



# Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
held ON TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2017 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), J Boryer, P Fisher, M Howell and R Jessop.

In attendance: Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs D Furness and J Gyngell.
- 2. Disclosure of Interest** – None.
- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 3 October 2017** were approved by Members and duly signed by Cllr Favell.

#### **4. Matters arising from previous meetings, not on this agenda**

The Clerk reported:

- that staff had confirmed that the recreation ground car park had become congested again. Members agreed that the car park should be closed between 8am and 10am Monday to Friday, within requirements of the Guide Hall hire;
- that the Parchment Trust plan to visit Guild Shaw and will produce a proposal to the Committee;
- the provision of a kissing gate and footpath repair at FP87 has been undertaken by ESCC;
- the purchase and distribution of padlocks and keys for the Watch Oak allotment site has been completed;
- the castle-themed play equipment is almost finished – awaiting the horse springers.

#### **5. Correspondence & Communications**

A communication had been received from street light contractor advising of holes developing in 2 columns. He feels that there may be more and that he will undertake a survey to confirm. In the meantime the Committee should be aware that each replacement will cost in the region of £2000.

#### **6. Allotments**

**a)** The **current vacancies** were noted as: Cherry Gardens – 4; Netherfield Hill – 1 (expression of interest outstanding); Virgins Croft – 4; Watch Oak – 12 (with possibly one more not renewing).

**b)** The **Action Plan for Allotments** was noted.

**c)** The **Senlac Allotment Association AGM minutes** had been circulated. Members were pleased to note the success of improved inspections and joint working.

**d)** Members discussed the **boundary and access issues** and agreed:

- that the Ash trees at Cherry Gardens should be removed, if safe to do so;
- all sheds not within the plot areas must be removed as and when unsafe;
- all new sheds must be within confines of plot;
- a letter to the owner of the shed at Netherfield Hill confirming the Council's preference for this to be placed on her own allotment plot;
- subject to agreement of plot holders, a communal shed and compost area by the trees could be provided by the tenants at Netherfield Hill.

#### **7. Cemetery**

**a)** The **Action Plan for the Cemetery** was noted.

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b) The Clerk confirmed that 4 quotes had been requested with 2 received to date for the **Cemetery lane repairs/resurfacing**. Cllr Boryer suggested that a cost for hot tar and chipping should be sought as an option. **Members agreed to delegate authority to the Clerk to place an appropriate order for this work at a maximum cost of £8,500 from the PWLB budget.**

c) Cllr Favell reported that, once repairs have been carried out to the Ceremonies room doors, the **Friends of Battle Cemetery group** will meet on an afternoon to attract more visitors.

d) The Clerk reported a request for kerbstones in the new **children's cemetery**. Members noted that Regulation 14 and 18 confirm that only headstones of appropriate sizes are permitted and that kerbstones would not reflect the design and ease of maintenance for the new cemetery.

## 8. Recreation Grounds

a) The **Action Plan for the Recreation Grounds** was noted. The Clerk was asked to contact Steve Scott for an update on progress on fundraising.

b) Cllr Favell reported that neither she or Cllr Gyngell were able to make the latest meeting of the **Recreation Grounds Working Group** with representatives of Battle Baptist Football Club(BBFC) and Battle Health Pathway(BHP). The Clerk reported that both groups are happy to progress the Pavilion upgrade, café proposal and health pathway as one project for the benefit of the community. She highlighted the items that required Council consideration. Members agreed:

- that a separate electricity supply for the pavilion and café should be installed;
- **to recommend to Full Council that a 10yr license, in principle, be granted to BBFC;**
- to request a revised cost for architect's fees for an extended Pavilion only and that the cost should be shared with BBFC;
- the café could be called "community area" for funding purposes.

c) A report from the Senior Traffic & Safety Officer of East Sussex County Council relating to **road crossing provision at Telham Playing Field** had indicated that this was not a viable project. **Members agreed that the £10k set aside for play areas should remain in the recreation facilities EMR.** Cllr Boryer highlighted the lack of play equipment at the Rother District Council site at Netherfield. The Committee agreed to place tripartite discussions with RDC and Optivo to improve the facilities at Netherfield on the Action Plan.

d) The Committee were happy to accept the **2<sup>nd</sup> Battle Rainbows offer of bird boxes** for installing on trees at the recreation ground. It was agreed that photographs should be taken of this for the newsletter.

e) **Battle Baptist Football Club** had proposed sharing the cost of a **defibrillator at the recreation ground** as a higher risk area. They would be able to source one through a specialist Football organisation at a cost of £382. **Cllr Jessop emphasised the importance of this equipment and agreed to pay Council's half share.** Members thanked Cllr Jessop for his very kind offer.

f) The Clerk reported that there had been **essential repairs to the doors at the Pavilion.**

g) **The Conservation Volunteers to plant free tree saplings with rabbit guards and bamboo canes @ £250 per day** had been passed from BHP. The Committee asked the Clerk to apply for the free tree saplings for the recreation ground and cemetery hedges for Council staff to plant.

## 9. Street Furniture & Lighting

a) The **Action Plan for Street Furniture & Lighting** was noted. Cllr Favell apologised that the condition survey or benches had not been undertaken.

b) A local resident had requested a **timing adjustment on lights in Marley Lane** to allow for the last train arrival. The street light contractor had confirmed that this would require a backward conversion at a cost of £2,424 plus an increase in ongoing energy charges. Members agreed that the cost could not justify this action as there are footpaths both sides of the road to help ensure safety from traffic.

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c) The Clerk reported **vehicle damage to column 259 Wellington Gardens** has resulted in the insurance company requesting additional quotes for work. A list is being compiled of contractors for non-urgent works.

## 10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

a) The **Action Plan for the remainder of BTC's Estate** was noted.

b) Cllr Favell had circulated a report on a meeting at the **Amenity Field** with Keith Datchler(KD) who had recommended the area be cut with arisings deposited to the side of the field. The Clerk had obtained two quotes, only one in writing. Members were reminded that part of the perimeter also required flailing. **The Committee agreed that the area should be cut and flailed at a maximum cost of £1000 from the Tree work budget (4390).** KD had additionally suggested that fencing, with an application to Sussex Lund to pay for this, be provided to enable sheep grazing as a preferred option for wild flower meadows. However, the response from East Sussex County Council indicated that a permanent fence would not be acceptable within the terms of the Agreement.

c) The Clerk reminded the Committee that the Rotary Club of Battle had agreed to sponsor a tub on the Abbey Green but had rescinded the offer when English Heritage refused the scheme. However, they have agreed to donate £350 on condition that an **A4 sponsorship sign** will be erected on the planter. Members felt that this would be inappropriate and not in keeping with the existing A5 sponsorship signs. The Clerk was asked to suggest that the RCoB be asked to consider an A5 sign.

d/e) Cllr Boryer had suggested that the Council consider a **joint project with Plumpton College for Woodland Skills Course** that could be beneficial in managing areas such as Mansers Shaw, Amenity Field and possibly the Cemetery. The Clerk reported that she had contacted Plumpton College and was awaiting a response. In addition to this, it had been confirmed that there is a legal requirement for the support member during **aerial tree work** to be trained in Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue. It has therefore been suggested to F&GP that an apprentice be considered for both succession planning and training reasons. Members agreed that both these proposals should be encouraged and the Clerk was asked to pursue.

f) The Clerk reported that she had met with the tenant farmer to discuss the issue of cattle escaping. Mr Wheatland had identified two areas of fencing that is being deliberately cut and damaged to enable access to land. **Members agreed to supply additional signage in Mansers Shaw in keeping with existing.**

g) **Battle Bonfire Boyes** have requested permission to **install oak posts to provide safety barrier on bonfire night** on the footpath near Guild Shaw. **Members agreed to this request.**

## 11. Financial Matters

a) The **budget report at 31 October 2017** was noted, as attached.

b) The Clerk reported that **Non-domestic Rate demands for the Cemetery backdated to 2015** had been received in the sum of £13,489.51. A hold on the demand has been agreed by RDC for 2 weeks while an **appeal is in progress.** The Clerk confirmed that the Chapel is exempt but that all the land is rateable; although part of the area currently being charged is not Council owned and forms part of the appeal. The Clerk was asked to clarify if land already used should be included in the charge. The final agreed cost will need to be taken from the PWLB budget.

c) Two quotes for the legal work necessary to **transfer the section of land from Coultershaw to the Town Council** had been obtained. **Members agreed that the services of Herington Solicitors should be engaged at a cost of £600.**

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## **12. Matters for information / future agenda items**

Cllr Favell reported that water storing gel granules had been recommended at the recent Resilience Conference and the Clerk was asked to research the cost and effectiveness with a view to these ~~are~~ being included in all hanging baskets and tubs to reduce both water and work staff time.

## **13. Date of next meeting:** 6 February 2017

There being no further business the meeting closed 9.15pm.

Cllr G Favell  
Chairman