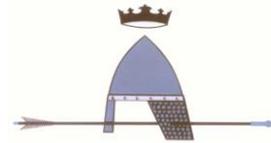




Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 5 August 2014 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr M Kiloh - Chairman
Cllrs: J Boryer, J Eldridge, P Fisher, D Furness and R Jessop.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs R Bye and J Sydes.

2. Disclosure of Interest – Cllr J Eldridge declared an interest in item 6 as a tenant of an office in the Almonry building.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2014. Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Fisher. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Committee noted that the:

- **Almonry signage** is now in place and payment from the Museum has been received;
- **single office** is now occupied and the rent received as agreed.

5. Correspondence and Communications

Members discussed the request from **Concorde 1066** for help towards the cost of the **brochure** by way of placing the order and making payment to enable VAT to be recovered. It was agreed that, as the event is to the benefit of the community and dependent on clarification from SALC that this is permissible expenditure, this could be approved, subject to payment in advance by Concorde 1066.

A provisional enquiry from **PCSO** for funds to be transferred from Sussex Police to BTC for payment of **Community Fun Day** event. Members agreed to this subject to the Deputy Town Clerk's time not being excessively used.

An email enquiry had been received from **Newhaven Town Council** regarding interest in **appraisal training**. Members agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk would benefit from this.

The Committee acknowledged that a Battle resident, **Steve Scott** has recently been awarded a **gold medal** for the men's double trap event in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. It was agreed that the Mayor should write with the Town's congratulations on his huge achievement.

6. Almonry Building

The Chairman had circulated a discussion document with suggested options for the **refurbishment and the future use of space** within the Almonry. It was agreed that there is a great deal of maintenance work required internally and it is hoped that our own workforce may be able to carry out some of this. Cllr Eldridge agreed to form a schedule of work identifying items that can be carried out by our staff and those that require specialist contractors.

The current use of the space available was not felt to be efficient or effective and alternatives were discussed. Members were advised that both Rother District Council (RDC) and the Police had expressed an interest in sharing accommodation as this was

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generally felt to be more community friendly. The Committee agreed to continue discussions with RDC, including the possibility of their assistance in grant applications, and also to contact local conservation architects for some initial advice regarding re-design of the various spaces available.

With the above in mind, it was agreed to offer an annual renewal **lease for the ground floor** office space and a rolling monthly lease for the first floor, single, rear office, currently let to Manor House.

7. Battle Abbey School Proposals

The Committee were advised of a meeting with Claverham Community College (CCC) and a subsequent letter detailing concerns relating to the proposed use of the recreation ground by Battle Abbey School for a sports facility. The Chairman confirmed that a request for completion of a questionnaire from all potential users of the recreation ground had been sent with a closing date of 8 August. A special meeting of the Estates Committee has been arranged for Wednesday 13 August at 7pm to consider the completed questionnaires and discuss the future use of the area. A recommendation will be made to the September Council meeting. It was also suggested that it could be beneficial for CCC and Battle Abbey School to communicate with each other.

8. Bank Reconciliation Statement at 30 June 2014 was noted. Members asked that, in the light of the closure of the Battle branch of Barclays Bank, enquiries be made of other local banks for suitable accounts.

9. Budget Report 2014-15

This was noted.

10. Cemetery Working Group

The Chairman reported the recommendations to:

- agree payment to CDSL for the preplanning and design phase of the cemetery extension in the amount of £5650;
- include the cost of replacing the Chapel windows within the overall scheme

It was highlighted that there is a £2000 budget for repayment of the previously agreed PWLB loan which will not be used. This leaves a balance of £3650 being required from reserves. This sum would be replaced from the project loan in due course. **Cllr Jessop proposed to recommend to Council that £3650 be taken from reserves towards the preplanning and design phase of the cemetery extension. This was agreed.** The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to obtain 3 estimates for the replacement of the **Chapel windows** to enable inclusion of this cost into the overall scheme.

11. Zero Based Budgeting

The Committee agreed to discuss the administration budget at the next meeting.

12. Almonry Garden Report

Simon Alexander had produced a report of plans for the garden including a list of tools requiring replacement and proposed planting for the autumn and spring. Members were concerned at the relatively low garden budget remaining and asked that the Chairman of Beautiful Battle be asked for confirmation of the urgency of this expenditure.

13. Gifting of Assets

This was agreed as below.

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Beautiful Battle:

Sponsor plaque – Winton Design
Matting and wicks
Plastic trays and shading for greenhouse

Chamber of Commerce

Christmas lights

14. Staff Matters

Council had been advised of the resignation of the **Town Clerk**. It was agreed that a Locum would be invited to cover evening meetings and to forward completed draft minutes to the Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) for circulation and action. The Locum would also be asked to cover the office telephone and enquiries during the DTC's holiday period at the end of August. Full Council will be asked to agree a job description and the recruitment procedure for the new Town Clerk at its next meeting. The **Deputy Town Clerk's** conditions will also be discussed at that meeting.

Members were advised that an appraisal with the **new Groundsman** will be carried out this week with Cllr Fisher and the Deputy Town Clerk.

Cllr Jessop proposed the re-appointment of Clerk/Deputy Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer. Cllr Fisher seconded this and all agreed.

15. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items

All Councillors are invited to a **Council Away-day on 18 August 2014** at the new Emmanuel Centre in Harrier Lane at 1.30pm. This will be to discuss ideas for restructuring of the Council to enable improved efficiency. It was agreed that 3 alternatives should be presented for discussion and to review the Council's Three Year Plan. Trevor Leggo, Director of East Sussex Association of Local Councils has been invited to facilitate. All Councillors have been asked to confirm availability to the DTC. Cllrs Furness and Jessop agreed to put forward a plan for consideration. Cllrs Kiloh and Jessop will meet with Trevor Leggo to discuss the format for the afternoon.

16. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 2 September 2014

The meeting closed at 7.50pm

**CLLR M KILOH
CHAIRMAN**

