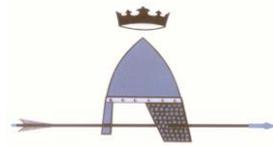




Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2019 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), J Gyngell and M Kiloh.

In Attendance: C Harris, Town Clerk, Cllr B Brown

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr C Would.

Cllr V Cook was absent.

2. Disclosure of interest – Cllr J Gyngell declared a personal interest in items 9 and 13 as a member of the Battle Festival Committee and Council's representative on Battle Memorial Hall Committee. Cllr M Kiloh declared a personal interest in item 10 as the spouse of a Trustee of the Museum.

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2019 were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Favell.

4. Clerk's Report

The Brownies' visit to the garden had been postponed until September.

5. Correspondence and communications received post agenda

A report from Beautiful Battle confirming that, in response to suggestions from the South & South East in Bloom judges, an Apothecary bed will be considered for the garden and more Thyme plants will be replaced in the front garden. Additional, permanent labels are being considered. The Clerk was asked to ensure that the new hydrangea in the front garden and additional plants at Cherry Gardens are watered on a daily basis.

Cllr B Brown was thanked for the Council's Tin Man Scarecrow entry. It was requested that the information sign make clear the title of Pu – Tin.

6. Almonry

- British Gas recently carried out a **service on both boilers**. Whilst this had been carried out satisfactorily, it was highlighted that should either of the boilers require repair the parts are no longer available. A quote for the replacement to condensing boilers had been received at £7,470.28. Members agreed that this work will be included within the refurbishment work and that a separate boiler for ground and first floor should be provided.
- As reported to Full Council, the Architect had confirmed that, due to ill health, there is a delay in producing the **Structural, Condition and Roof surveys**. Despite a firm request for an imminent revised date, this had not been confirmed. Whilst sympathetic to the personal circumstances, Members agreed that a limit of three weeks to produce final documents should be granted. If not completed, an associate or alternative surveyor would be requested to finalise the work at the expense of the EAR Sheppard Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers Ltd.
- An **Accessibility Statement** had been carried out on behalf of Rother District Council. This highlighted several items that would be rectified within the overall refurbishment project. The Clerk was authorised to request a funding contribution from RDC to replace all taps and install a hand rail to assist access to the ground floor toilet facility.

7. Reports from Working Groups

- **Wedding Venue** – no meeting to date.

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- **Almonry Development** – no meeting due to reports not received.

8. Personnel sub Committee

- Cllr Gyngell presented the **minutes of the meeting held on 16 July**. These were noted, as attached.
 - **Members agreed that Full Council be recommended to recruit a part time, experienced Tourism and Town Development Officer at a salary within the LC1 13-17 payscale (£22,021-£23,836 pro-rata), initially for a renewable 6 month contract.**
 - Members agreed a **temporary increase in the Clerk's hours** to 37 (from 33).

9. Grant requests

Cllr Gyngell repeated her personal interest in the first two items.

- **Battle Festival - £600 wildflower project.** Members noted that there was no financial information attached and agreed that this be requested for consideration at the meeting in September;
- **Battle Memorial Hall - £500 for replacement of projector equipment and screen. This was agreed.**
- **Battle Marketing Group - £500 for the production of 2019/20 Battle Town Map.** Members noted that there was no financial information attached and agreed that this be requested for consideration at the meeting in September.
- **Battle Chamber of Commerce, Battle Events - £500 for replacement of two stall covers. This was agreed.**

Cllr Kiloh repeated her personal interest in the following item.

10. Battle Museum lease

Members were reminded that the current lease expires on 31 March 2027 and a previous request to extend for a further 16 years last August had been refused in light of the uncertainty of the Heritage Lottery Fund application. The Battle Museum Committee have highlighted their concern that investment and grant applications are restricted by the current lease period and have requested an extension of 25 years to 31 March 2052. The previously agreed addition of a one year notice period to terminate is reiterated. The Museum confirmed all legal costs would be covered. **Members agreed to review the lease in 2021 and confirmed their support of the Museum's tenure for as long as the Council remains the freeholder. The addendum for a one year notice period was restated, on the basis of all legal costs being borne by Battle Museum.**

11. Action Plan

- The **BTC Statement on the Protection of the Environment** had been circulated prior to the meeting and was agreed, as attached.
- Members considered the **Local Council Award Scheme** and agreed not to pursue at this time.
- Members noted that whilst there appears to sufficient **policies** in place, many appear to be out of date. These are due to be reviewed in November. Members agreed that polices should be allocated to Members for review at the forthcoming Council communications discussion.
- A draft **Council Plan** was considered. It was agreed that an amended version would be agreed by email for recommendation to Full Council.
- Members agreed that a **card payment system** should be implemented. The Clerk was asked to research providers for approval by Full Council.

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- It was agreed that all Members of this Committee be **cheque signatories and have online authority**; the latter would be via office access only with passcodes retained in the safe.

12. Beautiful Battle

Minutes from meetings on 12 June and 10 July 2019 were noted, as attached.

13. Battle Festival

Members agreed to a request to use the Almonry for a **painting challenge event** on 6 October subject to production of appropriate risk assessment and insurance cover.

14. Report and recommendations from Internal Auditor

- The Clerk confirmed that the **general reserves level** at 31 March 2019 was 38%. Members agreed to review general reserves level (recommendation 50% of precept) at budget setting.
- Members agreed to consider, at budget setting, an increase in **Ear Marked Reserves for the Almonry building**, subject to position with refurbishment project
- The Clerk was asked to research short term bonds to **spread funds** in accordance with **Financial Services Compensation Scheme risks** for consideration by Full Council.

15. Financial matters

The **budget report at 30 June 2019** was noted, as attached.

16. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Review one Business Plan pertaining to either the Environment, ER&TD or Planning & Transport Committees
- Review the first draft of the Strategic Plan for the Development of The Almonry
- Review the draft Management Plan for The Almonry

17. Date of next meeting: 24 September 2019

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

**CLLR G FAVELL
CHAIRMAN**