



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 18 December 2012 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs, J Boryer, J Carter, J Eldridge, Mrs T Farr, R Harris,
Mrs M Howell, R Jessop, Mrs M Kiloh, Ms M-L Neill,
Ms J Ormonde-Butler, M Palmer and D Wilson.

Public Question Time

No members of the public were present

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs C Bishop, Mrs P Fisher and Mrs S Pry.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** – Cllr Carter said that he would have an interest under item 10 in the event that any discussion related to the allotments.
3. **Minutes of the Council Meeting** held on 20 November 2012. Cllr Wilson proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Ms Neill. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

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

5. Police Matters

The police representatives had sent their apologies. No matters were raised in relation to the latest set of **Crime Updates**. However, Cllr Boryer raised concerns of residents at **Darvel Down** who had been alarmed by what appeared to be a heavy police response to recent incidents. Sgt Masterson had offered a meeting to discuss the police reaction to these incidents and Cllr Boryer was encouraged to pursue this offer.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field had sent her apologies and had no matters to report.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies confirmed that Cabinet had agreed to ring-fence for the **benefit of local councils the Government grant** being provided as a consequence of the changes to the Council Tax Benefit system. Council had agreed to make a **grant of £60,000 to Robertsbridge Community College** as a contribution towards the cost of their new sport hall. Finally, she indicated that, following a receipt of a petition, the District Council would be working with the **Monday morning bowling league** to replace the facilities formerly at Ravenside Retail Park.

Cllr Boryer **thanked the District Council** for emptying the **Village Shop garbage bin**.

8. Correspondence & Communications

An **invitation** has been made **to comment on a Draft Strategy for Bexhill Town Centre**. It was agreed that, in the first instance, this should be considered by the Planning Committee.

The **Methodist Church** has written **seeking support for an application to the WARR Partnership for a grant** towards the cost of their new building at Blackfriars. **Cllr Harris**

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proposed, and all agreed, that this application should receive the Council's full backing.

Members noted a **proposal to install an automatic number plate recognition camera** opposite police station.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 21 November and 5 December were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted.

10. Minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 11 December were reported by Cllr Mrs Kiloh and noted. She drew attention to the discussion about the proposed **cemetery extension and the need to carry out a ground water audit** as required by the Environment Agency. Whilst some reservations were expressed about the timing of this in the absence of any detailed development plan for the extension it was finally accepted that this research would be necessary in order to inform the preparation of such a plan. **Cllr Mrs Kiloh therefore proposed that a consultancy be let in a sum not exceeding £3500. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed by a majority.**

11. Financial Matters

In order to ensure that **cheques** can always be signed on time the Clerk asked for authority to add Cllrs Bye and Mrs Pry as **authorised signatories. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Kiloh, seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.**

Following extensive efforts to find a contractor able to undertake **external repair works to the Almonry building** the Clerk had finally received a quote in line with the budgeted figure. **Cllr Bye proposed that a contract be let at a maximum figure of £6515. This was seconded by Cllr Harris and agreed unanimously.**

Subsequent to the previous meeting, information had been received via the District Council about the replacement of the previous **Council Tax Benefit arrangements** with a discount scheme. One effect of the change is to reduce the Council Tax Base expressed as a Band D equivalent. Although Government is providing a transitional grant to offset the impact of this, it is 10% less than the estimated amount currently being paid as Council Tax Benefit. The effect of these changes is that, even if the precept remains unchanged next year, the Band D Council Tax will go up. Latest advice from Rother is that the current figure for a Band D property of £66.95 would rise to £69.77. As a basis for discussion the Clerk advised that if the precept were to rise to the figure of £193,370, as previously discussed, the cost for a Band D property would become £72 and at £200,000 the figure would be £74.63 (an increase of about 11.5%). In the absence of further information from Cllr Jessop about contributions to a repairs and renewals reserve, and after lengthy debate, Council felt unable to come to any detailed conclusions about **the budget**. Members also noted the recommendation by the Services Committee that budgeted income from cemetery fees should reduce to £12,000. In general, however it was accepted that an increase in the precept would be unavoidable and that, in looking at this at its meeting on 8 January, F&GP should consider working around a figure of £200,000. In the context of the discussion it was also noted that Rother's latest position regarding **devolution** appears to suggest that little, if any, money would be transferred with a devolved activity. This would add further pressure on the Council's budget at a time when Government may be considering applying the same capping rules to the precept as currently exist in the relation to Council Tax. Taken together all these factors seem to combine to mitigate against the intentions behind the Government's Localism Agenda and it was agreed that the Chairman should alert the local MP to these concerns.

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12. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

13. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Cllr Eldridge - had attended a meeting of the **Museum Committee**;

Cllr Boryer - reported on a meeting of the **DDARA Committee** at which, not only had the police issue mentioned above been raised but also the potential danger of the pinch point near the Village Hall and the condition of the verge opposite the entrance to Darvel Down. These two matters will be raised again at the next SLR meeting;

Cllr Jessop - had attended meetings of **various groups** most of which had been of a social nature;

Cllr Mrs Kiloh - had attended the **Battle in Bloom Committee** meeting at which no points of significance had arisen.

14. Mayor's Engagements

Cllr Bye had attended a **leavers' presentation evening** at Claverham College; judged the **Fancy Dress competition** at Late Night Shopping and subsequently presented the prizes. He had also turned on the "**Lights of Love**" at **St Mary's Church**.

15. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Jessop, in his capacity as Chairman, had invited **Katie Bourne the recently elected Police and Crime Commissioner** to address the next meeting of RALC. If any Members have issues to raise they were asked to let him know.

16. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 15 January 2013

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

CLLR R BYE
Chairman

