



Battle Town Council



**DRAFT MINUTES of a Meeting of the
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 14 October 2014 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr M Kiloh (MK) - Chairman
Cllrs: D Furness (DF), R Bye (RB), R Jessop (RJ) and D Wilson (DW).

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Sydes.
- 2. Disclosure of Interest** – There were none
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2014.** MK proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by DF. This was unanimously agreed and they were duly signed.
- 4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**
The ATC confirmed that **ESCC** have been advised that the **Council wish to retain the Licence for the Amenity area** adjacent to Battle & Langton School and is awaiting the draft documentation.

Local solicitors have been approached for ideas of cost for drawing up annual leases for those that have expired. It was agreed that the ATC should arrange for the **renewal of the ground floor office space for one year.**

The **insurance renewal** has been confirmed with the current provider at a reduced rate from the previous year on a 3 year contract. Policy details have been reviewed and amended accordingly.

Cllr Kiloh reported on the Gold award again given to the Almonry Garden at the recent **S&SE in Bloom event**. She also advised that the Cemetery won Silver Gilt again and that the Beautiful Battle Group had attained a 'Thriving' award for both their entries.

The Chairman confirmed that the advertisement for the **Town Clerk vacancy** has been distributed to other local authorities, is being advertised by SSALC and is on most of the Council's notice boards and website.

The ATC reminded the Committee of the decision to undertake **Staff Appraisals** and suggested that these be arranged with the outside workstaff over the next two weeks. This was agreed.

5. Action Plan for the Almonry Budget

A proposed Action Plan with indicative timescales had been circulated to Members. This included objectives to maintain the fabric of the building, consistent with its status as a Grade 2* listed building, and the Garden, to a Gold Award winning standard. It also highlighted the need to develop and implement a Business Plan to ensure optimum use of the building, encouraging use by other bodies, the public and as a community asset. Cllr Kiloh confirmed that a draft proposal of changes to the ground floor had been sent to Rother for consideration by the Conservation Officer. The Almonry Working Group will consider architects plans and report back to F&GP.

Cllr Jessop agreed to help identify maintenance items requiring specialist attention and to

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provide cost guidelines. It was noted that future rent income may be reduced due to a tenant indicating plans to leave the building. It was agreed that a general increase in utilities and rates should be calculated for in line with inflation. New tables for the meeting room are required; these must be either stackable or collapsible for versatility. Cllr Jessop agreed to investigate. Members agreed that a replacement heating boiler is a priority and the ATC was asked to obtain estimates for this. A transfer to reserves of £5000 is required again this year. Cllr Wilson agreed to review procedures and criteria for grants for the Committee to consider.

Due to an omission in the previous minutes, the Chairman reminded the Committee of the previous meeting's discussion in relation to the **Admin Action Plan** which had also been recirculated with the agenda for this meeting. It had been agreed this should include objectives to review staff systems, roles and responsibilities; the reorganisation of office accommodation; upgrading of office computer systems; the review of the Parish Basic Allowance and Councillors' expenses and the Council's grants policy. It was felt that some costs for the office reorganisation could be obtained by grant funding. Increased figures for: equipment to purchase an office lap top; professional fees to cover office reorganisation; grants, if the policy changes; the Basic Parish Allowance and Clerical/Admin wages to allow for salary of a new Town Clerk.

6. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items

For November - Review of Committee Plans and Budget Proposals; Consideration of Grant Applications.

For January - Review of Grants Policy

7. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 4 November 2014

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

