



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of a SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2012 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Mrs M Kiloh - Chairman
Cllrs C Bishop, Mrs M Howell, Ms J Ormonde-Butler, M Palmer
and D Wilson.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs R Bye, J Eldridge and Mrs S Pry.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** - None.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** held on 2 October 2012. Cllr Bishop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Wilson. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

Although the minutes of the previous meeting were a correct record, the Clerk said that the figure of £2700 reported under item 6 as potential **income from the Watch Oak allotments** was an error. A more accurate figure is £1000.

Regarding **tree surveys**, as reported in the minutes of the latest Estates Committee meeting, Cllr Carter hopes to update a report compiled in 2005 early in the new year. Should he not be able to do so the Clerk had received an indication that the cost of contracting out this work would be about £20 per hour.

The repairs to the **bus shelter outside the Abbey pub** have been completed and the full cost recovered from the bus company's insurers.

5. **Correspondence & Communications** - None

6. **Allotments**

Cllr Wilson had **inspected all plots** at the end of September and the details have now been incorporated into a running report form recording the letting date of each plot, its condition at each inspection and when a "poor condition" letter is sent. As reported at the previous meeting the **general condition of plots** had deteriorated this year and, on receiving the annual rent demand, a number of plot holders at Cherry Gardens, Virgins Croft and Netherfield Hill have chosen not to renew. All those on the waiting list have now been written to but even if every one of these takes a plot there will still be vacancies. Cllr Wilson agreed to undertake a further inspection before the next Committee meeting at which point the situation can be reviewed and action taken to promote the **availability of plots**.

So far as **Watch Oak** is concerned following the **measuring exercise** the Clerk had written to all plot holders reporting the results. In most cases this had confirmed that the size of plots is larger than indicated in the records provided by Rother and that, in terms of their charging regime based on simply whether a plot is small or large, most would be re-categorised as large and therefore subject to a higher rent. However, as an incentive to enter into a new agreement with the Town Council the Clerk had indicated what the rent would be based on the actual size of the plot and several have already taken up this offer. He will write again in February to repeat the offer.

7. **Street Lighting and Street Furniture**

Cllr Mrs Kiloh reported a further **meeting with the maintenance contractor** the main purpose of which had been to see how the Council can most economically combine the programme of

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repairs with work to adapt lights to a “**part night**” **operating** regime. Although the Council’s budget for next year has yet to be finalised the contractor has been advised that a figure of £25,000 might be available. The contractor’s advice will be needed to assist further budget discussions and the Clerk was asked to chase this up.

So far as the move to “part night” lighting is concerned we are working with the County Council who will be coordinating arrangements for a public information meeting in January. The Clerk confirmed that the prominent article on this subject in the latest newsletter had not produced any negative responses.

The Dean had raised the question of **responsibility for the light outside the Church Hall**. As an interim arrangement the Clerk had organised for it to be repaired but for the Church to meet the cost. This had led to follow up correspondence. In researching the background the Clerk had found the minutes of a Street Lighting Committee back in 1978 when the matter first came up and the Council declined to accept responsibility. A copy of those minutes have been sent to the Dean.

8. Cemetery

Although Cllr Mrs Kiloh still wished to develop an overall **management plan** for the cemetery this had been overtaken by issues relating to the **cemetery extension**. This has thrown up the fact that before anything else can happen the Council will need to provide the Environment Agency with a risk assessment in terms of any impact on ground water. Guidance on this has been received from the Environment Agency which indicates that the sequence of events needs to begin with what they refer to as a tier 1 assessment. Although part of this work can be a desk study, it inevitably requires some field work and perhaps even boreholes. Potential consultants to carry out this study have been identified and an indicative cost obtained. £3000 has already been included in the draft budget for next year but to enable a degree of flexibility **Cllr Wilson proposed that Council be recommended to let a contract for this work up to a maximum cost of £3500. This was seconded by Cllr Palmer and agreed unanimously.**

9. Budget Report 2012-13 and 3 Year Plan

The Clerk had circulated his latest report as attached. The main differences from the previous one reflect small savings on maintenance at the allotments and cemetery but a reduction in allotments income. Although the forecast still includes a figure of £10,000 for cemetery fee income current receipts are still well behind those required to achieve this figure. With this in mind **Cllr Bishop, seconded by Cllr Palmer proposed that Council be invited to reduce the currently proposed budget figure from £17,000 to £12,000. This was agreed unanimously.** Looking ahead Cllr Mrs Kiloh had circulated a note about the 3 year plan underlining the importance of examining all activities to see whether they are still appropriate and whether they should be expanded or contracted.

10. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items

The agenda for the next meeting should include a **review of the budget**. The Clerk said that each Committee will also be looking at its **terms of reference** and an update of the **risk assessment**.

In the light of an increasing number of complaints the Clerk was asked to pursue the responsibility for **lighting in the Market Square**.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 26 February 2013

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

CLLR MRS M KILOH
Chairman

