



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 21 August 2012 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs Pry – Chairman

ALSO: Cllrs J Boryer, J Eldridge, Mrs P Fisher, R Harris, Mrs M Howell,
R Jessop, R McDonald, A Mitchell, Ms M-L Neill,
M Palmer and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

No members of the public were present

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs C Bishop, R Bye, J Carter, Mrs T Farr and Mrs M Kiloh

2. Disclosure of Interest – None.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 July 2012. Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Wilson. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Clerk said that he is in touch with the various **property owners** responsible for the **twitten between the High Street and Mount Street car park** who have agreed to carry out a repair and redecoration programme.

Having agreed to take part in the forthcoming **Business Fair** the Council has been asked to take an advertisement in the related brochure at a cost of £50 for half a page. **Cllr Jessop proposed acceptance of this, seconded by Cllr Mrs Fisher and agreed unanimously.**

5. Police Matters

PC Jayne Cleverley was welcomed to the meeting. All present confirmed that they had received the weekly **crime updates**, and there were no matters arising. Cllr Wilson pointed out that **young people** are regularly gathering at the **recreation ground** late at night often leaving litter, including empty alcohol bottles.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field had sent her apologies. There was no report

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllrs Field and Davies had sent their apologies.

Cllr Dixon spoke about the recent debate regarding the letting of a **grounds maintenance contract** and progress with the **refuse and recycling contract** under which a revised recycling regime will be phased in during 2014. Further discussions about the identification of potential **travellers' sites** had been deferred pending site inspections. Public consultation will therefore be delayed. The next **Planning Committee** meeting will be considering the applications relating to the enlargement of a riding area at **Campfield, Powdermill Lane**, the retention of the mobile home at **Beeches Brook** and the new **Methodist Church in Harrier Lane**. Regarding Beeches Brook the recommendation is to

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grant full permission which appears to be at odds with the proposal to include it in the consultation paper about possible travellers' sites.

8. Correspondence & Communications

Members noted the invitations to:

- The **Annual Parish Conference** on 13 September at the Memorial Hall
- The **Annual meeting with the County Council** on 17 September at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne
- The **Battle of Britain Anniversary Service** at St Mary's Church on 16 September.

A letter had been received from **Battle for Tennis** about plans to install rebound fences on the tennis courts at the recreation ground and Claverham Community College. Although the burden of the letter was to ask the Town Council to act as properly constituted body for the purpose of holding funds raised by Battle for Tennis, members were more concerned about the implications of a rebound fence in terms of the wear and tear on the recently refurbished courts and general management control. The matter was referred to the Estates Committee to pursue these issues in more detail.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18 July and 1 and 16 August

were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted. He highlighted the very useful meeting with **Rother planners about site allocations**. Members also noted that the Examination of the **District Council Draft Core Strategy** by an independent inspector will begin on 6 November. Cllr Harris queried whether the Town Council should make representations but was assured by Cllr Jessop that the previous discussions with Rother had reached satisfactory outcomes on all matters.

10. Street Lighting

Cllr Wilson presented a report following the Services Committee review of options for changing the street lighting regime. The report covered concerns about increases in crime and road accidents, environmental benefits and potential energy cost savings. The research had taken two forms. Firstly, a paper based review of reports from other local authorities where changes to the street lighting regime had been made. These were primarily County Councils where responsibility for street lighting rested fully with them throughout the area. In all cases there was no evidence of increased crime or car accidents and there had been significant environmental and cost benefits. Locally, the County Council is now rolling out a programme which has already seen part night lighting introduced in Heathfield, Crowborough, Seaford & Uckfield. The Rother area is now under review.

The second element of the Committee's research had been a meeting with the Council's maintenance contractor to consider technical issues. This concluded that the simplest and most cost effective change would be to move to part night lighting across the board with lights being switched off between midnight and 5.30am. This would reduce energy costs by 40% and repay the investment over about 3 years. Such a change would not prejudice future opportunities for savings as and when changes in lighting technology occur. If this proposal goes ahead the plan would be to introduce it area by area as repairs to the lighting columns themselves are prioritised.

Members noted the report and, whilst some had reservations about making any changes, agreed that the matter should be put to public consultation but fully supported by factual data. The Communications Committee was asked to consider the best method of consultation which, ideally, should be in liaison with whatever similar process is adopted by the County Council.

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11. Code of Conduct

Following the previous meeting the Clerk had circulated a revised draft Code, Register of Interest Form and Guidance Notes issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. He had additionally proposed consequential amendments to the Council's Standing Orders. **Cllr Jessop proposed adoption of the documents as circulated, including the amendments to Standing Order 25 and the deletion of Standing Order 49. This was seconded by Cllr Ms Neil and agreed unanimously.** Copies of the approved documents are attached.

Members were reminded of the need to complete the Register of Interest form and return to the Clerk within 28 days.

12. Flooding in George Meadow

Subsequent to the report given to the Estates Committee on 26 June, the Clerk had alerted all Council members by e-mail to the ongoing problem and the lack of identification by South East Water of any cause. Members had agreed that the Council should initiate its own investigations and, if necessary, resolve the issue by inserting a new drain to take the water away. At that stage the estimated cost was £4,000. The investigation had discovered a blocked drain which may once have captured water from a ditch, long since filled in. A new drain has therefore been inserted to by-pass this drain which had been immediately effective. The final cost, including investigation and landscaping, is £4,500. **Cllr Ms Neil proposed that retrospective approval be given to the final cost and that single tender action also be approved on the ground of urgency and the fact that the chosen contractor had previously carried out work for the Council, won in competition. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Pry and agreed unanimously.**

13. Town Crier

At the request of Cllr Jessop, the agenda had included a proposal that the Council should appoint a Town Crier. There were consequential and related proposals. Cllr Jessop underlined that Battle is an historic town and, as such, it would be perfectly appropriate to appoint a Town Crier, to be under the control of the Clerk with the principal role of promoting civic and community events. However, Cllr Harris was doubtful about the need for such a formal appointment particularly if it would have cost implications in terms of acquiring costume etc. He also queried Cllr Jessop's suggestion that, if an appointment were to be made, candidates should already have made a contribution to the town in a voluntary capacity. The key attribute would be to have the necessary personality. With opinion divided, **Cllr Ms Neill proposed that the whole issue be referred to the Communications Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Mitchell and agreed unanimously.**

14. Councillor Training

Cllr Mrs Pry said that those who had attended the 2 "in-house" sessions already held, on 24 July and 14 August, had found them very useful and informative. She hoped that more Members would make themselves available for the next session on 13 November. The Clerk announced the next round of formal training being organised locally by SALC. On 22 September at Leeford Place there will be a Councillors briefing and update session and a separate Chairmanship course. Members were asked to let the Clerk know if they wish to attend.

15. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

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16. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Cllrs Bye, Harris, Wilson, Mrs Pry, Jessop, Mrs Fisher and Mrs Kiloh had all attended the Battle in Bloom awards evening.

- Cllr Jessop - had circulated a comprehensive report including attendance at a meeting of the **Rother Local Strategic Partnership** and the **District Council Services Scrutiny Committee**;
- Cllr Boryer - had attended a meeting with **Rother Planners** about **site allocations in Netherfield**;
- Cllr Harris - had met **the judges** prior to the **South & South East in Bloom** inspection and escorted them on their tour;
- Cllr Mrs Howell - attended the latest **Muddy Boots** meeting at which a range of voluntary groups had reported on their current activities;
- Cllr Mrs Fisher - had attended a meeting with **Rother Planners** about **site allocations in Battle**;
- Cllr Ms Neill - was disappointed to have to report that a **planned footpaths walk had not gone ahead** due to lack of support. Efforts will be made to rearrange, perhaps on a Sunday afternoon;
- Cllr Mrs Pry - had also attended the **Netherfield site allocations meeting** and took part in the meeting with the **street lighting maintenance contractor**;
- Cllr Bye - in his absence had submitted a note that he had met with the **South & South East in Bloom judges** before and after their tour of the town.

17. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr McDonald announced that he would be stepping down as a Councillor in order to continue his studies at Brighton University. All present thanked him for his service and wished him well.

18. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 18 September 2012

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

CLLR MRS PRY
Chairman

