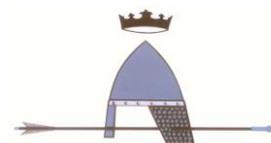




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 16 April 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs C Bishop, J Carter, J Eldridge, Mrs P Fisher,
D Furness, Ms J Gyngell, 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

No matters were raised.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr J Boryer.

The Chairman welcomed Cllrs David Furness and Jill Gyngell to their first meeting.

2. Disclosure of Interest – None.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 March 2013. Subject to the deletion of Cllrs Bishop and Mrs Kiloh from the list of those present Cllr Wilson proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Jessop. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings – None.

5. Police Matters

The Police representative confirmed that the focus remains on **illegal parking**, particularly in the loading bay. Responding to a request for information about a recent **incident in the vicinity of the Chequers roundabout** she was only able to confirm that there had been an incident which is being investigated. With particular reference to Caldbec Hill and the town end of North Trade Road, she was again asked about the **definition of obstruction**. In her opinion this would require a situation to arise in which a road was completely blocked and not just that care was required to pass a stationary vehicle.

The weekly **crime updates for March/April** were noted.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field had sent her apologies and there was nothing to report. She will be standing in the **forthcoming elections**.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies had sent her apologies. Cllr Dixon spoke about proposals to **restructure the senior staff at Rother**. This would involve the deletion of the Chief Executive post and the creation of 2 Executive Directors who would oversee 6 discrete management functions. These changes would make a significant contribution towards staff savings costs though there would be short-term expenditure on redundancies. On planning matters the main focus will be on the recent application relating to the location of 2 further **mobile homes at Greenacres Farm**. He also alerted the Council to the latest developments regarding the **Core Strategy** which require the District Council to review housing allocations. Cllr Jessop said that the Town Council has already responded to this. Finally, Cllr Dixon said that a review of the **Community Grants scheme** is underway which may lead to greater Ward Member involvement in future.

8. Correspondence & Communications

Following up the query raised by Cllr Mrs Fisher at the previous meeting the Clerk had spoken to Sussex Coast College about the **future of Pyke House**. By coincidence, he had been told that a letter was about to be sent to various interested parties in the town

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explaining that the building is no longer required and inviting suggestions for future use. The complication is that the building is subject to charitable status requiring use to be for educational purposes. The only suggestion made was that Battle Abbey School might be interested.

To the surprise of every Town and Parish Council in the district the share of the **Government's Transitional Grant** linked to changes in the **Council Tax Benefit** system has been paid as an additional sum outside of the **precept**. In the light of the guidance given by Rother, all Local Councils had assumed that the Transitional Grant would be deducted from the precept demand. Precepts, and therefore the increase in Council Tax, had been determined accordingly. As a result of the way in which the Transitional Grant has been treated the increase in the Local Council element of the Council Tax demand is therefore higher than anticipated.

Rother has advised that changes in its ground maintenance contracts have eliminated any **floral displays in the Battle car parks**. Bearing in mind the significant income raised from car park charges Members were extremely dismayed at this news. They confirmed however that the Town Council has neither the financial nor staff resources to fill the gap. It was agreed to leave any further consideration to the Battle in Bloom group.

A **letter** has now been received from **Gregory Barker MP enclosing one from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**. In that letter the Secretary of State had emphasised that the Government had set the legislative framework within which the Localism Agenda can be carried forward but that decisions on devolution must be made locally. The Secretary of State's letter had used Neighbourhood Planning as a good example. Relating this back to the Core Strategy issue of housing allocations Members agreed that a further letter should be sent to the MP questioning whether the philosophy of local governance is more theory than practice. The recent announcement of proposals to relax the requirement for planning permission relating to extensions should be added as a further example of loss of local determination.

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

10. Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 2 April were reported by Cllr Ms Neill and noted. She drew attention to the discussion about a **tree survey and recommended that Council agree to accept a quote of about £2000 to create a database and carry out an initial hazard survey. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.**

11. Clerk's Replacement

Anticipating that this might raise matters of a confidential nature **Cllr Bye proposed the adoption of Standing Order 3(a). This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.**

Cllr Bye said that a shortlist of 5 candidates to be interviewed had been established. All applications had been assessed against an agreed set of criteria, particularly relevant background and experience. The Clerk was asked to circulate these criteria to all Council Members but, subject to any additional points Members may wish to be covered, **it was agreed that the subgroup should now be given authority to offer an appointment and negotiate terms with the preferred candidate.**

12. Parish Assembly

The Clerk reminded the meeting of the arrangements for the forthcoming Assembly on 15 May. He confirmed that a number of organisations had indicated their wish to have a table display in the adjoining St Valery room. The Council's Annual Report, incorporating the

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Parish Assembly arrangements will be circulated next week to all residents and he hoped that Council Members would be able to help with distribution arrangements. A press release has already been issued promoting the Assembly and inviting those wishing to raise topics to submit them in advance for the Question Time session. Cllr Bye reminded the meeting that, on this occasion, oral reports will be given by the County and District Councillors.

13. Community Award(s)

In view of the confidential nature of this discussion **Cllr Bye proposed the adoption of Standing Order 3(a). This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.**

The various nominations received were discussed and it was agreed to make a single award.

14. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

15. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Cllrs Mrs Fisher, Howell, Kiloh, Ormonde-Butler and Pry had represented the Council in the recent **Good Friday Marbles Competition**. Cllrs Jessop, Ms Ormonde-Butler, Mrs Pry and Wilson confirmed that they had attended the recent **training session at Sedlescombe**.

- Cllr Palmer - confirmed that the promotional film being organised by the **Battle Marketing group** is almost complete;
- Cllr Jessop - had attended a **Scarecrows** progress meeting; meetings of **RALC** and **SALC**; and a meeting of the **Health Improvement Partnership**;
- Cllr Harris - had attended a meeting of the **Battle Charities** on 20 March;
- Cllr Mrs Fisher - had also attended the **Battle Charities** meeting;
- Cllr Ms Ormonde-Butler - had been involved in the **Scarecrows** discussion. She also reported on the latest **Chamber** meeting at which a presentation had been made regarding disabled access to business premises and the means of promoting where such facilities exist;
- Cllr Bye - reported that at the last meeting of the **Memorial Hall Committee** confirmation of an increase in bookings had been given.

16. Mayor's Engagements

He had been delighted to attend the formal opening of **Mrs Burton's Tea Room**.

17. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda – None.

18. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 21 May 2013

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

CLLR R BYE
Chairman

