



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday, 5 July 2016 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs D Furness (Chairman), G Favell, J Gyngell, R Jessop, M Kiloh and A Ratcliffe
In Attendance: Andy Beams (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence** – None.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – Cllr Ratcliffe declared an interest in the item concerning the Almonry, as a tenant of the building. Cllrs Furness and Gyngell declared an interest in the grant application for Battle Festival.

3. **Minutes of the meetings held on 10 May 2016** – These were duly signed by Cllr Furness as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Almonry update**

The Town Clerk updated Members with the reply from RDC that they would not send a planning officer to discuss the proposal, and that a formal pre-application should be completed. As a Town Council, there is no fee for this.

RESOLVED: Members authorised the Town Clerk to submit a pre-application using the most recent drawing received from the architect as a basis to begin discussions about the proposals.

5. **Council land assets**

Cllr Furness stated that given the sensitive nature of some of the assets, and the Members' interests in them, it would be prudent to get an independent expert view by appointing a suitably qualified consultant to produce a report.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for a consultant and to then obtain committee members consent to proceed via email

6. **Staffing Matters**

Pay recommendations – Members had received prior to the meeting the recommendations regarding the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to increase the Town Clerk's salary scale to SCP40 and the Deputy Town Clerk to SCP30, with both increases backdated to 1 January 2016.

Apprenticeship – Members had received the Town Clerk's report relating to the situation regarding recruiting an apprentice, and offering alternative options for recruiting a part-time staff member. Members acknowledged that a part-time employee was looking more favourable, but as additional staffing had not been considered prior to budget setting for this financial year, it was uncertain how it would be funded.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to defer a decision on additional staffing until the November meeting when the full financial implications of the staffing arrangements would be known and could be included in the budget for 2017/18.

7. **Administration issues**

Proposal and resolution templates – The Town Clerk had circulated draft templates for using to provide detailed information about proposals and accurately record the agreed resolutions for decisions. Cllr Jessop had used the proposal templates to illustrate an example to Members, and explained how it

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could assist in assembling all the required information needed to make a good decision.

Cllr Favell felt that there may be value in using them for Full Council, but did not see the need for using them regarding committee decisions, as these were already clear and the Environment committee already had a fully costed action plan. Cllr Kiloh felt they were unnecessarily bureaucratic and added little value.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to use the templates for new proposals for Full Council only.

IT proposal – The Town Clerk had circulated details of a proposal received from an external IT company to change the IT set up to a more flexible system, and provide IT support. While the proposal was comprehensive, it was expensive and given the decision made about additional staffing not being considered until the next financial year, there was less urgency in changing the set up. Members discussed how better use of the upstairs room could happen if there was accessible IT in that office.

RESOLVED: Members authorised the Town Clerk to purchase a suitable laptop for shared use between the office staff. The Town Clerk was requested to obtain quotes for local IT support to consider at the next committee meeting.

Online maps – The Town Clerk had provided a report outlining the costs and benefits of two alternate online mapping tools. Members agreed the maps provided a useful tool, and that the Council would benefit from having access to the system.

RESOLVED: Members authorised the Town Clerk to subscribe to the Parish Online mapping system at an initial fee of £20 and an annual subscription of £196.

8. Environment Committee requests regarding Council reserves

Members had been circulated an extract from the minutes of the Environment committee meeting where requests for funds from Council reserves were made to support the purchase of a piece of machinery and to supplement the asset replacement reserve.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to transfer £6,000 from the asset replacement reserve to the Environment budget for machinery purchase, and to transfer £10,000 from the general reserve to the asset replacement reserve for future Environment committee spending.

9. Chamber of Commerce membership proposal

Cllr Jessop explained to Members that currently the Town Council were observers only at Chamber of Commerce meetings, and had been invited to become a full member at a cost of £40 per annum. Members discussed the benefits of joining the Chamber and the hope that by being directly involved, the Town Council may be able to assist in getting everyone working together for the benefit of the town.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to join the Chamber of Commerce at a fee of £40 per annum.

10. Financial matters

Grant requests – Cllrs Furness and Gyngell left the room while the Battle Festival grant was discussed due to their declared interest.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to the grant request for £500 for Battle Festival, and agreed to give £250 to the PCC of St John the Baptist, Netherfield from the general maintenance budget of the Environment committee.

Budget reports – Members noted the reports.

Long term financial plans for committee – Members agreed the need to provide costs for the longer term plans to add detail to the business plan, as the other committees had already done. This would assist in future budget planning.

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11. Matters for information and future agenda items

In addition to the matters already raised, Members requested items to discuss:

General reserve levels

Personnel sub-committee membership and required actions

12. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 16 August 2016

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

**CLLR D FURNESS
CHAIRMAN**