



Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 15 March 2016 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs M Kiloh (Chairman), G Favell, D Furness, J Gyngell, R Jessop and A Ratcliffe

In Attendance: Andy Beams (Town Clerk), 1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence – None.

2. Disclosure of interest –Cllr Ratcliffe declared an interest in the item concerning the Almonry, as a tenant of the building.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 12 January 2016 – These were proposed by Cllr Favell, seconded by Cllr Furness, and duly signed by Cllr Kiloh as a true record of the meeting.

4. Visual Arts in the Town

Cllr Kiloh explained the proposal from Lesley Samms to form an advisory working group to coordinate all visual art proposals within the Town. Members acknowledged that it was useful to receive expert advice on such matters, but wanted to ensure the group had a wide enough membership to act independently. Cllr Ratcliffe suggested including representation from Claverham and/or Battle Abbey School's arts departments.

There was a further proposal from Beautiful Battle for a sculpture to be placed in the Almonry garden. Cllr Jessop suggested planning consent may be required due to the listed building status. The member of the public confirmed the designer was a professional sculptor and that from order to completion would take approximately eight weeks.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to respond to Lesley Samms confirming the Council are happy with the proposal, providing wider membership of the group is established, and asking for confirmation of the membership. The Town Clerk to check whether planning permission is needed for any sculpture in the Almonry garden and report back to the next meeting.

5. Town Clerk's report

Members noted the general update content of the Town Clerk's report.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk was asked to draft a resilience plan for the Council, based on the work already completed by Cllr Favell and using examples from other Councils.

6. Almonry update

The Town Clerk informed Members that the existing drawings had been completed following measuring taking place last month. He had attempted to contact the company to check the next stage, but calls had not been returned. Cllr Jessop expressed disappointment at the way the matter was being dealt with by all parties, and felt that had a duty of care been implemented before agreeing the contract, these delays could have been avoided. It was pointed out that there had been no agreement to set out a duty of care, so this had not been done. Cllr Furness stated that he had spoken with Steve Scott, the fundraising consultant, and he could only proceed once the plans had been drawn up.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk was asked to chase up the architect and explain the deadlines for planning submission to RDC by May 2016, and report directly to committee members with progress.

7. Staff Working Group

Members noted the report of the working group. Cllr Furness highlighted the need to keep staffing under constant review as the council potentially expanded and took on other services in coming years.

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The report of the Deputy Clerk was reviewed, along with the recommendations regarding pay and job descriptions for the grounds staff. Cllr Favell had some minor amendments to suggest to the job descriptions, which she would send to the Deputy Clerk.

RESOLVED: Members agreed the recommendations with regard to the grounds staff pay changes and job descriptions. Members agreed to form a Personnel Sub-Committee to deal with all staffing matters, which would consist Cllrs Favell (Chairman), Jessop and Kiloh.

8. Recommendations from External Relations and Town Development Committee

RESOLVED: Members agreed the recommendations to place all supporting papers for meetings on the website, although the Town Clerk was asked to continue to circulate via email to Members as well. Members agreed the recommendation for the Town Council to work with the Chamber of Commerce this year regarding the Christmas lights, and take over responsibility in future years.

9. To receive report on the Public Realm Working Group meeting

Members noted the content of the report.

10. To receive report of the Parish Remuneration Panel.

Members noted the content of the report and agreed the Town Clerk's recommendation to make no changes to the existing allowances for next year.

11. To agree recommendation for meeting schedule

Members discussed the two draft schedules and considered the benefits of each.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to recommend to the AGM to adopt the schedule based on a 6 week cycle of meetings.

12. To receive report on proposed use of Community Payback team

Members noted the content of Cllr Jessop's report, and felt the team could be used to carry out a number of projects in the town.

RESOLVED: Members requested Cllrs Favell and Jessop draw up a suggested list of priority tasks for the Community Payback team, and these would be considered at the next committee meeting, for work to begin in May.

13. To review updated Asset Register

Members reviewed the updated register completed by the Town Clerk, acknowledging this would now help with longer term financial planning for replacement of assets. The Town Clerk was asked to allocate each of the assets to the appropriate committee for ease of planning at future committee meetings.

14. Financial matters

Members noted the budget report to date, and reviewed the range of financial reports now available with the new accounting system. The Town Clerk offered to show any Members more detail of the system if they wished to know. Members reviewed the audit action plan, and were satisfied that the points raised had been addressed successfully. Members also discussed the situation with changing the bank account, and the vacant rooms in the Almonry.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk was asked to complete the bank account transfer to Co-op as soon as possible, with Members acknowledging that there may be charges in future for the account. The Town Clerk was also asked to prepare a proposal for alternate IT arrangements for the next committee meeting and to investigate the options for letting of vacant offices in the Almonry.

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15. Updated policies

RESOLVED: Members agreed to adopt the updated policies drafted by the Town Clerk as below:

- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Freedom of Information Act
- Grievance Policy
- Health and Safety at Work
- Recruitment Procedure
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement

16. New policies

RESOLVED: Members agreed to adopt the new policies drafted by the Town Clerk as below:

- Council Representatives on Outside Bodies
- Scheme of Delegation

17. Matters for information and future agenda items

None

18. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 19 April 2016

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

**CLLR M KILOH
CHAIRMAN**

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