

## **Battle Local Action Plan – Group: an update and request for more human resources**

Attn: Cllr David Furness  
BTC Town Clerk

This briefing provides an update on the BLAP Group progress in 2017/18 and highlights considerable concern for the future of its activity.

Very few people are currently engaged with the BLAP projects: Battle Health Pathway, Twitten Art, Steps2Ramps and Access-for-All (Battle Station) - more or less one person per project, yet they have managed to take all projects forward a few small steps during the last year. However the Group human resource level is now at its lowest number since BLAP was formed by BTC some 10 years ago.

Sue Burton has nevertheless done excellent work with Cllr Favell in moving the **Battle Health Pathway** project forward on many fronts and Sue's local fund raising to achieve early commitment has been phenomenal.

Alan Cole has worked on the **Steps2Ramps** project to place the idea more firmly onto BTC's (P&T Committee) radar and connect up the aspiration with potential s106 funding coming from the Lillybank Farm development and hopefully from CIL monies that BTC will receive.

Cllr Fisher has evidently not finished the **Twitten Art** project and is still sourcing pictures from Battle Abbey School, so we may see more installed artwork in the future. Additionally Paul has been until recently the Treasurer and our considerable thanks must be given to her for keeping our finances under control. Dale Wheeler has taken over as Treasurer following a virtual-EGM held recently using to save member's time by avoiding a face-to-face meeting for the single agenda item.

I have continued to lobby where I can about **Access-for-All** and have recently been pleased to see the DfT raising the principle again in their Train Operating Company tenders for the future Southeastern rail franchise. This has been a specific subject at meetings with all three bidders in Ashford and two London termini that I have attended.

All the projects are at different stages and are undoubtedly valued by the community. As a result in the last year we have turned our attention to a project related focus and avoided bureaucratic general progress meetings. Instead we have had specific meetings and discussions on the current focussed projects. Nevertheless these projects, despite being championed by dedicated BLAP members have very little public visibility and thus we struggle to gain support and particularly new BLAP Group members to take on further activity.

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In the early years BLAP had strong support from Councillors but this has dwindled in the last few years and indeed the few remaining Group members were quite shocked to discover 2 years ago that Councillors had left BLAP activities behind, following allocation of Councillor duties – a process *vis-à-vis* with regard to BLAP, we were unaware about. This meant that last year at the AGM BLAP was only just quorate to proceed. At the moment, this year doesn't look any better. Noting the BTC's 'Town Representatives' listing: Battle Local Action Planning Group (BLAP) - Cllr John Boryer; Cllr Paula Fisher; Cllr Jo Reeves – we have to report the latter did not engage in our activity at all and we are happy to say that Cllr Favell, Cllr Fisher and Cllr Jessop were the ones who gave practical support to BLAP in the last 12 months.

Concluding, if BLAP is to survive in its current form, we believe the Group needs to find more human resources to engage with the core projects already mentioned. Thus we are bound to ask for the fullest possible BTC support in May when Cllrs are allocated as 'Town Representatives' who can be occasionally be active for BLAP. (Cllr Fisher can describe the engagement required during Council discussions on this topic.)

Additionally I would very much appreciate a public call to the audience at the Parish Assembly (April-24) for support from more residents to bolster the already active projects described above.

Your support for this plea would be hugely welcomed by the small active BLAP Group.

Bev MARKS  
BLAP Group Chairman