



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of a Meeting of the ESTATES COMMITTEE held on Tuesday, 5 February 2013 at 7.30pm at The Almonry, High Street, Battle

Present: Cllr Ms M L Neill - Chairman
Cllrs J Carter, Mrs P Fisher, R Harris, R Jessop, Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

John Harmer, Footpaths Advisor was also present.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs Boryer and Bye.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** – None.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2012.** Cllr Carter proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Harris. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Clerk confirmed that the publicity for the **Battle Schools Greenway Project** is now being circulated. In addition, those promoting the scheme have asked whether the Council would join a steering group which is being set up. The general feeling was that the Council should limit its involvement to the support in principle which has already been given and that, at this stage, the promoters should be seeking to explore in more detail issues relating to land ownership and the practicalities of implementing their proposals.

The Clerk reported on recent guidance from insurance companies about **liabilities relating to incidents with trees**. As well as giving statistics about the of the number of such incidents it also provides useful information about how to identify trees presenting the greatest risk including the frequency of inspections and determining follow up action. Part of this procedure should involve giving priority to the highest risks locations. In the absence of an up to date report the Clerk was asked to identify an appropriate specialist to carry out a survey. In the meantime, and using the information produced by Cllr Carter in 2005, the Clerk was asked to carry out an inspection with the grounds maintenance staff.

Following the inclusion in next year's budget of £3000 for a **replacement swing at Telham**, the Clerk had obtained 3 quotes. The lowest is linked with a discount offer which expires at the end of February. Some clarification is required relating to the second lowest tender. At present the lowest quote is in the sum of £2885.92. **Cllr Jessop proposed that Council be recommended to accept this quote (or a lower one should this result from discussion with the second lowest tenderer). This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.**

5. **Correspondence & Communications**

An approach had been made by the **Pre-school Playgroup** to use **Mansers Shaw** as part of the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) aimed at delivering and promoting woodland education. The scheme delivers real life "hands on" experiences with a minimum impact on the environment. The Clerk had advised the Committee of this approach by email on 1 November 2012. Subsequently, the Playgroup have undertaken the necessary risk assessment and submitted the supporting paperwork to those organising the FEI.

Those who organised the **Battle Rocks** event as part of last years Battle's Big Event wish

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to organise something similar at the **recreation ground on 9-10 August**. Since last year's event had gone ahead with no problems or complaints **Cllr Jessop proposed, seconded by Cllr Mrs Fisher, that Council be recommended to agree to this request. This was agreed unanimously.**

6. Footpath Matters

Relating back to matters raised at the previous meeting the County Rights of Way Officer has confirmed that he is now in touch with the new owners of **Little Park Farm** in order to resolve outstanding issues, particularly the need to delineate footpaths across the fields. Regarding the "swampy" condition of the ground on **footpath 38** just beyond the walkway the Rights of Way Officer had said that nothing can be done at the moment in view of the extremely poor ground conditions. However, he will monitor the situation and if the area continues to lay unreasonably wet in the spring/summer he will consider whether some attempt should be made to carry out drainage improvements.

John Harmer reported on the current position regarding the creation of a **bridleway across Coarsebarn Farm**. At the Inquiry in September the Inspector had identified omissions and discrepancies in the Order creating the bridleway. Whilst merits of the case had been accepted, the Inspector had concluded that the Order contained so many mistakes that it could not be confirmed. County intend to remake the Order very soon. In the meantime agreement has been reached with the landowner to remove one of the fences currently restricting the route of the bridleway. The fence currently obstructing the northern end of FP108 remains a matter under discussion.

7. Recreation Ground

A letter had been received from Tony Perkins indicating that no formal news from the Tennis Club had been received regarding a **rebound facility within the tennis courts**. He had spoken to the County Council's grants advisor who had advised him that an Awards for All grant could be applied for by the Town Council. The Clerk had discussed this with her and it had become apparent that such an application would need to be supported by clear evidence of need from within the community. In the absence of this evidence the Committee agreed that the Council could not become further involved in this project.

8. Terms of Reference

The document previously approved by the Committee had been circulated. Some minor amendments were suggested and these have been incorporated in the attached document.

9. Risk Assessment

The Risk Assessment document completed in April 2010 had been circulated. In relation to workforce safety it was felt that a reference should be made for more formal arrangements to remind staff of their responsibilities and to pay attention to guidance on the use of any new tools or equipment. The item relating to trees would need to be amended in the light of the discussion under item 4 of the agenda. Regarding the asset register Cllr Jessop was concerned about the security of deeds relating to land owned by the Council. The Clerk assured the Committee that all land has now been registered and that, in the event of the loss of the original deeds, evidence of ownership could easily be retrieved. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the land registry documents together with the Almonry leases should be scanned and added to the Council's document back-up system. This action should be added to the Risk Assessment document. So far as the original deeds are concerned Cllr Jessop volunteered to arrange for copies to be made. The

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agreed revised document is attached.

10. Budget Report 2012-13

In circulating the attached report the Clerk drew attention to changes in the forecast figures relating to general maintenance costs at the recreation ground and other areas. The former related to the urgent need to remove a large amount of diesel stored in a tank in one of the sheds; the latter arose from the need to carry out urgent repairs to pot holes in Mount Street overflow car park caused by the bad weather.

11. Budget 2013-14 and 3 Year Forward Plan

The Budget for next year was noted. Looking ahead Cllr Ms Neill felt that a more in-depth discussion was needed before any strategic decisions can be taken and converted into a 3-year financial plan. She therefore proposed that a separate, informal meeting should be arranged to which all Council Members would be invited. Ideally, this should take place before the next Estates Committee meeting.

12. Matters for Information/Future Agenda Items

As discussed under the previous item, progress with developing a **Strategic Plan** would need to be discussed at the next meeting. The Clerk was also asked to provide a progress report regarding **tree surveys**.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 2 April 2013

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Ms M L NEILL
Chairman

