



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
held on TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2019 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle AT 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs V Cook (Chairman), B Brown, G Favell and H Sharman

In attendance: Mrs S Burton (Battle Health Pathway Project Manager), Amanda Kerr and Audrey Coop (Battle Against Climate Change), one member of the public (allotment tenant), Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr C Would.

Cllrs Kiloh and Samms were absent.

2. Disclosure of interest – Cllrs Favell and Cook as members of Battle Health Pathway Group.

3. Minutes of previous Meeting held on 27 August 2019 were approved by members and duly signed by Cllr Cook.

4. To consider budget for 2020-21

- a) A **fees and charges comparison for recreation ground facilities** had been circulated for information. Members agreed additional fees:
- £50 per hire for either football pitch. The Clerk to have discretionary authority for concessions;
 - £10 per hour for commercial use of Multi Use Games Area or Tennis Court.
- It was agreed that cemetery fees and regular hire charges to increase by 2%.
- b) Informal guidance on the provision of **flood lighting of the Multi Use Games Area** was to apply for pre-application advice at a cost of £99. Members agreed that this should be sought to clarify feasibility of a timed lighting scheme.
- c) One quote and design for **outdoor gym equipment** had been received and circulated to Members for consideration. The provision of this facility was agreed in principle with an Ear Marked Reserve of £5,000 for 2020/21. The type of equipment to be deferred.
- d) One quote and design for **zip wire equipment** had been received and circulated to Members at a cost of approximately £15,000. After some discussion, it was agreed that £15,000 be put into the Ear Marked Reserve for Recreation Ground facilities (440). The Clerk was asked to clarify any additional insurance conditions for this item.
- e) A schedule of the condition of Council's **litter bins** had been circulated together with a variety of replacement styles and indicative costs. Members agreed that new bins should provide for recycling and general waste. It was highlighted that five bins require replacement. Members asked that, if possible, the new dual purpose bins should be sited on the Abbey Green, recreation ground and Cherry Gardens as a priority. It was agreed that £2,500 be budgeted for five dual purpose bins.
- f) A report from the newly formed **Friends of Battle Skate Ramp** had been circulated. Members agreed a contribution of £1,000 towards the replacement Battle skate ramp. It was suggested that this project be included in the Council Awareness Event this week.

Public Question Time

An allotment tenant raised queries in relation to the keeping of chickens and the situation following a visit by a Pest Control Officer to the Cherry Gardens site. He highlighted the increase in complaints about rats since the granting of permission for chickens and the concern of diseases spread by rats. The Clerk confirmed that, in accordance with the adopted Keeping of Hens Policy, an additional plot had been granted permission to keep chickens and that, following the report from the Pest Control Officer and evidence from the tenant, the Committee would be considering the retaining of chickens on the existing plot later in the meeting.

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On another matter, the resident highlighted the replacement of three open top bins with closed lidded bins in the Market Square by Beautiful Battle Committee.

Representatives from Battle Against Climate Change highlighted the need for Battle to join other authorities in declaring a Climate Emergency. It was agreed that a 5 minute presentation to the next Full Council meeting on 19 November would be appropriate. Members agreed that it was essential that viable actions be identified prior to a declaration. It was reported that RDC's Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group will have completed their objectives and some guidance may be identified from their report.

Battle Health Pathway Project Manager had circulated drawings and recommendations from advisors to the Places to Ride funders in relation to a Stage 2 application for the pathway and cycle skills area. This had identified a need for the cycle skills area to provide for easier and harder sections, preferably with floodlighting. It had also suggested that the whole pathway provide for dual use; presently the sloped lower loop area close to Asten Fields is designated for walking only. The advisor had indicated that it should be marked for direction use to encourage cycling uphill in this area. It was highlighted that this section is a rugged surface which would also slow cyclists. In response to a question Mrs Burton confirmed that there would be no increase in cost of the cycle skills area for the revision to two ability levels.

5. Report from Town Clerk

- There has been no response from Hastings College in relation to the partnership to restore the old mortuary building at the cemetery. Further contact will be made.
- The memorial bench and tree have been placed in the recreation ground. Family and friends of the deceased have paid for the items and are happy with the items and position.
- The statue information sign has been installed. Mixed reviews on the location have been received but it is generally felt that it is corrected placed for footfall.
- The notice board for the cemetery has been ordered.
- The contractor had agreed to carry out the drainage work in the Natural Burial Area in the cemetery in September but had been delayed. Unfortunately, it is likely to remain too wet for this work to be completed until spring. The new trees have been re-potted and are being cared for.
- The replacement sign at Guild Shaw and fingerpost at Mansers Shaw have been installed.

6. Correspondence & Communications received post Agenda circulation

Members noted the revision to the Pavilion plan to allow for a ramp access to all areas of the facility, as required by the Football Foundation.

7. Estate Management Plan

This had been circulated. Members agreed the document, as attached and asked that the additional items are added to the staff task list.

8. Allotments

- a) The **report from Assistant to Town Clerk, including recent inspection report and current vacancy position** was noted, as attached.
- b) Two options for **maintenance to a large willow tree at Cherry Gardens** had been received: cut back and remove snapped limbs; pollard by 3 metres. Members agreed that the latter work should be carried out at a cost of £450 from the tree work budget (4390).

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- c) The **minutes from Senlac Allotment Association meeting** were noted, as attached. Cllr Brown reported that a tenant at the Watch Oak site will be undertaking a Pest Control Management Course, paid for by the SAA.
- d) Following conflicting reports in relation to rats at Cherry Gardens, a professional Pest Control Officer was asked to investigate. The report had been circulated to the SAA, as attached.
- e) Subsequent to the distribution of the report as above, the tenant keeping **chickens at Cherry Gardens** had requested permission to retain them on the existing site. Members noted that the coop appears extremely well made with all food kept in secure containers. The tenant had agreed to install extra wire fencing as recommended by the Pest Control Officer.
Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak.
Concern that evidence of increased rats due to chickens was raised.
Standing Orders were reintroduced
Members agreed, by a majority with one abstention, that, in accordance with the Policy that no new chickens will be permitted on internal plots, the existing two chickens may remain but must not be replaced or added to and that the coop must be made compliant with recommendations.
The staff were asked to monitor the situation.
- f) The **detailed action plan for allotments** was noted, as attached. The Clerk reported that feedback indicated that potential tenants generally will not wish to travel out of area for an allotment.
One member of the public left the meeting.

9. Cemetery

- a) Members noted that, despite ventilation and heating of the **Ceremonies Room, the appearance of damp is increasing**. A local specialist had identified possible causes and remedies at a cost of £2600. The Clerk was given delegated authority to seek further quotes and contract the work at best value up to £3,000 from PWLB Ear Marked Reserve (345).
- b) Cllr Favell reported that **Friends of Battle Cemetery** had found it difficult to encourage volunteers and had recommended a change of format to hold 3 social events at peak visiting times: Sunday 22 December (before Christmas), 12pm to 3pm; Saturday 21 March (before Mothering Sunday), 2pm to 4.30pm; and Saturday 20 June (before Fathers' Day), 2.30pm to 5.30pm. A poster had been circulated, as attached. Three walks had also been suggested: Wildflowers in May; Bugs in July/August; and Trees in September/October. It was suggested that an invitation to attend the social events be sent to the families of those interred within a 12 month period. Members agreed to the recommendations and Cllrs Brown and Sharman volunteered to assist at the events. The availability of the ceremonies room and promotion of the events to be included in the next newsletter.
- c) The **detailed action plan for the Cemetery** was noted as attached. Cllr Favell confirmed that meetings with Funeral Directors is ongoing. It was suggested that contact also be made with Care Homes. It was agreed that the Cemetery Regulations be reviewed at the next meeting.

10. Recreation Grounds

Cllrs Cook and Favell repeated their personal interest in the following item.

- a) Members discussed the report given by the Project Manager at PQT in relation to **design amendments to Battle Health Pathway and Cycle Skills facility**. Members agreed that directional signs for cycling should be installed to allow for dual use. On the understanding that costs will remain the same, Members agreed that the cycle skills facility provide for easier and more difficult sections.

Mrs Burton left the meeting.

- b) Members considered the **use of the recreation ground for personal fund-raising event** by a local Air Cadet. Whilst Members supported the innovative action, it was felt that the Market Square

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would be a more appropriate venue for a dog show. It was also highlighted that any event should not clash with the Battel Bonfire Boyes' dog show at their event or the planned VE day event.

- c) Members were reminded that although **car park** is closed early mornings, other than during school holidays, it appears that use **by non-recreation ground users** is increasing. This has the effect of restricting legitimate users of the facilities and is contrary to planning permission for the car park. Members agreed that polite reminder notices with a warning that registration numbers will be recorded should be placed on vehicles suspected of parking illegitimately.
- d) The **detailed action plan for the Recreation Grounds** was noted.

11. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) A comparison for **street light energy renewal** had been circulated. The broker reported that costs have increased across the market with the existing provider offering the cheaper renewal price. **Members agreed that a 60month contract with EON be accepted at an annual cost of £12,289.43.**
- b) The **detailed action plan for Street Lighting and Furniture** was noted.

12. Remainder of BTC's Estate

- a) Members considered advice from the High Weald AONB Officer in relation to **land management from High Weald AONB** which recommended reduction in use of bonfires and the use of a rocket or tumbler composter for grass cuttings. It was also suggested that a local farmer may have an anaerobic digester that the Council's arisings could be added to for conversion into energy for the farm. The Clerk was asked to contact Rother District Council for advice on where these items may be located locally.
- b) Members agreed the request for **use of the Abbey Green for the annual Mediaeval Fayre.**
- c) Members considered a request for **use of the Abbey Green to promote keep fit classes** but agreed that it was not appropriate to allow commercial use.
- d) The **detailed action plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate** was noted.

13. Financial Matters

- a) The **budget report at 30 September 2019** was noted, as attached. It was agreed that Castle Play EMR (380) unspent funds of £3,638.82 should be transferred to Recreation Ground facilities EMR(440); fencing for the petanque court to be taken from Recreation Ground facilities EMR(440).

Members agreed to recommend to F&GP an increase of 2% for items of expenditure not identified by the Clerk for adjustment. Additional items:

Skate ramp	£1,000
Litter bins	£2,500
Zip wire (recreation ground facilities	£15,000
Swings inc equipment for disabled	£5,000
Outdoor gym equipment	£5,000
Abbey Green resurfacing	£3,000pa – new EMR

14. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Climate Emergency Planning
- Cemetery Regulations review

15. Date of next meeting: 3 December 2019

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

CLLR V COOK
CHAIRMAN