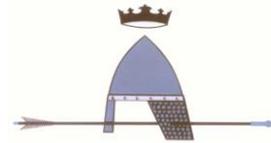




# Battle Town Council



**DRAFT MINUTES of a Meeting of the  
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
held on Tuesday, 4 November 2014 at  
The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr M Kiloh - Chairman  
Cllrs: D Furness, R Bye, R Jessop, J Sydes and D Wilson.

**1. Apologies for Absence – None.**

**2. Disclosure of Interest –** Cllr Furness declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 10, applications for grants, as the Chairman of the Battle Arts and Music Festival.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2014.** Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Bye. This was unanimously agreed and they were duly signed.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Acting Town Clerk (ATC) reported that written confirmation is awaited from a local solicitor who had indicated that no formal **lease** is required beyond the initial period as it becomes a continuation of existing terms and conditions. Once a variation is required further advice should be sought. Cllr Sydes reported his concerns that secured tenancies had been issued and it was agreed that no future leases should be issued on this basis. It was agreed to accept the written advice and to pursue options once the future plans for the Almonry have been fully explored.

Confirmation from the Chamber's Christmas Committee that **Father Christmas** will be at the Abbey Gatehouse, and not at the Almonry, on **Gala Night** from this year on.

**5. Correspondence and Communications**

The ATC confirmed that **notification of completion of 2013-14 Audit** had been received with no matters of concern. Comment had been made that assets should be at original cost or insurance value and remain constant, not revised to reflect current value. The Committee recorded their thanks to the ATC for this admirable work.

An invitation to attend a **Variety Club Children's Charity Winter Ball** had been received from Odeon Cinema Hastings. Tickets are £40pp with a discount for tables of more than 8 persons. Alternatively, a donation to their raffle or auction would be gratefully received. Anybody interested should contact the ATC for further information.

**6. Budget Review 2014-15**

The Committee noted the attached budget review which shows a deficit of £4935. The Chairman highlighted the notes relating to the agreed transfer from reserves for the pre-application fees and the CTS Grant which had not been included in the figures. Members were reminded that the latter was allocated by RDC from a Government Grant and may not be available next year. The ATC reported the major items that had affected the changes as being: a fall in cemetery income; lower bank interest received; urgent repairs to a soakaway at the cricket ground; purchase of a chainsaw and associated equipment; additional litter bins and professional fees in relation to office leases. These had been offset in part by a fall in staff costs; an insurance premium saving and lower cost of the Council's publications.

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## **7. Bank Reconciliation Statement** at 30 September 2014 was noted.

The ATC reported that only 2 local banks had responded to enquiries of services available as a result of the closure of Barclays in Battle. One had confirmed that they do not have business accounts and the other had indicated banking costs may be prohibitive. The ATC advised that deposits are currently being made weekly and that petty cash has been withdrawn with no problem from another branch, upon production of relevant proof of identification. It was noted that other local banks could be under threat of closure and it was agreed that, for the time-being, the current arrangements should continue. This will be reviewed early next year.

## **8. Fees and Charges Review**

The Committee discussed the fees and charges and agreed that, in discussion with members of Senlac Allotment Association, the rates for allotment rents should be subject to a substantial increase to bring them in line with other local authorities and help bridge the differential of expenditure to income. It was also agreed that the Association be consulted regarding the possibility of the allotments management be handed to them, with approved rules of conduct, terms and conditions. This would also enable possible grant sourcing for the allotment sites. It was felt that fees for sports facilities should be increased in line with inflation. In comparing cemetery fees with other local providers it was agreed to increase burial plots and memorial application fees but to retain existing charges for the other services. The Committee agreed that there should be no increase in the other fees and charges. **Cllr Jessop proposed that the attached fees and charges be recommended to Council. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed unanimously.**

## **9. Budget 2015-16 and Forward Plan**

A spreadsheet containing prices and estimates for some items put forward by each Committee was circulated. It was noted that further costs were awaited. Cllr Jessop advised that at a recent NALC meeting it had been suggested that capping may be introduced for large Town/Parish Councils next year with others following at the next term of parliament. After some discussion, it was agreed that the ATC should provide each Committee Chairman with an estimated budget proposal for consideration by its Members to facilitate a final budget discussion at an extra F&GP meeting on 25 November.

*Cllr Kiloh highlighted the time of 10pm and that, in accordance with Standing Order 16, she suggested taking the rest of the agenda forward to the next meeting. **Cllr Jessop proposed continuation of the meeting for a further 15 minutes. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed by a majority.***

## **10. Grants**

Cllr Wilson had circulated a comprehensive paper for the Committee **to consider a policy procedure for grant applications**. Members agreed that a policy must reflect the objectives of the Council with a concise application form to enable organisations to advise which criteria it satisfied. It was suggested that each Committee could promote grant availability for areas or themes. Applications to be submitted to F&GP twice yearly, specifically prior to RDC's Community Grants considerations. This was agreed in principle and Cllr Wilson was asked to produce a policy criteria and relevant documentation. Members congratulated Cllr Wilson on his well-produced document.

A list of **requests for grants** were presented by Cllr Kiloh. Members were reminded of Council policy to require detailed accounts for all applications above £250.

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*The meeting was closed at 10.15 with the remaining items: Proposed Meeting Dates 2015; Almonry Garden Report and Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items being taken forward to the additional meeting planned for 25 November 2014.*

**11. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 25 November 2014**

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

CLLR M KILOH  
CHAIRMAN

