



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
held on TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 2019 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle AT 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs V Cook (Chairman), B Brown, G Favell, H Sharman and C Would

In attendance: Carol Harris (Town Clerk), A Gavin (Secretary Senlac Allotment Association)

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman invited Mrs Gavin (AG) to speak on behalf of the Senlac Allotment Association. AG confirmed that the Allotment Act 1950 allows for hens to be kept on Council allotments. However, she reported SAA had raised concerns at the permission granted for an inside plot for this purpose at Cherry Gardens allotment site. AG reported that there have been several issues in relation to rats at the site since the chicken arrived on site and there is great concern at the potential diseases caused by contamination of plots by rat urine. She advised that plot holders are passionate about their plots and should be considerate when gardening to ensure their choices do not adversely affect other plot holders. AG requested that the Council work with SAA to ensure a robust solution. She thanked Cllr Favell for the helpful and productive assistance she have provided to SAA over the past 5 years.

Mrs Gavin left the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Environment Committee for the new Council. She expressed grateful thanks to Cllr Favell for her work as Chairman for the previous 4 years. Cllr Cook confirmed that her aim is to encourage a paperless Committee to help reduce the carbon footprint.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr M Kiloh.

Cllr L Samms was absent.

2. Disclosure of interest – None.

3. Minutes of previous Meeting held on 2 April 2019 were approved by members and duly signed by Cllr Cook.

4. Town Clerk's report

- Advice had been received from Cemetery Development Services Ltd that moling would not be effective within **the natural burial area**. A series of deep cut off drains had been recommended. The Clerk was asked to seek quotes for this work for consideration at the next meeting.
- Confirmation that the proposed **petanque court** area will be dug by a Battle Muffin member within the next 7 days.
- The levelling of the football pitch has now been completed and the area seeded. It is unlikely that the pitch will be ready for formal football use this season.
- The **arbour at the cemetery** has been installed.
- The revision to the internal layout of the **Pavilion**, as requested by the Football Association, has been completed. The construction notes have been produced and this requires further work prior to tenders being invited.
- Tenders for the **Battle Health Pathway** have been invited via direct contact and the government portal with a final submission date of 28 June.
- Two quotes have been received for the **Pump Track/Cycle Skills area**. These require review by the Health Pathway Group.

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- The **defibrillator at the recreation ground** has been installed close to the Multi Use Games Area. Publicity will be issued once a photograph with Hastings Direct, major contributor for the unit, has been obtained.
- The **water pressure washer** has been purchased and will be used to clean the **roundabout and statue** shortly.
- As there had been a delay in the production of the **directional finger posts at the recreation ground**, Members agreed to postpone these items until the project is complete.
- Confirmation of the contractor used for **gym equipment** at Robertsbridge had been received. The Clerk was asked to obtain a quote for similar apparatus for the next meeting.

5. Correspondence & Communications

An email of concern at the **visibility** due to the wildflowers on the **roundabout** was discussed. Whilst some Members empathized with this, it was agreed that advice from the police and highways authority confirming that careful driving at roundabouts should not be affected by long grass should be relayed to the resident.

A request from a local fitness instructor based at the Guide Hut to **unlock the gates** slightly earlier on specific days to allow clients access to the car park was agreed.

6. Action Plan for 2019/20

This was agreed, as attached.

Members **agreed responsibility for individual areas** as:

Cllr Bernard Brown	-	Allotments
Cllr Glenna Favell	-	Cemetery
Cllr Caroline Would	-	Recreation Grounds
Cllr Hazel Sharman	-	Street Furniture and Lighting
Cllr Vikki Cook	-	Remainder of BTC's Estate

7. Allotments

- a) The **detailed action plan for allotments** was noted, as attached.
- b) The report from the Assistant to Town Clerk had been circulated. Members noted **current vacancies**: Cherry Gardens – 3; Netherfield Hill – 0; Virgins Croft – 2; Watch Oak – 6. **Members agreed the recommendation that plots 1a and 1b at Virgins Croft be laid to grass** as these had been vacant for some considerable time and there was cost involved in maintenance. An **inspection had been carried out in April** with several items highlighted for monitoring. The annual **skip provision** had recently been completed with no issues, although a larger skip had been requested at Cherry Gardens for future years. This would not be possible due to the location of the heritage art sculpture.
- c) As reported by the Secretary to SAA, further complaints regarding **chickens at Cherry Gardens site** had been received. The Clerk confirmed that 2 recorded delivery letters had been sent to the Tenant; the second being a final warning to retain the chickens on the agreed plot and to ensure no nuisance was caused to surrounding plots. A hand delivered letter had also be issued requesting confirmation of receipt. No communication has been received. **Members supported the Clerk's recommendation that the Agreement be rescinded at this year's renewal.** Cllr Favell agreed to work with SAA to formally draft a Policy for the Keeping of Chickens for approval at the next meeting.

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- d) Members agreed that the ATC and workstaff member for the **allotments** should judge the **Most Improved** category of the **competition**. Cllrs Brown and Cook agreed to judge the remaining categories. They agreed to provide the Clerk with their decision prior to the end of June.
- e) The **judging criteria** was agreed, as attached.
- f) One quote had been received for water stop taps at Cherry Gardens and Virgins Croft in the sum of £325 each. **The Clerk was granted delegated authority to seek further quotes and agree the work to a maximum cost of £650.**
- g) The ATC had recommend **inspection dates** at the beginning of September, December, March and June to align more closely to the Committee meetings. This was agreed.
- h) Cllr Brown agreed to represent the Council at meetings of the **Senlac Allotment Association**.

8. Cemetery

- a) The **detailed action plan for the Cemetery** was noted, as attached.
- b) Cllrs Favell and Cook agreed to assist with the **memorials inspection**. A convenient date will be agreed.
- c) The Clerk reported that Hastings College remained intent on carrying out the refurbishment work to the **mortuary**. However, a dead bat had been found close to the building although no further evidence of bat activity had been evidenced. The Clerk was awaiting a quote from a local ecologist to assess the site prior to advancing the works. **Members agreed that a professional investigation should be carried out to a maximum cost of £300.**
- d) A request for prepayment of **chapel & interment fee** had been received. Members felt that this was not appropriate.
- e) A replacement **notice board** is required at the entrance to the cemetery. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for a wood replacement for the next meeting.
- f) The Clerk was asked to circulate to all Councillors a request for volunteers to assist Cllr Favell at the **Butterfly Walk** on 8th June at 2pm.

9. Recreation Grounds

- a) The **detailed action plan for the Recreation Grounds** was discussed. It was agreed to include the provision of play equipment for disabled users in the medium term objectives. The document, as agreed, attached.
- b) Members agreed that advice should be sought from the **High Weald AONB** officer in relation to **land management**, particularly in relation to the Council's use of compost bins and bonfires.
- c) In light of advice from a proposed grant funder for the **Pavilion and café project**, Members agreed that the facility should have a name synonymous with a meeting place, rather than a hot food provider. Two suggestions had been made "Rendezvous at the Rec" and "The Magnet". The Clerk was asked to seek further ideas from Councillors for inclusion in the documentation by Monday.
- d) The **draft business plan for café area** to be submitted to the professional fundraising consultant's attention was discussed. It was agreed that this required revision and Cllrs Favell and Would agreed to undertake this task. The document will then be circulated for approval via email.
- e) Members agreed to a request from friends and neighbours of a local young man recently deceased to donate **memorial bench and flowering cherry tree** to be sited close to the MUGA at the recreation ground.

10. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) The detailed **action plan for Street Lighting and Furniture** was noted, as attached.
- b) The Clerk confirmed that the fingerpost erected by ESCC at Park Lane purely pointed to the 1066 Country Walk. **Members agreed the purchase of a 2m timber fingerpost pointing to the Cricket Ground and Market Road to be sited at George Meadow at an approximate cost of £150.**

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*The Chairman proposed that, in light of the late time, some items be deferred until the next meeting.
This was agreed unanimously.*

11. Remainder of BTC's Estate

- a) To review **detailed action plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate** – deferred.
- b) The draft **Abbey Green Agreement** with English Heritage had been circulated. It was noted that this was a 10year Agreement with the same terms as previously. **It was agreed that the Agreement should be recommended to Full Council.**
- c) Members noted that users of the **Abbey Green** are responsible for the production of their own **Health & Safety Risk Assessment**. The Clerk was asked to form a general Health & Safety Risk Assessment for the area.
- d) Three designs and quotes for a replacement **skate ramp** had been received. Members discussed the merits of each and **agreed to award the contract to Fearless Ramps**, subject to the Clerk confirming noise levels and final cost; in the region of £16,000. The Committee agreed that publicity and Crowd Funding should be progressed as soon as possible. The Clerk was asked to seek advice from ESCC for crowd funding.
- e) The final draft of the **statue information sign** had been circulated. Members asked that Audrey Coop be thanked for her extensive work on this project. It was agreed that this should be erected on timber posts, similar to that of the sign by the Oak tree bed.

12. Financial Matters

- a) The **budget report at 31 March 2019** was noted, as attached.
- b) To consider action in relation to non-payment of invoices – deferred.

13. Matters for information / future agenda items

- To consider litter bin replacement programme with consideration to mixed litter and recyclable compartments
- Drainage work at the natural burial area
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Notice board for the Cemetery

14. Date of next meeting: 6 August 2019

The meeting closed at 10.06pm.

Cllr V Cook
Chairman