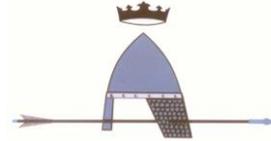




Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held on Tuesday, 22 September 2015 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr G Favell – Chairman
Cllrs J Boryer, J Gyngell, M Kiloh.

In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk (DTC)

1. **Apologies for Absence** - Cllrs D Furness and M Howell.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** - None.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 28 July** were approved and signed by Cllr Favell.

4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Committee noted the DTC report:

- Further **tree work at the Cemetery** including at the boundary to Langton Close, in line with the recommendation in the Tree Survey, will be undertaken this month;
- The Town Clerk has contacted the owner of the **Oak tree logs** left on the **North Trade Road (NTR) Recreation Ground** and their contractor has been instructed to remove the wood from BTC land as soon as possible;
- **Kingsmead Open Space** – a site meeting is to take place between interested parties on 30th September at 10.30;
- The **pathway by the Pavilion** has been cleared of stones, covered in top soil and sown with wild flower meadow seed;
- **Staff training:** the memorial inspection workshop has been cancelled; playground inspection competence training arranged for 12 October; details for advanced tree surgery to be discussed further;
- **Football pitch** – as verti-draining can only be done in the spring, the best option was ‘earthquaking’ (which should be done on a regular basis for it to be effective). This has been completed. The hedge will be planted after the ground is prepared and the bare-rooted plants are sourced this autumn;
- The **basket swing seat** in the NTR Play Area has been replaced;
- The bark on the **Adventure Area** has been topped up;
- A **litter bin** has been placed by the exit from the **MUGA**;
- The **RoSPA inspection** at the **Adventure Play** area has been inspected and the report received today;
- **CCTV** has been installed on the **Pavilion** to cover the surrounding areas;
- **Street lighting column in Langton Close** – Kier has forwarded insurance details in order that the repair costs can be recovered. The order for the replacement column has been placed.

5. **Correspondence & Communications**

At the previous Full Council meeting the Committee had agreed to consider how to **encourage recycling**. It was agreed that one of the old style bins should be installed at the recreation ground with a sign to encourage the recycling of bottles and cans.

An email raising various concerns particularly in relation **signage regarding dogs on leads and fouling and boundary security** at the **NTR recreation ground** was discussed. The Chairman will respond confirming that a review of the signs will be undertaken in April; there are plans to re-site the play area which will encompass better exit points and that the boundary hedging will be improved during this financial year.

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6. Allotments

Cllr Favell agreed to continue as **Co-ordinator for the Action Plan for Allotments** until the Committee was back to full membership. **Cllr Gyngell proposed that Full Council be recommended to appoint one of the recently co-opted Councillors to this Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Kiloh and agreed unanimously.**

The **Action Plan for Allotments** had been circulated to Members. Cllr Kiloh highlighted a meeting with ESDA Disability Group and fundraiser to further plans in relation to providing accessible plots at Watch Oak for less active people.

There are currently no **vacancies** at Virgins Croft or Netherfield Hill; 2 at Cherry Gardens and 3 at Watch Oak. The rent reminders will be issued by 30 September and this historically results in some allotments being released. Cllr Kiloh asked to be informed of the reasons for these tenants' decision.

The Committee agreed that one plot in each site should be divided into **small 'taster plots'** to offer residents an opportunity to try allotment gardening.

Cllr Favell, the DTC, BTC's lead worker for Allotments, Anne Gavin (Secretary to the Allotment Society) and the SAA representative of each site will undertake an **allotment inspection on 7 October.**

Cllr Kiloh proposed that the revised Tenancy Agreement be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Gyngell and agreed.

The issue of **deposits to encourage tenants to vacate plots in a rentable condition**, and to contribute to the cost of re-instatement if they are not, was discussed in conjunction with comments made by the Senlac Allotment Society. Members agreed a nominal deposit of £10 for existing plot holders with future allotments incurring a deposit of £50 for large allotments and £25 for a small plot. It was further agreed that a rotavator should be purchased to ensure that plots would be available in a workable condition. Existing tenants would be offered the service for a fee.

7. Cemetery Extension

The **report from the Cemetery Working Group** and **Co-ordinator of the Action Plan for the Cemetery** had been circulated and was noted. Cllr Favell reported that tenders had been opened and a meeting with a contractor will be arranged shortly. It is expected that clearing of the area will be undertaken over the autumn/winter with work commencing in spring. Cllr Boryer highlighted the issue of damp in the Chapel and was reminded that works will be undertaken within the cemetery extension project. Date of the next meeting of the Working Group is 24 September.

The Committee considered two quotes for the **paths in the Lower Cemetery** but agreed that these were not comparable. Cllr Boryer agreed to look at the surface and provide a specification that could be provided to both companies together with the proposed cemetery extension contractor. Once quotes had been received the DTC was authorised to make an informed decision and instruct the works to be carried out.

Members agreed that the **slope to the Lower Cemetery** should be cleared and grass seeded in preparation for cremated remains plots.

The DTC advised that a discussion had taken place with Cllr Favell and the workforce in relation to **re-siting the main workshop**. Various options had been considered and it had been agreed that an area at the west end of the NTR Recreation Ground would be most suitable. RDC are being consulted regarding the requirement of planning permission. Although reservations were made about security of equipment and the visual impact, Members agreed that this site should be pursued.

It was noted that the cemetery extension project will be **financed** from the Public Works Loan.

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8. Recreation Ground, Play and Games Facilities

The Committee agreed to disband the **Sport & Leisure Working Group** for the present time.

The **report from the Co-ordinator of the Action Plan for the Recreation Grounds** had been circulated and was noted. Cllr Gyngell highlighted proposals to increase interest and visitors to the NTR recreation ground including the re-siting and replacement of the play area with castle themed equipment and offering the pavilion to a small trader as a café. These were agreed by the Committee. It was suggested that the café should be trialled on weekends and school holidays.

The Committee discussed mowing paths in the Telham Playing Field, leaving long grass that could be cut and baled by a farmer in late summer. The DTC will investigate the practicalities.

Cllr Boryer supported the proposals made by **Battle Baptist Football Club** although the contribution required from BTC was not possible due to other projects already committed to. It was agreed that BBFC should be highly commended for their work in the community and offered encouragement and support but advised that the Council is not in a position to offer the financial assistance suggested.

Members agreed that **toilet facilities for NTR recreation ground users** should be provided and that one disabled unit, at an approximate cost of £3,500, would replace the existing amenities.

Cllr Boryer agreed to write a specification for the **levelling of the top area at NTR Recreation Ground** to enable the DTC to obtain comparable quotes for the work.

As noted in Cllr Gyngell's report, a **covering of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)** would prevent users from constantly retrieving balls. Members supported the installation of overhead netting.

The Committee agreed that the provision of **steps and a gate at the NTR recreation ground** by the car parking area should be costed for immediate action.

Members discussed **priorities for the next financial year** and agreed that the following items should be included for 2016-17 budget, at a total cost of £16,000:

- Contribution to reserves - £5,000 for replacement of play equipment
- Net for the MUGA -£1,000
- Disabled toilet facility at Pavilion – £6,500 to include opening/closing and cleaning costs
- Levelling of top fields - £3,000; excess soil transferred for use on:
- Cycle track at recreation ground - £500; hopefully using helpers from the Reparation Team and youth volunteers.

It was felt that the re-siting of the workshop from the Cemetery to NTR recreation ground should be funded from the cemetery extension loan as the move was to facilitate returning the other side of the chapel to public use.

The Committee felt that grant funding should be sought for a youth shelter and aeroskater for teenage users and a castle play area and cableway for younger children.

9. Street Furniture & Lighting

The **Co-ordinator of the Action Plan for Street Furniture & Lighting** had confirmed that work is underway.

The Committee agreed that an additional £1,000 should be added to the fingerpost reserve in the **next financial year**,

10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

The **reports from the Co-ordinators of the Action Plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate including Tree Work** had been circulated to Members and noted. Cllr Boryer confirmed that work

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to Mansers Shaw can be undertaken in small sections to limit the impact on other activities carried out by the Council's workforce. He reported that a National Trust advisor would soon be advising on the project. Cllr Boryer agreed to carry out a site visit with staff to establish a programme to commence in October. He will also prioritise the next phase of tree surgery required from the Tree Survey and identify which items require an outside contractor.

Cllr Favell confirmed that once this year's invoices have been received from the current grass cutting contractor, a schedule of works will be compiled and a review undertaken.

The **report from the Town Improvement (Working) Group** had been circulated and noted. Cllr Kiloh reported that communication was ongoing with English Heritage regarding 3 new containers for the Green but it was hoped for them to be in place soon. She also confirmed that the group are considering replacement flag poles.

At a recent **Beautiful Battle** meeting discussion had taken place regarding the **watering regime carried out by BTC on their behalf**. The area planted and maintained by the Choral Society in the Twitten was previously watered from a water butt. This has been removed and BTC are now asked to add this to the existing programme. The DTC confirmed that no contribution towards the watering had been requested from BB this year. The Committee agreed that if a water butt is provided near to the Twitten the Town Council would ensure the butt is refilled regularly. The DTC was asked to raise an invoice in the sum of £750 towards the watering regime carried out this year.

The **Risk Assessment document** had been circulated and was agreed by the Committee.

The **Management Programme for BTC's estate** had been circulated. It was noted that the allocation of work areas for the outside workstaff appeared to be working well. The DTC was asked to produce the Management Programme as a diary document.

Tree surgery training and subsequent equipment at £5,000 and an additional £3000 for tree work were agreed as **priorities for the next financial year**.

11. Budget report

This had been circulated and noted. It was agreed that hedge improvements at the NTR recreation ground should be carried out at an approximate cost of £300 which could be taken from the budget set aside for the Amenity site maintenance (102).

12. Matters for information / future agenda items

The DTC confirmed that the RoSPA report on the Adventure Play Area had not identified any significant risk items.

13. Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 24 November 2015

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Cllr Favell
Chairman

