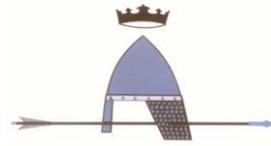


Battle Town Council



**DRAFT MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 13 January 2015 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr M Kiloh - Chairman
Cllrs: J Boryer, R Jessop and D Wilson.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllrs R Bye, D Furness and J Sydes.

2. Disclosure of interest – None.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 25 November and 10 December 2014. Cllr Boryer pointed out his attendance was not recorded correctly on the minutes of 25 November. The Town Clerk was asked to amend this, and subject to that correction the minutes of both meetings were approved and duly signed.

4. Matters arising from previous meetings – None.

5. Grant awarding policy

Cllr Kiloh thanked Cllr Wilson for his hard work in preparing the documents, and those who had responded with suggested alterations. An updated version had been circulated taking into account the alterations prior to the meeting for Members information. Cllr Wilson explained the difference between the two proposed application forms, and the merits of each were discussed by Members. Members also discussed publicising the scheme via a press release to encourage applicants.

Cllr Kiloh proposed that the committee recommend the policy and the preferred application form to Full Council for adoption, along with advising local groups of the scheme via a press release in the Battle Observer. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed by all.

6. Almonry working group

Members had received a briefing note from Trevor Houghton-Berry following the working group meeting on 8 January 2015, but unfortunately no representative present at the meeting was in attendance at this committee meeting. Cllr Kiloh reminded Members of the informal discussions that had taken place with regard to accommodating Rother District Council within the Almonry, and wanted to now pursue this on a more formal basis by authorising the Town Clerk to negotiate with RDC. Any proposal must be cost neutral to the Town Council accounting for any loss of income from existing tenants potentially displaced, with associated relocation costs to be met by RDC.

Cllr Jessop agreed this was needed, but expressed concern that other tenants in the building who may be affected by the proposed changes had not received written confirmation of the Town Council's plans and how their leases may be affected.

Cllr Jessop proposed the Town Clerk be authorised to begin negotiations with RDC and report to the committee with a proposal. This was seconded by Cllr Boryer and agreed by all.

Additionally, Members agreed that a proposal for other planned alterations to the Almonry building was needed, and the Almonry working group would be requested to submit a proposal to the committee at the next meeting.

7. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

Cllr Kiloh informed Members that approval had been received from DCLG to apply for a loan up to the agreed £250,000. The Town Clerk explained that the approval lasted for one year, and the funds could be applied for in tranches as needed. Each application would take two weeks to release the funds. Cllr Kiloh informed Members that the work already undertaken involving the various surveys had been charged at the lower end of the estimates, and no additional costs had been encountered to date. Meetings were being arranged by the consultants to obtain pre-planning advice then a meeting with the Town Council would be needed to decide on an appropriate design.

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8. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Town Clerk had provided a note regarding the standing orders and financial regulations currently in use by the Town Council. Both were older versions, and a number of updates had been issued in the last eighteen months which included some mandatory changes. In order to comply with the relevant legislation, some immediate changes were recommended along with a fuller review of both documents.

Cllr Wilson proposed that the recommended mandatory change to standing orders relating to filming, photographing and recording of meetings be recommended to Full Council, and the Town Clerk be asked to provide the committee with updated draft standing orders and financial regulations at the next committee meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Kiloh and agreed by all.

9. Filming, photographing and recording of meetings

Members discussed the Town Clerk's recommendations regarding the Town Council filming, photographing and/or recording the meetings themselves to ensure a true complete version exists.

Members agreed to recommend in full the Town Clerk's suggestions to Full Council.

10. National salary award

Members noted the report of the Town Clerk detailing the changes to salary scales and how this impacted on affected staff. The increments would be included from January 2015 onwards, and incorporate amounts outstanding to the staff members employed at the end of 2014.

11. Town Clerk contract and working arrangements

Cllr Kiloh informed Members that the Town Clerk's contract had been finalised, following the amendments regarding the national salary award. Regular meetings between the Chairman and Town Clerk would be conducted during the probationary period to ensure any issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

Cllr Jessop proposed the signing of the contract be completed. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed by all.

12. Meeting administration

The Town Clerk outlined a process for agreeing agendas and completion of minutes in conjunction with committee chairmen to meet the appropriate timeframes. Members felt this was consistent with the existing approach, and also welcomed the addition of the Town Clerk's notes to accompany agenda items.

13. Council business plan

Cllr Kiloh outlined the need to agree a format for the production of a plan. Previous attempts had resulted in limited success, although some committees had produced plans of their aspirations. Members agreed that in light of the changed committee structure, there was a need to review and consolidate existing plans, or generate new ones as appropriate. The aim was to produce a comprehensive plan for the annual assembly in April

Cllr Jessop recommended that committees forward their plans to the Chairman and Town Clerk to collate, with a full review to take place at the next committee meeting, and Members agreed to this approach.

14. Matters for information and future agenda items - None

15. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3 March 2015

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

**CLLR M KILOH
CHAIRMAN**

