



# Battle Town Council



## MINUTES of a COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2012 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs C Bishop, R Bye, Ms M-L Neill and Mrs S Pry.

**Cllr Jessop was also in attendance.**

- 1. Election of Chairman** Cllr Bishop was proposed by Cllr Bye, seconded by Cllr Mrs Pry. With no other nominations Cllr Bishop was duly elected unanimously.
- 2. Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs J Boryer, J Eldridge, R Harris and M Palmer.
- 3. Disclosure of Interest** – None.
- 4. To Sign the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12 June 2012.** Cllr Bye proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Ms Neill. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

### **5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meetings**

Referring back to the discussion at the previous meeting Cllr Bishop sought to establish the precise purpose of the **web-site**. The Clerk confirmed that in terms of Quality Council criteria, a website is regarded as an essential element in communicating information and that specific documents must be published on it. Beyond that the Council is free to develop whatever format it feels appropriate. Hitherto, staff resources have been a constraint in taking forward further development but Cllr Bishop felt that this could be overcome by simplifying the current website without losing the information contained in it. As commented at previous meetings one aim should be to make the website more attractive and interesting, including the use of images. It should also become a means of consulting with residents on issues such as changes to the street lighting regime. All present shared Cllr Bishop's view that reviewing the website could be an interesting project for the students at Claverham College. To take this forward he will draft a brief for the project which Cllr Mrs. Pry will then put to the relevant staff at the College.

Differing opinions were expressed about the relevance of **Social Media** to the Council's business, particularly in the short term. This will be discussed again once the more important and urgent review of the website has been completed.

### **6. Business Fair**

Cllr Jessop reminded the Committee that, at a Council meeting, he had volunteered to lead on the organisation of the Council's stand at the Business Fair. Committee Members were grateful for this confirmation.

### **7. Revisions to Street Lighting Regime**

The Clerk said that he and Cllr Mrs Kiloh had recently met with the member of staff at the County Council responsible for this exercise. It seems unlikely that any major changes will be made to the County's regime locally but a public meeting will be held in January to present their ideas. The Committee agreed that it would be sensible to incorporate the Town Council's proposals at this meeting. In the meantime they agreed that the Council's provisional decision to make changes to the street lighting regime should be reported in the next Newsletter, with a clear statement of the perceived benefits, together with something similar on the website. Cllr Mrs Pry asked that the experience of Heathfield

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would be worth exploring.

## **8. Town Crier**

Following a discussion at the August Council meeting, Cllr Harris had circulated Members of the Committee with his further thoughts which essentially questioned whether there was any justification for making a permanent Town Crier appointment. Remembering that the discussion of the whole subject had been prompted by Mike Dawes playing the part of a Town Crier when the Olympic Torch came to town, Cllr Harris had suggested that he simply be asked to take on this role as and when invited by the Council. After some debate, during which Cllr Jessop reaffirmed his wish to see a permanent Town Crier post created, the general feeling of the Committee was against this idea. **Cllr Mrs Pry therefore proposed that Mike Dawes be invited to act as Town Crier on appropriate occasions. This was seconded by Cllr Bye and agreed unanimously to recommend accordingly to Council.**

## **9. Newsletter**

A brief discussion took place about items for inclusion in the next newsletter – changes to the street lighting regime; In Bloom activity; encouraging interest in the Business Fair; Quality Council reaccreditation; Council vacancies; and the reopening of the tennis courts. In order to raise the profile of the election for Police Commissioners it was also agreed that those attending the Question and Answer session at the Memorial Hall on 5 October would prepare a feedback note with the aim of encouraging residents to vote.

## **10. Parish Assembly and Annual Report**

Whilst understanding the reasons for adopting the approach in recent years, the Committee acknowledged concerns that combining County and District Councillors reports to the Parish Assembly with that of the Town Council had produced an unwieldy Annual Report. The likely result is that some residents fail to read the report or may be deterred from attending the Assembly. County and District Councillors are also denied the opportunity to speak at the Assembly other than as part of the Question Time session. The Committee therefore agreed firstly, that whilst the Annual Report should continue to be published and circulated as quickly as possible after the end of the Council year and promote the Parish Assembly, it should focus primarily on Town Council activities. Secondly that the County and District Councillors should present brief oral reports at the Assembly. In the case of the 5 District Councillors it was agreed that, ideally, one Member should present a single, factual report. Cllr Bye will negotiate this with them.

## **11. Marketing Issues**

In Cllr Palmer's absence the Clerk referred to the main items discussed at the latest Battle Marketing Group meeting on 5 September. This had opened discussion about the Battle Guide 2013; had reported arrangements with Arrow fm for promoting events; dealt with progress on developing a Keane trail and a general promotional film. There had also been a general discussion about the effect of the Olympics which appears to have been negative since most attractions have reported a significant decrease in visitor numbers. On the other hand there are indications that those who may have postponed visits during the peak period are now making bookings for the autumn.

## **12. Budget Report 2012-13**

The Committee noted the attached budget report including a reduction in the forecast spend on the Olympics/Battle's Big Event.

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## **13. Budget 2013-14 and 3 Year Plan**

The general view of the Committee was that there is no current need to expand or take on new activity. Next year's budget and the forward plan should be prepared accordingly. The only item to which attention was drawn was the spend on advertising.

## **14. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items**

## **15. Date of Next Meeting: provisionally, Tuesday, 22 January 2012**

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

CLLR C BISHOP  
Chairman

