



# Battle Town Council



## MINUTES of a SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2013 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr Mrs M Kiloh - Chairman  
Cllrs C Bishop, J Eldridge, Mrs M Howell, Ms J Ormonde-Butler, Mrs S Pry  
and D Wilson.

**Mr Robert Gee was also present for item 7.**

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs R Bye and M Palmer.
- 2. Disclosure of Interest** - None.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting** held on 11 December 2012. Cllr Wilson proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Bishop. This was agreed and they were duly signed.

#### **4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Clerk reminded the Committee of the decision taken by the Estates Committee to give **tree survey** work a greater priority. He will shortly be meeting an arboriculturalist to discuss arrangements and will include land managed by the Services Committee.

Several **lights in the Market Square** are now operating, though their performance appears to be intermittent.

#### **5. Correspondence & Communications** - None

#### **6. Allotments**

The Committee thanked Cllr Wilson for his latest survey report. No doubt because of the recent very poor weather the **condition of many allotments** leaves something to be desired but it is hoped that this position will improve in the coming months. For the moment therefore it was agreed that “poor condition” letters need not be sent. About **20 plots remain vacant** and the Clerk was asked to do everything possible to publicise this, including establishing whether Hastings Borough Council have a waiting list of their own. It was acknowledged that the condition of vacant plots can deteriorate quite quickly and act as a disincentive to potential new allotment holders. The Committee therefore asked that arrangements be put in hand to better maintain vacant plots.

Regarding **Watch Oak** a number of allotment holders have now transferred to a new agreement with the Town Council. For those that have not a further invitation to do so will be given when rent reminders are sent out in mid March.

NALC has produced a revised model **allotment agreement**. The Clerk had adapted this to incorporate specific matters relating to the Town Council and had circulated the document which was simply noted.

It was noted that the **numbering of plots** on site remains as an outstanding action.

#### **7. Street Lighting and Street Furniture**

Cllr Mrs Kiloh reported briefly on the previous evening's **public meeting** about proposals to change the **street lighting regime**. Attendance over the period of the meeting varied but average numbers were low – about 15. Display boards had provided background information

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and showed clearly both where lighting is proposed for part night and how the Town Council intend to implement any agreed programme over a 3 year period, as attached. Cllr Mrs Kiloh had outlined the reasons behind the Town Council's proposals. These were endorsed by the County Council representatives who are implementing similar plans in other areas where they maintain residential lighting. In Battle, they are responsible only for the main routes – North Trade Road, London Road, High Street and Hastings Road – where their plan is simply to dim lights after midnight.

A number of those present spoke in support of the Town Council's proposals. Others based their concerns on a general feeling that everywhere would be safer if lights are left on throughout the night. Although the lights in Station Approach will be unaffected those catching late trains from London were concerned that they would arrive back in darkness at their homes in residential areas.

Written comments were left by those attending and will be analysed but the initial impression is that a majority support the Town Council's plans. A number of supporting emails had also been received from those unable to attend.

Mr Robert Gee was present for this item and, on being reassured that the lights in Station Approach and North Trade Road would remain on throughout the night, expressed his support for the proposals.

On the assumption that the matter would be raised at the Parish Assembly it was agreed that a large scale map illustrating the proposals should be displayed.

## **8. Cemetery**

Cllr Mrs Kiloh confirmed that a **contract for a groundwater audit** of the proposed extension area had been let. Work on this is in hand but the cost will be met from next year's budget. The expectation is that the report will highlight any issues which might be of interest or concern to the Environment Agency.

## **9. Terms of Reference**

The Clerk had updated and circulated the previously approved terms of reference. Cllr Mrs Kiloh had also circulated a note to prompt a review of the Committee's activities to see whether there are any areas where a fundamentally different approach should be considered. Regarding allotments, the current high level of vacancies was of concern and would need to be monitored to assess whether there is now over-provision. For the moment, however, everything should be done to let vacant plots. Street lighting policy was discussed and the Clerk reminded the Committee that the Council has agreed not to add to its responsibilities by taking on lights on new developments. Although transferring lights to County might be an option there would not only be immediate financial implications in terms of upgrading to meet County standards but also future loss of control over maintenance standards and operational matters. It was therefore agreed that the current responsibilities should continue. In the short term the existing cemetery area will continue to be managed as now but plans for the extension area will be influenced by the outcome of the ground water audit.

In the light of these discussions the attached terms of reference were endorsed.

## **10. Risk Assessment**

The Clerk had updated the risk assessment undertaken in 2010 and circulated a copy. Subject to minor amendments these were agreed as attached.

## **11. Budget Report 2012-13**

The attached report was noted including a revised downward forecast for income from cemetery

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fees.

## **12. Budget 2013-14 and 3 Year Forward Plan**

The budget set for 2013-14 was noted. Whilst most of these figures could be carried forward as the basis for a 3 year plan, Cllr Bishop pointed out the need to reflect actions recorded in the risk assessment such as the computerisation of various records. To enable more time to be devoted to discussion Cllr Mrs Kiloh suggested a further informal meeting before the next Committee meeting by which time the cemetery ground water audit report might be available.

## **13. Matters for Information and Future Agenda Items – None.**

## **14. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 30 April 2013**

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

CLLR MRS M KILOH  
Chairman