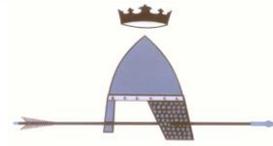




Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 3 September 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr R Bye - Chairman
Cllrs: C Bishop, Mrs M Kiloh, R Jessop and Mrs S Pry.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Mr P Fisher.

2. Disclosure of Interest – None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 June 2013. Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Bishop. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

A request for **grant** towards **furniture and equipment for Methodist Church community hall** had been received. **Cllr Jessop proposed that £500 be granted and given when the facility was ready to make purchases. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed.**

5. Correspondence and Communications

The Chairman reported on the poor service being given by **Barclays Bank**. Due to an initial bank error and subsequent communications the Council has been unable to write cheques for almost 2 months. The Clerks were extremely concerned about this and it was agreed that, in the first instance, a meeting should be arranged within the next 2 days with the Business Manager to rectify this problem but that, secondly, enquiries be made with other banks to investigate whether a change of bank provider should be made.

The Chairman notified the Committee that the **Victorian water pipe** running from the stop-cock inside the entrance drive gate at the **Cemetery** to the lavatories in the Chapel was wearing very thin. It had been subject to several repairs in recent years and again last week. The Clerk had obtained a verbal quote for repair by CWS and Cllr Jessop would investigate further options using mole equipment. Quotes would be obtained and recommendations made to full Council. The Clerk said that this work would need to be carefully planned not to clash with funeral arrangements and was best dealt with before it burst again, potentially disturbing future funerals.

A **thank you letter** to the Council from the **Twinning Association** had been received for the kind reception of their guests from St Valery sur Somme and the Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Pry for her welcome given in French.

6. Budget Report Review 2013-14

No comments were raised in respect of the report. Cllr Jessop highlighted the need to review the precept within the budgeting process.

The Clerk reported that a refund of a rental deposit of £1000 for the first floor office would shortly be made.

7. Bank Reconciliation Statement

The attached statement at 31 July 2013 was circulated after the meeting. The Chairman

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reported that the Clerk's predecessor and the Clerk had checked it together and had been satisfied with it.

8. 3 Year Forward Plan

The Chairman requested **all Committees to put forward their 3 year plan** with estimated figures, particularly for new work. The Clerk **highlighted the need for at least one further full time groundsman if the core areas of the estate were to be managed to an adequate standard and not to continue declining**, about which Councillors and the public were continually expressing concern. A person with relevant work experience would be preferable but the Clerk was also making some investigations about apprentice possibilities from the local land management colleges, such as Netherfield. Cllr Boryer said he could make enquiries with Plumpton College about volunteer help. The Chairman suggested that Community Service might be able to provide assistance. Cllr Bishop asked if the precept would need to be raised to fund this and pointed to the need for all Chairmen to look at where their Committees could make savings. The Chairman said that this need to be looked into as a future agenda item but would not be decided today.

The Clerk noted that there was scope for **managing the allotments and cemetery** with reorganised maintenance methods, given greater staff hours and by using best practice models from other, already successful comparable settings. Cllr Mrs Kiloh was looking at the cemetery in this regard and a meeting was to be held with allotment holders to progress this in October 2013.

Cllr Bishop reported on his recent examination of the Council's IT equipment with the Clerks and recommended that this should be updated immediately. **Cllr Mrs Kiloh proposed that Council be recommended to approve that funds be taken from unearmarked reserves to get the office working efficiently at an approximate cost of £2000. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and all agreed.** Cllr Bishop agreed to progress his work and take it to full Council as a matter for information.

9. Insurance Renewal

The Clerk confirmed that the current insurance provider appeared to be efficient and cost effective and the Committee agreed to renew the policy.

10. Street Collection Permit Policy

The Chairman noted that the proposed policy confirmation provided by the Clerk's predecessor was self explanatory and all agreed it should be adopted. Cllr Jessop, on behalf of the Scarecrow Festival, expressed his thanks to the Council for permission to change the beneficiary Charity.

11. Almonry Garden

The **Beautiful Battle (BB)** volunteers had provided a written report highlighting the continual improvement of the lawns, the excellent roses and successful herb bed. They suggest various possible improvements to be made in the future. It was also noted that the hanging baskets had been watered by volunteers.

The **Battle in Bloom group (BinB)** had met and discussed the idea of issuing a joint press release highlighting the partnership between BTC and BB but had agreed to that an article in the next Newsletter would be preferable. It had been agreed that BinB would continue for the next year. It was recommended that a meeting should be arranged to discuss more joined up thinking and agreement on future planting schemes and the way forward, particularly in view of the Council's commitment of groundsmen and financial

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resources. Cllr Boryer agreed to attend the next Battle in Bloom on 12 September with Cllrs Mrs Kiloh and Mrs Pry and the Beautiful Battle meeting on 18 September. The Chairman, Cllr Ms M-L Neill was often unable to attend and Cllr Boryer was considering joining the group representing BTC. There was support from Councillors for an agreement to cover all aspect of the work undertaken by BB with BTC, along the lines of that which is currently titled 'The Almonry Garden' which actually included some other areas of the town too.

12. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items

Cllr Mrs Kiloh confirmed that the quotation for the **Tier Two Survey of groundwater at the Cemetery** had been received, at an unexpectedly high cost of c£8000. The Clerk was concerned that the specification should be checked against what was definitely required by the Environment Agency and the local Planning Authority prior to going ahead with it. Environmental Impact Assessment legislation governed this area of planning policy. Cllr Jessop offered to research this and advise accordingly. Cllr Kiloh was investigating what was needed in similar applications at Bexhill and Robertsbridge cemeteries.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 5 November 2013

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

**CLLR MRS S PRY
CHAIRMAN**

