



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of a SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 1 October 2013 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr M Kiloh - Chairman
Cllrs C Bishop, J Eldridge, J Gyngell, M Howell, J Ormonde-Butler, M Palmer
and D Wilson.

1. **Apologies for Absence** –Cllrs R Bye and S Pry.
2. **Disclosure of Interest** - None.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** held on 9 July 2013. Cllr Bye proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Ormonde-Butler. This was agreed and they were duly signed.
4. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings** – None.
5. **Correspondence & Communications** – None.

6. **Allotments**

Chairman Cllr Kiloh reported the **Allotment Holders' meeting** held beforehand as having been relatively positive, identifying needs to do certain tasks and budget planning.

Following an increase in the number of new lettings, the number of **vacant plots had decreased**. Cllr Wilson had not been able to carry out an inspection since the last meeting. **Councillors agreed that plots should be properly marked and some divided into smaller plots. Cllr Wilson and Mr Peter Mills had volunteered** to do this and Cllrs Gyngell and Ormonde-Butler also offered help if needed. There was an **agreed need to dedicate labour to strimming and covering the vacant plots** with very thick black plastic to prevent weed seed blowing over let plots. Cllr Palmer suggested they should also be treated with weedkiller otherwise the weeds would emerge again and Cllr Ormonde-Butler suggested rotivating for new tenants, though the Council did not have the equipment at present.

Review of meeting with allotment holders – metal stakes were needed and 1200 gauge black plastic needed to be budgeted for, to mark and cover vacant plots. This was a long job and the Clerk suggested to start with, the vacant plots only could be marked. Thereafter the others could be marked out as they became vacant to keep them clearly identified. It was considered whether a contractor could be used to do this work of clearing sites and maintenance of the paths etc but **Councillors agreed that it would be more cost effective to employ an extra grounds man who could also undertake other much needed tasks on the Battle Town Council (BTC) estate.** The trees and hedges around all allotments needed attention and any future work would need to be put in the 3 year forward plan. If an **Allotment Holders' Association** was set up again, this would help address these matters. Meanwhile **funds for marking and covering vacant plots were needed during November.** The Clerk confirmed that this work would ideally be undertaken in the autumn when it was not too wet to strim. The Chairman would produce a plan with figures. **Cllr Bye proposed a budget of £1000 per annum was provided for maintenance of the allotments over the three year forward plan budget, seconded by Cllr Wilson and all agreed.** There was already a provision in the budget for estimated costs of the replacement fence at Cherry Gardens and quotations were being sought, but making it badger proof was not likely to be realistic on cost grounds.

Battle Town Council

7. Street Lighting and Street Furniture

The timing of lights switching on in Aston Field was queried as they were not on at 5.30am. The Clerk understood this was **probably due to transfer to photo sensitive cells and GMT/BST** and daylight hours but **would confirm with the lighting contractor** and that transition was going to plan.

Some shingle tiles had been knocked off **Abbey Green bus shelter**. Councillors decided to delay this minor repair and **review in the spring**.

Abbey Green planters – The Committee considered providing for replacement of these over the next three year plan. (*The Clerk confirms for the purposes of the Minutes that this particular street furniture is allocated to the Estates budget, rather than Services, as there is a license agreement for the Abbey Green between BTC and English Heritage.*) The Clerk was seeking advice about whether one very dilapidated planter could be repaired for the interim period.

Fingerposts - Cllr Kiloh proposed that the **five BTC Town fingerposts** as previously agreed in the approved locations should be **allocated to the budget, based on the figures researched by the previous Clerk since last meeting, seconded by Cllr Eldridge**.

8. Cemetery

Cllr Kiloh was delighted to confirm that the **Cemetery had won a Silver Gilt Award at South East in Bloom and overall best in the category**. Councillors were aware that given the statutory obligation to provide grave spaces for the Town, progressing the **extension plans were a key priority for the Council**. The Clerk had made extensive investigations, seeking advice from East Sussex County Council and now **awaited a response from the Environment Agency (EA), as to whether the full specification quoted by consultants for the Tier Two groundwater survey (at just under £7000), was required**. She was specifically checking with the EA whether, as material considerations and under Environmental Impact Assessment criteria each set out by Government, all that had been quoted for was necessary to support a successful planning application, given the much higher than anticipated cost and mention of a possible Tier Three survey. **The Clerk advised of the importance of using a professional planning consultant to apply for planning permission**, with knowledge of this specialist area of advice. **The principle of taking a Public Works Loan for the Cemetery plans had already been approved by Finance and General Purposes**. Councillors agreed to advise **Full Council of the proposed cost of the Tier Two Survey before applying for the Public Works loan**.

9. Tree Hazard Survey

It was confirmed that all urgent No 1 priority rated work in the survey in the Cemetery had been undertaken and would be paid for shortly. **Quotes were awaited for the costs of No 2 and 3 rated work for the estate as a whole and would need to be allocated to the Services budget** and all respective areas of the BTC estate.

10. Budget Report 2013-14 – noted as attached.

11. Budget 2014-15 and 3 Year Plan

Consideration of the proposed budget for 2014-15 and activities to be covered in the Council's 3 Year forward Plan included:

Tractor store/ground staff facilities – Cllr Kiloh had met Cllr Jessop to discuss specifications. The Committee considered the more expensive brick built possibilities, deciding on a timber building of c.30' x 12' on a concrete base with specification, considered previously, at an

Battle Town Council

estimated cost of £9,180 inc VAT. The Clerk noted the need to account for labour and materials to maintain the timber in future years. Cllr Eldridge felt that there should be **an overall budget of £15,000 for the building and professional fees** for building regulations and planning (permitted development rights had been confirmed by the Local Planning Authority but building control may be necessary over a certain size of building.) **All were agreed.**

Cllr Wilson proposed the resolution that a full time, additional member of ground staff was necessary, seconded by Cllr Eldridge and all agreed that this was now the priority for the budget. It was felt that to be effective at delivering what was needed in terms of skills and for management purposes, the individual should be trained with some experience.

Heating for Chapel – would be placed as an **Item in the next agenda** and a provision made for them in the budget. It was noted that it might be necessary for the electrical circuit to be upgraded and plug sockets needed to be assessed. Modest cost, basic electric heaters could be purchased in the interim.

12. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items – None.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 10 December 2013

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

CLLR KILOH
Chairman

