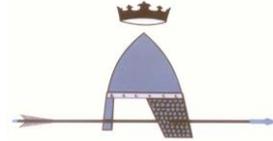




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of a SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING held on Thursday, 1 May 2012 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Mrs M Kiloh – Chairman
Cllrs R Bye, J Eldridge, R McDonald, Mrs S Pry and D Wilson.

Cllr R Jessop was also in attendance

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr R Harris.
Absent, Cllrs A Mitchell and M Palmer.

2. Disclosure of Interest - None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2012. Cllr McDonald proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Bye. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Clerk said that one offer of a **memorial bench** had been made since the arrangements for repair **endowments** had been agreed. The donor had queried the reason for paying the additional £200 and wanted to know exactly how it would be used. She had simply been given an assurance that the money would be set aside for the purpose of maintaining the seat. The Committee discussed how this commitment should be delivered and concluded that an inventory should be maintained recording the date on which seats are donated, when and what maintenance work is undertaken and the cost to be charged to the endowment reserve.

5. Correspondence & Communications

A request had been received from a resident in Norman Close for a **bus shelter** to be provided opposite the junction with Marley Lane. In the absence of any budget for this purpose the Committee felt unable to pursue this request.

6. Allotments

As agreed at the previous meeting the Clerk had devised a checklist recording the **condition of allotment plots**. This simply analysed condition under 3 headings – good; okay and poor. The form also records which plots are vacant at the date of each inspection. Cllr Wilson had undertaken a thorough survey of all plots towards the end of March, using this checklist, and he presented his findings. With regard to the Watch Oak it was felt that progress should be monitored over the coming months before any action is taken to draw attention to poorly maintained plots. Otherwise, the Clerk was asked to write to the occupiers of plots 5b, 7b and 8b at Virgins Croft and plots 3, 15a, 24 and 36 at Cherry Gardens. Cllr Wilson will continue to produce monthly reports throughout the summer and, in the comments column, will indicate more clearly where he believes letters need to be sent drawing attention to the poor condition of plots. In conclusion Cllr Bye proposed a vote of thanks for the very thorough way in which Cllr Wilson had approached this task.

The **tenancy position** is generally satisfactory with only 8 plots covering all four sites remaining unlet. There is currently no waiting list.

Regarding the **water supply at Netherfield** Cllr Bye had spoken to a previous allotment tenant who had advised that the then allotment holders had collaborated to acquire a hose pipe which had been connected to the supply of a neighbouring property owner. With this information in mind, the Committee agreed that, for the present, allotment holders should be left to make their

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own arrangements.

7. Street Lighting and Street Furniture

Cllr Mrs Kiloh had circulated a paper inviting the Committee to **consider options for reducing the street lighting** for which the Town Council is currently responsible. A number of other Councils have already made changes in this respect. Although primarily motivated by savings in ever increasing energy costs there were also good environmental reasons for making changes. Concerns that crime and traffic accidents would increase as a result had proved unfounded elsewhere.

Switching off for part of the night would be the obvious option but dimming, using low energy bulbs or even switching off permanently in some areas could be considered. As a very basic guide to the cost implications, the Clerk had established that percentage energy savings would match the percentage reduction in lighting time and that the cost of adapting all columns, by changing photocells, and some rewiring would cost between £12-15,000. A 50% reduction in lighting time would therefore repay the costs over a 3-4 year period.

The Committee agreed that the issue should be explored further, including any arrangements for public consultation, subject to the matter being discussed at the next Council meeting.

Regarding **finger posts** the Clerk had established that replacement posts made of timber could be inserted into the existing metal bases. He had spoken to a potential contractor who had indicated that the cost of each post would be about £100 plus £20 per finger. These are material costs only and do not include labour for installation. The Committee agreed that this should be an item for further discussion in the context of setting the 2013-14 budget.

8. Cemetery

Members reported on their **inspection** of the cemetery and generally agreed that current standards of maintenance leave room for improvement. It was accepted that a long term management plan would be beneficial but that, in the short term, and with an eye on the South East in Bloom judging, certain items of work should be given priority. De-weeding and tidying of the gravel paths; painting of the Chapel doors and edging of the grass areas were identified. Committee Members were all asked to continue to inspect the cemetery with a view to the reports made to each future Committee meeting forming the basis of a longer term management plan.

9. Budget Report 2011-12

The attached budget report was noted. The Clerk highlighted the main changes from the previous report – a significant increase in cemetery fee income and a reduction in cemetery maintenance costs. Regarding the latter he explained that this varies from year to year and that, whilst the budget for 2012-13 is above the previous years spend, this is likely to be needed in order to carry out the improvements already highlighted by the Committee.

10. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items – None.

The Committee were reminded that at the next meeting decisions about the allotment awards would be made. As usual, for this purpose, the next meeting will be preceded by a gathering at the Cherry Gardens site to discuss recommendations. To enable all Committee Members to contribute to this exercise the Clerk was asked to let them have a copy of the current allotment plans.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 10 July 2012

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

CLLR MRS M KILOH
Chairman

