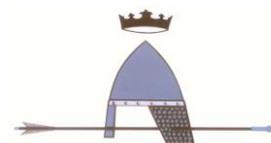




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday, 19 November 2013 at
The Almonry, High Street, Battle

PRESENT: Cllr R Bye – Chairman
ALSO: Cllrs C Bishop, J Boryer, J Eldridge, P Fisher, D Furness,
J Gyngell, M Howell, R Jessop, M Kiloh, J Ormonde-Butler,
M Palmer, S Pry, J Sydes and D Wilson.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr John Sydes to his first meeting.

Public Question Time

Simon Alexander spoke about the hopes for the roundabout, particularly a planting scheme to commemorate the anniversary of WW1 next year and Battle of Hastings in 2016. On behalf of Beautiful Battle, he suggested that to best enable maximum flexibility the cordylines should be removed.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr J Carter.

2. **Disclosure of Interest** – None.

3. **Minutes of the Council Meeting** held on 15 October 2013. Cllr Jessop proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Bishop. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Simon Alexander reported on the progress in planning the proposed **Concorde 950 event** confirming that it will now happen although the name may be changed to Concorde 1066. Members were told of the current plan for the day which it is intended will be of interest to Battle residents and visitors. The Chairman thanked Simon Alexander for his presentation.

5. Police Matters

Sgt Paul Masterson advised the Council that this week is focussing on raising awareness of domestic violence with Battle holding a joint venture on Friday in the Market Square with the Fire Service. Cllr Wilson queried whether the ribbons mentioned at the last meeting had arrived but Sgt Masterson said they had not yet been delivered. He also highlighted that it is Road Safety week. Next week the Police will have a meet and greet session at Darvel Down on 28 November. He confirmed that crime remains down on last year although there are some non-domestic thefts from sheds and garages, particularly in the more rural areas. The Chairman thanked Sgt Masterson for his report.

6. Report from County Councillor

Cllr Field had sent her apologies but had sent a written report advising that work is beginning on next year's budget but that things are looking grim. Whether or not authorities will accept a Council Tax freeze again is unclear bearing in mind the effect on base budgets but there is some hope that the Secretary of State may be persuaded to accept a baseline of 1%. She confirmed that interviews are soon to take place for a Director of Children's Services.

7. Report from District Councillors

Cllr Davies referred to a recent Services Overview and Scrutiny meeting at which the details of the new waste scheme with Kier were reported. This will be rolled out in Rother from 30 June 2014 and it was hoped that it would run smoothly as issues experienced in Wealden had been rectified and the Hastings change had gone well. Cllr Davies

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confirmed that residents will receive a leaflet explaining the new scheme and how to subscribe to the brown bin for garden waste collection at £25pa. The information will also be on the Rother website soon.

Cllr Dixon felt that full implementation of the scheme may not happen until September 2014. He reported that at the Scrutiny meeting the issue of Travellers' sites had been discussed and all 16 sites originally suggested are now being reconsidered. The Council's decision making structure had also been reviewed. A Member development scheme to encourage more candidates for the 2015 election was announced. Cllr Dixon also advised that there are to be changes to taxi licensing conditions and that 2 heads of service had been made redundant. He is in touch with Cllrs Bye and Bishop regarding car park charging.

8. Correspondence & Communications

A **request** had been received for grant towards estimated cost of £28,000 to build an extension to provide a better kitchen, consultation area and office by **Battle Pre-School Playgroup**. It was noted that this would be a promise of grant for a future year to enable further grant aid to be raised. **Cllr Fisher proposed that a commitment to a grant of £150 be made. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.**

The Chairman welcomed Pat Simnett from **Amicus Horizon**. She said that following discussions with the Highway Authority agreement had been reached to hard surface the muddy area opposite the entrance to Darvel Down and that it would become an official bus stop. Amicus Horizon had agreed to fund this at an approximate cost of £1000. They are also hoping to raise funds for a **bus shelter** but **asked that the Town Council accept the ongoing maintenance responsibility**. Cllr Boryer pointed out that from this point buses travel to Heathfield and that few people would be likely to use the shelter. Members asked that the type of shelter proposed be advised to the Services Committee for consideration.

A **request from Rother District Council for comments on existing and potential Polling Stations** had been received. There is a planned change for the Marley Lane ward from the Church Hall to the new Benedicta Whistler hall on the side of the Church due to access issues experienced previously. It was also noted that the Netherfield School is still suggested for the Netherfield Ward. Cllr Dixon confirmed that there are no other schools currently used in the Rother area. Council felt that this was not acceptable and asked that the Village Hall be put forward as an alternative or the White Hart's Restaurant. It was noted that, when it is completed, the new Methodist Church and Hall off Harrier Lane would be well suited for the Marley ward.

9. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 23 October and 6 November were reported by Cllr Jessop and noted.

10. Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 22 October were reported by Cllr Fisher and noted. Council was reminded of the ongoing debate regarding the suitability of the cordylines on the roundabout for both aesthetic and practical reasons. **Cllr Pry proposed the cordylines be removed from the roundabout. This was seconded by Cllr Bye. With 10 in favour, 4 against and one abstention the proposal was carried.**

11. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 November were reported by Cllr Bye and noted. Cllr Fisher was concerned that no mention was made of her request that groundstaff time spent on 'other areas' be more precisely apportioned, particularly in relation to time spent supporting the work of Beautiful Battle. She will ask that an amendment be made to the minutes at the next meeting.

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Turning to the various recommendations made:

- **Cllr Bye proposed the approval of fees and charges for 2014-15. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously;**
- **Cllr Bye proposed the payment of grants to Battle Area Community Transport (£750) and Battle Memorial Hall (£500). This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously;**
- **Cllr Bye proposed the amendment of Financial Regulations to include the Assistant Clerk as a cheque signatory. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously;**
- **Cllr Bye proposed the meeting dates for 2014. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.**

The discussion then focussed on the **budget for 2014-15**. Subsequent to the F&GP meeting the District Council had advised that the Town Council will receive a further transitional grant to offset the effects of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The likely amount is £10,144. Cllr Bye drew attention to the key facts and figures recorded in the F&GP minutes and invited discussion. Cllr Jessop reinforced the comments he had made at the F&GP meeting, focussing on the need for the Council to properly maintain its assets and to bear in mind the possibility that precepts might be capped at some future date. With this latter point in mind he urged colleagues to regard the Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant as a windfall to be added to general reserves. Cllrs Bishop and Pry felt that, irrespective of the merits of the various additional bids which had been made, the economic climate and the pressures on family budgets are such that a precept increase of 9.5% could not be justified, particularly in the absence of the root and branch review requested by Cllr Bishop at the F&GP meeting. Cllr Sydes agreed that a fundamental review of Council priorities is essential. In bringing the discussion to a conclusion, Cllr Bye supported the idea of putting aside the windfall grant. **Cllr Jessop then proposed that the precept should be set at a figure of £218,500. This was seconded by Cllr Palmer and was agreed by a majority vote of 10:4 with one Member abstaining.** In the light of the decision, Cllr Pry asked that Standing Order 10 be invoked and that the names of those voting for and against should be recorded. Those in favour were Cllrs Bye, Boryer, Eldridge, Fisher, Furness, Gyngell, Howell, Jessop, Kiloh and Palmer, those against were Cllrs Bishop, Pry, Sydes and Wilson. Cllr Ormonde-Butler abstained.

The approved budget is attached.

12. Remembrance Day Wreath

Cllr Wilson proposed that the Council incur expenditure of £50, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, for a Remembrance Day wreath. This was seconded by Cllr Jessop and agreed unanimously.

13. List of Payments and Receipts was noted.

14. Reports from Representatives of the Council

Cllrs Bishop, Boryer, Bye, Fisher, Furness, Jessop, Ormonde-Butler, Pry and Wilson had attended the Remembrance Day Service and Parade at St Marys Church.

- Cllr Jessop
- had circulated his list of meetings to Members. These included the **SALC AGM** and **AiRS Annual Conference**; a meeting with **Roger Comerford of RDC** about the Core Strategy and Local Plan, notes of which will be attached to the next Planning Committee minutes; a meeting of the **Battle Chamber of Commerce** in October where discussions included advertising, logos, parking and a

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planned conker match next year; he also reported on the previous evening's Chamber meeting at which the main topic had been branding and a request made for the Council's views on a proposal that all businesses and English Heritage should use the same logo alongside their own. The Council could see no merit in this idea;

- Cllr Wilson - had recommended that the **Youth Service** mobile unit visit Darvel Down;
- Cllr Kiloh - attended the recent **Beautiful Battle** meeting;
- Cllr Furness - had attended a **Safer Rother Partnership** meeting and several meetings of the **Battle Arts and Music Festival**. He reminded Members that all are welcome to the free concert at the Memorial Hall on 24 November at 3pm;
- Cllr Gyngell - had attended the meeting with **Roger Comerford of RDC** about the Core Strategy and Local Plan and meetings of the **Battle Arts and Music Festival**;
- Cllr Fisher - had been present on the Abbey Green for **Armistice Day**; had attended the **Battle Abbey Advisory Committee** meeting;
- Cllr Boryer - had attended a meeting of the **Darvel Down Association**;
- Cllr Pry - attended the **Battle Arts and Music Festival** meetings;
- Cllr Bye - had attended a meeting of the **Battle Abbey Advisory Committee** meeting at which English Heritage had reported on poor visitor numbers but high new memberships.

14. Mayor's Engagements

Cllr Bye had judged the best guy and best youngsters fancy dress at the **Battle Bonfire**; attended the **BLOG production** of HMS Pinafore and had been honoured the lay the Council wreath at the **Remembrance Day Service**.

15. Matters for Information/Future Items for Agenda

Cllr Boryer asked that the Council send some flowers to the Town Clerk who is currently on sick leave. The Chairman agreed to arrange this and suggested the cost should be taken from his Allowance.

16. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 17 December 2013

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

CLLR R BYE
Chairman

