



# Battle Town Council



**MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
held on Tuesday, 12 January 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), 3 members of the public

**1. Apologies for absence** – None.

**2. Disclosure of interest** – Cllrs Furness and Gyngell declared an interest in the grant application for Battle Festival. Cllr Favell declared an interest in the grant application for Battle Health Pathway. Cllr Ratcliffe declared an interest in the item concerning the Almonry, as a tenant of the building.

**3. Minutes of the meetings held on 10 November 2015** – These were proposed by Cllr Favell, seconded by Cllr Furness, and duly signed by Cllr Kiloh as a true record of the meeting.

**4. Town Clerk's report**

Members noted the general update content of the Town Clerk's report. Members were advised that a further meeting between Malcolm Johnston and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been arranged for Tuesday 26 January to clarify the position regarding future shared use of the Almonry.

The Town Clerk explained that it would be necessary to rekey all the current financial year's entries into the new accounting system, to ensure accuracy when it came to the year end processes.

**5. Almonry repairs and maintenance**

The Town Clerk had provided estimates for urgent repair works, and reminded Members of the previously obtained quotes for longer term works of replacement heating and roof repairs.

**RESOLVED:** Members accepted the Town Clerk's recommendation to increase the Almonry maintenance budget by £1,000 to £1,500 for next year, and to authorise completion of the urgent works.

**6. Financial matters**

Members noted the budget report to date.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to increase the F & GP budget by £1,000 for Almonry maintenance, resulting in a net committee budget of £147,650.

Members discussed the precept recommendation following confirmation of the reduced Council Tax Support Grant figure of £7,329.47. Members considered the internal auditor's comments with regard to the relatively low level of general reserve.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Jessop proposed a 1.5% increase in the precept, which was seconded by Cllr Furness and agreed by Members. This results in a precept demand of £252,683, equating to £95.40 per Band D household. This recommendation will go to Full Council for a decision next week.

Members discussed the existing general and earmarked reserves, and noted the possibility of moving money between projects as required.

**RESOLVED:** Members requested the Town Clerk to prepare a recommendation with regard to potential new or replacement machinery, along with estimated costs, to allow a more detailed discussion at the next committee meeting.

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## 7. To consider grant requests

Members considered grant requests from four applicants, taking into account the remaining grant budget for this financial year.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed the following grants:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>
Battle Community Singers	£380
Battle Festival	£500
Citizens Advice Rother	£100

The request from Battle Health Pathway was referred back to the group to clarify the need for the topographical survey, and report back to the Full Council meeting next week. A sum of £720 remains in the grant budget to cover this application if it meets all the requirements.

## 8. Audit

The internal auditor's report had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. It highlighted a number of areas where improvements were needed, many of which should have been raised on previous audit reports. An action plan with five primary points had been raised, and the Town Clerk assured Members that all of those points would be resolved before the end of year audit.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to the recommendation of the Town Clerk to be part of the Sector Led Body for the future appointment of external auditors, and noted the comments of the Town Clerk with regard to the improvements made to the asset register.

## 9. To agree policy discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014

The Town Clerk had prepared and circulated proposed decisions on the policy discretions, outlining that the Town Council would not normally adopt the discretions but reserved the right to consider each request on its merits.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed the policy discretions recommended by the Town Clerk

## 10. To discuss future staffing roles and responsibilities

The Town Clerk had recirculated some comments from this previously deferred item. Cllrs Favell and Kiloh had also prepared some ideas.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to establish a working group to bring together a recommendation for consideration by the committee at the next meeting. Cllr Kiloh will convene the group, which will include Cllrs Favell and Jessop.

## 11. To agree Almonry Meeting Room conditions of hire

The Town Clerk had prepared and circulated a draft conditions of hire document prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to the draft and authorised the Town Clerk to proceed.

## 12. To review training requests for 2016

The Town Clerk had circulated details of recommended training for the office staff, along with the response from Cllr Jessop with regard to Member training. Cllr Kiloh reminded Members that the committee needed to prioritise training needs for both staff and Members, and asked for this item to be placed on the next agenda.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to the submitted training requests and authorised the Town Clerk to book the places.

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## **13. To consider request from Ticehurst and Etchingam Parish Councils regarding shared use of a Community Warden**

The Town Clerk had circulated a request from Ticehurst and Etchingam Parish Councils, enquiring if Battle Town Council wished to share use of a Community Warden. The Town Council had previously considered a Community Warden and decided against the idea due to the lack of powers the Warden would have to deal with important issues within Battle. Cllr Jessop added that the pilot schemes which would receive PCC funding had already been allocated within Sussex, so this particular scheme was unlikely to receive any financial support.

**RESOLVED:** Members asked the Town Clerk to decline the request.

## **14. Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Beacon**

Members discussed the plans, which had been circulated by the Town Clerk, and agreed that the Battle Bonfire Boyes should be approached to run the event.

**RESOLVED:** The Town Clerk to contact the Bonfire Boyes and ask them to submit their plans to the Town Council.

## **15. Matters for information and future agenda items**

For the next meeting, an agenda item regarding an update on the committee action plans.

## **16. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 15 March 2016**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

**CLLR M KILOH  
CHAIRMAN**