



# Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
held on Tuesday, 3 October 2017 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), J Boryer, J Gyngell, R Jessop and J Reeves.

In attendance: Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs P Fisher, D Furness and M Howell.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** – None.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 1 August 2017** were approved by Members and duly signed by Cllr Favell.

#### 4. **Matters arising from previous meetings, not on this agenda**

The Clerk reported:

- that RDC have agreed to replace open **waste bins** with lidded where appropriate;
- that the **wood chipper** has been ordered. The cost of £9,995 includes delivery and training on use;
- the **multi-use games area** panels have been replaced;
- the **statue tablet** has been installed close to the Oak tree bed;
- on further inspection and discussion with the workforce, it is suggested that the **tunnel areas** at the recreation ground be recovered with turf as the artificial grass would not be practical or aesthetically pleasing;
- that a meeting had been held with the owners of **land accessing Mansers Shaw**. They had indicated a willingness to gift the land to the Council, with any legal costs being borne by the Council. **This will be presented to the next Full Council meeting;**
- the **CCTV camera** has been positioned to face the entrance to the accessible toilet at the recreation ground.

10 c) Marilyn Waughman(MW), Beautiful Battle Chairman, was welcomed to the meeting. All agreed that the area beneath the **Oak tree bed** is not thriving in its current form and should be replaced with grass and a bench surrounding the tree. Members thanked Beautiful Battle for all their efforts and asked that MW liaise with the Clerk in relation to the removal of plants to other sites.

*Marilyn Waughman left the meeting.*

d) Bev Marks(BM), Battle Ramblers, was welcomed to the meeting. He reported that the fencing and **stile S2472 on footpath 87 into Mansers Shaw** had been recorded as being in very poor condition. BM advised that communication had been made with the Rights of Way(RoW) Team and the Ramblers had agreed to fund a kissing gate from legacy funds that ESCC Rangers would install. **Members agreed provide approx. 3-5m<sup>3</sup> hardcore and 2 half days labour to assist.** The Committee thanked Battle Ramblers for their generosity and asked BM to liaise with the Clerk and RoW officers.

#### 5. **Correspondence & communications**

The landowner of 19 High Street has copied correspondence from a local Surveyor indicating that the **boundary wall of Tills Courtyard and George Meadow** is jointly owned. This wall requires substantial maintenance. The Clerk confirmed that workstaff have already undertaken work to remove the ivy growing on our side of the wall. The Clerk was asked to contact David Martin, Historical Architect and the SALC legal team for advice. **This will be taken to Full Council for discussion.**

Battle Ramblers had reported safety concerns in relation to **Bridleway 86b**. The Clerk was asked to write to the tenant farmer to request attention be made to this area.

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## 6. Allotments

- a) Members noted the **current vacancies**: Cherry Gardens – 2; Netherfield Hill – 1; Virgins Croft – 4; Watch Oak – 10.
- b) The **Action Plan for Allotments** was noted.
- c) Members were reminded that one year's notice should be given for increases. **It was agreed to recommend to F&GP that fees for allotments will increase by 1p per m<sup>2</sup>** with effect from October 2018. The Clerk highlighted that the current level of **deposits for new tenants** is not acting as a deterrent; with workstaff putting much time and effort into getting the allotment into a cultivatable condition for it to be returned in a poor condition. **Members agreed that deposits for new tenants will increase to £50 for a small allotment and £100 for a large plot.**
- d) The (t)DTC had circulated a report on the recent **routine inspections**:
- Cherry Gardens – most plots are in an acceptable condition with most tenants responding to previous advisory letters. 2 plots will not be invited to have the tenancy renewed and 2 have given notice. There have also been 2 requests to reduce the size of their plots. There is confusion over the responsibility and boundary of plots. Members agreed to take this to the Senlac Allotment Association for consideration to ensure uniformity.
  - Netherfield Hill – all plots in a cultivated condition.
  - Virgins Croft – Most plots in a cultivated condition with 3 plots issued an advisory letter. One tenant has 2 plots with both being of concern. Members agreed that the tenant should be encouraged to release one plot.
  - Watch Oak – Most plots cultivated with one requiring an advisory letter. One tenant is reducing number of plots and one tenant is being asked to reduce number of chickens or increase run size.
- e) Members were reminded that the same **padlocks and keys at Watch Oak** have been distributed for many years. The cost is in the region of £150, although further investigation on how to secure padlocks to the chain/gates is required. One key would be provided with tenants expected to replace lost keys. **Members agreed to the purchase of replacement of padlocks and keys at a cost of £150.**

## 7. Cemetery

- a) The **Action Plan for the Cemetery** was noted.
- b) **Members agreed that to recommend to F&GP that the fees and charges should be increased by approx 2%.** The Ceremonies room charge is to include kitchen use and a deposit of £25 will be applied. The draft fees and charges are attached.
- c) The **Hire Agreement for the Ceremonies Room** was agreed as attached. The Committee thanked the (t)DTC for this work.
- c) Members agreed that the **consecration of the new children's cemetery** can be confirmed for 31 October at 11am. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served to guests that should include representatives from the local churches, funeral directors, grave digger, press and Councillors.
- d) Cllr Favell reported that the **Friends of Battle Cemetery group** should continue for a while longer and that one member wished to help to organise a Remembrance Service in spring 2018.
- e) The **South & South East in Bloom** judges had awarded a Silver Gilt this year. The comments will be circulated to Members. Cllr Favell reported that there were no constructive comments and suggested that consideration be given next year whether to enter.
- f) The Clerk reported that several avenues had been explored for the method of **disposal of prayer furniture and bellows**. It was accepted that there was no financial gain from these items and the Clerk was given authority to dispose as necessary.
- g) The Clerk had circulated photographs of a retrospective request for **private access to cemetery** with related works from Norman Close. Members felt that this was criminal damage to Council property and no permission should be given as it could compromise security and create a precedent.

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The Clerk was asked to request that the steps be removed, replanting is undertaken and the gate be removed or secured. It was also agreed to erect a fence behind the compost area.

## 8. Recreation Grounds

- a) The **Action Plan for the Recreation Grounds** was noted.
- b) **It was agreed to recommend to F&GP to keep the existing fees, charges and deposits the same for 2018/19.** The Clerk was asked to endeavor to obtain insurance details for circuit trainers using the Council's land.
- e) The **Annual Play Inspection** reports had been circulated. There are no high risk items and the (t)DTC will produce a schedule of works for the staff to ensure all highlighted work is carried out.
- f) It was agreed that the **car park in the NTR** recreation ground should be locked once a week. A notice must be erected advising that the area will be locked on any one day.
- g) Members noted the successful application for a grant of £25,000 from the Rother Community Fund for the **Castle themed play equipment.** The Clerk confirmed that the Eibe proposal had been slightly amended to include a slide, as requested during consultations, and windows to discourage misuse of the equipment. Cllr Favell reported on a consultation carried out at Market Square and B&L School with the two favoured options. Although this had not received a great number of responses it had shown a slight preference towards the Eibe scheme; echoing the comments made by the B&L School Council. **Members noted that, including the amendments and costs for levelling the land to enable installation, the discounted cost of the Eibe project is £40,933.70 and it was agreed to place the order for this.** Members were reminded that Battle Muffins have granted £500 towards a horse spring rocker and it was **agreed that part of the excess funds should provide for an additional horse.** Further equipment may be added and the Clerk was asked to research appropriate items.

It was agreed to discuss the following items together:

- c) Report from the **Recreation Grounds Working Group**
- d) Budget requirement for **Pavilion project**
- h) **Budget for 2018/19** for match funding equipment for children detailed in Action Plan
- i) **Battle Health Pathway project**

The notes from the **Working Group** had been circulated. In addition there had been a meeting with Battle Baptist Football Club(BBFC) and a representative of Step Up Sports Consultancy to discuss proposals for the Pavilion. BBFC had proposed employing the consultant to seek funds for demolishing and rebuilding the **pavilion with a café** with the Council making applications as the landowner.

The notes from the **Health Pathway Project Group** had been circulated. These confirm that this project is also ready for taking forward for fundraising.

The Clerk had received a Heads of Terms confirming a Consultancy rate of £25 per hour with approximate time being identified prior to any expenditure. To avoid any conflict for funds, **the Working Group would therefore like to recommend to the Committee and the Health Pathway Project Group that the Pavilion, Café and Health Pathway are considered as one project. Subject to agreement of the Health Pathway Project Group, this was agreed.**

Members were reminded of the commitment to support the Health Pathway and had requested a widened section of pathway between the gates near the car park and the play area adjacent to the North Trade Road. It was highlighted that the Council's commitment to this project also included volunteer hours, room hire etc in addition to grant funding.

After some discussion, **Members agreed that:**

**£30k for the Pavilion, café and health pathway projects for 2 years;**

**£20k for match funding against equipment for children detailed in the Action Plan;**

**£750 for a long reach hedge cutter;**

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should be recommended to F&GP for consideration in the budget setting for 2018/19.

## 9. Street Furniture & Lighting

a) The **Action Plan for Street Furniture & Lighting** was noted.

## 10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

a) The **Action Plan for the remainder of BTC's Estate** was noted.

b) The rent for **George Meadow** is due for review. Research had indicated that there has been an increase in rental value. **Members agreed to recommend to F&GP to increase the annual charge for George Meadow to £50 per acre, total £1,250 per year, for 3 years.** The Clerk reported that the original 1977 lease for 5 years with Battle Preschool appears not to have been subject to review. They currently pay an annual peppercorn rent of £1 and Council staff cut the grass approx. 6/7 times a year free of charge. **Members agreed to give Battle Preschool notice of a change to rent and, in line with the Guide facilities, to recommend to F&GP a rent of £360 per year and that the Council will no longer be responsible for grass cutting of the area.**

e) An example of **fun circuit equipment** for children had been circulated. Workstaff had indicated that this could be undertaken at Mansers Shaw for reasonable cost and **Members agreed that a budget of £500 should be allocated for the provision of a children's fun circuit at Mansers Shaw.**

f) The Heads of Terms had been received for the License of **Amenity site** for a period of 5 years at a peppercorn rent. **Members agreed that the Amenity site should be added to the Action Plan and Asset Register and managed as a wildflower meadow area.**

g) A local charity, **Parchment Trust** have offered the services of their manpower for gardening type work. The Clerk was asked to contact Parchment Trust to suggest taking on a project at Guild Shaw: submitting creative ideas to the Council and producing an agreed scheme.

## 11. Financial Matters

a) The **income and expenditure to 31 July 2017** was noted. The Clerk highlighted the high electricity and water charges: the former is in part due to heating at the Chapel/Ceremonies room during drying out period; the water charges at Cherry Gardens are still being investigated for mis-apportionment by the supplier. It was agreed that the SAA should be alerted to the high water costs at the allotment sites.

b) The **budget headings** will be reviewed by Cllr Favell and the Clerk. **Members agreed to recommend to F&GP an increase of 3% for 2018/19.**

## 12. Matters for information / future agenda items

Cllr Jessop reported the planting of plug plants to assist the wildflower meadow at Caldbec Hill.

## 13. Date of next meeting: 5 December 2017

There being no further business the meeting closed 9.45pm.

Cllr G Favell  
Chairman