



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held on Tuesday, 24 November 2015 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr G Favell – Chairman
Cllrs J Boryer C Davies, J Gyngell, M Howell, M Kiloh.

6 Members of the public

In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk (DTC)

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr J Reeves. Cllr D Furness was absent.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** - None.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 22 September** were approved and signed by Cllr Favell.

4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Committee noted the DTC report:

- **Kingsmead Open Space** – a site meeting had taken place and notes circulated to all Members confirming Rother's agreed maintenance regime;
- there are currently no available unused **bins to install as a recycling facility** at the recreation ground;
- the ground at the top of the recreation ground bank **has been prepared and the Alder hedge** ordered;
- Adrian Blunden (AB) and Michael Deboick had successfully completed the **Routine Visual Playground Inspections of play areas and equipment course**;
- **Dogs on leads and dog fouling notices** had been displayed at both recreation grounds;
- a **rotavator had been purchased** and used on a recently taken allotment plot;
- the DTC had been advised that the gateway at **Telham playing field** would not facilitate access by a bailer or tractor to enable the grass to be collected by a farmer;
- a contribution towards the **watering of tubs and hanging baskets** had been received from Beautiful Battle. BB have also provided a **water butt in the twitten** for use by the Choral Society.

5. **Correspondence & Communications** – none not covered by Agenda items

6. **Allotments**

Cllr Davies was appointed as Co-ordinator for the Action Plan for Allotments. As previous co-ordinator, Cllr Favell confirmed that there is nothing new to report to date.

The notes from **Senlac Allotment Association's (SAA)** AGM on 15 October 2015 and meeting on 10 November 2015 had been circulated and were noted.

Current vacancies were noted as: Cherry Gardens 4; Netherfield Hill 0; Virgins Croft 1 and Watch Oak 2.

Comments received from tenants, the SAA and the Town Clerk had been circulated and discussed. It was noted that 12 months notice of rent increases is not imperative although the Committee agreed to advise the SAA of proposed increases and to place notices at all allotment sites. Members of the public declined the Chairman's invitation to make additional comments. **Cllr Favell proposed an increase to allotment rents at Cherry Gardens, Virgins Lane and Watch Oak from 16p to 20p per square metre (m²) for 2015-16 and from 20p to 25p per m² for the year 2016-17 and at Netherfield Hill from 16p to 18p per m² for the year 2015-16 and from 18p to 20p per m² for 2016-17 and to adjust the Management Plan accordingly. This was agreed by a majority.**

In response to the comments as before, **Cllr Favell proposed that existing allotment tenants (on 1 October 2015) be charged a deposit of £0.00. This was agreed unanimously.**

In response to a query from the tenant of **allotment 32 Cherry Gardens** it was agreed to amend the

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records to show the plot size as 120m².

A request by a local resident to **buy plot 9 Virgins Croft** as additional garden space had been received. The DTC advised that allotments are managed as one unit and must not be sold without the consent of the Secretary of State who must be satisfied that it is surplus to requirements. The DTC was asked to advise the resident accordingly.

Cllr Boryer suggested that the **main Council pathways** should be wide enough for the mower to access easily. Cllr Davies agreed to investigate whether this is feasible.

4 members of the public left the meeting at this point.

7. Cemetery

Cllr Favell's report from the **Cemetery Working Group** had been circulated and she confirmed that the pre-contract meeting with Agrifactors had taken place and clearance work at the cemetery extension area would begin shortly. Nothing further to report on the Action Plan for the Cemetery.

The **meeting with the fundraiser** had been postponed and there was therefore no report. Members agreed that, if necessary, an extra meeting could be called to discuss the repairs to the chapel.

A letter from **A C Towner Ltd in relation to memorial erected on gravespace DC128**, together with photographs had been circulated to Members. The DTC was asked to ensure the removal of the light and to resolve this delicate issue with the stonemason. Members also agreed that amendments and clarification of the Regulations should be considered.

A request for work to **Sycamore trees adjacent to 16 Langton Close** had been received. *Standing Orders were suspended so that Mr Davidson senior could speak.* Mr Davidson confirmed that the trees caused shadow and much leaf dropping to the property and there was concern that any branch falling from the trees could hurt members of the family. *Standing Orders were reinstated.* Members were reminded that a comprehensive tree survey had been carried out and that none of these particular trees had been identified as requiring work. Other residents had previously requested work to be carried out to trees adjacent to properties and, unless dangerous, work was agreed only at no cost to the Council. It was also acknowledged that there is no budget available for extra tree work. With this in mind, Members agreed to obtain a quote to reduce the crowns on these trees and to provide this to the resident for his consideration.

1 member of the public left the meeting at this point.

8. Recreation Ground, Play and Games Facilities

The DTC confirmed that a ditch has been formed close to the bottom of the bank and behind the football pitch to aid **drainage**. Moling to the wettest area will be carried out shortly. AB is also monitoring the site regularly. A letter from **Battle Baptist FC (BBFC)** asking for more permanent solution works had been received and had quoted works that the DTC had no knowledge of. BBFC will forward a copy of the recommendation from the expert contractor for the Council's attention. The Committee agreed to add the football pitch to next year's Action Plan.

1 member of the public left the meeting at this point.

Cllr Gyngell reported that the **play equipment** appeared to be in a safe condition. A case to replace and re-site the play equipment had been circulated and Members approved the use of this for any fundraising applications. Cllr Gyngell confirmed that several play equipment providers have been contacted for ideas and estimations of cost. A request has been submitted to Battle & Langton School for pupils to complete a questionnaire on preferred playground equipment.

There had been no meeting with the **fund-raiser** and it was noted that applications cannot be made to RDC's Community Fund until other funds are in place. Members agreed that Cllrs Favell and Gyngell together with the DTC should approach local businesses for sponsorship. Cllr Boryer agreed to look at other sources of sponsorship.

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Cllr Favell reported on the availability of **Tesco Community Greenspace Grant Fund** that must be applied for by 27 November. She suggested that shelters for the recreation ground would be a suitable project and it was agreed to ask the Town Clerk to make an application for £12,000.

9. Street Furniture & Lighting

Cllr Howell confirmed that she had spoken with contractors in relation to the various options for **replacement or refurbished fingerposts**. Members asked that prices and implementation times be obtained for both options to enable a final decision at the next meeting.

Although not in the Council's remit, the poor **lighting in the Market Square** was raised and the DTC confirmed that this issue has been ongoing for some time with no responsibility being admitted. Cllr Boryer requested an enquiry be made with the lighting engineer regarding the **yellow lights near Netherfield Church**.

10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

Cllr Favell advised that final invoices are awaited from the **grass cutting contractor** and that once received a specification of works will be offered for tender. It is also anticipated that some of the work may be brought back in-house.

Members thanked Cllr Boryer for both his physical work and the coordination of the **Mansers Shaw tree project**. He reported on 2 half day sessions and suggested that work would progress more efficiently if he undertook a 2 day course to obtain the Certificate for Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting at a cost of £300 plus £150 examination fee. **Cllr Favell proposed this course be undertaken by Cllr Boryer with the cost being met from the tree work budget. This was seconded by Cllr Gyngell and agreed unanimously.**

Cllr Kiloh reported that the **Abbey Green** area has been the subject of discussions with English Heritage. She confirmed that replacement planters and trees have been purchased and that EH have requested details of the materials and type prior to giving authorisation. A further meeting has been arranged to produce a joint improvement plan for consideration by the Committee. Cllr Kiloh advised that the current lease agreement expires in 2018.

The DTC confirmed that a notice of rent review was due to the tenant farmer of **George Meadow/Upper Stumblets** in September. Unfortunately, there had been a change in staff at BTF Partnership (previously Charles Clark & Co) and this had been missed. The servicing of notice can only be undertaken in September. Members agreed that the next review should be undertaken in-house.

Complaints have been received in relation to **motorcycles parking on the Abbey Green**. It was agreed that this issue should be passed to the Town Improvement Group for consideration.

Members asked that further **notices be erected** at the recreation ground reminding **dog owners** of their responsibilities and that **'no skateboarding'** signs at the tennis court should be provided.

11. Budget report

The **income and expenditure**, as attached, was noted.

Members approved the attached **Fees and Charges for 2016-17** and asked that these be displayed both on the web-site and on appropriate notice boards.

12. Matters for information / future agenda items

13. Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 26 January 2016

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Cllr Favell
Chairman