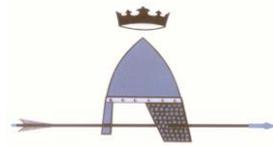




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of an additional meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2019 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), V Cook, J Gyngell and C Would.

In Attendance: Cllr B Brown, C Harris (Town Clerk), one member of the public (from item 5)

1. **Apologies for absence** – None.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.
3. **The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Favell.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

4. **Almonry Development Project**

The confidential notes from the Almonry Development Working Group following initial reassessment on 13 November 2019, in accordance with agreed procedure, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Items recommended for exclusion from the project were discussed and agreed. No further savings were suggested. Advice from the heating engineer on the benefits and disadvantages of conservation heating were noted and a decision was postponed pending advice from Rother District Council's Conservation Officer.

Cllr Cook joined the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that specialist advice is being sought in relation to VAT for this project and also for the other two Council led projects: pavilion rebuild and Battle Health Pathway. **The Chairman confirmed that the flow chart, as agreed previously, had been followed with a recommendation from the ADWG to continue to the tender stage at this time. This was agreed unanimously.**

7.30pm

One member of the public joined the meeting

Public Question Time

The Council was asked if, as a result of the current 1st of 3 key stage reviews on **the Almonry development project**, an announcement would be made. The Chairman confirmed that the agreement to continue to tender would be published in the minutes.

5. **Clerk's report**

- As a result in a change in policy, the TSB no longer offer accounts to non-profit making organisations. Research is continuing to apply for suitable **savings plans**. To ensure best rates are obtained, Members agreed that 12 month plans would be appropriate.
- Two official complaints had been submitted to **Barclays Bank**: the Mandate Team had still not completed the changes asked for in June; charges to pay funds in at the Post Office had increased and no availability of business banking on Saturdays severely impact on efficient staff time. The Clerk confirmed that the iZettle is now available for debit card receipts.
- Notification from RDC that the Parish contribution of **Community Infrastructure Levy** funds for this current period is £6,029.02. This will be added to existing Ear Marked Reserve(430) for future infrastructure items.
- Cllr Samms had requested use of the ground floor office to offer a **gift wrapping service**, using recycled brown paper and raffia, on late night shopping to raise money for the UNESCO

Battle Town Council

bid. She highlighted that this would encourage people into the building. **Members agreed to this use subject to good publicity of the evening's attractions and security of the office space.**

6. Almonry Development Project

The Chairman reported the decision from the confidential session to take the project forward to tender. Members were reminded of the agreement, subject to the initial reassessment, to contract the archaeological survey (written scheme of investigation) at £395 and CCTV drain survey at £550. The Clerk confirmed that the former sets out what is expected from contractors; how work is undertaken, and this is required prior to the site investigation and forms part of the Planning Conditions. As previously noted at ADWG meetings, a site investigation is also required to establish ground conditions to allow the structural engineer to design the foundations and to identify any contamination; required for re-levelling of ground and the rebuild. A quote for £1870 had been received. **Members agreed to these surveys at a total cost of £2815.** The Clerk was asked to emphasise that no further costs would be expected.

7. Almonry Garden

The Clerk reported that damage to the wall, caused by the Cyprus tree roots, south of the building adjacent to Western Avenue. A specialist quote is being obtained to carry out urgent brickwork resetting. There is a recommendation to rebuild a 4m length of the wall. Reports have been passed to insurers for consideration.

Following a site meeting, a report had been circulated, as attached. **Members agreed the recommended changes** and noted the additional £500 budget to facilitate these.

8. Policies review

The following **policies** had been circulated prior to the meeting and **were agreed**, as attached:

- Almonry Meeting Room Conditions of Hire;
- Bullying and Harassment;
- Co-option;
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure;
- Disciplinary Appeals appendix A;
- Disciplinary Misconduct appendix B;
- Freedom of Information Act;
- Investment;
- Recruitment.

Members agreed to recommend to Full Council the revised Code of Conduct, as attached.

It was suggested that a Reserves Policy should be added. This will be discussed at the next meeting together with review of the remaining Policies.

9. Financial Regulations

Following a **NALC review** the Clerk proposed minor amendments to the Financial Regulations. She also requested a change to allow a maximum of £100 for petty cash to be drawn by the Town Clerk from the Council's debit card. **The Financial Regulations were agreed for recommendation to Full Council**, as attached.

Battle Town Council

10. Wedding Venue Working Group

The notes had been circulated, as attached. **Members discussed the recommendations and subject to: steam clean of curtains; and a request for donation of table cloths, these were agreed.**

11. Action Plan

This was noted as up to date and on target, as attached. This will be presented to Full Council.

12. Budget and precept for 2020/21 for recommendation to Full Council

- The Clerk recommended that the **Members Parish Basic Allowance** should remain at £240pa per elected Councillor.
- The Clerk recommended that the charge for the **Ceremonies Room** be amended to reflect that charged for the Almonry meeting room (£50 per session) with a reduced rate to £25 for those hiring the Chapel. The fees and charges were agreed, as attached.
- Members noted that the potential **budget and precept 2020/21** including all Committee's proposed projects and an increase in general income and expenditure of 2% produced an increase in precept of over 11%. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk had discussed potential reductions in budget codes and reallocation of funds, as detailed attached. These were discussed by Members. A spreadsheet including these amendments had been produced to show income, expenditure and projects. This identified potential zero increase in precept requirement for 2020/21. **Members agreed to recommend the amendments and a precept for 2020/21 of £375,398.**

13. Financial matters

- The budget report to 31 October 2019 was noted, as attached.

14. Matters for information and future agenda items

CLlr Cook was congratulated on her 40 year service to Girl Guiding Award.

15. Date of next meeting: 28 January 2020

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

**CLLR G FAVELL
CHAIRMAN**