



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 19 March 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs C Bishop, J Boryer, Mrs P Fisher, R Harris,
Mrs M Howell, R Jessop, Mrs M Kiloh, Ms M-L Neill,
Ms J Ormonde-Butler, M Palmer, Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

On behalf of the residents in Asten Fields, Sue Edwards referred to a recent public meeting organised by those promoting the **Schools Greenway project**. Whilst the residents have no objection in principle to the aims of the project they remain concerned about some of the practical aspects and the general detriment it may have on the area. Cllr Bye said that the Town Council had received no formal feedback from the meeting but would note the concerns expressed. In the meantime he underlined the Council's position which is simply to support the idea of providing a safe cycle route. At this stage, and pending the outcome of the consultation exercise, the Town Council has expressed no opinion on the suitability of any particular route.

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1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs C Bishop, J Carter, J Eldridge and Mrs M Kiloh.
 2. **Disclosure of Interest** – None.
 3. **Minutes of the Council Meeting** held on 19 February 2013. Cllr Mrs Pry proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Howell. This was agreed and they were duly signed.
 4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**
Battle Schools Greenway project had been placed on the agenda in anticipation of feedback via the promoters from a public meeting held on 13 March. No further information had been received other than as recorded under Public Question Time above.

5. Police Matters

PCSO Daryl Holter reported:

- that the **Shopwatch Scheme** continues to develop;
- a warning that **fake £20 notes** are currently in circulation and asked that any suspicions be reported to the police;
- increasing numbers of **shed breakings and oil thefts**. Again, any suspicious behaviour should be drawn to the attention of the police;
- that at the regular officer briefing meetings PCSO's are encouraged to devote as much time as possible to **patrols within the town centre**;
- the relevant local authorities have been asked to consider the option of **decriminalising parking**;
- the **20 minutes parking restrictions** in the High Street is not being enforced.

PCSO Holter suggested that any questions on the last two points be taken up with Sgt Paul Masterson.

On the general question of **parking**, but within particular reference to **Caldbec Hill** and the area adjoining the police station, Cllr Jessop queried the definition of 'obstruction' even when parking occurs in an unrestricted area. PCSO Holter said that each circumstance would need to be considered on its merits.

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Cllr Boryer asked PCSO Holter to remind Sgt Masterson that he had promised a meeting with him to review recent incidents which appeared to involve an unnecessarily large **police presence**.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field said that the **County and Surrey** are working together to secure financial benefits from **joint procurement**. The **Director of Children's Services post** has become vacant but will be refilled.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies reported on the outcome of the debate relating to a **clinical strategy for East Sussex**, including the decision to focus maternity and paediatric services at the Conquest. Regarding the **Combe Valley (formerly Pebsham) Countryside Park** she said that management and development plans continue to evolve. She also made reference to the need for greater integration between **pot hole repairs and general road management**.

Cllr Dixon said that the planning application relating to the proposed **development at the rear of 56-58 High Street** has been withdrawn. He also spoke about potential **cuts to tourism funding** and the setting up of a Working Group to advise on where savings should be made.

Cllr Field alerted the meeting to a very recent announcement that the former **South East Plan** has been revoked by the Government. This is likely to lead to the number of development sites/housing allocations being reviewed by the Inspector conducting the examination of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

8. Correspondence & Communications

In place of the previous Christmas Tree Festival **St Mary's Church** will, this year, be asking groups and organisations to enter a **traditional nativity crib**. Members were asked to let the Clerk know if they wish to support such an entry.

The Mayor of **Troina in Sicily** has **invited the town to enter into a Twinning arrangement** based on the historical fact that Sicily was also conquered by the Normans. Interesting though this association may be Members did not believe that it was a sufficiently strong basis for twinning.

The **Bonfire Boyes** have asked for the usual permission to use the **recreation ground for the Summer Fayre** on 28-30 June. This was agreed. The Council is also invited to join the Carnival procession.

9. Minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 26 February were reported by Cllr Wilson and noted. Regarding the proposed change to **part night lighting**, as well as commenting on the public meeting held on 25 February, Cllr Wilson drew attention to subsequent comments from a local resident who remains firmly opposed to any change primarily on health and safety grounds but also because of people's fear and perception of crime. Bearing in mind the experience of other authorities who have moved to part night lighting, and the research carried about by the Town Council into concerns such as these, Members adhered to their decision to go ahead with this project.

10. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 27 February and 13 March were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted.

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11. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 March were reported by Cllr Bye and noted. **He proposed the adoption of the recommendation that there should be a 1% pay increase for all staff with effect from 1 April 2013. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.**

12. Terms of Reference

Cllr Bye confirmed that all Committees had now reviewed and updated their Terms of Reference. These were endorsed by Council. In the light of these, **Cllr Bye proposed the attached Terms of Reference for Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and approved unanimously.**

13. Devolution

Immediately prior to the Council meeting, Cllrs Bye and Harris and the Town Clerk had met with **Rother's Director of Resources**, Malcolm Johnston, to review current options for devolution. There is to be no change of policy regarding **car parks** and, at present, Rother have no plans to close or devolve **toilets** which are managed as an integral part of a car park. This left the matter of **open spaces**. Rother's policy remains that any transfer of an interest in land must be on the basis of a long lease rather than freehold. Bearing in mind that two of the open spaces, at Darvel Down and Coronation Gardens, include children's play equipment the question was raised about future repair and replacement costs. Current condition could be established from the regular safety inspection reports which would be a useful guide to future costs. Malcolm Johnston will research these and consider whether an agreement might be negotiated whereby, if the Town Council assume responsibility, short term financial help might be provided by Rother, to be phased out over a period of years. He will also research current grounds maintenance costs.

14. Parish Assembly

The recently cancelled Communications Committee meeting had intended to confirm arrangements for County and District Councillors to report to the Parish Assembly. Rather than relying on a written report circulated as part of the Council's Annual Report, it is proposed that they should report orally to the Assembly but provide a written copy as the basis for the published notes of the Assembly proceedings. This was agreed.

15. Clerk's Replacement

At the time of the meeting, 9 completed application forms had been received and 18 other expressions of interest. Cllr Bye confirmed that the short-listing will take place on 9 April and interviews on 9 May.

16. Councillor Vacancies

Four applications had been received to fill the two vacancies. In order that they could be discussed in confidential session, **Cllr Mrs Fisher proposed the adoption of Standing Order 3(a). This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed unanimously.**

Each vacancy was considered in turn. For the first, **Mr David Furness** received an immediate majority of 9 votes and was duly co-opted. For the second, 3 Members abstained from voting. With 5 votes **Ms Jill Gyngell** received a majority of the remaining votes and was duly co-opted.

17. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

18. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Cllr Wilson - is liaising with Tracey Johnson from the **County Youth Service** in following up an initiative by a young person to **develop the skateboard ramp area;**

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- Cllr Palmer
- spoke about the latest **Battle Marketing Group** meeting. This had included the likely impact of **funding cuts** by both Hastings and Rother. On the positive side, the launch of the **Keane Trail** has received a very positive response on social media including many contacts from abroad. A **promotional film of the town** is also nearing completion;
- Cllr Jessop
- drew attention in his notes to a discussion at the **Chamber** about the desirability of creating a unique **Battle brand**;
- Cllr Boryer
- on behalf of the **Netherfield Village Hall**, thanked the Council for the recent **grant** and said that Amicus Horizon are helping with redecoration costs;
- Cllr Ms Neill
- reported on the latest **Battle in Bloom group** meeting. Two issues require Council approval. Firstly, a **change** in the usual date for the **local competition awards** evening to 1 August. This was agreed. Secondly, arrangements for funding the **proposed Gateways**. An indication has been given that the Battle Partnership might help with the cost and, after some debate, **Cllr Jessop proposed that the balance of about £2500 should be funded from the Council's reserves. This was seconded by Cllr Harris and agreed unanimously**;
 - Reminded all present of the proposed **Estates Committee strategy meeting** on 26 March and tabled background papers;
- Cllr Mrs Pry
- had also attended the **Battle in Bloom group** meeting, adding that it had begun discussions about the management of the town's entry in the **South and South East in Bloom competition**.

19. Mayor's Engagements

There had been no engagements during the past month.

20. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Jessop confirmed that the forthcoming **SLR meeting** would discuss the apparent lack of gritting during the recent snow.

Cllr Mrs Fisher asked that the future of **Pyke House** be investigated.

21. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 16 April 2013

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

CLLR R BYE
Chairman

