



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2012 in
The Almonry, High Street, Battle, at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs C Bishop, J Boryer, R Bye, J Eldridge, Mrs T Farr,
Mrs P Fisher, R Harris, Mrs M Howell, R Jessop,
Mrs M Kiloh, R McDonald, Ms M L Neill, M Palmer,
Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

No members of the public were present.

1. Election of Chairman

Two nominations had been received, Cllr Jessop by Cllr Palmer and Cllr Bye by Cllr Mrs Pry. Cllr Harris said that in the circumstances, a vote would be required. **Cllr Mrs Fisher proposed that Standing Order 10 be invoked so that a signed ballot could take place.** This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Farr and agreed by a majority. The result of the ballot was 8 votes for Cllr Bye, 5 votes for Cllr Jessop and 2 abstentions. Cllr Bye was therefore duly elected to serve as Chairman for the ensuing year.

In acknowledging his election, Cllr Bye paid tribute to the commitment and hard work of his predecessor, sentiments which were shared by all present.

2. The Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed by Cllr Bye.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Ms Neill proposed the nomination of Cllr Mrs Pry, seconded by Cllr Palmer. With no other nomination all present supported this proposal. Cllr Mrs Pry was therefore duly elected to serve as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

4. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs J Carter and A Mitchell.

5. Disclosure of Interest – Cllr McDonald expressed a personal interest in part of item 11 as a member of the Cricket Club.

6. To Approve the Formation and Membership of the Standing Committees

The Members appointed to each Committee, in addition to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council, were discussed and are set out in the attachment.

7. To Appoint Representatives of the Council to Other Bodies

A list of the bodies to which appointments need to be made had been circulated. Cllr Mrs Kiloh wished to step down from representation on RALC and a vacancy needs to be filled on the Netherfield Village Hall Committee. Cllr Bye agreed to fill the RALC appointment and Cllr Boryer agreed to represent the Council on the Netherfield Village Hall. The complete list for the year is attached.

8. Annual Subscriptions

Members confirmed that the Council should continue to be members of SALC, the Rother Association of Local Councils and that they should continue to fund the annual subscription for the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

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9. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 April 2012. Cllr Wilson proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Mrs Fisher. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

10. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings – None.

11. Correspondence & Communications

Cllr McDonald repeated his personal interest in the first item which is a request by the Cricket Club that Council consider applying for the area leased to the Club to be given the status of a Queen Elizabeth II Field. Bearing in mind that the Club has security of tenure Council Members were not persuaded that there would be any great merit in seeking this status which would close off any options for future use in the event that the ground is no longer required for its current purpose. **Cllr Ms Neill therefore proposed that the request be declined. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Fisher and agreed unanimously.**

The **Citizens Advice Bureau** had asked the Council to consider appointing a Director/Trustee to their Board. Whilst Council did not wish to make a formal appointment individual Members were encouraged to make contact with CAB if they wished to respond to the request in a personal capacity.

St Mary's Church will be organising a **"Celebration of Flowers"** to mark the **Diamond Jubilee**. The event will run from 2 – 5 June including the serving of Jubilee teas on 3 June. The Council is invited to take part by arranging a display of fresh flowers, and Cllr Palmer agreed to lead on this.

As part of **Battle's Big Event** there will be a **Carnival procession** as part of the launch on 30 June. The Council is invited to join the parade, and it was agreed that this should be led by the Chairman and Vice Chairman who would carry the new town flag in banner form. Other Members of the Council are also encouraged to participate.

An **invitation to attend Battle's Big Event "Thank you" party on 9 September** was noted.

Similarly, an **invitation to the opening of Diamond Jubilee Garden on 1 June at 6.00pm** was noted.

12. Report from County Councillor

In introducing her report Cllr Field offered **congratulations to Cllr Bye** on his appointment and added her **thanks to Cllr Harris** for all he had done over the past year. A **new Vice Chairman** has been appointed, **Cllr Meg Stroude**. Cllr Lock is taking on a new brief covering the **economy and development**. The Leader of the Council had said that the immediate focus must be to link in with current changes in the **Health Service**, transitional arrangements for which will be quite difficult.

Loans are being made available for major **redevelopment** of part of Hastings close to the **railway station** and the **business park on Queensway**.

An interesting point emerging from a **scrutiny review of carers** is that many people who undertake this role fail to recognise themselves as carers sometimes needing support themselves.

Finally, Cllr Field confirmed that despite her resistance in some respects, the complete package of **new parking restrictions** had been approved.

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13. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Field said that at the Council's AGM it had been agreed to **increase the Cabinet posts** from 7 to 8, the additional one having special responsibility for Bexhill matters. The **new Council Chairman is Cllr Mrs Hughes with Cllr Jenkins as the Vice Chairman.**

Cllr Davies spoke about forthcoming **housing plans** and the Council's relationship with Amicus Horizon. She mentioned that the Housing Association is now working to new national standards set by the Housing Association Regulator, the Tenant Services Authority. Amicus Horizon will be bidding for over £3.5m of social housing grant to build new homes over the next four years. She also reported a Cabinet discussion about the Local Development Scheme which, among many other things, had dealt with a protocol relating to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

14. Report from the Police

PCSO Chris Dewitt was welcomed to the meeting. Notwithstanding the promise that they would receive individually copies of the weekly **Crime Reports** it appeared that Councillors were not yet receiving them. PCSO Dewitt will report back accordingly. The usual **parking problems** were then raised including the loading bay and people abusing the general 20 minute limit. Cllr Mrs Kiloh also highlighted parking on the double yellow lines in Mount Street outside the Baptist Church. PCSO Dewitt acknowledged the difficulties and said that, within the resources available, the Police were doing their best to keep on top of the problem. Whilst monitoring the loading bay would continue to be a priority constant checking of abuse of the 20 minute limit was simply not possible. However, he will report back on the Council's continuing concerns.

15. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 25 April and 9 May were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted. Regarding the discussion with **Rother Planners** which had immediately followed the meeting he said that this had focussed mainly on the process for **identifying development sites** rather than discussing individual sites themselves. Although Netherfield will be the subject of a separate discussion these will be coordinated with those for the town itself. In the course of the discussion it had emerged that the exercise will identify potential travellers' sites. Confirmation of progress with the link road has opened new options in this regard.

16. Minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 1 May were reported by Cllr Kiloh and noted. Regarding options for **reducing street lighting** she invited Members to support the recommendation that the Services Committee should carry out a review. Member noted that this topic had received divided opinion at the recent Parish Assembly. Cllr Mrs Kiloh acknowledged this and confirmed that any review would involve a public consultation and that all options would need to be thoroughly explored including appropriate research. Whilst the Police had expressed concerns at the Parish Assembly Members were clear that any input that they make must be evidence based. Cllr Mrs Kiloh noted these points and, subject to them, **proposed that the Services Committee carry out a review with particular reference to energy consumption. This was seconded by Cllr Ms Neill and agreed unanimously.**

17. Report Back from Parish Assembly

Whilst it was generally accepted that the Assembly had gone well Cllr Harris had serious reservations about the lack of an opportunity for the **County and District Councillors** to give an **oral report**. Similarly, the **Town Council Chairman** should be given such an opportunity. The inclusion of a **guest speaker** was broadly welcomed, as was the initiative to invite **local groups** to have a table display. The fact that very few **young people attend** continues to be of concern and some felt that opportunities may exist for the increased use of social media to access young people. Whilst the promotion of the Assembly through the Town Council's **Annual Report** was also supported, Cllr Mrs Fisher felt that many people fail to read it not least because the print is not bold enough.

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District Cllr Dixon endorsed the thought that County and District Councillors should be given the chance to speak and also felt that they could contribute to the **planning of the event**.

Two points of detail – the **town flag** should be displayed in future and a **banner** promoting the event should be placed in **Netherfield**.

18. Localism Seminar

Cllrs Harris and Jessop reported on the SALC Seminar held on 20 April. Whilst it was useful to be kept in touch with issues flowing from the Localism Act not a lot new had been learned. However, it had been helpful in confirming the understanding of how things are progressing. Cllr Harris had been particularly impressed by the commitment to “localism” expressed in a presentation by the Communities and Local Government Minister.

Regarding two specific matters, firstly, Members agreed that the Council should seek to obtain the new “General Power of Competence”. They acknowledged that this will involve the Clerk in undertaking a further training module. Secondly, Members noted that although the old Code of Conduct is being repealed a similar replacement Code is being compiled by all the local authorities across East Sussex for their use which will, in due course, be recommended to Town and Parish Councils. An outstanding matter to be resolved is that regulations to be made under the Localism Act have yet to define what will in future be known as “disclosable pecuniary interests”.

19. Priorities for Policy Reviews

As agreed in reviewing Standing Orders Council had set a requirement that at each AGM the priority for reviewing policies would be discussed. On this occasion it was agreed to invite F&GP to take the lead. However, Cllr Bye suggested that **health and safety policy** should be a priority item.

20. List of Payments & Receipts was noted.

21. Reports from Representatives of the Council

- Cllr Harris
- had attended the **SALC Localism Conference**;
 - opened the **Church Hall extension**;
 - attended a **Senlac Scouts Church Service**;
 - had chaired the latest **Battle in Bloom Committee** meeting;
 - presented the awards for one of the legs of the **1066 Relay**;
 - installed the **window display** in Holland & Harpers to promote this year’s **Battle in Bloom event**;
 - presented **Jubilee commemorative mugs** at **Netherfield and Battle & Langton Schools**;
- Cllr Palmer
- referred to the latest **Marketing Group meeting** and gave a brief demonstration of the new 1066 app;
- Cllr Jessop
- had also attended the **Localism Seminar**;
 - the **BLAP AGM** and subsequent **Steering Group** meeting;
 - the **Chamber President’s Night**;
 - various **Battle’s Big Event** and **Scarecrow Festival** meetings;
- Cllr Ms Neill
- had also attended the **Church extension opening**;
- Cllr Wilson
- the **Scouts Executive Committee** meeting;
 - a **Guides** meeting;
 - the **BLAP AGM**;

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- Cllr Mrs Kiloh - the **Battle in Bloom Committee** meeting;
- a **Beautiful Battle Committee** meeting at which the need for a watering rota for the plant display in the courtyard was mentioned. Volunteers were requested;
- Cllr Mrs Fisher - the **Church extension opening**;
- accompanied Cllr Harris in **presenting** the **Jubilee mugs at the primary schools**;
- Cllr Boryer - the **Netherfield Village Hall AGM**. He mentioned that Amicus Horizon are providing funding towards the cost of improved heating;
- Cllr Mrs Pry - the **Netherfield Village Hall AGM**;
- Cllr Bye - the **2011 Guiding Review** in Eastbourne.

22. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Harris was sad to report the **death of Ernie Morris**, the Council's former grave digger. The cremation will be on 30 May at 2pm.

21. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 19 June 2012

The meeting closed at 9.02pm.

R BYE
Chairman

