



Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2014 in
The Almonry, High Street, Battle, at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M Kiloh – Chairman
Cllrs J Boryer, R Bye, J Eldridge, G Favell, D Furness, J Gyngell, T Hall,
M Howell, R Jessop, J Lay, J Ormonde-Butler, S Pry, and D Wilson.

County Cllr Field, new Clerk in waiting A Beams, temporary Project Manager T Houghton-Berry and 2 members of the public were present.

Public Question Time

No questions were raised but Mr Beams and Mr Houghton-Berry were welcomed and introduced to Members.

Cllr Lay was welcomed to his first meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs M Palmer and A Ratcliffe.

Cllr Sydes was absent.

2. Disclosure of Interest – None.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 November 2014. Cllr Bye proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Chairman confirmed that, further to the agreement in principle at the previous meeting, Mr Houghton-Berry has been appointed as part-time **Project Manager** for 8 hours per week.

5. To Receive a Report from the County Councillor

Cllr Field reported that at the previous evening's Cabinet meeting it had been decided to go against opposition from many Members and cut **bus services**.

6. To Receive a Report from the District Councillors

Cllr Dixon had given his apologies and sent seasons greeting to Council.

Cllr Field advised that RDC had expressed concerns with the **Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan** in relation to identified development land and was not willing to accept the proposed Plan in the current format. Cllr Jessop highlighted that BTC's draft Neighbourhood Plan would not be affected in this way as development sites had already been agreed. Cllr Field also reported work on the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** which is a free trade agreement currently under negotiation between the EU and the USA.

7. Correspondence and Communications

The Chairman reported communications between a tenant at the **Market Square** and landlord relating to problems with **Electrical wiring**. Whilst this was not directly the responsibility of the Town Council, Cllr Kiloh suggested that a meeting be convened with all interested parties of the Market Square area to discuss how to bring the area back to a suitable standard.

The Acting Clerk reported that **ESCC** have accepted that rent for the **Amenity Site (by Battle & Langton School)** had been paid up to 2010. They requested the increased rate of £330pa to 2014 and an agreement of £425pa until 2019, plus the professional fee of £300; a total of £2045.

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She confirmed that she had responded expressing the Council's reluctance at such an increase in rent, with rising maintenance costs in mind and suggested a negotiation. A reply is awaited.

A letter had been received from **ESCC** advising that the **Delegated Service** payment for general maintenance of footpaths will be made this year but will cease thereafter. Match Maintenance or Pay As You Go services may be appropriate and would need to be applied for. The Chairman confirmed that this is on the SLR Agenda for discussion at tomorrow's meeting.

8. To Receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 19 November and 3 December were presented by Cllr Jessop and noted.

9. To Receive the Minutes of the Informal meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 10 December were presented by Cllr Kiloh. She introduced the issues relating to the recommendation for the precept in 2015/16. She highlighted how costs had been reduced on the Newsletter, Annual Report and insurance premiums but that the original figures proposed would still require an increase of 22%. A majority of Councillors had felt this was unacceptable. Further discussions had taken place and it had been suggested that further savings could be made eg the heating system at the Almonry could be included in the proposed grant funding for the refurbishment project. Other items had already been agreed by Council and should remain in the budget eg £7000 PWLB payments; £8500 tree work; £4080 Basic Parish Allowance; £1500 Neighbourhood Plan and £2000 election costs. It was also recommended that £8600 of the CTS grant be put into reserves. Cllr Boryer suggested that proposed expenditure should be further reduced to keep the rise in precept at below 5%. Members were assured that all Committees had looked carefully at all of the figures prior to agreeing on the recommendation of £240,000 precept. Cllr Pry raised concerns at another large increase and felt that residents at Netherfield will not feel that they are receiving value for money. **Cllr Jessop proposed that the precept for 2015/16 should be set at a figure of £240,000. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed by a majority vote of 11:3.** The approved budget is attached.

The Chairman confirmed that a press release highlighting the Council's decision for an increase in precept would be issued the following day.

Cllr Furness reported on the Almonry Working Group meetings that had discussed ideas for improving the Almonry building and making it and the Museum a more attractive visitor experience. This would increase revenue and tourism and also encourage people to this side of town. Something which is supported by the Chamber of Commerce. Preliminary Plans had been drawn with positive comments received and Rother's Conservation Officer had appeared generally happy with the scheme. Cllr Furness confirmed that the work of the Council would not be affected and that grant funding will be sought to implement the improvements. **Cllr Furness proposed that the Working Group be given approval in principle to pursue the project and further the plans to produce to Council. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed.**

10. To Approve Committee Membership for the New Standing Committees

The list of Committee Membership had been circulated to Members. **Cllr Kiloh proposed that Membership on the new Standing Committees as attached be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Howell and agreed.** Cllr Kiloh reminded Members that the elections in May could result in the amendment to these.

11. List of Payments & Receipts – were noted.

12. Reports from Representatives of the Council and Other Reports

- Cllr Furness had attended a meeting of **Battle Arts & Music Festival**;
- Cllr Howell had attended the **Battle in Bloom** meeting;
- Cllr Gyngell had attended a **Battle Arts & Music Festival** meeting;

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- Cllr Hall had attended meetings of the **1066** and **Almonry Working Groups**;
- Cllr Favell had attended a meeting of the **Battle Health Pathway** at which they had indicated a wish to present a paper to the Environment Committee.
- Cllr Jessop had attended meetings: with the **Chief Constable** at Lewes Police HQ at which funding options that are being considered had been reported; of the **Almonry Working Group** with the Museum Trustees; of the **Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils** to discuss pay and conditions of the Association's staff; of the **Battle & District Chamber of Commerce** at which a presentation regarding the future of the Battle Post Office was made. He had also attended the town's **Gala Night** celebrations;
- Cllr Kiloh had attended the **Claverham Community College Presentation Evening**; the **Battle Choral Society Concert**; the **St Michael's Hospice 'Lights of Love'** service and had switched on the tree lights; the inaugural meeting of the new **Battle in Bloom Working Group** which is looking for a new name to reflect its wider remit and had invited Chamber to send a representative; the **Beautiful Battle Committee** meeting and **Gala Night** at which she had judged the Best Dressed Business and Best Dressed Individual Fancy Dress competitions.

13. **Matters for information/ items for future Agenda** – None.

14. **Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 20 January 2015**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm

M KILOH
Chairman