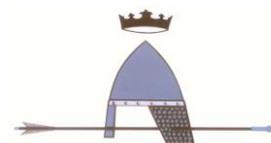




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 18 June 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs J Boryer, J Carter, J Eldridge, Mrs P Fisher, D Furness,
Mrs J Gyngell, Mrs M Howell, R Jessop, Mrs M Kiloh,
Ms J Ormonde-Butler, Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

Without consultation with the Council, the **Police** had very recently **invited residents to attend the meeting** as if it were part of the standard arrangements for consulting with residents about **policing priorities**. PCSO Karen Hayes apologised for this confusion but spoke briefly about the current focus on parking and speeding issues which had recently resulted in the issue of 45 parking tickets and responses to 10 calls about parking problems a number of which had related to North Trade Road. On speeding she confirmed that the SID machine is regularly deployed, supported by police patrols. The latter had resulted in a number of tickets being issued.

With no other suggestions from either the public or Council Members it was agreed that parking and speeding should continue to be the priorities.

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1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs C Bishop, R Harris, Ms M-L Neill and M Palmer.
 2. **Disclosure of Interest** – None.

Members were reminded of the need to keep their **Register of Interests** up to date and of the rules relating to the **disclosure of interests** at meetings.

3. **Minutes of the Council Meeting** held on 21 May 2013. Cllr Jessop asked that the minutes be amended in relation to item 19 to make clear that he had abstained in the vote relating to the proposed Community Event. Subject to this, Cllr Carter proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Furness. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings** – None.

5. Police Matters

Members had received the usual **crime updates for May/June** and no questions were raised.

Cllr Furness reminded the meeting of the Council's responsibilities under section 17 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1998. This section makes it the responsibility of various statutory agencies, including local authorities, for reducing crime and disorder. In order to better acknowledge this responsibility and to gain more detailed information about crime and disorder in the area **Cllr Furness suggested that the Council re-establish its membership of the Safer Rother Partnership**. In addition he felt that it would be helpful for the Neighbourhood Police Inspector to be invited to full Council meetings on a quarterly basis to enable informed discussion on current crime. Cllr Furness formally proposed this action which was seconded by Cllr Mrs Kiloh and agreed unanimously. Cllr Bye proposed that Cllr Furness should therefore be the Council's representative on the Safer Rother Partnership. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Fisher and agreed unanimously.

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6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field said that the new arrangements, with no party in overall control, are settling in well. The main activity in recent weeks had been the first round of **Scrutiny Committee** meetings. In response to a question from Cllr Boryer about the way in which **pothole repairs** are prioritised Cllr Field acknowledged that focussing on the large holes requiring urgent action, without attending to less significant problems nearby, may not appear cost effective. However, such a priority system is essential to ensure that urgent work is dealt with as quickly as possible.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies' report highlighted a **land swap** between **Rother and the County Council**. In return for land required for the **Bexhill-Hastings link road** County had given the former **Bexhill High School site** adjoining the Bexhill Leisure Centre. This offers the potential to provide a new leisure centre and £30k has been allocated for a feasibility study. This will look at the option of incorporating a swimming pool. Town Councillors were disappointed that such a facility would continue to be difficult to access by Battle residents.

Cllr Dixon confirmed that the **Chief Executive post** has now been deleted and that Derek Stevens will be leaving in early August. In response to questions he gave a reassurance that the short term cost of the senior staff changes being made would be offset by savings within a twelve month period.

The **Tourism Working group** is making proposals which will reduce the cost of the **TIC operation**; make savings in the cost of **Rye guides** and divert £9k towards developing **events**.

The application to allow the **mobile home at Beeches Brook** to remain permanently is recommended for approval.

The debate at the **Standards Committee** had considered the distinction between **Councillors** acting in their capacity as an **elected Member and as private individuals**. The Committee had concluded that the separation could never be absolute and, on occasions could be unclear. However, there would be circumstances in which private behaviour could legitimately affect an individual's public office due to its impact on the reputation or integrity of the organisation concerned.

Regarding the **Core Strategy** and **housing site allocations** the availability of the 2011 census data may now be helpful.

Finally, he summarised the outcome of the latest debate regarding **local governance for Bexhill** which included a decision not to pursue the establishment of a town council as the cost would outweigh the benefits, and to withdraw support for the town forum.

8. Correspondence & Communications

The Clerk confirmed the **invitation to the Annual Parish Conference** which will take place on 25 June at the Memorial Hall beginning at 1.45pm. Cllrs Mrs Kiloh and Ms Ormonde-Butler will attend together with the new Town Clerk.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22 May and 5 June were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted. He highlighted the discussion which had taken place at the meeting on 5 June regarding the identification of additional development sites.

10. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 June were reported by Cllr Bye and noted. The various recommendations were proposed and considered as follows:

- **Cllr Bye proposed the appointment of the Clerk and his successor as Responsible Finance Officer. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Kiloh and agreed unanimously;**

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- **Cllr Bye proposed the approval of 2012-13 accounts. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously;**
- Cllr Bye drew particular attention to the Governance Statement in Section 2 in the Annual Return highlighting the issue of risk assessment as recorded in the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting. A comprehensive exercise to carry out risk assessments relating to all the work of the Council had been undertaken during the year. With this in mind **Cllr Bye therefore proposed that a positive response should be given to all the Governance questions in Section 2 of the Annual Return; and that the Accounting Statement in Section 1 together with related Explanation of Variances between 2011-12 and 2012-13 be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously;**
- **Cllr Bye proposed the re-appointment of the internal auditors. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously;**
- **Cllr Bye proposed that the list of assets purchased on behalf of Beautiful Battle be agreed and that they be gifted. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.**

11. Community Event

Cllr Jessop proposed the motion that to ensure that the Council and its Members comply with current regulations in respect of expenditure the Council wishes to open the Community Event to be held in late July to all residents of the Battle Town area. Invitees already sent or about to be sent invitations will remain welcome. In doing so, and noting the Council's reliance on Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 as the legal basis for expenditure he argued that, at the upper limit agreed at the previous meeting, such expenditure would not satisfy the requirement to be commensurate with the benefit accruing to the area or its inhabitants. Cllr Mrs Fisher provided an update on the arrangements, including a latest estimate of total cost of about £600. In the light of this Cllr Jessop withdrew his motion.

12. Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 11 June were reported by Cllr Eldridge and noted.

13. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

14. Reports from Representatives of the Council

- Cllr Eldridge - had attended a recent meeting of the **Battle Museum Committee** at which the need for some building maintenance had been highlighted. He encouraged Members to visit the Museum to see an exceptionally interesting hoard of coins currently on loan;
- Cllr Jessop - said that the recent meeting of the **Chamber of Commerce** had essentially been a social one;
- Cllr Furness - speaking in his capacity as a **volunteer at the Museum**, fed back public comment and surprise that there is no public art or statue in the town to celebrate the events of 1066;
- Cllr Mrs Pry - had attended the **Bexhill Mayor-making** event and the **Rother Chairman's Civic Service**;

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Cllr Bye

- reported that at the latest meeting of the **Memorial Hall Committee** the good news had been received that bookings continue to rise.

15. Mayor's Engagements

During the past month he had attended the **launch of the promotional Visit Battle** video at Battle Abbey and had been present at the official opening of the **Cricket Club's new gate**.

16. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Eldridge felt that it would be helpful if a notice could be displayed to explain that the **mural on the library wall** has been removed for repainting.

Cllr Ms Ormonde-Butler drew attention to the fact that it is difficult to open the main **5-bar gate** into the **recreation ground**. She also asked whether the Council would be taking part in the **Summer Fair Carnival procession**. No formal invitation to participate has been received but Cllr Bye will get in touch with the Bonfire Boyes.

17. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 16 July 2013

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

CLLR R BYE
Chairman

