



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 20 March 2012 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Harris – Chairman

ALSO: Cllrs J Boryer, R Bye, Mrs P Fisher, Mrs M Howell, R Jessop,
Mrs M Kiloh, R McDonald, Ms M-L Neill, Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

No members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr J Carter, J Eldridge, Mrs T Farr.

Cllr A Mitchell was absent.

2. Disclosure of Interest – Cllrs Boryer and Mrs Pry declared a personal and prejudicial interest in part of item 11 as members of DDARA.

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21 February 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

Confirmation of the agenda for the forthcoming **Localism Conference** had been received, which includes a substantial part dedicated to Neighbourhood Planning. Cllrs Harris, Jessop and the Clerk will attend.

Cllr Harris reminded Members of the background to the **grant** to the **Town Band**, including the offer of a Community Grant from the District Council conditional on funding being provided by the Town Council. He had now met with the Band at their recent AGM and better understood how they operate and cover their costs. In large part all costs and expenses are recovered through charging fees to perform at various events. Exceptionally, fees are waived for special parades such as Remembrance Day. In terms of local performances they hold concerts in the Memorial Hall for which tickets are sold. Returning to the conditions attached to the Rother grant offer all present shared the view of Cllr Harris that it is improper for the District Council to impose such conditions without any discussion with Town and Parish Councils either in terms of general policy or individual cases. Cllr Field will take this up with the Chief Executive.

Further formal contact with **Claverham Community College** is awaited though Cllr Mrs Pry drew attention to the various activities reported under item 9 of the recent Communications Committee minutes.

Cllr Harris confirmed that he would be meeting with officers from the **District Council** the following evening to pursue issues relating to the **purchase of the car parks**.

As agreed at the previous meeting Cllr Harris had written to the Leader of the **District Council** about the lack of **snow clearance** in the car parks. The reply had indicated that clearance work had been prioritised across the district but that with limited resources it had not been possible to clear every car park as quickly as might be wished. Nevertheless the Mount Street car park had been one of the first car parks to be treated. The reply had acknowledged the desirability of improving performance in clearing the footpath between the Mount Street car park and the High Street.

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5. Police Matters

The **PCSO's report for February** and the latest **Crime Updates** were noted. No matters arose.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field said that things are now settling down following the agreement of the budget. Good progress is being made with the **broadband project**. There is a possibility that the Chancellor's budget statement on 21 March may give some indication of whether the **link road** will progress and how it might be funded.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Dixon had sent his apologies.

Cllr Davies drew attention to the recent Cabinet decision about **Community Grants**. She had not been present during the discussion of this subject under item 4 and was therefore reminded of the Town Council's concern about being required to contribute to schemes to which the District Council gives its financial support. Cllr Davies will take up these concerns. She also drew attention to the latest rumours about further **unlawful development at the Greenacres site**.

8. Correspondence & Communications

Extracts from the latest **SALC Newsletter** had been circulated updating Members on 2 issues arising from the Localism Act. The first is the proposed revocation of the Power of Wellbeing, to be replaced by a general Power of Competence. Secondly, consequential changes to the Code of Conduct arising from the abolition of the Standards Board for England. A new model Code is being prepared by NALC which the Council will be invited to adopt in due course.

Local traders are planning to hold a **Diamond Jubilee 'street party'** on the Abbey Green on 5 June. The management of this needs to be considered in the context of the general prohibition of using the Abbey Green for "café style" activities. However, bearing in mind the exceptional nature of the event Council agreed that whilst local pubs and restaurants should not trade directly on the Green activities such as a hog roast could be permitted.

The **4 Churches** have come together to organise a **Diamond Jubilee lunch** on 27 May and wish to use the recreation ground for this purpose. This was agreed.

The **Dean of Battle** has issued an invitation to all Council Members to attend the **opening of the new Church extension** on 22 April at 10.30am.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 29 February and 14 March were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted.

10. Minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 1 March were reported by Cllr Mrs Kiloh and noted. Cllr Boryer reminded the meeting of the commitment to replace the yellow sodium lights at the top of Netherfield Hill.

11. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6 March. These were presented by Cllr Harris who drew attention to the following matters. Firstly, to note the revised **investment arrangements** and the report of the meeting with **Rother's Devolution Working Group**. Regarding the latter Cllr Harris highlighted the fact that the freehold disposal of an asset by the District Council would mean that it would have

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to go on the open market. The negotiations about the possible purchase of the car parks would need to take account of this. Secondly, the numerous recommendations for consideration by Council. The following were reported and taken together:

- **Request for grant from Methodist Church**
- **Request for grant of £50 from DDARA**
- **Potential overspend in 2012-13 budget**
- **Delegated authority to acquire replacement tractor and trailer**
- **Revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**
- **Appointment of Internal auditor**

Cllrs Boryer and Mrs Pry repeated their personal and prejudicial interest in the second of these items.

Noting the terms of the recommendations made by F&GP **Cllr Ms Neill proposed that they all be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed unanimously.**

Regarding the potential overspend in next year's budget the Clerk said that, since the F&GP meeting, an offer to lease the vacant office space had been received. The quotes for the children's playground fencing are also lower than expected. In this respect, and in order to minimise further delay, he suggested that Council approval be given to accept the lowest tender subject to the estimates being examined at the forthcoming Estates Committee meeting. **Cllr Wilson proposed acceptance of this recommendation. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Pry and agreed unanimously.**

In the light of the discussion at F&GP, the Clerk had prepared a **draft training strategy paper**. This would need to form the basis of the relevant section of the submission for Quality Council reaccreditation. Reservations were expressed about exactly how the Council would evaluate any future progress. Cllr Harris and the Clerk will review the draft document in attempt to accommodate this point and also to re-present it based on the guidance from NALC.

12. Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 13 March were reported by Cllr Mrs Pry and noted. On **marketing issues** Cllr Palmer added that at a recent meeting of the 1066 Country Board progress regarding the development of an iphone app was reported. Regarding the new **satellite information point** to be located at Yesterday's World posters and flyers are now being distributed widely though the necessary signing may not be in place before the opening.

The new **flag** had arrived and was displayed. It was agreed that this should be formally unfurled and raised before the next Council meeting at 7.15pm.

13. Car Park Charges

The response from Rother referred to under item 4 had also covered the issue of the increase in car park charges. Cllr Jessop referred to these increases in the context of the overall rates of increase for the services and facilities provided by the District Council, highlighting that those for the Market Square car park are considerably greater. **He therefore proposed the motion that "Battle Town Council condemns the disproportionate increase in car park charges in Market Square imposed upon its residents by the unjustified percentage increases adopted by Rother District Council when setting charges". This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Kiloh and agreed by a majority.**

14. Vacancy

The applicant seeking co-option had written to set out the basis on which he would be available to carry out Council duties. In the light of this **Cllr Wilson proposed that Clive Bishop be co-opted. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed unanimously.**

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15. Community Awards

Cllr Harris proposed that in view of the confidential nature of the business new Standing Order 3(a) should be adopted and that the public and press should be excluded. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.

Cllr Harris reminded the meeting that more than one Award could be made but expressed his view that, unless there were 2 exceptional nominations, only one Award should be made. He proposed accordingly. This was seconded by Cllr Ms Neill and agreed unanimously. Various nominations were discussed and it was agreed to make a single Award and also a Young Persons Award.

16. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

17. Reports from Representatives of the Council

- Cllr Bye - had attended a meeting of the **Memorial Hall Committee**;
- Cllr Mrs Fisher - had attended a meeting of the **Battle Charities** and invited Members to alert her if they become aware of potential hardship cases;
- Cllr Mrs Kiloh - had attended a **Battle in Bloom Group** meeting;
- Cllr McDonald - had attended several **Big Event** meetings. He will liaise with Cllr Jessop and produce a spreadsheet of activities already agreed to be attached to these minutes;
- had attended a **Museum Committee** meeting;
- Cllr Jessop - as mentioned above, had also been present at meetings of the **Battle's Big Event Group**;
- continues to be involved in the organisation of the **Scarecrow Festival**;
- had attended the previous evening's **Chamber** meeting;
- Cllr Palmer - confirmed his attendance at the recent **Battle Marketing Group** and **1066 Country Board** meeting;
- Cllr Harris - had made a presentation to **Rother's Devolution Working Group**;
- had attended the **South & South East in Bloom** briefing seminar;
- as mentioned above, had attended the **AGM of the Town Band**;
- had Chaired the latest **Battle in Bloom Group** meeting.

18. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda – None.

19. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 17 April 2012

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

CLLR R HARRIS
Chairman

