unitary authority. At

this point, the decision of the UK Government was uncertain, as to whether Sussex would feature in the fast-track programme. It was advisable to plan for the worse-case scenario to ensure the support of local assets.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Uckfield Town Council would remain engaged with Wealden DC, and work had already begun prior to this process to look at the town's infrastructure requirements. The Town Clerk asked members to keep an open mind.

Councillor Cox referred to the Wealden DC Overview & Scrutiny Committee, where they received an update on the management of the flood defences at Pevensey levels. They had also discussed the issue experienced over the Christmas period with Council Tax payments. Staff had come into the office over the Christmas period to rectify the issue, but staff were also being impacted by the proposals around local government reorganisation. It was therefore asked that members be mindful of this.

Councillor French was grateful for one of her fellow Wealden District Councillors raising a case relating to an Uckfield resident who had been affected by the Council Tax error.

Councillor Manvell advised that the council tax billing issue fell within his portfolio. He welcomed the feedback received from Town Councillors when it happened. Wealden DC were upset by the lack of trust that had been created from this error. They had undertaken an initial review, but would be undertaking a further review to look specifically at communications. A process had been created for residents to apply to have any bank charges refunded.

Councillor Bennett felt it was very important that those staff involved in the issue were being appropriately supported by Wealden DC. Councillor Reed added that Town and Parish Councils were key in these situations for assisting in communications.

Councillor Reed had met the Forestry Commission at Boothland Wood. She had also met with the Naturespace Partnership. Councillor Reed had attended the Conservators for Ashdown Forest's fundraising event, and she had advised them of the Town Council's Community Grant programme should they wish to make an application. She had also had a conversation with Sustrans about active travel for Uckfield, and the creation of a Masterplan.

**FC.80.01.25** Members **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

#### **4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillors V. Frost and C. Macve due to personal commitments. The County Councillors sent their apologies due to another meeting.

#### **5.0 MINUTES**

5.1 To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 2 December 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

**FC.81.01.25** Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 2 December 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by

the Mayor.

5.2 Action List

Members noted the action plan.

5.3 Forward plan

Members noted the proposed forward plan for future Full Council meetings. From this plan, members could identify suitable meetings for strategic or topical discussions.

**6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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

(a) Plans Committee of the 6 January 2025

**FC.82.01.25**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the Plans Committee of the 6 January 2025.

(b) Environment & Leisure Committee – no meeting held.

(c) General Purposes Committee of the 16 December 2024

**FC.83.01.25**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the acts and proceedings of the General Purposes Committee of the 16 December 2024.

**7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

(None received).

**8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS**

(None received).

**9.0 TO RATIFY DOCUMENTATION CONSIDERED BY STANDING COMMITTEES:  
General Purposes Committee**

(i) Risk Management Policy –No. 29

**FC.84.01.25**

It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the decision of General Purposes Committee on 16 December 2024 and to adopt the Town Council's updated Risk Management Policy.

**10.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WEALDEN PARISH  
REMUNERATION PANEL ON TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLOR  
ALLOWANCES FOR 2025/26**

Members were presented with the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel who met on 12 November 2024. This report recommended a 3.0% increase on the figures set in for 2024/25. Uckfield Town Council had not followed the recommended increases for around four years, which meant that the starting position was different to that within the Panel's report for 2024/25.

Due to the Christmas period, the Town Clerk had posed a number of options to members by email prior to Christmas, to obtain an indication for budget setting on what position members may wish to take.

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	BASIC ALLOWANCE	CHAIR ALLOWANCE
A	Freeze member allowances at the current rate	£1,415.61	£1,954.73
B	Increase the current rate of allowances by a further 5% (to move us closer to the Panel's suggested figure)	£1,486.39	£2,052.46
C	Increase the current rate of allowances by a further 3% (so we stay behind the recommended figures, but align with the Panel's proposed percentage increase)	£1,458.08	£2,013.37
D	Increase member allowances to the current figure recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel	£1,537.00 (8.6%)	£2,122.00 (8.6%)

Fourteen responses had been received out of 15 Town Councillors by email. The responses received were as follows:

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
2 in favour	4 in favour	6 in favour	2 in favour

A fourth option was also proposed by a member, which suggested that new councillors did not receive an allowance in their first year.

Members discussed the matter, prior to taking a vote. They understood that Councillors who were self employed for example, lost out by doing public service. A balance was needed to make the role attractive, and ensure that it was inclusive.

Some members were supportive of some increase, but conscious that too great an increase would not be well received by tax payers, in the current financial climate.

Due to the lack of indecision or steer in one particular way, three votes were taken, on the three options of A, B and C.

Councillor Manvell proposed Option B (5%), which was seconded by Councillor Bennett. Five votes were recorded in favour.

Councillor Ullmann proposed Option A (to freeze the current allowance), which was seconded by Councillor Selby. Two votes were recorded in favour.

Councillor French proposed option C (3%), which was seconded by Councillor Ward. This saw 5 votes in favour.

Due to a tie, the Town Mayor took the casting vote, and voted in favour of Option C (3%).

**FC.85.01.25** With 5 votes in favour and the casting vote of the Town Mayor (Chair of Full Council), it was **RESOLVED** to agree to an increase of the basic member allowance and the Chairman's allowance by 3% which would set the basic allowance at £1,458.08 and the Chair's allowance at £2,013.37 for 2025/26.

**11.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE AND APPROVE THE CONSOLIDATION OF EARMARKED RESERVES**

Members had been presented with the Town Council's earmarked reserves. In line with a recommendation from the Internal Auditor, staff had been working on the consolidation of the Town Council's earmarked reserves. This would see the reduction from in the region of 76 separate descriptions to, around 26. This would make reviewing the earmarked reserves much clearer for both staff and elected members. By prioritising the reserves by the necessity of the works required, it also highlighted the importance of the funds allocated for specific projects, as well as the limited funds the Town Council would be left with, if all this work was undertaken promptly. The Chair of Finance Sub-Committee was pleased with the consolidation exercise.

Councillor Reed requested that the description for 'Climate Change Initiatives' be expanded to include 'and nature' or 'and biodiversity' due to the parallel workstreams. The Town Clerk had already created a consolidated earmarked reserve titled 'Conservation and wildlife monitoring' which incorporated work around nature, but nevertheless, members had approved the expanded term.

**FC.86.01.25** Members **RESOLVED** that subject to the broadened description for 'Climate Change Initiatives', that the consolidation of earmarked reserves be adopted.

**12.0 TO CONSIDER PROPOSED DRAFT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS FOR WEALDEN CITIZENS ADVICE AND WEALDEN VOLUNTEERING**

The Town Council had received presentations from both organisations to understand more about their work. There had also been a number of discussions surrounding the figures attached to the service level agreements during budget setting and by Finance Sub-Committee. Members were being asked three things at this meeting:

- (i) to agree to a term of 12 months for both service level agreements in order to provide all organisations with the opportunity to review their position in the autumn;
- (ii) to approve the recommended sums attached to the service level agreements for 2025/26, by Finance Sub-Committee, and;
- (iii) consider the content of the service level agreements, and nominate two Town Councillors to sign these once the agreements had been finalised by all parties.

Further to the presentations by both organisations, members discussed the amounts attached to the service level agreements. Some members felt that the amount attached to Wealden Volunteering should be increased. But members recognised that the overall budget had already increased enough for the new financial year. It was therefore proposed that the funding set aside for the wider community grants be reduced to reflect this increase.

Councillor Smith proposed to increase the sum allocated to Wealden Volunteering by £1k (to £9k), to meet their requirement for 2025/26, and to reduce the allocation under the General Power of Competence for general community grant funding to £22k. Councillor Reed seconded this proposal.

Councillor Manvell spoke on the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee which sought to retain the sum allocated to Wealden



Volunteering for £8k, based on their broadened catchment across the district, and funding received by Wealden District Council. Councillor Ward seconded this proposal.

In taking a vote on Councillor Manvell's proposal, a total of five members voted in favour.

In taking a vote on Councillor Smith's proposal, a total of six members voted in favour.

**FC.87.01.25** Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) agree to the term of 12 months for both service level agreements;
- (ii) increase the funding allocation for Wealden Volunteering to £9k from the existing £8k, and to reduce the general Community Grant funding pot to £22k from £23k, as a result;
- (iii) approve the signing of the service level agreements with two nominated Councillors, once the content of the agreements had been finalized. The agreement must include monitoring in both agreements, and reflect the level of support provided to the different parish areas.

**13.0 TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2024**

Due to the large agenda that evening, the Town Clerk had presented further highlights from the residents' survey results. The proposed budget supported the feedback from residents, with more emphasis placed on grounds maintenance and improvements to sports facilities, play areas and community assets such as CCTV and Christmas lights etc. The feedback from the survey aligned with the priorities for 2025/26, and the Town Clerk suggested that an informal meeting be held with members in February to work through the results in more detail.

Members noted the highlights and agreed that an informal workshop type setting would be useful to look into the results in more detail.

Councillor Reed also asked that the results of Wealden DC's recent surveys be obtained.

**14.0 TO ADOPT THE CONTENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-30 PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE DOCUMENT**

Members considered the content of the Strategic Plan 2025-30, which set out the priorities for the next five years. Further to discussions at the December meeting, members were keen to separate out the objectives which the Town Council could deliver for the town, from the longer-term community aspirations. In the latter situation, the Town Council's role would be to lobby or to present to key stakeholders.

The Town Clerk explained that before staff created the final design and layout of the document, it was important to obtain feedback from Town Councillors on whether the objectives were right, and whether they were content with the split of deliverables and community aspirations.

Councillor Reed requested the inclusion of:

- (i) Weald to Waves
- (ii) 30by30 United Nations Target

- (iii) Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- (iv) A22 bypass – and concerns for adjacent green corridors

The Town Clerk advised that the 30by30 target was already referenced within the Strategic Plan, and asked for clarity on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy work as the Town Council was already a pilot for the Sussex Local Nature Partnership's Green Spaces project. Councillor Reed explained the difference, and the Town Clerk advised that items (i) and (iii) could be further included. However the Town Clerk felt uncomfortable incorporating large subjects such as the dualling of the A22 bypass, when this had yet to be discussed by Full Council, and there could be a difference of opinion around the table.

Councillor Smith added the need to include an up to date Sustrans study – to review sustainable modes of transport (walking and cycling networks). Councillor Reed further requested the inclusion of air monitoring within the town centre.

Members requested more detailed discussions on some of these subject areas, notably – 30by30, the dualling of the A22 bypass, and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

**FC.88.01.25** Subject to the inclusion of (i) and (iii) above, members **RESOLVED** to: approve and adopt the objectives for the 2025-30 Strategic Plan, and would await a finished design in its publication.

**15.0 TO ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2025/26**  
Members reviewed the annual priorities for the organisation in 2025/26.

Councillor Mayhew noted that the community grant and service level agreement figures needed to be updated following the Town Council's earlier decision.

**FC.89.01.25** Subject to the change in the figures, members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Plan for 2025/26.

**16.0 TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE AND FORMALLY SET THE ANNUAL BUDGET (PRECEPT) FOR 2025/26**

The Chair of Finance Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to present the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee. Councillor Manvell advised members of the lengthy discussions taken by the sub-committee in relation to this year's budget. He also advised that the decision had not been taken lightly. It was a case of looking at what Uckfield Town Council needed in terms of resource to just stand still let alone meet the growth of the town. This would be further exacerbated by the potential devolvement of services in the future from the local government re-organisation. Finance Sub-Committee members were certain that we needed to place less reliance on the Council's reserves (capital). At present the Town Council did not hold any contingency fund, and needed to start putting money aside.

The Chair thanked the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee and invited members to provide their thoughts on the proposals one by one.

Staff were commended for their work and despite the difficulty in setting these

proposals, members were in the main supportive in order to meet service needs. Members also recognised the need for any communications around the precept/budget figures to be jointly supported and co-signed by councillors.

Members recognised that there were still gaps within the budget, in terms of:

- risk of pension liability changes;
- the need for contingency;
- this was only Phase 1 of resource/staffing to meet service needs;
- further investment in buildings such as the Signal Box and Osborn Hall;
- reviewing hospitality services;
- the changes to the Public Right of Way across Ridgewood Farm;
- River Uck/Rivers Trust work to clean up the watercourses and retain biodiversity;

**FC.90.01.25** Bearing in mind the very difficult decision, members unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the annual budget for 2025/26 of £1,986,904 with a precept of £1,321,884. This would result in an increase of £30.30 (15.95%) per annum for the average Council Tax Band D household (approx. £3.03 per month).

**17.0 TO ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2025-30**

**FC.91.01.25** Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Asset Management Plan for 2025-30.

**18.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25 (Q3)**

Members were presented with an update for quarter 3 (Oct – Dec) for 2024/25. Subject to discussions surrounding the Christmas lights and dissatisfaction with the contractors, members noted the report.

**19.0 TO CONSIDER THE BEST METHOD FOR RESPONDING TO THE FOLLOWING CONSULTATION**

**(i) Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England (deadline 12 February 2025)**

**(ii) Draft Transport Strategy Consultation (deadline 7 March 2025)**

**FC.92.01.25** It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, should the agenda continue past 9.00pm.

Members suggested that these consultations could be considered at the same informal workshop that would be held with members to review the Residents' Survey results. Councillor Reed also spoke of a further consultation on the Nature Recovery Green Paper.

**20.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Members noted the report.

**21.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT**

Two deed of grants had been received:

Jeremy Mercer

Ms Connie Deman

**FC.93.01.25** It was **RESOLVED** for three councillors to sign the above deeds of grant.

**22.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

None received.

**23.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None received.

**24.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair, Councillor Bedwell advised members that her project 'People need People' was due to be launched on 23 January 2025 at the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce meeting. The Uckfield Chamber of Commerce had offered to sponsor the project for one year. The project aimed to get businesses supporting local charities and voluntary groups, but also for their volunteers to share expertise with the businesses.

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.

**ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY  
FULL COUNCIL**

<b>Resolution No.</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
<p><b><u>FC.105.02.17</u></b></p> <p><b><u>FC.95.01.20</u></b></p>	<p><u>14.0 To sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows and West Park Local Nature Reserves.</p> <p><u>18.0 To sign and seal the Town Council’s byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to:</p> <p>(i) authorise the affixing of the common seal to the byelaws for both Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve and signing by two named councilors, and; (ii) authorise the Town Clerk for Uckfield Town Council to carry out the necessary procedures and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation.</p>	<p>20.02.17</p> <p>20.01.20</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>In progress.</p>
<p><b><u>FC115.04.19</u></b></p>	<p><u>9.0 To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Donna French</u> It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to support the motion put forward, and; “reinvestigate the possibility of part funding a traffic warden; entering into a discussion with Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate, with a view to joint funding a shared traffic warden, employed via Sussex Police.”</p>	<p>08.04.19</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>It was proposed that this matter be brought back to Full Council so members could fully understand the views of individual councillors. This has been delayed until the New Year, due to large agendas related to annual business planning and devolution based matters.</p>
<p><b><u>FC.30.09.20</u></b></p>	<p><u>12.0 To review a report by Councillor A. Smith on the need for affordable homes in Uckfield</u> After a detailed discussion, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to request that the Town Clerk write to the Housing Minister Rt Hon Robert Jenrick with a copy of this report and advise Wealden DC’s planning department of these discussions along with neighbouring parish councils.</p>	<p>14.09.20</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>The report would be updated utilising the latest market analysis, affordability and housing market information. It would be presented back to UTC before being sent to MHCLG, and to the Deputy PM.</p>

## UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<b><u>FC.55.10.21</u></b>	Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the motion “ <i>Uckfield Town Council supports the increase in the provision of Changing Place Toilets across the country, and will approach East Sussex County Council to understand if they:</i> <i>(i) have submitted an expression of interest to central government to draw down funding to the county of East Sussex, and:</i> <i>(ii) if ESCC have expressed an interest, that Uckfield Town Council lobby for such facilities to be introduced in Uckfield.</i> ”	25.10.21	HG	Officers will prepare necessary financial information to understand what’s involved in creating a Changing Place Toilet. Members were asked to consider suitable locations.
<b><u>FC.63.10.23</u></b>	<u>13.0 To receive a response from East Sussex County Council to a previous motion submitted requesting the installation of a pedestrian crossing</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept the proposed amendment to Councillor Bennett’s original motion and set out to: “maintain this as the ideal site and the path that students were taking to reach school, in order to emphasise the views of the young people. Uckfield Town Council would be very happy to explore the option of community match funding and fund a feasibility study, as the Town Council felt it was important to concentrate on this area, and not further north of the town. It was also suggested that any data or feedback from the feasibility study and associated speed surveys, should reflected in any future updates to the Sustrans report.”	30.10.23	HG	In progress.
<b><u>FC.76.12.23</u></b>	<u>11.0 To consider a motion from Councillor D. French</u> After some discussion, members <b>RESOLVED</b> to put forward nominations for the Uckfield Rugby Club, the Family Hub (as Childrens Centres were at risk of closure) and the Highlands Inn (as the last remaining pub in the south of Uckfield and their support to community lunches) as Assets of Community Value.	11.12.23	HG	In progress.
<b><u>FC.105.02.24</u></b>	<u>14.0 To consider the issues being experienced with parking at Victoria Pleasure Ground</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to give permission for officers to proceed with the above three proposals for monitoring vehicles parking at Victoria Pleasure Ground, and to also replace signage which emphasised the purpose of the car parking area.	26.02.24	HG	Near completion.

## UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<b><u>FC.115.04.24</u></b>	<u>10.0 To consider current issues with pavement parking and proposals for undertaking a campaign</u> With unanimous support, members <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve for the Town Clerk and Marketing & Community Engagement Officer to proceed with a communications campaign around poor parking behaviour.	08.04.24	HG/ WH	In progress.
<b><u>FC.29.06.24</u></b>	<u>12.0 – To consider a request to review the opening times of the toilet(s) at Victoria Pleasure Ground</u> With six votes in favour, and three members against the proposal (including Cllr Selby), members <b>RESOLVED</b> to address this matter through the Town Council's budget setting process which would begin September 2024, to ensure the correct service provision was in place.	26.06.24	SD/HG /JH	Unable to be considered at this time.
<b><u>FC.44.09.24</u></b>	<u>11. To consider a motion from Councillor Bernadette Reed</u> With seven votes in favour, two votes against and two members abstaining from voting, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> for the Town Clerk to nominate Luxford Field Car Park as an Asset of Community Value.	09.09.24	HG	To be progressed.
<b><u>FC.49.09.24</u></b>	<u>15.0 To consider the relocation of the substation in Shepherds Way</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to request that a meeting be arranged onsite with UKPN, to understand what difficulties they were experiencing with the current location and what would be involved with any movement.	09.09.24	Grnds/ TC	We await an update from UKPN on their updated proposals following our site visit.
<b><u>FC.50.09.24</u></b>	<u>16.0 To consider setting up a working group to establish a Heritage Plaque Project</u> Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to select Option B, and prepare a localised scheme for Uckfield, with the following members appointed to join a member-led working group (Councillors D. Bennett, D. French, J. Love and B. Reed).	09.09.24	WH	In progress.

## UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

<u>Resolution No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Date Raised</u>	<u>Action By</u>	<u>Date Complete</u>
<b><u>FC.63.10.24</u></b>	<p><u>15.0 To consider a motion from Councillor D. French</u>            Members <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the purchase and installation of a central locked box housing a public access trauma kit on the exterior of the Civic Centre, with plans to look wider in the town, in due course. Research should be undertaken to source funding or partnership working to deliver this project in association with local emergency services as well as the Freemasons, Rotary Club and Uckfield Lions.</p>	21.10.24	HG	In progress.
<b><u>FC.64.10.24</u></b>	<p><u>16.0 To consider further expansion of a motion from Councillor B. Reed</u>            (i) approve the broadening of the Town Council representative role for the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to also include the Weald to Waves initiative, and (Councillor D. French and Councillor B. Reed);            (ii) approve for Councillor Reed to utilise that role to liaise with the relevant agencies involved in the Weald to Waves initiative, and understand what the partner role entails in terms of resource and if a financial contribution is required. Councillor Reed was asked to bring back a report with this information.</p>	21.10.24	BR	In progress



## FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2025

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

## FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2025

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT/OFFICER
<b>April 2025</b>	Ratification of GP Committee policy and strategy reviews such as the Annual Investment Strategy	Town Clerk/ Asst Town Clerk
	Snapshot of Budget and Balance Sheet position at end of December 2025	Asst Town Clerk
	End of Year Progress Update on 2024/25 Annual Priorities	Town Clerk
	Motion from Councillor Bennett on rail trackbed	Town Clerk
	To consider legal advice on Ridgewood Recreation Ground	Town Clerk
	Consultation response on Sussex and Brighton Devolution Consultation	Town Clerk
CONFIDENTIAL	None.	
DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
<b>May 2025</b>	Election of Mayor	Town Clerk
	Election of Deputy Mayor	
	Any co-options – youth or elected member	
	Review terms of reference of committees	
	Appointments to standing committees and sub-committees	
	Appointments to Outside bodies	
	Appointments to Full Council working groups	
	Annual review of Standing Orders/Scheme of Delegation/Terms of Reference	
	Annual review of Financial regulations	
	Annual review of Code of Conduct policy	
	Schedule of monthly member audits	
	Review of Fixed Asset Register	
	Calendar of meetings for 2025-26	
Membership of bodies and annual fees		
CONFIDENTIAL	Signing of lease agreements – Cemetery Chapel and Victoria Pavilion	Town Clerk

## FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2025

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
<b>June 2025</b>	Internal Audit Report for 2024-25 (for the year ending 31 March 2025)	Asst Town Clerk
	Annual Governance Statement – Section 1 of AGAR	Asst Town Clerk
	Sections 2 & 3 of AGAR and draft financial statements	Town Clerk/ Asst Town Clerk
	Standing Orders and Direct Debit payments	Asst Town Clerk
	To consider costs of establishing a Changing Places toilet	Town Clerk
	Discussion on the Town Council's viewpoint on parking issues in Uckfield	Town Clerk
CONFIDENTIAL		
DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
<b>September 2025</b>	Q1 Progress Update for 2025/26 Annual Priorities	Town Clerk
	Snapshot of Budget and Balance Sheet position at end of June 2025 (Q1)	Asst Town Clerk
CONFIDENTIAL		

## FULL COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN – 2025

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
<b>October 2025</b>	To note the report of the External Auditor	Town Clerk
	Q2 Progress Update for 2025/26 Annual Priorities	Asst Town Clerk
	Snapshot of Budget and Balance Sheet position at end of September 2025 (Q2)	Town Clerk
	Six monthly review of Fixed Asset Register	Town Clerk
	To review the documentation for the Town Council's Buildings Insurance Renewal	Town Clerk/E&F Mgr
	Calendar of meetings for 2026	Town Clerk
	Initial review of Service Level Agreements	Town Clerk/Asst TC
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>		

DATE OF MEETING	DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM/REPORT	REPORT OFFICER
<b>December 2025</b>	To consider draft content of Strategic Plan 2026-2031	Town Clerk
	To consider draft content of the Annual Plan 2026/27	Town Clerk
	To consider draft content of the Annual Budget 2026/27	Asst Town Clerk
	To consider draft content of the Asset Management Plan 2026-31	Town Clerk
	Calendar of meetings for 2026	Town Clerk
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>		

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Policy Number 14		
Issue No.	Date Agreed	Details of amendments
1.	11.03.25	Consideration of draft at Personnel Sub-Committee
2.	17.03.25	GP45.03.25: Ratification at General Purposes Committee
3.	07.04.25	Adoption at Full Council

## **1.0. Aims and Objectives**

The Council operates a standard procedure for the recording of sickness absence. It is hoped that in so doing, it will quantify the level of sickness absence and, if appropriate, take steps to reduce it.

Equally important is the need for the Council to ensure a fair and consistent approach to the management of sickness absence. Other objectives are:

- the promotion of employees' health, safety and welfare;
- the saving of resource;
- the identification of changes necessary in working practices or environment;
- ensuring that the Council complies with the Equality Act (2010);

It should be stressed that responsibility for applying the provisions of the policy lies with the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk & RFO and line managers.

## **2.0 Application of Policy**

The main principles of the policy will apply to all staff, although we do recognise that reporting timescales may need to differ for frontline service areas such as Caretaking and Luxfords Restaurant, particularly if the staff member is due to open the Civic Centre or Restaurant.

## **3.0 Recording of Sickness Absence**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Council has well established procedures for recording absence for the purpose of paying employees under the terms of its various sick pay schemes in accordance with NJC terms and conditions relating to sick pay.

The Council has a standard procedure for monitoring sickness absence. It will also provide an accurate overview when reporting sickness statistics to Councillors.

### 3.2 Reporting Procedure

#### (i) Notification – what to do if a staff member is unwell

Day	Procedure
Day 1 (and prior to)	<p>Employees are required to telephone their line manager before their contractual start time for work, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) provide details of their condition, and an;</li> <li>(ii) estimation of how long they expect to be off.</li> </ul> <p><i>If they are unable to call personally, someone else may call for them. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure the Council is notified.</i></p> <p>Please note if the employee's role sits within Luxfords Restaurant or within the Civic Centre (caretaking and cleaning functions), as these individuals are likely to be responsible for opening up the restaurant or building, if they start to feel unwell the evening before their shift, they should notify their line manager at that stage using a brief form of communication (i.e. message/whatsapp). This will enable the manager to arrange for appropriate cover. The employee can then converse by telephone later on that first day of their sickness as and when they can.</p>
Following days of sickness absence	<p>Employees are required to telephone again each day, unless otherwise agreed with their line manager, or out of hours.</p>
Day 7	<p><u>Seven days or less</u></p> <p>If the employee is away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), it is considered self-certification, and staff should complete a self-certification form and provide it to their line manager when they return to work.</p> <p><u>Seven days or more</u></p> <p>If the employee is away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), they must obtain a 'fit to work' statement from their doctor and continue to do so as each certificate runs out.</p> <p>This certificate gives details as to whether the employee is too ill to work or whether they are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council.</p> <p>This also gives the employee and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support their return to work. The form gives space for the doctor to provide information about the condition and helpful tick boxes to suggest common ways to help their return to work.</p>

## **(ii) Discuss – returning to work**

On the first day back at work after a period of sickness absence, the line manager will arrange an informal meeting. If this is not possible on their first day back, the meeting may take place later.

The return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions should be private and confidential. The meeting would normally include:

- a welcome back to work;
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting; which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas; offering support where appropriate;
- a discussion about the reasons for absence;
- explain that the absence will be recorded;
- establish if medical advice has been sought (if appropriate);
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a 'fit to work' note from the doctor has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps; and where the council can support the employee, and;
- a handover of work where appropriate.

## **(iii) Consider (eligibility for sick pay)**

### **Council's Sick Pay (Occupational Sick Pay)**

The Town Council works to the Green Book (see appendix A). It is the Council's policy to pay staff their normal basic rate of pay exclusive of overtime/allowances during periods of sickness absence.

This occupational sick pay will be for absences due to sickness calculated over the previous 52 weeks and will include their entitlement to SSP if this is required (depending on the length of time they have worked for the Town Council).

#### Please note:

Payment is, however, conditional upon the employee complying with the council's procedure for:

- (i) notifying their manager of the absence;
- (ii) attending an interview with their line manager on request to discuss the absence, and;
- (iii) completing a self-certification form on return to work or providing a 'fit to work' note when requested.



The Town Council may also ask the employee to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor or medical professional at the request of the Council. This would be in cases where further understanding needs to be obtained on the staff member's condition.

Uckfield Town Council may not pay occupational sick pay where:

- the employee has failed to comply with the Council's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- the employee unreasonably refuses to attend a sickness absence meeting with the Council on request;
- the employee is unable to work because they hurt themselves in a dangerous sport/activity or occupation;
- the employee has misled the council about their fitness to work;
- they have resigned, or;
- where disciplinary proceedings are pending against them.

#### **Statutory Sick Pay**

In certain circumstances, such as a new member of staff who is yet to qualify for Council sick pay, they may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). SSP is currently paid after four qualifying days absence from work. The qualifying days are their normal working days within their contract. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted from SSP and if they earn below the lower earnings limit, they will not qualify for SSP.

### **3.3 Recording Procedure**

An Employee Sickness Record form should be used to record all employee sickness absence including appointments with a GP or at hospital. The form records each incidence of sickness absence.

Specific information to be recorded:

- the reason for each absence;
- the length of each absence in working days, including half days;
- whether the absence is self-certified or authorised by a doctor's 'fit to work' certificate.

It should be emphasised that employees have the right to confidentiality regarding illness. Considerable care should, therefore, be given to the security of records. Those responsible for maintaining sickness records must ensure that absence records are held in a secure place and made available only to authorised staff.

Please note that employees should be permitted to see a copy of their own sickness record on request.

## **4.0 Monitoring of Short-term Sickness Absence**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As an employer the Council has a responsibility to ensure that its sick pay scheme is not abused. The Council should also raise awareness of the effects of absence on fellow colleagues and service delivery.

Monitoring absence can also help indicate what may be contributing to the periods of sickness absence.

### **4.2 Monitoring Procedure**

In dealing with sickness absence, the Council should ensure a consistent approach between departments.

The Assistant Town Clerk & RFO will, therefore, play a major role in advising departments of how to manage a particular case.

Line managers should review the sickness records of employees at the end of each quarter.

#### **Persistent short-term absence**

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness. The Town Council understands most employees will have some short-term sickness from time to time. However, if an employee is frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage productivity, and place additional burden on the work of colleagues.

It is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently. In some circumstances, the Council may be required to begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process.

If the Town Council starts this procedure, they will meet with the employee:

- (i) to set attendance targets, and;
- (ii) following a review meeting they may issue a formal warning if targets are not met.
- (iii) the employee will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting and they can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. They may appeal against a formal warning.
- (iv) If their absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the council may bring the employment to an end following consultation with the employee.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition then the Town Council may also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician, their G.P. or consultant to establish further information about their health and how the council can support their attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the council will not consider any pregnancy related absence.

The council will consider alternative employment options before making a decision about ending employment. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal sanction.

The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for absence or if the employee has not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

## **5.0 Approaches to high levels of sickness absence**

Sickness absence falls into four categories and each demands a different response. When a line manager refers a case to the Assistant Town Clerk, examination of records should determine into which of the following categories, the case falls:

- a one-off absence (e.g. minor operation);
- a series of absences due to one diagnosed cause;
- serious long-term illness;
- multiple absences due to minor unrelated illnesses.

The approach adopted will differ according to the nature of the absence(s). Early Occupational Health intervention after 10-15 days absence has been shown in many cases to have dramatic effects on long-term sickness, by starting to find solutions whilst the psychology remains one of temporary absence.

In the first case, for example, a minor operation will have usually remedied an employee's ill health and no further action will be necessary. The Council may, however, want to satisfy itself that the health issue will not recur or be further exacerbated by the duties of the employee's job, by writing to an employee's GP when they return to work. Permission needs to be obtained from the employee. The Council reserves the right to refer the employee to its own doctor for a second opinion, under the NJC terms and conditions.

Absences falling into the second category may require an exploration of the possibility of redeployment of an employee into another job or job re-design.

Absence cases falling into the third category, which do not lend themselves to adaptation of job duties or redeployment, may lead to ill-health early retirement or termination of employment on grounds of capability and will be dealt in accordance with NJC terms and conditions.

Absences in category four may be the most common, and may also form recognisable patterns, e.g., where someone calls in sick with a variety of ailments on the last week of the month or during school holidays. These

absences may be the hardest to address and in some cases will need to be dealt with using the Capability Policy or the Disciplinary Policy.

## **6.0 Long Term Sickness Absence and Referrals to General Practitioner**

### **6.1 Definition**

Any single absence of the duration of four (4) or more weeks is considered long-term. It is recommended that the line manager should liaise with the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO in order to discuss an approach to the case and consider the potential reasons for this absence.

### **6.2 Approach**

In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with the employee. In cases where the return date is less certain the line manager and Assistant Town Clerk should ensure:

- Discussions are maintained at the start of the absence and periodically throughout;
- Obtaining better information on their health and likely prognosis, ideally through an Occupational Health Physician;
- Where appropriate alert the employee to the fact that their absence is becoming an issue, and;
- The employee has the opportunity to state their opinion of their condition and give consideration to that opinion.

Where ill-health means that they are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the council may need to consider bringing their employment to an end. In these circumstances, the council will:

- Review their absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal;
- Consult with the employee;
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice;
- Advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility;
- Discuss whether they may be able to access benefits from the Local Government Pension Scheme (where appropriate);
- Meet with the employee to discuss the options and consider their views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing the employee to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative;

- Review if there are any alternative jobs that the employee could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss;
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss the employee on grounds of long-term ill health;
- Following this meeting, inform the employee of the final decision;

### **6.3 Redeployment and Accommodation of Disability**

Where a staff member experiences sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010. This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

Accommodation may involve re-designing the individual's job, adapting the working environment or changing the hours of work. If accommodation proves impossible, every attempt will be made to redeploy the employee into a position for which they are capable.

In pursuing its policy of attempting to accommodate or redeploy staff the Council will make full use of the advice and assistance of external agencies such as Sage HR and ACAS or the advice of an Occupational Health Practitioner. Employees will also be fully consulted regarding such options.

### **6.4 Ill Health Early Retirement. Termination of Employment on Grounds of Capability Incapacity**

Where accommodation and redeployment are not viable options, ill health early retirement or termination of the individual's employment will be the only options. No decision to pursue these options would be taken without reviewing the medical evidence and consulting personally with the employee.

#### **Data Protection**

The Council will treat personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing data will be provided in the council's employee privacy notice.

#### **This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.**

Date of policy: March 2025

Approving committee: General Purposes Committee/Full Council

Date of committee meeting: 17 March 2025/7 April 2025

Policy version reference: v2

Supersedes: [The Management of Sickness Absence Policy)

Policy effective from: 1 April 2025

Date for next review: 1 April 2026

## **Appendix A – Guidance for Senior Management Team**

### 1.0 Return to work interview:

These notes are intended as guidelines to assist line managers with conducting return to work interviews with employees:

- arrange to have a meeting with them as soon as is convenient, but certainly this meeting should be on the day they return to work;
- advise the individual that the meeting will be recorded and that a copy will be placed on their personnel file;
- the meeting should be held away from the individual's usual work environment (for instance, for kitchen staff the meeting should be held away from the kitchen);
- you should enquire sympathetically as to the person's health, initially to ascertain whether or not they are fully fit to return to work, and as to the nature of the illness;
- if you have concerns that there are either work related or external factors that are affecting the person's health, you may want to make a tactful enquiry. It may be that the person may benefit from counselling by a qualified practitioner or by visiting their GP for additional advice and support;
- you should share any concerns you may have with the employee about their level of sickness absence where there have been a number of absences due to minor and unrelated illnesses;
- In serious cases, where there is no improvement, this could lead to disciplinary action being taken. In no case, however, would the Council issue a warning before first discussing the matter with an employee and, where appropriate, referring them for medical opinion;
- At the end of the meeting, advise the employee again that a record will be kept on their personnel file and that they have the right to see their file should they so wish;
- After the meeting, you should ensure that the notes from the meeting are placed on the employee's personnel file. If this is not immediately possible, the form should be placed in an envelope and clearly labelled "confidential".

### 2.0 Green Book terms

The Town Council adopts the Green Book terms and conditions of employment. Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods: -

#### During 1st year of service

1 month's full pay (after completing 4 months service) followed by,  
2 months half pay

#### During 2nd year of service

2 months full pay, followed by,  
2 months half pay

#### During 3rd year of service

4 months full pay followed by,  
4 months half pay

#### During 4th and 5th year of service

5 months full pay followed by,  
5 months half pay

### After 5 years' service

6 months full pay followed by,  
6 months half pay

Periods of full pay will include SSP. In periods of half pay, employees receive half pay in addition to SSP provided the total does not exceed normal pay.

If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of the following, sick pay may be suspended:

- (i) sickness attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery;
- (ii) the employee's own misconduct or neglect, or;
- (iii) active participation in a professional sport, or;
- (iv) injury while working in the employee's own time for another employer or for private gain;

### 3.0 Council's Sick Pay

The legal requirement is to pay Statutory Sick Pay (subject to eligibility) and anything additional is for the council to decide. Any additional sick pay is known as 'occupational sick pay' (OSP). The council will need to commit to paying any OSP it decides to offer and take into account the cost of National Insurance and the cost of any temporary staff required to cover the absence. It would be unusual to bring an employment contract to an end before the occupational sick pay expires.

If an employee already has a paid sick leave entitlement, you cannot unilaterally change their entitlement. Councils can change the policy for all new staff joining after a defined date provided this is consistently applied.

### 4.0 Medical appointments

There is no legal requirement to pay time off for medical appointments, except antenatal appointments. Please see the Maternity and Parental leave policies for details.

The council would prefer staff to make up the time. If a council decides to offer payment for medical appointments, it is sensible to put some limit on this.

### 5.0 Medical advice

Health information is considered to be personal sensitive information under Data Protection legislation and particular care must be taken when processing medical information.

An Occupational Health report can comment on an individual's health in relation to the employee's role. It will be important to provide the OH physician or nurse a referral form with full details of the employee's job, the concerns you have about their health in relation to their work and be specific about the questions you need answering. Any report should then be discussed with the employee before the council decides on any follow up actions. If the report makes recommendations, these must be carefully considered and discussed with the employee.

### 6.0 Health and wellbeing

All employers have duty to provide a safe place of work which includes the physical environment as well as mental health.

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Policy Number 45		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	23.03.09	Adopted at General Purposes Committee - GP068.03.
2	15.12.09	Finance Sub-Committee agreed to review Policy in one year's time. GP.045.12.09
3	05.12.11	General Purposes - GP.63.12.11
4	01.12.14	Reviewed at General Purposes Committee - GP.39.12.14
5	18.01.16	Reviewed at General Purpose Committee GP.50.01.16
6	25.01.22	Review of strategy by Finance Sub-Committee
7	31.01.22	General Purposes Committee GP29.01.22
8	16.01.23	Review at General Purposes Committee 16.01.23
9	05.02.24	GP.38.02.24 - Ratification at GP Committee
10	26.02.25	Adoption at Full Council
11	10.03.25	Review at Finance Sub-Committee 10.3.25
12	17.03.25	GP46.03.25 - Ratification GP Committee
13	07.04.25	Adoption at Full Council



## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The strategy has been produced and complies with UK Government guidance.
- 1.2 Uckfield Town Council acknowledges its responsibility to the community and the importance of prudently investing the temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the community.

## **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 The general policy objective for this Council is prudent investment of its balances. The Council's investment priorities are:-
  - (i) the security of its reserves  
and
  - (ii) the liquidity of its investments.
- 2.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

## **3.0 Policies**

- 3.1 All the Town Council's investments will be Specified Investments which are those offering high security and high liquidity. This means that:-
  - (i) All investments will be made in sterling and any payments or repayments will also be made in sterling.
  - (ii) All investments will be short to medium term investments which will not exceed a maximum of fifteen months.
  - (iii) All investments will be made with a body or investment scheme which has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency<sup>1</sup>. (A high credit rating will be defined as 'A' 'High Credit Quality'.)
  - (iv) All investments will be made in UK banks, building societies or charitable funds.
- 3.2 Credit Ratings will be monitored at quarterly intervals. If the credit rating falls during that period, the Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the General Purposes Committee, the Chair of the Finance Sub-committee and the Town Clerk, will decide on the appropriate action.

<sup>1</sup> A credit rating agency is defined in the guidance as one of the following three companies: Standard and Poor's; Moody's Investors Service Ltd; Fitch Ratings Ltd.

- 3.3 For prudent management of its balances, the Town Council, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, will adopt a policy whereby funds which are likely to be surplus for up to three months can be invested in short term deposits with one or more of the UK major clearing banks and/or building societies.
- 3.4 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities maintain that borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Town Council will not engage in such activity.

#### **4.0 Review and amendment of the strategy**

- 4.1 This strategy will be reviewed annually.
- 4.2 At the end of the financial year during the preparation of accounts the Responsible Financial Officer will also report on investment activity.
- 4.3 The General Purposes Committee may recommend variations of the strategy for approval by the Full Council in accordance with the guidance from the Secretary of State.
- 4.4 The General Purposes Committee will review the Town Council's banking arrangements every two years.
- 4.5 The Finance Sub-committee will consider the placement of the Town Council's deposits one month before any bond matures and recommend movements to the General Purposes Committee or if subject to time constraints Full Council as necessary. At present the 15-month investment period Uckfield Town Council has been reviewing, will fall in October.

#### **5.0 Current investments**

- 5.1 Uckfield Town Council's current investments are with:
- NatWest Bank Plc – day to day current account;
  - NatWest Bank Plc – business reserve account;
  - NatWest Bank Plc - liquidity manager 35 day account
  - NatWest Bank Plc - liquidity manager 95 day account
  - NatWest Bank Plc – 15-month fixed-term deposit;
  - Lloyds Bank Plc – Treasurer account;

#### **6.0 Non-financial investments**

- 6.1 Non-financial investments are normally held by a local authority to generate a profit, and it would normally be a physical asset that can be realised to recoup the capital invested. Uckfield Town Council has a portfolio of assets, with most buildings leased out for community use or to local small independent businesses. The full list of the Town Council's assets is available in the Town Council's Property Asset Management Plan 2025-30 which can be found on the Town Council's website: <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/key-documents/>
- 6.2 The Town Council currently owns the following residential property which sits adjacent to a Town Council owned community building:
- 2A Vernon Road

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Statement of position at 31 December 2024

**APPENDIX A**

**Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024**

Specified investments	£
• NatWest Bank Plc – Day to Day Current Account	200,000.97
• NatWest Bank Plc – Business Reserve Account	358,050.64
• NatWest Bank Plc - liquidity manager 35 day account	102,610.30
• NatWest Bank Plc - liquidity manager 95 day account	413,006.86
• NatWest Bank Plc – 15 Month Fixed-term Deposit Account	307,050.00
• Lloyds Bank Plc – Treasurer Account	21,067.15
Non – financial Investments	
• Flat 2A Vernon Road (March 2024 Valuation)	150,000.00

**Nb. For the present time the General Reserve shall, as a minimum be kept as three months operating costs as predicted by the annual budget. This is in addition to earmarked reserves that are allocated for a specific purpose or project.**

# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



## ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

<b>Policy Number 81</b>		
<b>Issue No.</b>	<b>Date Agreed</b>	<b>Details of amendments</b>
1	11.03.25	Consideration at Personnel Sub Committee
2	17.03.25	GP44.03.25 Ratification at General Purposes Committee
3	07.04.25	Adoption at Full Council

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the key procedures for both employees of Uckfield Town Council and Senior Management Team in handling requests for annual leave.
- 1.2 All employees are entitled to take annual leave and their specific entitlement will be set out in their contract of employment and based on whether they are full-time, or part-time, where it will be calculated pro rata.
- 1.3 Enabling staff to take annual leave can be a positive step and help to maintain staff welfare, morale and productivity.

## **2.0 Annual leave entitlement**

- 2.1 The paid leave entitlement for employees is set out in their contract of employment. The basic leave entitlement for a full-time staff member is 23 days per annum in addition to the number of Bank holidays for that year.
- 2.2 The basic entitlement extends to 28 days per annum plus the number of Bank Holidays for that year, for those who have worked for the organisation for 5 years or more (*this will commence from the April following the five-year anniversary of their start date*).
- 2.3 Part-time employees receive a pro-rata entitlement of both annual leave and bank holidays, according to their hours of work.
- 2.4 Uckfield Town Council also provide all staff with two statutory days to be used over the Christmas break. This equates to two shifts for part-time employees.

## **3.0 Working part-time**

- 3.1 If an employee's pro-rata entitlement to Bank Holidays exceeds the number of days that fall on their normal working days (typically because they don't work on Mondays), they will be able to take the excess as leave.
- 3.2 If their entitlement to Bank Holidays is less than the number of Bank Holidays that fall on their normal working days (typically because their normal working days include Mondays), they can make up the difference by using their leave entitlement. With agreement from the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, the employee may be able to work additional hours to make up the deficit or take unpaid leave.

## **4.0 Variable hour workers**

- 4.1 Statutory minimum holiday entitlement is based on 5.6 weeks of holiday per holiday year, including bank and public holidays. Please note any holiday entitlement over and above 5.6 weeks will be pro-rata based on hours, days, and weeks worked. Where variable hours are worked, the actual weekly holiday entitlement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis depending on the average number of hours worked per week, over a 52-week reference period, excluding any weeks when no work has been undertaken.

## **5.0 Leave year**

- 5.1 The leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March. It is the responsibility of the employee to manage their leave in such a way that they can take it all during the leave year. Their annual leave entitlement will be calculated pro-rata in their first and last year of employment with the council, depending on their start date or date of departure.

## **6.0 Carrying over leave**

- 6.1 Except in the very rare circumstances of a booked and agreed period of leave being cancelled at the council's request, or if the employee has had a period of long-term sick which has required them to have a prolonged period of absence from work, procedures will need to be followed to ensure a minimal amount of leave is carried over, and annual leave is taken throughout the year.
- 6.2 The standard procedure at Uckfield Town Council allows for employees to carry over the equivalent of one week of work:
- (i) For full time employees – up to 37 hours or 5 days;
  - (ii) For part-time employees – up to the equivalent of their weekly contracted hours;
- 6.3 Permission would need to be granted by the line manager and Assistant Town Clerk, should any specific requests be accepted, which would typically be based on service requirements during periods of staff shortages.
- 6.4 And any leave carried over into the next financial year, would need to be booked and taken within the first two months of that year i.e. April and May.

## **7.0 Requesting leave**

- 7.1 An employee should request leave from their line manager (or the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO in their absence) and be required to provide as much notice as possible. This will allow the council to plan workloads.
- 7.2 At present, requests for annual leave are considered on a first come, first serve basis. But, before granting leave, line managers and Senior Management Team will need to consider:
- The team's workload;
  - The need for office or team cover, and;
  - Whether other staff have or are likely to ask for the same time off (e.g. a popular holiday time);
  - Seasonal pressures on that particular service;
- 7.3 The line manager and/or Assistant Town Clerk & RFO will balance the employee's needs against the needs of other staff before agreeing to leave. If an employee takes leave without such permission, it will be treated as an unauthorised absence and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 7.4 Requests for longer periods of leave (i.e. more than two weeks) will need to be approved by the line manager in association with the Assistant Town Clerk & RFO, and Town Clerk. This will be to ensure adequate cover can be provided for the role or service area during that time. Detail on the reason for the longer period of leave will need to be presented.

## **8.0 Sickness during leave**

- 8.1 If an employee becomes ill during a period of paid annual leave, they must comply with the requirements of the sickness reporting and certification procedure if they wish to have this sickness period discounted from the period of paid leave taken. As per the Town Council's 'Management of Sickness Absence Policy' it is important that the employee contacts their line manager, on the first day of sickness and keeps the council up to date during the period of sickness.

## **9.0 Payment in lieu (in the case of leaving the council)**

- 9.1 The council cannot offer payment in lieu of leave entitlement unless the employee is leaving the council and has not taken leave entitlement that they had accrued at the time of leaving.
- 9.2 If an employee leaves during the course of a leave year, and cannot take any outstanding accrued leave before their last day, they will receive a payment in lieu of any outstanding accrued leave. In these circumstances, a calculation will be made, of the amount of paid leave due to them on a pro rata basis, for that part of the leave year up to the date of termination of the contract.
- 9.3 Holiday pay will be based on their current rate of pay including any regular overtime. If, however, they have taken more paid leave than is due by this calculation, then a deduction will be made from the employee's salary payments for an amount at their basic daily rate for the days in question. Such a deduction will be deemed to be a contractually authorised deduction.

**Please note, this is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.**

**Date of policy:** March 2025

**Approving committee:** General Purposes Committee/Full Council

**Date of committee meeting:** 17 March 2025/7 April 2025

**Policy version reference:** Version 1

**Policy effective from:** 1 April 2025

**Date for next review:** 1 April 2026

## **Appendix A (Guidance for managers)**

### 1.0 Annual leave entitlement

The statutory minimum leave entitlement for full-time workers is 5.6 weeks (20 days in addition to 8 Bank Holidays). This should be pro-rata for part-time workers. For example, if an employee works three full days a week, their entitlement will be 3/5ths of the full-time entitlement (i.e. 12 days leave in addition to 4.8 days Bank Holidays).

### 2.0 Public and extra statutory Holidays

Employees required to work on a public or extra statutory holiday shall, in addition to the normal pay for that day, be paid at plain time rate for all hours worked within their normal working hours for that day. In addition, at a later date, time off with pay shall be allowed as follows:

- Time worked less than half the normal working hours on that day — half day
- Time worked more than half the normal Working hours on that day — full day

### 3.0 Carrying over leave

It is important that staff take their statutory annual leave in order to ensure the council complies with working time legislation. The council has a responsibility to support staff to take their annual leave. If the council offers leave entitlement in excess of the statutory minimum, you may wish to allow staff to carry over unused entitlement from one year to the next. In this case, Uckfield Town Council works to the following procedure:

*“Where it has not been possible to take all your leave in the current leave year, and only with prior consent from the clerk (or the council in the case of the clerk), you will be permitted to carry forward up to 5 days leave (one week’s equivalent). This must be taken within the first two months of the new leave year.”*

### 4.0 Rolled-up holiday pay

It is not permissible to "roll-up" holiday pay into basic pay, i.e. pay an employee a higher hourly, daily or weekly wage, part of which is designated as holiday pay, with the result that, when the employee goes on leave, they receive no pay.

### 5.0 None normal working hours

Some employees may not have normal working hours. For example, if the amount of work fluctuates from week to week.

In these circumstances, the amount payable during statutory annual leave must be calculated as an average of the employee's actual pay during the 52 weeks that preceded the start of the leave period. This would exclude any weeks the employee has not worked. If, during the preceding 52 weeks, there was one or more weeks during which the employee did not work (and hence received no pay). That week must be discounted and an earlier week counted instead (limited to a maximum reference period of 2 years).

For those not working all year round (casual/term-time/seasonal), recent case law has concluded that the holiday entitlement should be calculated based on the minimum 5.6 weeks statutory entitlement. A week is based on average hours



worked over a 52-week period prior to the leave, and the entitlement will be 5.6 weeks holiday based the average week.

Additional guidance and example scenarios are available at <https://www.gov.uk/holiday-entitlement-rights/holiday-pay-the-basics>

### 6.0 Religious festivals

Please note, refusal of annual leave on a day that has religious significance for a particular employee may amount to indirect discrimination under legislation.

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 7 April 2025**

### **Agenda Item No. 10.0**

#### **TO CONSIDER LEGAL ADVICE ON THE VILLAGE GREEN STATUS OF RIDGEWOOD RECREATION GROUND**

##### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Ridgewood Recreation Ground is located in the south of Uckfield. In recent months and years, there has been approval of a number of developments on open space surrounding Ridgewood Village:
- (i) Land at Eastbourne Road (90 homes);
  - (ii) Ridgewood Farm, Lewes Road (1<sup>st</sup> phase built 250 homes, followed by 750);
  - (iii) Ridgewood House, Lewes Road (9 homes);
  - (iv) Siggs Farm, Lewes Road (9 homes);
  - (v) Land south of Springfield, Lewes Road (9 homes);
  - (vi) Horsted Pond Farm, Lewes Road (340 homes);

There are also further sites allocated within the draft Wealden Local Plan, which will be accessed via Lewes Road such as Ridgewood Manor.

- 1.2 The scale of development is therefore enormous, on what is currently a village feel. We are acutely aware that Ridgewood Recreation Ground is an important open space, and currently holds a small play area, a mixed used games area (Muga), it sits adjacent to Ridgewood Village Hall, has car parking, and recent trees planted as part of a community orchard scheme adjacent to the Ridgewood allotment site. It is also the main point of access for walkers into the Millennium Green. As well as providing the walk through to facilities from Millennium Green once the Horsted Pond Farm site has been built out.
- 1.3 The Town Council is keen to retain this as an important green space, but at the same time, some flexibility will be required to improve existing assets to meet the growth in population in this part of the town. For example, the car park may need expanding, the village hall may need extending. The Town Council may wish to consider improving the footpaths, for increased footfall, and there may be interest in installing or creating further leisure facilities on the recreation ground to entertain passing walkers on their route into town.
- 1.4 At present the majority of the recreation ground is registered with 'Village Green status.' See attached appendices A and B.
- 1.5 The Town Clerk has approached the Town Council's Solicitors to seek advice and understand the options for the recreation ground, now and in the future.
- 1.6 This report therefore provides an update on that advice, and requests the views of members, on how the Clerk should proceed.

## **2.0 Legal advice on 'Village Green' Status**

2.1 *"The coding on the registration signifies that it is for a village green. Under s16 of the Commons Act 2006, the freehold owner of a village green may apply to the Secretary of State for a parcel of land to be released from registration.*

*You have said that the Village Hall is owned by Uckfield Town Council and is in a full repairing lease agreement to the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee. The application would need to be made by the Town Council as the freehold owner of the land and must be appropriately signed/ sealed by the dual authorised persons. All interested parties would be required to enter into the application as well. This will include relevant highway authorities if the land is crossed by highway, bridleway, public footpaths etc. It is likely that Ridgewood Village Hall Committee would also need to be included in the application as the charity has a relevant interest.*

*If the released land is more than 200 square meters **you are required** to make an application to register replacement land in its place. If it is smaller, there is no obligation to do this, but there will be a much greater chance of success if you do because the Secretary of State has a policy of avoiding net loss to village greens. Whatever you decide will need to be clearly described in the application and remember that all those with an interest in the replacement land will also need to be included in the application, together with copies of the registration and other relevant documents.*

*I appreciate that ideally you would like to reduce the registered land rather than remove it entirely. You may need to remove it entirely then offer back as it were, the reduced space that you would like to continue as VG registered land. The Town Council may also consider offering an additional piece of land if available as well, which might help boost local support during the pre-application consultation which you must hold. You should ensure that all responses gathered during the consultation are recorded including information on which responses were followed up and why and which were not.*

*Do take care with how the released and replacement land is described in the application because exactly that wording is used to advertise and inform about your proposals.*

*There is a non-returnable fee to apply to de-register land of £4,900 payable on application unless the relevant land was originally enclosed under the Inclosure Act of 1845. I don't think this is relevant here, but no fee is payable for de-registration of that land, so it is worth checking. There is no guarantee of success.*

*One slight concern I have is that the legislation indicates that replacement land cannot already be registered, which would be the case if you offer back the remainder of the Ridgewood Recreation Ground, so I would definitely raise that in the application process.*

*I have attached the link to the relevant form which you will submit to the Planning Inspectorate, which I hope provides further assistance regarding this process:*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-form-to-deregister-common-land-or-village-greens/notes-on-completing-an-application-to-deregister-or-to-deregister-and-exchange-common-land-or-town-or-village-greens#:~:text=A%20non%2Drefundable%20fee%20of,details%20are%20available%20on%20request>*

**3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the legal advice, and advise the Town Clerk of how they wish to proceed.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

See Overleaf  
for Notes**Register of Town or Village Greens**

LAND SECTION – Sheet No. 1

1 No. and date of entry	2 Description of the land, reference to the register map, registration particulars etc.
1 27 Feb 1970	The piece of land known as the Recreation Ground, New Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield in the Parish of Uckfield, as marked with a green verge line inside the boundary on sheet TQ41NE of the register map and distinguished by the number of this register unit. Registered pursuant to application No.1056 made 19 December 1969 by the Uckfield Parish Council (Clerk A V Eade Esq., Town Hall Chambers, Uckfield, Sussex). ( <del>Registration provisional</del> )
2 8 Aug 1972	The registration at entry No.1 above, being undisputed, became final on 1 August 1972.

No. and date of note	Notes	No. and date of note	Notes
1 12 Mar 1973	The area of the land comprised in this register unit is 1.6 hectares.		

Note: This section contains the registration of every right of common registered under the Act as exercisable over the whole or any part of the land described in the land section of this register unit.

See Overleaf  
for Notes

# Register of Town or Village Greens

RIGHTS SECTION – Sheet No. 1

1 No. and date of entry	2 No. and date of application	3 Name and Address of every applicant for registration, and the capacity in which he applied	4 Particulars of the right of common, and of the land over which it is exercisable	5 Particulars of the land (if any) to which the right is attached

No. and date of note	Notes	No. and date of note	Notes



COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965

**Register of Town or Village Greens**

OWNERSHIP SECTION – Sheet No. 1

NOTE: This section contains the registration of every person registered under the Act as owner of any of the land described in the land section of this register unit. It does not contain any registration in respect of land of which the freehold is registered under the Land Registration Acts 1925 and 1936, but the absence from this section of a registration in respect of any land described in the land section does not necessarily indicate that the freehold of that land is registered under those Acts.

Registration authority  
**East Sussex County Council**

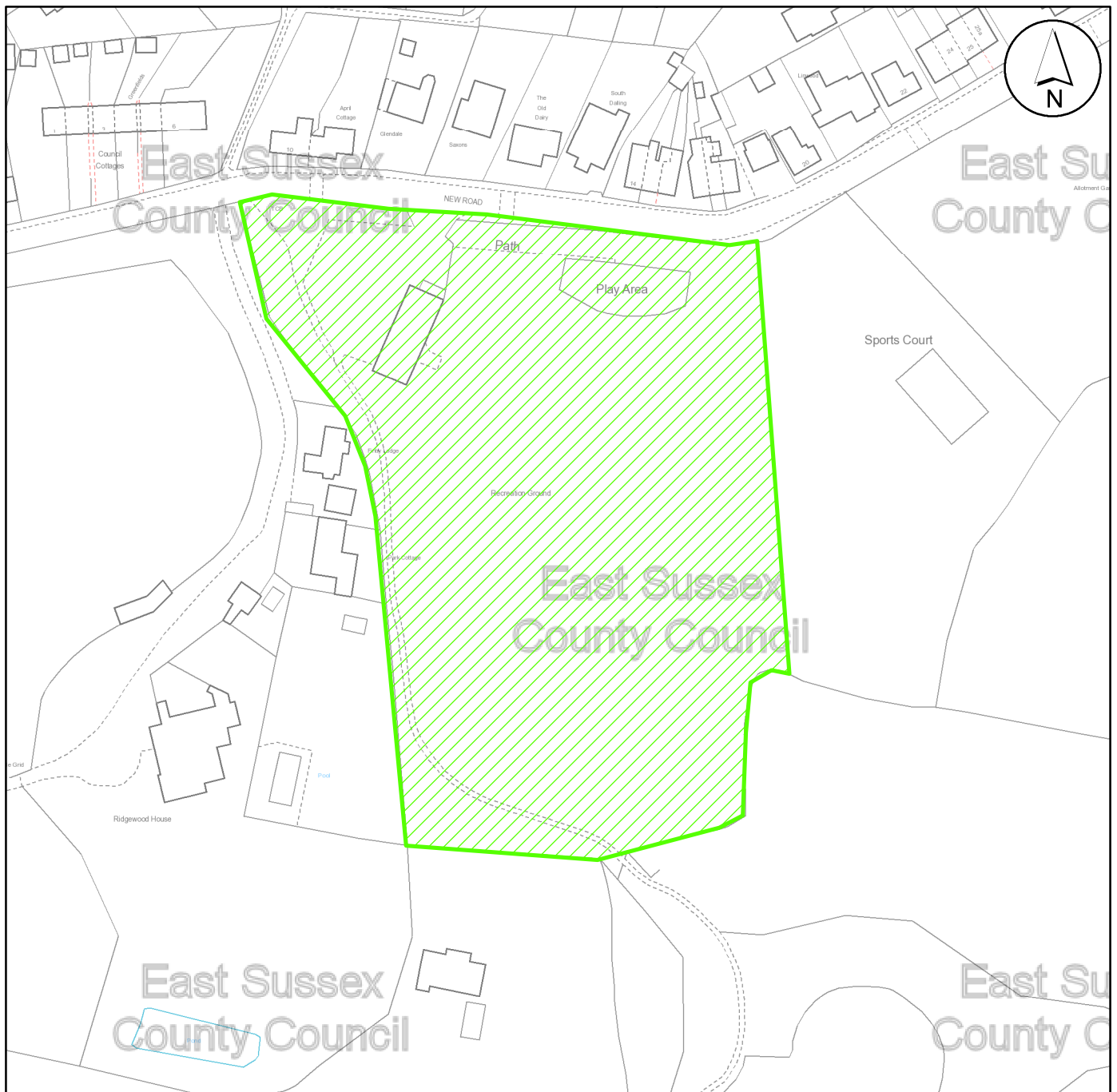
Register unit No. VG 53

Edition No. 1

See Overleaf for Notes
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1 No. and date of entry	2 No. and date of application	3 Name and Address of person registered as owner	4 Particulars of the land to which the registration applies
1 24 Oct 1979		Uckfield Town Council (see note No.1 overleaf) (see note No.2 overleaf) (see note No.3 overleaf)	The whole of the land comprised in this register unit.


No. and date of note	Notes	No. and date of note	Notes
1 24 Oct 1979	The registration of ownership at entry No.1 overleaf was made in pursuance of Section 8(2) of the Act by the Direction of the Chief Commons Commissioner dated 28 June 1979 under reference 37/U/90.		
2 12 April 2007	The ownership registration at entry No.1 overleaf of the part of the land hatched blue on the register map has been deleted under Section 12 of the Act, the land to which it applied having been registered under the Land Registration Acts 1925 to 2002.		
3 21 Sep 2009	The ownership registration at entry No.1 overleaf of the part of the land cross-hatched blue on the register map has been deleted under Section 12 of the Act, the land to which it applied having been registered under the Land Registration Acts 1925 to 2002.		




**Search Address box:**

Search of Common Land/  
Village Green status in  
Uckfield,  
East Sussex

This plan is a representation of the original Common Land and Town & Village Green maps held by the County Council and does not preclude a future claim of a Town or Village Green under the Commons Act 2006.

Key:  Village Green Unit Number **VG53**

East Sussex County Council  
County Hall  
St Annes Crescent  
Lewes



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Date: **Oct 2024**

Scale: **1:1,500**

Author: **AT**

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 7 April 2025**

### **Agenda Item No. 11.0**

#### **TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR D. BENNETT RELATING TO THE TRACKBED OF THE UCKFIELD TO LEWES RAILWAY LINE**

##### **1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report sets out a motion submitted by Councillor Bennett in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

##### **2.0 The motion for consideration**

2.1 Councillor Bennett gave written notice of the following motion which was received on 21 February 2025 and before the required deadline:-

2.2 *"The Uckfield to Lewes railway line closed in 1969.*

*Since that time, there has been an active campaign to reinstate a link which many people regard as one which should never have been lost.*

*To ensure that the possibility of reopening the line remains both possible and viable, local planning authorities have upheld a strict Track Protection Policy, to safeguard the route from ingress by development which would add complexity in any case for reinstatement.*

*Recently, proposals have been mooted which have caused us to fear that the trackbed protection policy may not be regarded with the level of security that we have traditionally regarded as sacrosanct.*

*It has always been regarded that the safeguarding of the route would involve the protection of the whole existing trackbed, i.e. the width of the existing double track alignment, from "fence to fence".*

*Our Town Council has very long-standing policies to support the reinstatement of our railway link and I would ask that we reinforce these policies with one which provides security of the route by making it our policy for Uckfield Town Council to ensure that we are committed to support the protection of the whole width of the alignment for future reinstatement for railway use without hindrance or obstacle, however that may be proposed.*

*This railway reinstatement is now even more vital, given the Office of National Statistics recent published figures which state:*

2.2.1 - Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census, the population in East Sussex is approximately 546,000, an increase of over 19,000 people (3.6%) since 2011, with population increases in each of its boroughs and districts ([East Sussex in Figures](#) - population by age and sex, 2001-2021, districts, census 2021). The population is set to increase to 628,000 by 2035 (an increase of 15% ([East Sussex in Figures](#) - Population projections by age and sex (dwelling led), 2020-2035 - districts)). All borough and districts are also expected to continue to experience population growth:

- Wealden is expected to see the greatest increase in population at 22% with an additional 43,600 people;
- Eastbourne is expected to see the smallest increase at 4% with an additional 4,100 people;
- Hastings is expected to have 5,000 more residents (+5.4%), Lewes 11,200 (+11%) and Rother 12,100 (+12.5%);

2.2.2 This population growth increases the need for housing, accessible transport, jobs, healthcare, education and learning provision in addition to the creation of places where people are proud to live, work and visit.

*If we are to receive such unprecedented growth in population, it is absolutely essential that we ensure that we safeguard and champion the prospect of suitable public transport that is capable of supporting it.*

*I would therefore propose:*

*Uckfield Town Council calls upon Wealden District and Lewes District Council's Planning Departments (and any such authority which may take responsibility for planning in the future) to ensure that the standing Track Protection Policy safeguards the totality of the route of the Uckfield to Lewes railway, ensuring that no development, obstacle or hindrance, however that may be proposed, is allowed upon the area within the fence to fence width of the alignment.*

*This policy reinforces Uckfield Town Council's long-standing policies to support the reinstatement of the Lewes to Uckfield Railway as soon as possible.*

*I humbly submit this proposal for consideration and hope that colleagues will support."*

Cllr Duncan Bennett (New Town Ward)

Also Chair of the Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee (AGM).

2.3 For the purpose of members' reference, the Town Council's Strategic Plan seeks to support the electrification of the railway line, the reinstatement of the railway line between Uckfield and Lewes, and reinstatement of a link between Uckfield/Lewes/Brighton and Tunbridge Wells stations:  
<https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/your-council/plans-and-budgets/>

### **3.0 Recommendations**

3.1 Members are asked to consider the motion and advise the Clerk of how they wish to proceed.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

## Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 7 April 2025

### Agenda Item No. 12.0

## TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S VIEW ON THE SUSSEX AND BRIGHTON DEVOLUTION CONSULTATION

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In December 2024, the UK Government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#). This set out plans to move power out of Westminster and back to local communities, ensuring that every part of England would be covered by devolution. The local council leaders from East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton and Hove City Council expressed their interest in taking forward devolution within their area through the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority, with the first election for a Mayor taking place in May 2026.
- 1.2 It was then announced on 5 February 2025, that Sussex & Brighton would form one of the six areas of the devolution priority programme.
- 1.3 Before taking a decision on whether to proceed with the making of the necessary legislation, the UK Government are seeking views from interested parties, including those who live and work in the area.
- 1.4 The consultation seeks views, particularly from interested parties, including those who live and work across Sussex and Brighton, on the effect of establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority in the area. It includes questions on the proposed geography and how the Combined County Authority will make decisions, together with questions on the effects of working across this geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority.



- 1.5 The deadline for consultation responses falls at 11.59pm on Sunday 13 April 2025.
- 1.6 Members are encouraged to respond individually if they haven't already, more so as local residents.
- 1.7 In the meantime, members are asked as to whether they wish to provide a formal response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council:
- 1.8 A copy of the questions within the consultation are attached in appendix A, for consideration in advance of the meeting:  
[Sussex and Brighton devolution - GOV.UK](#)

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider whether they wish to provide a corporate response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council, and if so, provide the Town Clerk with the relevant responses.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

## 5. Consultation questions

Having considered all of the above, please respond to the following questions. For each question, you can provide the following answers:

- Strongly agree.
- Agree.
- Neither agree nor disagree.
- Disagree.
- Strongly disagree.
- Don't know.
- Prefer not to say.

You will also be invited to explain your answers.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the proposed geography will deliver benefits to the area?

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the economy of the area?

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve social outcomes in the area?

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve local government services in the area?

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve the local natural environment and overall national environment?

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities?



## Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 7 April 2025

### Agenda item 13.0

#### **TO NOTE THE END OF YEAR PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a review at the end of the financial year for the Town Council's priorities for 2024/25.
- 1.2 The priorities identified for delivery in 2024/25 consisted of initiatives which were often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but demonstrated that by working together with colleagues and partner agencies, we can achieve a great deal for the town and its residents.
- 1.3 Organisations often spend time producing plans or lists of priorities, but do not review progress until the end of the year. With this paper, the Town Clerk provides an update to members to explain the progress being made to deliver these priorities.

##### **2.0 End of Year Progress Update (2024/25)**





- 2.1 Of the 12 priorities, seven priorities are completed, three priorities have progressed well, but still ongoing, and two priorities are slightly behind schedule.

##### **3.0 Recommendations**




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




Appendices: Appendix A: End of Year Progress Update 2024/25  
Contact Officer: Holly Goring




##### **Key:**




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

## APPENDIX A: End of Year Progress Update 2024/25

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<b>COMMUNITY GRANTS</b> We will award up to £52,000 of community grant funding to local groups and charitable organisations for the period 2024/25 (£25,000 to community groups, and £27,000 through service level agreements)		All payments were made with first instalments paid in May 2024, and second instalments for the larger grants in October 2024.	General Purposes Committee	Assistant Town Clerk & RFO
<b>UPGRADING PLAY AREA FACILITIES</b> We will undertake a full upgrade of Victoria Play Area, and seek to replace pieces of equipment that have reached end of life in Hempstead Recreation Ground and Oakwood Drive play area.		<p>A number of play area companies reviewed the existing site of Victoria Play Area, and provided initial ideas for designs and indicative costings mid-year. A survey was published in March 2025 to obtain the views of members of the public on what they'd like to see in the new upgrade. A total of 211 responses were received. The results of which will be reported to E&amp;L Committee on 14 April 2025.</p> <p>The tender process is now underway to obtain formal designs from play area companies, and the tenders will be opened on 19 May 2025 prior to Full Council. The top 3-4 play area companies will be required to attend a public open morning on Saturday 31 May 2025, to display their designs and seek further input from local residents.</p> <p>The project is making progress and will be delivered in 2025/26.</p>	Environment & Leisure Committee	Estates & Facilities Manager
<b>PUBLIC EVENTS AND ANNIVERSARIES IN THE TOWN</b> We will work alongside the local business community and local community groups to deliver two free public events within the town; D-Day Anniversary Beacon Lighting and Weald on the Field		<p>Both events were completed and were a great success through the provision of excellent entertainment, local traders supplying food/refreshments, and of course teamwork from councillors and staff!</p> <p>The weather was on our side, and the events were delivered in the region of the budget allocated.</p>	Full Council	Town Clerk

Priority	Status	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<p><b>FESTIVE LIGHTS</b> Work with the Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses to review the festive lighting for the town centre, in preparation for Christmas 2024</p>		<p>Despite working with East Sussex Highways and the contractor through the year, we still experienced issues prior to installation and during the festive period, which resulted in complaints on social media. We lost two lamp columns due to road collisions. The overhead at the upper section of the High Street should not have been installed by the contractors, as we were aware of the issues of power supply as a result of property ownership changes, and East Sussex Highways had to be called out after installation to address connections for 3-4 motifs. Although these were then working, the storms over the Christmas period further affected two overheads and two lamp column motifs failed and these were unable to be fixed before switch off on 6 January. This was very disappointing. The Town Council will be re-tendering for the contract for 2025 onwards, and will be consulting residents on what they wish to see in the town. Additional funding has also been incorporated into the budget for 2025/26.</p>	<p>General Purposes Committee</p>	<p>Estates &amp; Facilities Manager</p>
<p><b>PROTECTING NATURAL HABITATS</b> We will place greater focus on wildlife monitoring in both our ancient woodlands and local nature reserves, and separate areas from the public to preserve the flora and fauna and protect key species</p>		<p>Equipment was purchased to start undertaking wildlife monitoring in our woodlands and nature reserves.</p> <p>We have been exploring opportunities to obtain grant funding with the support of a local agency to support our woodland management.</p> <p>Siltex has been purchased for Harlands Pond, and a bulb planting day took place in February.</p> <p>Quotes have also been obtained and funding set aside in the budget for 2025/26 for wildlife appraisals to be completed and associated monitoring such as dormouse surveys.</p>	<p>Environment &amp; Leisure Committee</p>	<p>Estates &amp; Facilities Manager</p>
<p><b>WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN</b> We will undertake the third year of works within our Woodland Management Plan, to address ash dieback. We will re-plant trees and restock areas of our woodlands where trees have been removed and disease has had an impact.</p>		<p>These works have been underway since November. Much of the works undertaken this winter were undertaken by qualified Grounds staff, in addition to tree surgery companies for more substantial works. This approach has ensured greater care of the surrounding woodland, and access points into the woodlands. This formed year 3 of a planned programme of ash dieback works. Contractors will remove the processable timber carefully in the summer months once the wood has dried out.</p> <p>In the meantime, a grant application to Wealden DC was successful for community orchard tree planting, and this funded the planting of trees. Planting was completed in March 2025 with local residents, with orchards planted at Ridgewood Recreation Ground, New Barn, and West Park. We have also funded a rolling programme of tree surveying and monitoring.</p>	<p>Environment &amp; Leisure Committee</p>	<p>Estates &amp; Facilities Manager</p>

Priority	Stat us	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<p><b>GRASS VERGE CUTTING</b> We will continue to contribute to the costs of East Sussex County Council's grass verge cutting contract to retain a good standard of service and ensure visibility is maintained on pavements and highways.</p>		<p>The payment was made to East Sussex County Council for 2024/25 to maintain existing service standards and frequency of cuts to the town's grass verges. <i>(Urban verges used to receive 5-6 cuts per annum but East Sussex County Council can now only afford to fund two. Rural verges receive two cuts per annum).</i></p>	<p>Environment and Leisure Committee</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>
<p><b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b> We will host an educational activity with primary schools, consider alternative fuel supplies in our wider building portfolio, explore additional insulation within our buildings, review the equipment we purchase, use local suppliers, and manage our land for nature with a continued focus on conservation and tree planting.</p>		<p>A new air source heating system was installed at the rear of Foresters Hall, and an all-electric system for heating/water in Foresters Chapel, in place of gas.</p> <p>Improvements have been undertaken to lighting to replace with LED whilst undertaking emergency lighting upgrades.</p> <p>Tree saplings alongside community orchards have been planted with assistance from Wealden District Council.</p> <p>The Climate Change Steering Group hosted a Green Fashion Show in February, and have scheduled in further events for 2025 including an Eco EXPO.</p>	<p>Environment and Leisure Committee</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>
<p><b>IMPROVEMENTS TO TOWN COUNCIL BUILDINGS</b> We will continue to improve the standard of our buildings and ensure efficient use of utilities and the health and safety of our service users, staff and leaseholders. This will include LED lighting and compliance works, and new tables and table racks for the Civic Centre. Works will also commence to</p>		<p>Electrical Installation Condition reports have been completed for all buildings, including the majority of remedial works. Improvements have been undertaken to emergency lighting within the Civic Centre, and improvements to lighting within Foresters Hall, and Victoria Pavilion. Research has been undertaken to identify the right tables for hirers/bookings in the Civic Centre. These will be purchased in 2025/26, due to other priorities taking precedent.</p> <p>The Caretaker reconfiguration works were completed and has received Building Control sign off. This enabled us to provide more security and privacy to Town Council IT, equipment, and the Civic Centre, and Town Centre CCTV systems. It also created a new meeting space, for hire.</p> <p>A fully upgraded, and new plumbing and heating system was installed at Victoria Pavilion. The air source heating system was installed at the rear of Foresters Hall, and the gas heaters</p>	<p>Full Council</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>

<p>the Signal Box, to enable this to be returned to use.</p>		<p>removed from Foresters Chapel and replaced with electric heaters supplying heat and hot water. Safety was also improved, with the installation of TMVs to avoid scalding risk. A feasibility study has been undertaken for the Signal Box, and the Estates &amp; Facilities Manager has been working with a local commercial enterprise, to review options for refurbishing the building for use. New fire doors have been installed in Foresters Hall, Victoria Pavilion and West Park Pavilion in February and March 2025.</p>		
Priority	Stat us	Notes	Lead Committee	Lead Officer
<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING</b> We will work with local partner agencies, residents and local businesses to understand the infrastructure requirements for Uckfield, in regards to sport, leisure and recreation and community facilities and the future impact on the Town Council's provision of allotment and cemetery space.</p>		<p>A residents' survey was circulated in November/December 2024 which included questions on resident's desires for sport, leisure and recreational facilities in Uckfield, in addition to what they prioritise from Town Council services. This has informed the Town Council's Strategic Plan, budget setting and through further workshops identified the key priorities for land owned by the Town Council.  The Town Clerk has met with key stakeholders, and the Chairs of the Town Council's committees have also met to confirm the priorities from the list of work required.</p>	Full Council	Town Clerk
<p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b> We will support the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Uckfield Neighbourhood Plan ready for submission to the local Planning authority.</p>		<p>The above documentation has assisted with the updating of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The documents are currently being updated in line with the above, the draft Wealden Local Plan, the Town Council's Strategic Plan for 2025-30, 2021 Census data. It is planned to submit the initial draft to Wealden DC for review mid-April 2025.</p>	Full Council	Town Clerk
<p><b>POLICY REVIEW</b> We will be undertaking a full review of the Town Council's policies in respect of personnel (staffing matters), GDPR and respect in the workplace.</p>		<p>A scheme of delegation has been adopted, the pension policy approved by General Purposes Committee and ready for ratification by Full Council. Further reviews are in the process of being undertaken of the Town Council's HR policies – annual leave, sickness absence, annual investment and risk management.</p>	General Purposes	Assistant Town Clerk/Town Clerk

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

### **Monday 7 April 2025**

#### **Agenda Item 15.0**

#### **TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The report sets out the engagements of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor between 14 January and 7 April 2025.
- 1.2 Please note that Councillor K. Bedwell was elected as Mayor and Councillor S. Mayhew elected as Deputy Mayor on 20 May 2024.

#### **TOWN MAYOR**

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|----------|--|
| 23.01.25 | Chamber of Commerce Meeting re launch of 'People to People' Project. East Sussex National, Uckfield. |
| 29.01.25 | Afternoon Tea Celebration of Life. Temple Grove Care Home, Herons Ghyll.                             |
| 31.01.25 | Ashdown Radio interview, Uckfield.   |
| 05.02.25 | Funeral of Velda Reed with Town Clerk. Wealden Crematorium, Horam.                                   |
| 17.02.25 | Visit to Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare. Ringmer   |
| 21.02.25 | Visit to Uckfield Foodbank with MP Mims Davies. The Source, Uckfield.                                |
| 21.02.25 | Judging at Green Shoots Upcycle Fashion Show. Civic Centre, Uckfield.                                |
| 22.02.25 | Planting of spring bulbs. Harlands Pond, Uckfield.   |
| 25.02.25 | Ashdown Radio interview. Uckfield.   |
| 04.03.25 | Meeting with Cllr. Kelvin Williams to discuss infrastructure in Uckfield. Civic Centre, Uckfield.    |
| 12.03.25 | Visit to St Wilfred's Hospice Awareness Day. Civic Centre, Uckfield.                                 |
| 14.03.25 | Visit the 'Chatty Café' - Holy Cross Church, Uckfield.   |
| 16.03.25 | 56 <sup>th</sup> Charter Anniversary Luncheon and delivered speech. Wellshurst Golf Club, Hellingly. |
| 17.03.25 | Meet the team and volunteers of Wealden Citizens Advice. Library, Uckfield.                          |
| 27.03.25 | Uckfield Chamber of Commerce AGM. Civic Centre, Uckfield.  |
| 03.04.25 | Wealden Volunteering Network Lunch. Victoria Pavilion, Uckfield.                                     |
| 05.04.25 | Guest of Uckfield Rugby Club at pre-match meal. Uckfield Rugby Club, Uckfield.                       |
| 05.04.25 | Guest at Uckfield Singers Spring Concert. Civic Centre, Uckfield                                     |

#### **TO NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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| 23.01.25 | Deanery of Uckfield Celebration Service. Holy Cross Church, Uckfield. |
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