

Public Document Pack

UTTLESFORD YOUTH COUNCIL held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 4 JULY 2018 at 5.30 pm

Present: Councillor M Wolter (Chairman)
Councillors T Birkbeck, R Davey and O Woor.

Officers in attendance: R Dobson (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager),
B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer) and J Starr (Community Officer).

Also present: District Councillors P Fairhurst and B Light; P Kempster and S Rabczak.

YC25 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors H Briffa, J Fairhurst, A McHugh, E Reid, J Reid and District Councillor Lemon.

The Democratic Services Officer said the Youth Council was not quorate and therefore no resolutions could be passed at the meeting.

YC26 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

Members deferred approval of the minutes until the next quorate meeting.

YC27 **NATIONAL DEMOCRACY WEEK**

The Democratic and Electoral Manager explained the electoral registration process for potential electors aged sixteen or seventeen. Throughout the presentation she stressed the importance of registering to vote; if potential electors had not registered before an election, they would be unable to exercise their right to vote on polling day.

She said sixteen or seventeen year olds could register in a variety of ways but the most straightforward method was to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. She added that a National Insurance number would be required.

Members agreed in principle that it would be helpful if the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager visited schools to talk about the importance and practicalities of electoral registration.

The Community Officer said this could be progressed as a joint initiative between the Youth Council and Electoral Services, particularly if scheduled during the Youth Council's election period in September or October. He said it would be a good time to promote democracy in a general sense.

Councillor Birkbeck said young people were not interested in 'National Democracy Week' but they were interested in democracy. Schools were continuously informing pupils of the importance of democracy, but this was not enough to create sufficient enthusiasm or engagement with young people. He said holding a mock referendum on a relevant and pressing issue, such as abortion, would be a good way to generate youth engagement with democracy.

The Chairman said a Democracy working group would be established at the next quorate meeting to help take this issue forward.

YC28 **YOUTH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

As the meeting was not quorate, the Chairman deferred the decisions on changing the constitution and co-opting new members until the next meeting. She said the items would be on the next agenda.

Councillor Birkbeck asked for the amended constitution to be included with the minutes of this meeting (please see attached).

Members said they were happy to speak at Council and requested a Youth Council item on the next possible Full Council agenda.

YC29 **PROPOSED PLANNING SEMINAR**

Members discussed the proposed planning/housing seminar. There was general agreement that young people were interested in the issues of planning and housing, and they should contribute to the Local Plan in Uttlesford.

The Community Officer said the seminar needed to be arranged before the Uttlesford Local Plan consultation period ended in September, to ensure young people in the District contributed towards their views to the consultation process.

Councillor Birkbeck said those invited to address the seminar should display a range of views on planning issues, including local groups and officers at the council, so the young people whom attended were truly well informed.

Councillor Fairhurst said the Assistant Director – Planning should arrange a consultation with the Youth Council and requested officers to contact him.

The Community Officer said a realistic date for the seminar was likely to be in early September, but he would keep Members informed.

YC30 **WORKING GROUPS**

Members discussed the following Working Groups

- Plastics – Councillor Birkbeck requested that Plastics was placed as an item on the next agenda.

- Elections - Councillor Birkbeck tabled a draft resolution, which included a motion to adopt proposed election guidelines in the constitution (resolution and guideline documents attached). As the meeting was not quorate, a binding resolution could not be made. Members discussed the prospect of holding a virtual meeting by using social media or voting buttons via email.
- Communications – The Chairman and Councillor Birkbeck had arranged to meet a journalist at the Saffron Walden Reporter to help raise the profile of the Youth Council and increase participation before the scheduled elections in September.

The Community Officer said the Youth Council had now a formal Council email address and he would circulate details following the meeting.

YC31 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)**

- 11th September at 5.30pm
- 7th November at 5.30pm
- 9th January at 5.30pm
- 7th March at 5.30pm

The meeting ended at 7.00pm

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This is an amended document and not the actual constitution. Highlighted objects have been changed.

Constitution of the Uttlesford Youth Council

Objectives

The Uttlesford Youth Council exists to give the young people of Uttlesford a voice in the affairs of the Uttlesford District Council (UDC). It endeavours to represent specifically the views of young people, especially on those issues in which they have particular interest.

The Youth Council will be recognised in the Constitution of the District Council, and its members will be invited to attend meetings of the Full Council and will be offered a suitable speaking slot to voice matters of concern to young people up to twice annually, and also exceptionally, by prior arrangement with the Democratic Services of the District Council.

The Youth Council will engage with the District Council on any matters of concern and the District Council will in turn undertake to provide a response within ten working days of the matter first being raised.

Electing councillors

Eligibility

Candidates for the Youth Council must

- (a) be aged at least 13 on the 31st of August in the calendar year in which the elections for which they are standing are held, and no older than 19 when they stand for election, and
- (b) be either
 - (i) living or working in the district, or
 - (ii) attending school, college, or sixth form in the district.

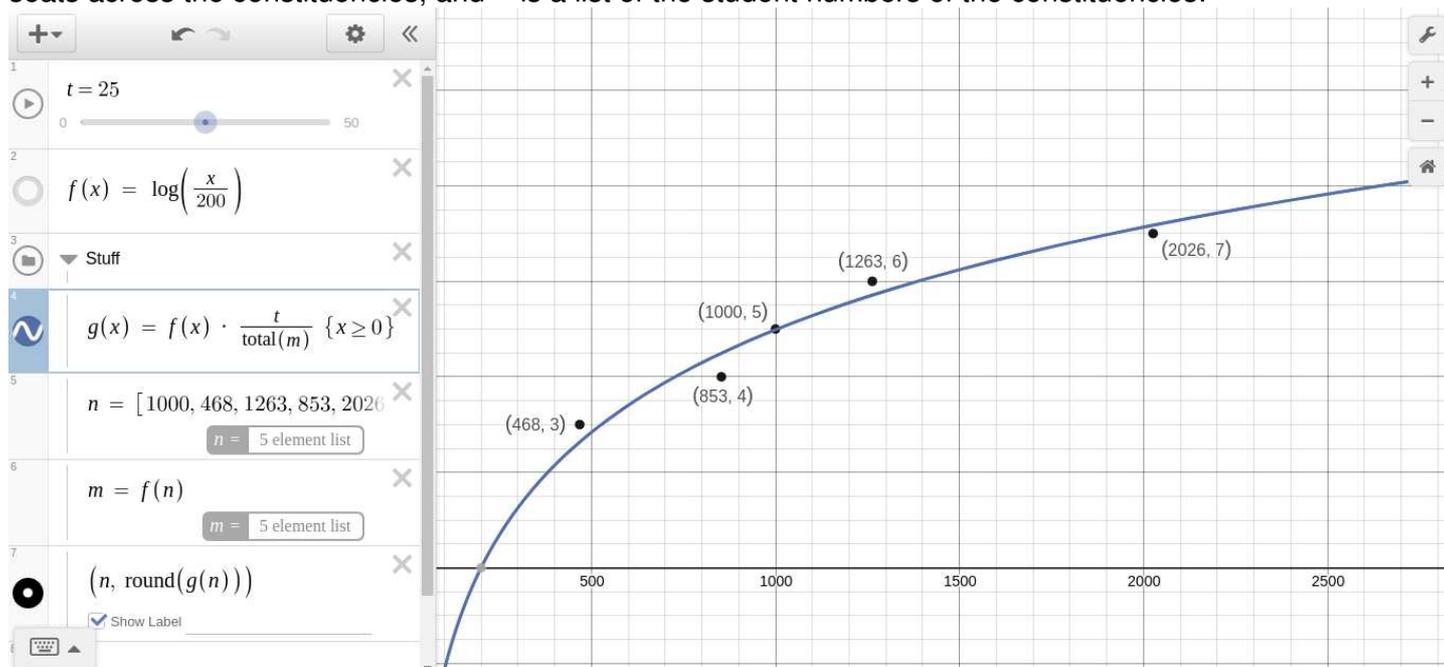
There is no limit on the number of terms that a councillor may serve, nor any restrictions on standing consecutively.

Election pools (constituencies)

A number of seats on the council be available for each secondary school, college, and sixth form in the district, with weightings based upon their sizes thus:

| Constituency | Number of students (201601) | Number of seats |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Felsted School | ~ 1,000 | 5 |
| Forest Hall School | 468 | 3 |
| Helena Romanes School and Sixth Form Centre | 1,263 | 6 |
| Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport | 853 | 4 |
| Saffron Walden County High School | 2,026 | 7 |
| Residents not attending school in the district | - | 3 |
| | Total: | 28 |

The number of seats for each constituency is calculated according to this graph, where t is the total number of seats across the constituencies, and n is a list of the student numbers of the constituencies:



In addition to the school-based seats, three seats are available for residents of the district who meet the eligibility criteria but who do not attend school, college, or sixth form in the district (see table above). Those who wish to stand for the Youth Council will be invited to apply by application. Applications will be considered by the Youth Council at the first meeting after the election and successful candidates co-opted. If the Youth Council has any vacant seats following elections or after resignations, then it may, by majority vote, co-opt an eligible member to fill each seat. Substitutes who wish to be co-opted are to be considered for the seat first, before seeking to co-opt a member who did not stand for election.

Election

Each educational institution is given the responsibility to hold its own elections. The Youth Council will offer support to the institutions to hold campaigns, promote the elections, and hold the elections with the help of the incumbent councillors for that institution. **The election guidelines and election pack created by the youth council should serve as the primary guide for institutions on how to hold their elections.**

The candidates for each constituency will be ranked in descending order of preference after voting. The number of councillors to be elected for each school will be taken from the list of candidates in descending order of votes given to each candidate (beginning with the candidate with the highest number of votes). **{{removed deputies section}}** **If a councillor cannot attend a meeting, then may choose to nominate somebody to act a substitute. The constitutional power of a substitute is nothing, they do not count toward establishing a quorate and are not given a vote without the express and signed written permission of the councillor they represent. Councillors are not obliged to send a substitute but may wish to if they know they will vote on an agenda item, or have some notices to give out.**

Any seats belonging to a councillor whose term has not expired and who is not standing down will not filled by election.

Elections shall **take place during school hours in** October or November annually, **as decided by the institution.** The terms of the councillors-elect will begin on the day of election. The duration of each term shall be **approximately two years**, ending on the day of the second election after that in which they were elected.

Each institution may decide eligibility to vote, but nobody outside of the institution without an obvious link may vote.

General principles

The Youth Council will adhere to the following principles:

- (a) Although councillors are still permitted to be a member of a political party whilst serving their term, the Youth Council itself will always be strictly non-party political, and all meetings will be conducted on that fundamental principle.
- (b) Councillors will not miss school, college, sixth form, or work to undertake any duties for the Youth Council, unless in exceptional circumstances where it has been permitted for the councillor in question by
 - (i) their school, and
 - (ii) their parent or guardian (if under 18 years of age).
 - (iii) their employer
- (c) All councillors shall endeavour constantly to remain aware of and represent the interests of their constituents.

Meetings

- (a) The Youth Council will hold a full meeting every other month, scheduled in the previous meeting to be
 - (i) during the first week of the month,
 - (ii) in a venue in Uttlesford to which either the Uttlesford District Council or the Essex Youth Services has access, and
 - (iii) from 17:30 to 19:30,unless otherwise agreed. Meetings may be held more frequently if necessitated by urgent business to be considered.
- (b) Meetings of the Youth Council are open to members of the public, district councillors and officers, by prior arrangement through contacting someone nominated by the Youth Council. Any young person whom the Youth Council represents is permitted by prior arrangement to attend an open-session forum at the beginning of the meeting and participate in discussions, but will have no vote. The Youth Council may vote to expel any person on the basis of disruptive behaviour.
- (c) Minutes will be taken at full council meetings, by a councillor confirmed for the role at the beginning of the meeting, comprising at least
 - (i) a list of all councillors present and all apologies received,
 - (ii) details of proposals made and the outcomes of votes upon them,
 - (iii) any significant contributions to discussions by a councillor, andIf a councillor is not available to fulfil this role, the District Council will provide the services of an officer (usually from the Democratic Services team) to undertake this role. Minutes will be published on the Youth Council's page of the website.
- (d) An agenda for each full council meeting will be produced and circulated with at least five full days before the meeting. The agenda will include the undermentioned standard items as well as any matters for discussion as agreed by the chairman. The standard items are:
 - (i) apologies made by councillors who cannot attend the meeting,
 - (ii) minutes of the last meeting to be signed off for accuracy,
 - (iii) any items of business specified on the agenda,
 - (iv) any other urgent business, and
 - (v) the date, time, and venue of the next meeting.

- (e) A meeting of the Youth Council will only be quorate if it comprises
 - (i) at least seven councillors, and
 - (ii) councillors representing at least three different constituencies.

Proposals

Proposals

Any councillor may make a proposal in a meeting.

The proposer may withdraw their proposal at any time before voting.

The procedure for motion to be considered is as follows:

- (a) The proposal must first be seconded.
- (b) The proposal is then opened for discussion and debate by the councillors present.
- (c) Whilst discussion is open, the proposer may agree to amend their proposal, or any councillor can propose an amendment. If either the original motion or any amendment proposed is seconded, it will be put to the vote and determined by a majority show of hands.

Majority show of hands

First those in favour of the motion will be asked to raise their hands, and then those against. Each councillor may only vote once. Any hands which are not raised will be counted as abstentions. For the motion to be passed, a simple majority of councillors who voted must vote for the motion.

If the vote is tied, a second discussion period shall ensue, followed by a second vote. If this is also tied, the person acting as chairman will have a casting vote.

A councillor is only eligible to vote if they have been present for the entire discussion of the motion.

Chairmanship

Chairman

Election

A chairman will be elected with a term of one year, in the last full meeting under the chairmanship of the incumbent chairman. Any councillor may stand for the role of chairman, unless they are the incumbent chairman. Time will be allocated towards the end of the meeting for candidates to make a short speech, and for a vote to be taken. The chairman will be elected by secret ballot. The candidate with the plurality of votes (the most votes, whether or not by overall majority of those present) will be elected.

The chairman-elect's term will begin at the end of the meeting in which they are elected.

Role

The chairman will be responsible for

- (a) chairing full meetings during their term (including ensuring that minutes are taken, directing the Youth Council through the agenda, and overseeing discussions and voting),
- (b) agreeing agenda items for full meetings during their term,
- (c) appointing councillors to working groups and appointing chairmen of working groups, and

- (d) communicating with the chairmen of the working groups to ensure that they have the resources needed.

After a second discussion period, the chairman receives a casting vote to determine the outcome of a tied vote. The chairman can delegate work as agreed to the vice chairman either at or outside of formal meetings, provided that a report back is made to the next meeting.

Vice Chairman

Election

A vice chairman will be elected at the same time, and with the same term and method of election, as the chairman.

Role

The vice chairman will chair meetings in the absence of the chairman. They are expected to assist with the chairman's work outside of meetings.

Working groups

A working group is a voluntary team of councillors which exists to research and make proposals relevant to the terms of reference on which it has been set up. A working group may be created by vote at a meeting. Upon the creation of a working group, the chairman will either before the conclusion of the meeting or immediately after the meeting has finished:

- (a) appoint councillors to serve on the working group — the chairman will ask for a show of hands for volunteers, and should appoint an appropriate number of councillors to the working group, taking into account the number of other working groups on which each councillor sits and the distribution of schools across the councillors —,
- (b) appoint a chairman, or two co-chairmen, of the working group — the chairman will ask the working group's members for a show of hands for volunteers, appointing the chairman or co-chairmen based upon suitability for the working group —, and
- (c) with the members of the working group, agree suitable terms of reference and a date by which the working group must report back, and set a date, time, and venue for the first meeting of the working group.

Ceasing to be a councillor

A councillor will cease to be a councillor

- (a) at the end of their term of office, failing re-election,
- (b) upon formally resigning, by means of signed letter given to the chairman (or vice chairman if the resigning councillor is the chairman),
- (c) upon moving out of the area or school, college, or sixth form which they represent,
- (d) by failing to attend five meetings in a row, having received a warning letter after missing two in a row,
or
- (e) by being expelled for poor attendance and poor performance. If a councillor misses two meetings in a row, their expulsion on the basis of poor attendance will be put forwards for discussion at the third

meeting. The rest of the Youth Council is to vote upon the matter, guided by evidence of how likely the councillor is to adequately improve their attendance in future meetings, and how useful the councillor has been to the Youth Council outside of the Full Council meetings (such as in working groups).

Constitutional review

A proposal can be made at any Council meeting to amend any part of the Constitution. The Constitution will be approved by the District Council and any amendment must be agreed by majority vote at a Council meeting.

Uttlesford Youth Council - Election Guidelines

Allocated Seats

The seats allocated to each school in the Uttlesford District are as followed

| Constituency | Number of students (201601) | Number of seats |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Felsted School | ~ 1,000 | 5 |
| Forest Hall School | 468 | 3 |
| Helena Romanes School and Sixth Form Centre | 1,263 | 6 |
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| Residents not attending school in the district | - | 3 |
| | Total: | 28 |

[1]

All schools should, at the end of November, have elected a number of representatives equal to the number allocated.

Candidate eligibility

The terms of the councillors-elect will begin on the day of election. The duration of each term shall be approximately two years, ending on the day of the second election after that in which they were elected^[2]. In the case of incumbent councillors from the school, as the term length is two years if a councillor does not step down they do not need to seek re-election.

To be eligible to run for election in the Youth Council, a young person must:

- (a) be aged at least 13 on the 31st of August in the calendar year in which the elections for which they are standing are held, and no older than 19 when they stand for election, and
- (b) be either
 - (i) living in the district, or
 - (ii) attending school, college, or sixth form in the district.^[3]

The institution recipient of this document ultimately holds responsibility for running the election and this document serves only as a guideline for how best to do it. However, we would advise the institution to follow these guidelines unless there is already a system in place for elections to various posts within the school.

Pre-election

The election should be scheduled to happen on a Thursday in October or November^[4], however as long as an election has happened before the final Thursday in November, the date is not particularly pertinent. In the interest of fairness it should happen on a day in which all students are in school, i.e not the day of a field trip.

When this date has been decided, a notice should be circulated through form of bulletin and form tutors, while the posters attached should be printed and displayed somewhere public to members of the school. In a period ideally lasting longer than two weeks after the initial message is circulated, a list of candidates for election should be gathered. While the responsibility for promoting the election lies on the shoulders of the institution we would encourage school to partake in promotion - these candidates must put themselves forward for election and not be chosen by the school, but teachers may be encouraged to encourage their students to run and assemblies could be given. Any candidate within the guidelines for running may put themselves forward for election. These candidates then have the opportunity to campaign for their election however they choose - in most case, we think this will include asking their friends and teachers to vote for them, however the institution may wish to set their own guidelines on how campaigning is done. After a minimum of two weeks of campaigning, the election day can then take place. Note that this means the election must be planned at least one month in advance: two weeks for candidates to put their names forward and then two weeks for candidates to campaign.

Election day

Election ballots should be available to every person who wishes to vote. Voting does not need to be compulsory, but any eligible person who wishes to vote may. The constitution states that only those eligible to run may vote,^[5] however the school may decide to allow teachers, staff and other members of the faculty to vote.

The ballot papers should display the names of every candidate who has put themselves forward for entry. The format for voting should be that each person may select a single candidate to vote for but if the institution wishes to they can use a Single Transferable Vote system - this requires a considerable amount more effort to tally up however. A ballot box should be, at recreational breaks in the day (lunch and morning break) be placed in a central location and watched by a volunteer. Each person may use their ballot slip to vote by crossing a box and putting it in the ballot box.

Post election

At the end of the final recreational break in the school day, the votes should be tallied. The top candidates (winners) for however many seats are up for election should have their name(s) and email(s) forwarded to youthcouncil@uttlesford.gov.uk and cc'd to istarr@uttlesford.gov.uk NO LATER than the final Thursday of November.

In the event of less candidates than available seats putting themselves forward

If less candidates put themselves forward than there are seats, the election process can be scrapped and a default win awarded to the candidates. However, the election should still be planned up until the deadline for candidacy has passed. Teachers are welcome, and encouraged, in this instance, to nominate students for election with the student's consent.

Constitution References - see attached Constitution.

[1]: Eligibility pools (constituencies)

[2]: Election

[3]: Eligibility

[4]: Election

[5]: Election



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UYC Working Group - Elections

Resolution

In the Elections Working Group, we created a plan to tackle the issue of elections.

We debated the existing structure for elections and have created new guidelines for elections which we intend to send to schools over the summer and coordinate them using in order to fill the ranks of the council. We will be sending a pack to the schools with:

- letter explaining the Youth Council and our aims
- our constitution
- the election guidelines
- and new posters.

This plan has been a work in progress for many months now and all the details can be found in the next few documents of the agenda pack. We hope to debate (and pass!) this resolution at the next meeting. It has been divided into four sections, such that some may be adopted and others returned for redrafting.

1.1

Allocation of a yearly budget of £150 from the Youth Council yearly budget to pay for printing and postage of elections material to relevant groups.

1.2

Adoption of the Youth Council Election Guidelines as official guidelines for UYC regional elections.

1.3

Resolution to send material to schools pertaining to elections (guidelines, constitution, posters) in September of each election year.

1.4

Adoption of the amendments to Version 1.4 of the Constitution, and renaming to 1.5. Resolution to send this version to the council legal department to check it before asking UDC to adopt the amended version.

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