



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING held on TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016 in
The Almonry, High Street, Battle, at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs M Kiloh (Chairman), J Boryer, G Favell, D Furness, J Gyngell, M Howell, R Jessop, A Ratcliffe and A Russell.

Cllr Gary Curtis, Cllr Kevin Dixon, 1 member of the press, Andy Beams (Town Clerk)

Public Question Time – none.

1. Apologies for absence – Received from Cllrs C Davies, P Fisher, M Palmer and J Reeves, and County Cllr Field.

2. Disclosure of interest – Cllr Ratcliffe declared an interest in item 7 with regard to the logo design, which was prepared free of charge by his company for consideration by the Council.

3. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 January 2016. Cllr Favell proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Russell and agreed unanimously. These were duly signed by Cllr Kiloh.

4. To receive a report from the County Councillor and District Councillors

In the absence of the County Councillor, there was no report.

Cllr Curtis reported that Rother District Council had now agreed the 1.94% increase in Council Tax for the next financial year. Issues with rubbish collections seem to be resolved at the current time.

Cllr Favell asked what information was being circulated with regard to the hardship fund for those struggling to pay their council tax, as a resident had pointed out no details had been circulated. Cllr Dixon confirmed they should have been as establishing a hardship fund had been agreed when the tax increase had been debated.

Cllr Dixon reported that he had appeared at the Planning meeting to attempt to reverse the decision regarding Beech Close, but had been unsuccessful.

5. Correspondence and communications

Battle Twinning Association – Members had received details from the Twinning Association with regard to their 50th anniversary. Members discussed the idea of the Council forming closer links with the Association, and agreed Members should consider joining individually and that a Council representative could be added to the Association committee, which was common in other towns with twinning arrangements.

Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign – Members had received the information relating to an invite to join the group. Members agreed there were benefits to understanding the issues better, but felt further research into the group and its constitution was needed before committing to join. The Town Clerk was asked to provide more detailed information and report back to the next Full Council meeting.

ESCC cuts to voluntary services – Cllr Kiloh reported that she had been informed by Home Start that their funding from ESCC was being terminated from April 2016. She proposed writing to ESCC to express the concerns of the Town Council with regard to the cuts to important voluntary services which would adversely affect local families. Members agreed to send the letter.

Creative England film friendly locations – The Town Clerk reported on a meeting he had attended explaining the potential benefits of allowing filming and photographing to take place on their land and/or premises. Members agreed for the Town Council to register their interest with Creative England, and any request to film would subsequently be referred to the Council for approval.

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Other Communications – The Town Clerk informed Members that the Cemetery contract had now been signed, and work was scheduled to commence in April, weather permitting.

Battel Bonfire Boyes had agreed to co-ordinate the Beacon lighting for the Queen's birthday celebrations and Members agreed that if the Bonfire Boyes bought the Beacon, support would be given to give them a grant to reimburse their costs.

RDC had visited Battle and reviewed the bins in the High Street with the Deputy Town Clerk. As a result, they were prepared to replace 3 or 4 bins and had suggested the Town Council may like to pay for a commemorative plaques marking the 950th Anniversary. Members requested more information with regard to cost before making a decision.

6. Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 26 January 2016

These were presented by Cllr Favell. Cllr Boryer explained the benefits of the chainsaw training he had received, and updated Members on the progress made at Manser's Shaw, highlighting concerns regarding the access which was particularly muddy at present. Cllr Kiloh acknowledged this and recommended the Environment Committee investigate this further at their next meeting.

Members discussed the proposal regarding using funds from the asset reserve to pay for planters in the High Street and/or Abbey Green.

RESOLVED: Members agreed the proposal originally made by the Environment Committee to use £5,000 from the asset reserve to fund the planters.

7. Minutes of the External Relations & Town Development Committee meetings held on 2 February 2016

These were presented by Cllr Ratcliffe, who highlighted the purchase of an additional defibrillator. The Town Clerk informed Members he had been approached by the Rotary Club who were working with other local groups on funding more defibrillators, and discussions were ongoing about where these would be placed.

Cllr Kiloh updated Members on the progress of the GeoTourist app, where the Historical Society had produced the text and photographs, and these were now with Anton Lesser for recording.

Cllr Ratcliffe explained the idea behind 'Better Battle' in more detail, and Members agreed with the concept. Cllr Ratcliffe will work with the Town Clerk to invite all relevant groups and organisations to an initial meeting to facilitate a brainstorming session on the project.

Members discussed the recommendation from the committee with regard to the logo

RESOLVED: Members requested sight of the proposed logos mocked up onto letterheads and papers for the next Full Council meeting, which Cllr Ratcliffe agreed to prepare.

8. Minutes of the Planning & Transport Committee meetings held on 27 January and 10 February 2016

The minutes were presented by Cllr Jessop with no questions from other Members.

9. Libraries opening hour's consultation

RESOLVED: Members agreed the draft response prepared by the Town Clerk.

10. List of payments and receipts

RESOLVED: Payments totalling £29,418.49 and receipts totalling £19,219.15 for the period 1 to 31 January inclusive were noted by Members.

Cllr Furness requested that congratulations to the Town Clerk be noted on the work with changing the accounting system and the website, which was agreed by Members.

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11. Reports from representatives of the Council and future reporting formats

Cllr Kiloh explained that discussions had taken place about standardising the reporting format for representatives of the Council on outside bodies. The Town Clerk recommended that written reports be completed by representatives which could be circulated in advance of the meeting detailing the key points from any meeting attended. Cllr Jessop offered to produce a template for others to follow, which was agreed as a useful tool.

Members agreed that at the Annual Meeting a deputy would also be appointed to each outside body to ensure attendance on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllrs Jessop and Kiloh had circulated written reports to Members.

Cllr Boryer had attended a meeting of Beautiful Battle, where a proposal was discussed regarding placing a commemorative sculpture in the Almonry garden. The Town Clerk was asked to request full details from Beautiful Battle for consideration.

Cllr Furness had attended meetings of the Festival, the Battle Partnership and the Memorial Hall.

Cllr Favell had met with Andrew Dyer of the National Trust regarding Lake Meadow, and had previously circulated a report.

Cllr Russell had attended a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

12. Matters for information / future agenda items

Cllr Ratcliffe thanked Cllr Jessop for circulating the police report. It was noted that Members could sign up directly via email to receive police reports.

Cllr Boryer expressed disappointment that other Members had not visited Netherfield Post Office during the consultation on its proposed changes. The Town Clerk confirmed that as Cllr Boryer's response to the Town Council had been the only one received, his views had been reflected in the official Council response to the consultation.

Cllr Dixon asked why the meetings for February and March weren't on the third Tuesday, as had historically been the case. Cllr Kiloh stated that the dates had been agreed by Members following a draft proposal from the Town Clerk at the Annual meeting in May 2015, but the comment would be taken into account when the next schedule was agreed from May 2016 onwards.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 22 March 2016

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

Cllr M Kiloh, Chairman