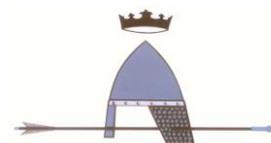




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 17 December 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs J Boryer, J Eldridge, P Fisher, D Furness, M Howell,
R Jessop, M Kiloh, J Ormonde-Butler, S Pry, and J Sydes.

Public Question Time

John Harmer reported that there are several winter walks organised by the Ramblers over the Christmas period. Posters advertising these can be found around the town.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs C Bishop, J Carter, J Gyngell, M Palmer and D Wilson.

2. Disclosure of Interest – Cllr R Jessop declared a pecuniary interest in the Planning minutes of 4 December relating to a proposed move of the Post Office.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 November 2013. Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Boryer. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Chairman reported receipt of an apologetic letter from **Barclays Bank** confirming a credit of £300, to include staff costs of £250 and £50 for punitive and other compensation costs, in relation to the lack of service received in relation to mandate changes.

Members noted the **completion of the lease of the vacant office and occupation from 16 December.**

5. Police Matters

Sgt Paul Masterson confirmed that the **Community Contacts** will be issued tomorrow and weekly thereafter. Any Councillor not receiving this should let him know.

He reported recent **successful prosecutions**, partly due to local eye witness accounts. Members offered their congratulations on this good news.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field reminded Members that **grant settlement final figures** will be received from Government on Christmas Eve. She expressed some concern over the **proposed parking restriction review** on North Trade Road and Caldbec Hill as just moving drivers further up the road. Cllr Field reported on the reprovioning and closing of some **day centres**, particularly those for the elderly. Although no specific details have been announced, the reformatting of the **Battle Fire Station** has been mentioned.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies reported on the **Housing and Homeless Strategy** consultation currently being undertaken. The key points are empty homes; prevention of homelessness and more affordable housing. She confirmed that this Strategy does not include travellers.

Cllr Dixon reported that at the recent Cabinet meeting the proposal to reintroduce all previously identified potential **travellers sites** was overturned which leaves only 3 – Beeches Brook, Greenacres and Telegraph Point, Brightling. He also reminded Members

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that over the Christmas period there will be 3 consecutive weeks **collection of general refuse** rather than one of recycling.

8. Correspondence & Communications

Letters of **thanks for grant** had been received from **Battle Area Community Transport** and **Battle Memorial Hall**.

The usual request for **grant of £250** to help maintain the grounds had been received from **Netherfield Village Hall and Recreation Ground**. **This was agreed**. Cllr Boryer highlighted the increased cost of grass cutting and suggested that the grant may be increased next year.

Members were reminded that the promise of a **grant of £500** had been made to the **Battle Methodist Church** on receipt of confirmation that purchases towards the cost of chairs, tables, baby changing tables and crockery was being made. This has now been received. **Cllr Jessop proposed the payment of grant. Cllr Fisher seconded and all agreed.**

Cllr Bye reported a Chairman's Briefing from **NALC** about the **Council tax benefit Support Grant**. This had covered the extent to which billing authorities had passed on the grant to local councils. In most cases this had happened but, in their discussions with Ministers, NALC had pointed out that where the grant is not passed on it forces local councils to increase their precept. The Briefing note had also made reference to possible capping of precepts. At this stage Ministers had indicated that there would be "no nasty surprises" though, if capping is introduced, it is unlikely to apply to any local council with less than a £70 council tax element at Band D.

In response to a letter requesting **Jempson's Supermarket** to investigate and repair the **lights in the Market Square** a response had been received confirming that an electrical consultant had attended on several occasions and finally traced the fault to the electrical supply in the public toilets in that area. Both the column lights and the canopy lights had been repaired but Jempsons confirmed that the responsibility for the ongoing maintenance must now fall to Rother District Council. It was noted that the column lights are again not working.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 20 November and 4 December and were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted. It was confirmed that the Post Office has withdrawn the consultation for relocation as being premature. **Cllr Jessop proposed that Bev Marks be appointed as the Council's representative to Rother Transport Action Group, on the basis that he will liaise with the Council as necessary. Cllr Kiloh seconded and agreed unanimously.**

10. Submission to SALC of Loan Application to PWLB

Referring back to the discussion on 15 October, Cllr Kiloh confirmed that the option of obtaining a loan to cover the cost of the Tier 2 groundwater audit and planning application fees had been investigated and no reason could be found why such a loan would not be approved. She reminded the meeting that the consultants who will carry out the Tier 2 audit are happy to commence work as soon as they are authorised to do so, anticipating that payment will be made once any loan has been received, probably at the beginning of the next financial year. The Council's budget makes provision for the loan repayment. Accordingly **Cllr Bye proposed, seconded by Cllr Kiloh that a loan application in the sum of £10,000 be made, to be repaid over a period of 5 years. This was agreed unanimously.**

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11. Proposals from Battle in Bloom Group

Cllr Kiloh reported that, with resources in mind, the Battle in Bloom group felt that **only the town centre area should be entered in next year's South and South East in Bloom competition.** This would focus on the area between the Abbey Green and slightly beyond Abbey Court. Beautiful Battle will be discussing whether to enter any other categories eg acorn bed but these would not involve Council resources. Cllr Pry confirmed that these are all part of long term plans which would include making grant applications and ways of reducing costs. She also said that the Estates Committee would be consulted. The group had also suggested that the **Almonry Garden and Cemetery should again be entered in their respective categories.** These proposals were agreed.

12. Application to Fill Vacant Councillor Post

A single application had been made to fill the vacancy. **Cllr Bye proposed that Justin Lay be co-opted to fill the vacancy. This was agreed unanimously.**

13. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

14. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Members had attended:

- Cllr Jessop
- the **Battle Arts and Music Festival's** taster concert;
 - a meeting with the Chief Constable of Sussex on behalf of **RALC**;
 - a social meeting of the **Battle and District Chamber of Commerce**;
- Cllr Furness
- a meeting of the **Safer Rother Partnership**;
 - the **Battle Arts Festival** meeting to discuss plans for next year;
- Cllr Kiloh
- meetings of **Beautiful Battle** and **Battle in Bloom** including a site meeting on the Abbey Green to discuss plans for this area;
- Cllr Boryer
- a meeting of the **Battle in Bloom** group;
 - the **licensing of Ann Marie** as the new vicar for 4 rural parishes at Netherfield Church;
- Cllr Pry
- a meeting of the **Battle in Bloom** group.
- Cllr Bye
- a meeting with **Trevor Leggo** in relation to the Asst Town Clerk's job description;
 - a recent **Memorial Hall Committee** meeting.

15. Mayor's Engagements

Cllr Bye had attended the opening of the **new tea rooms at Yesterday's World** and the **Battle Abbey Concert.** He had also switched on the lights at the **Lights of Love service** at St Mary's Church and judged the Fancy Dress competition on Late Night Shopping.

16. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Eldridge reported that the **Christmas tree on the Abbey Green** appears to be leaning. He also highlighted the poor condition of the Mount Street car park sign.

Cllr Fisher suggested that the Council send a letter of **congratulation on the Dean's appointment as Canon.**

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Cllr Bye reported that he will be attending a meeting with Cllrs Field, Dixon and Bishop together with Alan Deeprise, President of the Chamber of Commerce, regarding **car parking issues** tomorrow evening.

17. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 21 January 2014

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

**CLLR R BYE
Chairman**

