



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
held on TUESDAY, 6 AUGUST 2019 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle AT 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs H Sharman (Chairman), B Brown, G Favell, M Kiloh and C Would

In attendance: Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs V Cook, L Samms.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.
3. **Minutes of previous Meeting held on 4 June 2019** were approved by members and duly signed by Cllr Sharman.
4. **Town Clerk's report**
 - The **petanque court** was completed, courtesy of Bryan Godwin, in time for the civic meeting with Deputy Mayor of St Valery sur Somme, M Bocquet. A generous donation of £552 towards the cost of this facility had been received from Battle Muffins. A mutually convenient open event in September was agreed.
 - **Directional fingerpost sign** for the Cricket Ground/Market Road has been received and is awaiting installation.
 - Cleaning of **statue and roundabout** was completed prior to South & South East in Bloom competition.
 - The **bat survey** was carried out and no evidence of activity in the **old mortuary building** was found. The ecologist had provided an appropriate avoidance bat mitigation strategy to assist when the works are undertaken. Hastings College have agreed to add the work to the mortuary to their schedule from September.
 - The **memorial bench** had been ordered, although the proposed location has been amended to between the beech hedges above the new junior pitch.
 - The **Agreement for the Abbey Green** has been agreed and returned to English Heritage.
 - As a result of varying advice and costs, the work to the **taps at the allotments** have not yet been completed but are in hand.
 - Oak posts for the **statue information sign** had finally been sourced and would be installed once the hedge had been cut back.
 - One **outdoor gym** provider has been met onsite; with another arranged for next week. Quotes will be available for the next meeting. It was suggested that advice on designs should be sought from professional trainers.
 - Further examination of the **gate at the tennis court** entrance had suggested that replacement, rather than repair, was necessary. A quote had been received for £995 new or £795 secondhand. The local ironworks had agreed to build a bespoke gate for £400 using the surplus high quality fencing from previous repairs. **Members agreed to the bespoke gate proposal by Sussex Ornamental Iron Ltd at a cost of £400.**
5. **Correspondence & Communications**

A request from the allotment tenant at **1 Cherry Gardens allotment** for trimming of the overhanging willow tree. If workstaff are unable to complete this work, it was agreed that a tree surgeon should be appointed from the tree budget (4390).

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A request to complete a review of the **Rother & Hastings playing pitch strategy** had been received. Members agreed that the Clerk should complete the form and include reference to the existing pavilion.

6. Allotments

- a) **Cllr Brown's report had been circulated.** Members discussed the recommendations and agreed that:
- Availability of 'taster' plots should be highlighted on the website;
 - Posters of availability replaced at allotment sites;
 - The Hastings Allotment Association be contacted for advice on willingness to travel to sites out of area;
 - Confirmation of any waiting lists at other local authorities to be researched.
- b) The **report from Assistant Town Clerk, including recent inspection report** had been circulated. Members noted the tenants' request for barbed wire at the Watch Oak site. It was highlighted that this was in contravention of the terms of lease with Rother District Council. Members agreed that security is not the Council's responsibility and that a battery operated CCTV unit, as successfully used in the recreation ground, should be suggested to the Senlac Allotment Association at a cost of approximately £55. Current vacancies were noted: Cherry Gardens – 2; Netherfield Hill – 0; Virgins Croft 1; Watch Oak – 7. As a result of the recent inspection, 20 tenants had received letters requesting attention to their allotment with four warning that tenancies may not be renewed.
- c) A draft **Policy for keeping hens on allotment plots** had been circulated and was agreed, as attached.
- d) In recognition of extensive evidence of ruined produce, **Members agreed a special request for reduction in rent for 2020/21 for one allotment tenant.**
- e) The **detailed action plan for allotments** was reviewed and noted, as attached. **Members agreed that there should be no increase in allotment rents for 2020/2021.**

7. Cemetery

- a) **Cllr Favell (GF) reported** that there had been several memorial stones laid down as a result of the recent safety inspection. She confirmed that notices will be displayed at the Cemetery and information published on the website, social media and local newspaper. GF confirmed that the recent bat walk had been very successful with over 40 guests. **Members agreed that a further set of walks should be arranged for next year.**
- b) Four designs for a **replacement notice board** with indicative costs had been circulated. **Members agreed that the dark oak notice board at an approximate cost of £750 was most appropriate.** This would be paid from the PWLB Reserve (345) It was suggested that this should be placed inside of the cemetery gates for better viewing.
- c) Two quotes for **additional drainage in the natural burial area** had been received. Both contractors had successfully undertaken work for the Council previously. As the new cemetery had been constructed by Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd, in line with the specification provided, **Members agreed that Agrifactors be contracted to carry out the additional drainage in the natural burial area at a cost of £3,860 from PWLB Reserve (345).**
- d) The **detailed action plan for the Cemetery** was reviewed and noted, as attached. It was noted that the newsletter will be available in September and will include an awareness of cemetery facilities. Cllr Favell agreed to meet with local funeral directors to promote services available.

8. Recreation Grounds

- a) **Cllr Would (CW)** presented the **Battle Health Pathway** minutes, as attached. She highlighted the continuing fundraising efforts that include Run on the Rec on Friday and a 1066 Country Cycle Ride on 18 August: Councillors are asked to present medals to the participants of the latter. CW

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confirmed that the area is extremely well used at present with older youth meeting in the evenings. The Clerk was asked to ensure that both the rec and Mansers Shaw is checked on Mondays and that any liability of use is clarified.

- b) The Clerk was asked to research the details of the **zip wire** at Coronation Gardens and provide quotations for consideration at the next meeting.
- c) The Clerk was asked to research details of possible **floodlighting for the Multi Use Games Area**; to include purchase and energy costs and implications of planning permission.
- d) A request for **family tennis training equipment** to be stored in a small section at the front of the **Pavilion was agreed.**
- e) **Members agreed to purchase fencing for the petanque court to a maximum of £500 from play equipment (4335)** and the provision of a similar scheme of bench seats to those near the castle equipment would be appropriate and cost effective.
- f) **Rendezvous at the Rec:**
 - i. The Clerk reported on an informal meeting with a potential tenant/manager of a facility had been undertaken to explore management options. Indicative revenue from rent had been received at between £5-£8,000 per annum. Members noted that to lease out the facility would provide an income but would remove any control on community use. **As the Council's previous agreement to management the facility had not been rescinded, Members felt that this should not be discussed further.**
 - ii. Members were reminded that a formal **Plan** was required by funding providers. Although aware of the time constraints, Members felt that there are several queries in relation to the funding and the business proposal that require clarification prior to approval. **An additional meeting to discuss this item was agreed for Wednesday 21 August at 10am in the Almonry.** The Clerk was asked to attend a meeting with the funding consultant, Step up Sports prior to this. She requested all questions be submitted for discussion by Monday.
- g) The Assistant to Town Clerk was asked to provide a spreadsheet of comparative **facility fees and charges** for agreement at the next meeting.
- h) The **detailed action plan for the Recreation Grounds** was reviewed and noted, as attached. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for swings that include use by physically disabled children.

9. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) A report on the street light work that remains outstanding had been circulated, as attached. **Cllr Sharman proposed that these be actioned. This was agreed.** The Clerk was asked to identify who designs and retains responsibility for street lights on new developments for discussion at the next meeting.
- b) **A condition report of town's litter bins** had been circulated. This will be considered at the next meeting.
- c) The **detailed action plan for Street Lighting and Furniture** was reviewed.

10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

- a) There was no report from **Cllr Cook.**
- b) The Clerk reported that posters and requests for contributions, via Crowdfunding or directly to the Council, towards the replacement **skate ramp** had been published and circulated. To date £160 had been received on Crowdfunding. Two residents had volunteered to discuss ways of raising the profile of this project and will be meeting next week.
- c) Members considered material options for the **replacement sign for Guild Shaw** and **agreed the granite effect plaque at a maximum cost of £200 (General maintenance 4205).**
- d) The **detailed action plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate** was reviewed and noted, as attached. The Clerk was asked to circulate the existing fees and charges schedule for consideration at the budget setting next meeting.

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11. Financial Matters

a) The **budget report at 30 June 2019** was noted, as attached. The Clerk confirmed that costs at: Cemetery (200)

Projects (4800) related to the provision of the shelter in the new cemetery and therefore had been moved out of PWLB reserves(345);

Recreation Grounds (210)

General Maintenance (4205) relate to the public toilet cleaning and opening/closing costs for previous years and will be a charge from general reserves;

New play equipment (4385) is the youth pod and will be taken from Recreation Ground facilities reserve (440);

Projects (4800) is provision of petanque court and junior pitch. As reported above, a contribution for the former has been received from Battle Muffins and a RDC grant is awaited for the latter;

Miscellaneous Expenditure (4900) is the defibrillator. This was subject to a large contribution from Hastings Direct.

b) The Clerk reported that, despite several requests and reminders, there were three **invoices that remained outstanding from 2019/20**:

- **Claremont School – contribution towards repairs to Cemetery road: £1,000;**
- **White House, Marley Lane – contribution towards repairs to Cemetery road: £250;**
- **MM Events Group – use of Abbey Green for International Market: £200.**

The Clerk was asked to send a final warning prior to legal action to Claremont School and to contact Hastings Borough Council for advice in relation to MM Events Group. Members felt that the White House debt would not be financially beneficial to pursue.

12. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Outdoor gym equipment
- Health & Safety Risk Assessment for the Abbey Green
- High Weald AONB advice
- Parking at the recreation ground – non recreation ground users
- Estate Management Plan

13. **Date of next meeting:** 1 October 2019

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

Cllr H Sharman
Chairman