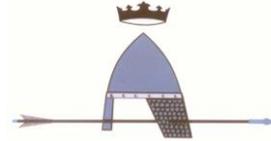




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 8th October 2013 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr P Fisher – Chairman
Cllrs C Boryer, D Furness, S Pry and D Wilson.

Member of the public, Mr B Marks.

- 1. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs R Bye and J Carter.**
- 2. Disclosure of Interest** – Pecuniary interest declared by Cllr Wilson regarding Item 5, request for site access to Amenity area re proposed works at Battle & Langton Primary School, at which he is a staff member.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting** held on 25 June 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

Iron Gate near Church Hall – Cllr Carter had asked could foliage around this be cut. The Chairman and Mr Champion had inspected and both the gate and tank traps needed investigation.

The Estates walkabout on 13 August had been useful. The Clerk confirmed that very nearly all items needing attention, noted during the walk, had been attended to by the grounds staff.

Tennis Wall project – Cllrs Boryer and the Chairman had met Mr Perkins with a contractor who was concerned that development close to the pavilion might undermine foundations so would need to be further back, closer to the gate of the tennis courts. **The Chairman confirmed that Council needed to look at the new proposed siting and recommended that Members of the Estates Committee went to look at it. The Clerk noted the need to check if planning permission or a prior notification application under permitted development rights was required and Environment Agency licences were needed if it became necessary to remove soil to another site.** Mr Perkins had asked when he could begin certain initial works. She had stated clearly to Mr Perkins that no work must be undertaken until Council had given approval for them specifically. The Chairman noted **Council's support of the principle of the project but stated the funding must to be confirmed in writing first, the site agreed by Council and stressed that no works must be undertaken until Council had given specific permission for them.**

The Tennis Club had asked again if the Council would have the courts sealed. Cllr Wilson advised that this could not be done as previously confirmed, as the **surface was a permeable type, drilled with holes which were not to be sealed.** A new tennis net had been asked for which the ground staff had advised required replacement of dilapidated fixings. **Councillors agreed to fund a replacement.**

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5. Correspondence & Communications

Mr Dawes of The Battle Partnership had written regarding their flag poles on the Abbey Green made for the Big Event and taken down, following which fixings for hanging baskets had been placed there. Councillors and the previous Clerk had understood that the flag poles would come down after the Big Event. Mr Dawes hoped with Council's consent to put them up each summer. **The Chairman would check what had been agreed to.**

The Clerk had met Ms Stewart of English Heritage and discussed jointly **approaching business sponsors who might fund replacement of the dilapidated oak planters**, a proposal for which Battle in Bloom were to develop. Ms Stewart had agreed to the invitation to join the group for discussions about the Green.

Letting of first floor of Almonry – The Clerk had since found that the Almonry was dealt with by Finance and General Purposes Committee and would leave details in her absence to advise that Committee of the agreed heads of terms at an open market rent on reasonable terms.

Farm Tenancy matters - The Clerk confirmed a productive meeting with Mr Wheatland who encountered various difficulties managing public access along the 1066 route, some of which, were inevitable. **The Clerk summarised how she could work with the tenant on some simple measures with which BTC (Battle Town Council) could help. BTC and English Heritage were investigating jointly, possibilities to minimise obstruction of the tenant's right to farm vehicular access to the farm as well as BTC's right along Park Lane. The Cricket Club had responsibility for the maintenance of the fence along the public right of way and needed to maintain that better**, which would help with the tenant's stock control. Mr Wheatland agreed to attend to areas of his own fencing in need of ongoing repair. Ragwort control was improved.

Land adjoining BTC's overflow car park, off Marley Lane – The Chairman proposed and Councillors agreed that the **Clerk should have preliminary discussions** with the adjoining owner's agent, following correspondence from him suggesting some proposals re car parking problems in Battle.

Pavilion – the Clerk summarised the minor repairs undertaken.

Access to rear of property on High Street - The Clerk had confirmed in writing, to the owner who had been using BTC's gate and route to rear of his property, that there was no right of access. Access for necessary works such as repairs and maintenance could be arranged with BTC with reasonable notice.

The Clerk had contacted **the fence contractor to make good the playground fence and gates at North Trade Road** which were not adequately fixed when put up less than one year ago. The first attempt at repair had not been sufficient and she continued to ask them to make good.

The Committee confirmed that the **oak tree above the acorn bed outside the Fire Station could be trimmed**, requested by BB.

Cllr Wilson repeated his pecuniary interest in the following matter.

Request for site access to Amenity area, which was licensed to BTC by East Sussex

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County Council (ESCC), **was agreed in principle by the Committee, on condition of complete and effective reinstatement.** Mr Marks added that there were man hole covers and the area was boggy so reinstatement had to be carried out very well. Cllr Jessop suggested use of protective felt on the surface.

Mr Marks summarised Battle Local Action Plan group's comments on BTC's potential developments in and around the Recreation Ground at North Trade Road in relation to the Battle Schools Greenway (BSG) proposals. Councillors agreed with the principle of the amalgamation with the shared use/cycle path. The Chairman confirmed that it was only the middle section between the ghyll and North Trade Road Recreation Ground that this Committee was addressing. It was compatible with the Council's hopes for a pathway on the Recreation Ground with a view to bridging the ghyll in place of the current steps, which would be very helpful to the use of the route. It was hoped that the combined approach might help in negotiations with the ESCC for funding.

Estates Committee members **agreed to recommend to Council agreement, in principle, to amalgamating with the Battle Schools Greenway proposal, the middle segment from Asten Fields to Saxon wood, to join with BTC's proposed exercise track on the Recreation Ground.**

6. Tree Survey Report – The Clerk reported that she had **asked for quotes from four Tree Surgeon company contacts** with good indemnity insurance, experience of working alongside the public, most with forestry contract experience who would undertake the coppicing work at Mansers Shaw in return for the wood crop and should not therefore cost the Council. **Two quotes were still awaited but she had requested them as soon as possible to give time for Chairmen to finish budget proposals and the 3 Year Forward Plans asked for at F&GP Committee on 5th November.** No 1 rated urgent works had been undertaken, organised by the previous Clerk, and yet to appear in the budget for this year as they were unplanned - invoices had just been received. A single further tree, rated 1 had since been noted from the Report, near the footpath between the Stumblets end of Mansers Shaw, and a cost for this had been asked for. She had focused just on the works rated 2 and 3 for medium term planning, to be costed separately in order that Councillors had the option of staggering the significant costs over budgetary years. They were then further divided into the cost centre areas of the Estate. Where trees of 2 and 3 rating were close by, she had asked for a joint quote for best value.

7. Recreation Ground

The Chairman would meet the Supervising Groundsman to go through the Annual Playground Inspection of the play areas and make the necessary recommendations for works as needed.

8. Budget Report 2013-14 – noted as attached. The Chairman confirmed that the Committee had kept fairly well on budget to date and the Clerk noted the urgent tree survey costs which were not yet reflected. Cllr Jessop reiterated comments at the last annual budget session that there was a need to increase the budget to cover items needed and that the report he had prepared re costs for the various proposals. It was noted that the Tree Survey and Cemetery plans costs hadn't been dealt with yet. **Cllr Wilson confirmed the general consensus for the need for an extra member of ground staff to which all agreed** and after that he felt it important just to cover general maintenance costs.

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A special Estates Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 22nd October to budget for costs of an extra ground staff member, tree survey and playground costs.

9. Budget 2014-15 and 3 Year Forward Plan

In view of the time and Item 8 agreed as above, this would be discussed on 22nd October 2013. The item listed on this meeting's agenda, to discuss and if necessary amend the tabled plans previously prepared by Cllrs Jessop and Boryer and submit for Council approval, would be dealt with then.

10. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items – None further.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Special meeting on Tuesday 22nd October, as above and thereafter to be confirmed for 2014. The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Chairman
Cllr Fisher

