

Battle Town Council

Annual Report



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2021-2022



Community Event and Parish Assembly Saturday 23rd April at Battle and Langton School

Full details page 9

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Chairman's Report



The works to repair and refurbish the Almonry have taken longer than planned. However, Officers were able to move back to the Council offices in November, though not all the building could be reoccupied at that time. Councillors were able to use part of The Almonry to welcome the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex following the Act of Remembrance on 11th November. It is hoped that he will return to mark the reopening of The Almonry in the near future.

Open days will be arranged for residents to look around the refurbished building.

Residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which **has enabled local people to determine the type, size and design of dwellings that are needed and where they should go**. The character of the town will be protected and buildings, drovers' ways and other facilities of historical importance will also be afforded protection.

As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan being adopted, **Battle Civil Parish now receives an increased percentage of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**, a tax that local authorities charge on most new developments in their area. The funding will support infrastructure (which includes social, environmental and communication) improvements that the local community will benefit from. The annual Call for Need, inviting suggestions for infrastructure projects, can be found on page 15.

The Council is hoping that, with your help, Battle will gain another Gold Award in the **South & South East in Bloom competition**. The competition isn't all about flower displays. The town will be judged on everything from horticulture, conservation and sustainability through to litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour, and also the positive impact the competition has on our community spirit and civic pride.



Everything the judges see will affect the marks, so if they pass by your home, you could be crucial to the town's success. Judging will be in June/July - we will advertise the date when we know it.

The Town Council has asked Beautiful Battle to use **silver, gold and white flowers and foliage** in the town planters to mark the various jubilees in the Queen's long reign and **regal purple highlights** will be added. Perhaps you will consider using those colours for your summer planting, too.

Battle Town Council will be facilitating the **Annual Parish Assembly at Battle & Langton School on Saturday 23rd April 2022**. Town, District and County Councillors, together with representatives from local organisations, will be available from 4.30pm. If you have any questions or wish to discuss any issues, but are unsure who to speak to, please ask me or any Town Councillor to point you in the right direction. The formal meeting will begin at 6pm with three short presentations which, we hope, will be of interest to the community. Residents will have an opportunity to air their views about Parish issues before the assembly finishes at 7.30pm.

Cllr Glenna Favell, Chairman

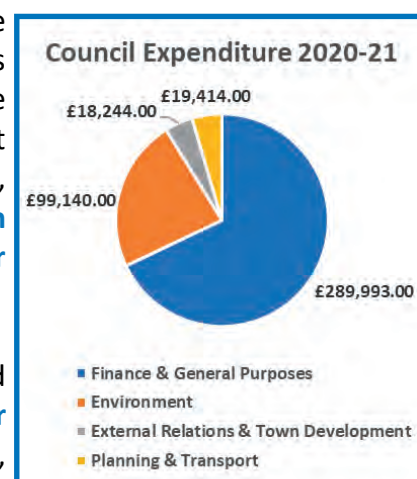
Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

Every autumn, the **Finance & General Purposes Committee(F&GP)** recommends a budget to Council for consideration. The budget affects whether or not the parish precept, paid as part of the Council Tax, changes. (There was no increase last year, but projects were delayed, reduced or funded by other means.)

Budget setting begins with a line-by-line review of the income and expenditure in our current budget. Our Town Clerk, who is also our Responsible Financial Officer, makes recommendations regarding projected increases and reductions. The committee also takes into account costs that might impact the budget, such as inflation, staffing levels, staff salaries following the annual appraisals and training requirements (for both staff and Councillors).

Standing Committees put forward their ‘wish list’ of projects from their Action Plans to progress during the next financial year and F&GP tries to find a way to fund them!

Earlier in this Council’s term, it was agreed that residents would be consulted if the precept needed to be increased by more than 3%. This may need to be reconsidered because planned projects have had to be delayed for another year, suggesting that an increase of 3% is not sufficient to progress improvements to services and facilities. In January, Council agreed F&GP’s budget recommendations. This will result **in an increase of the precept by just under 3%, which is an increase of 8p per week for Council Tax for Band D properties** in Battle parish.



F&GP has produced a Community Infrastructure Levy(CIL) Policy and associated documents. The Committee is now working on the **5-year rolling Plan for the Use of CIL Funds**. It will contain information on past, current and projected spending of CIL funds on infrastructure within the parish. The Plan will record details of how potential projects for funding through CIL have been prioritised.

F&GP is responsible for the Almonry and gardens. Last year, Council agreed to proceed with essential repairs, refurbishment and improvements to include wheelchair access, accessible WC and a Tourist Information Point. **Further serious defects were revealed when work commenced**, that have resulted in increased costs. A Plan for the Use of The Almonry is still in draft, but focusses on the need to: meet the requirements of Council & community; respect and enhance the heritage of the property; and to cover its running costs. I am proud to report that The Almonry is to be used by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex for Investiture Ceremonies.



The Committee would like to **thank the Beautiful Battle volunteers**, not only for maintaining the gardens, but also for the time and thought put into the plan for the restoration of the rear garden following the building works.

Cllr Glenna Favell, Chairman

Environment Committee Report

Following the virtual official opening of the **Battle Health Pathway and the Cycle Skills area** in the North Trade Road Recreation Ground we are delighted both are used constantly. Most days, adults can be seen ambling and talking, parents can be seen wheeling buggies or running behind children learning to ride on the upper pathway, whilst on the Cycle Skills Area children of all ages can be seen hurtling around the track at a rate of knots. I even know of a local mechanic who spends his lunch break up there getting his exercise. Many residents have commented that teenagers and young toddlers take it in turns on the track with the teenagers actively encouraging the youngsters, picking them up after a fall, fixing their chains and sending them on their way with encouragement. In turn the parents encourage the toddlers to wait while the Big Boys and Girls have their turn! Sadly, litter is still an issue and despite providing bins often the Council Ground staff collect much scattered litter.

The **new skate ramp was completed in September** and we were pleased to receive grants from Sussex Police to provide fencing, and to the Rotary and Muffin Clubs for funding to provide picnic benches. Once again, the litter bins provided could be better used!

Since the summer we have also improved the provision of play equipment for adults and children with the siting of some **gym equipment and a new toddler swing with an additional swing for children who need extra support and strapping.**



Last year's consultation resulted in an **overwhelming request to replace the existing Pavilion** to include a community refreshment area. The Council is now working to raise funds to provide a new, improved Pavilion.

The cemetery continues to be well cared for and provides a peaceful contemplative space with a wide variety of flowers, trees and birdsong which is amazing. The yew hedge around the Children's Cemetery has been replaced with a hedge of roses and we hope with all the rain this winter we can see some amazing growth.

Telham playing field is becoming a wonderful wildflower meadow like the Amenity Field adjacent to Battle and Langton School. The intention is to cut a pathway (as has been done at Caldbec Hill) so we can enjoy walking through the meadow without damaging the wildlife.

Battle Town Council has also **completed re-laying the brick path at St Mary's Church** which runs parallel to the wall and it was a pleasure to stand on it at the Remembrance Service without mud splattered tights or trousers. The Council is supporting St Mary's Church plans to become an Eco Church and turn a part of the **rear and side Churchyard into a wildlife garden** whilst maintaining a neat frontage.

One of the responsibilities of the Council is with **street lighting and furniture**. Street lighting is a bit of a conundrum as some are our responsibility and some East Sussex County Council's but we try and get lights fixed as soon as we are alerted to any faults. We **thank the Council ground staff** who have, once again, been busy repairing some of the benches around the town, watering the hanging baskets and regularly inspecting the playground equipment.

Cllr Vikki Cook, Chairman

External Relations & Town Development Committee Report

The Committee has worked hard to implement items that were put on hold or amended due to Covid:

- **Battle in Bloom 2021** took the form of a virtual display of varied and colourful residents' photos which were displayed in the December Newsletter and on the Council's website and social media.



- Work to **restart and repair the Town Clock** is still ongoing, despite intervention by our MP and considerable work by the Clerk.
- A '**New Residents' pack** has been completed with extensive information for people new to Battle .
- Some **Town Trail plaques** have been replaced and we must **thank Mary Clarke** for her help.
- Forming a **Community Resilience Plan Group** to help in the event of an emergency in and around the town including Telham and Netherfield is still a work in progress. If you feel that you could be part of that team in any way please do see further information on page 19.
- The **Remembrance Day Event on November 11 on the Abbey Green** was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, our MP Huw Merriman, Councillors and the public. Children from Netherfield CE School and Claverham Community College read moving poems and Battle Abbey Chamber Choir sang an Anthem. The Almonry was used for a small reception afterwards.
- The **town looked delightful during December** with the beautiful Christmas lights, enhanced by excellent window displays from the shops and the fun displays by the Yarn Bombers. Santa Tours again were very popular around the parish and over £300 was raised for Battle Food Bank.
- **The Writing Competition winners** for each category were Adult - Amanda Kerr, Senior Children - Elisabeth Parsons and Junior Children - Elliott Jenner.



The Town Council has funded and received donations towards several **defibrillators around the town**. These are at recorded locations and are registered for regular maintenance checks. Unfortunately, there has been some unfortunate criminal activity resulting in the loss of two units this year. Both have been replaced and we ask that any sightings of misuse are immediately reported to the Police. Residents' safety is paramount.

Looking ahead, a **family friendly Parish Assembly** with interesting community displays and Councillors available for discussions, will be held on 23rd April, more details on page 12.



The Almonry refurbishment is almost complete and we are making plans for a **Tourist Information Point**, to include displays of Battle to be available for residents and visitors. Do visit the Almonry - It is a wonderful asset to your Town and has some interesting historical features.

Battle's next major event will be the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee on 2nd June** incorporating family events and lighting a Jubilee Beacon. Beautiful Battle volunteers intend to have floral displays combining silver, white, gold, green and purple throughout the town and hopefully residents will help to promote our town as we enter the **South & South East in Bloom Competition** by keeping Battle looking its best.

Cllr Hazel Sharman, Chairman

Planning & Transport Committee Report

The Battle Town Council Planning and Transport Committee is responsible for considering the **planning applications put to the Local Planning Authority**, Rother District Council(RDC). We are not the final arbiter of decisions: these lie with RDC. But, we are consultees, and as such have a valuable part to play in the decisions reached by RDC, although there are times when we disagree!

One recent application which was unanimously approved by the whole Committee was at **Glengorse**. Originally the building was a school, but in 1991 it changed to offices. However, a new application was presented in 2021 to **revert to a school, for children with Special Education Needs**. There was no doubt in our minds, and in those of RDC, that this was an excellent proposition, and should make a great deal of difference to the children involved.



The Committee is also concerned with **transport, including rail**, and other matters, such as **footways and footpaths, traffic management** including investigating lower speed limits, **bus shelters and car parks**.

The **footpath advisor** (who is not a Councillor) carries out regular inspections, and liaises with the appropriate department to have repairs made, and also to investigate new routes, for example an extension east of Harrier Lane, to link up with the 1066 Country Walk in a safer way. And as part of the Action Plan, it will be recommended that future developments should ensure there is connection from these new developments into the existing Active Travel Networks in the Parish.

When discussing new developments, the Committee has to now abide by the **Policies set out in the now approved Neighbourhood Plan**. As a consequence of this, we have developed a “pro-forma”, which sets out in summarised form the various considerations that must be taken into account. Not least is the Battle Design Guidelines, which when incorporated with the High Weald Housing Design Guide ensures that buildings fit in with the overall design and architecture of our historic East Sussex town. At a consultation meeting with the planning department at RDC, this idea was highly commended – full marks to all of us involved.

When considering any planning applications, the Council ask you take into account the Battle Design Guidelines, which can be found at battletowncouncil.gov.uk/news/battle-civil-parish-design-guidelines



The main future development in Battle is the **Blackfriars site**. This has been in gestation for many years, and the latest information is that work may be starting soon. The concept has received awards for its innovative measures, and we all watch this space with interest.

Finally, every month we are advised of **enforcement actions**, where for example a planning application has not been made, or unauthorised changes have been made. The owner can go to appeal, and if the result is negative, they have twelve months to comply.

Your Planning Committee diligently looks at all applications (and sites) to ensure that Battle **retains its viability as a good place to live in**.

Cllr Margaret Howell, Chairman

Personnel sub Committee

This sub Committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee has met 8 times this Council year. In connection with the appointment of our **new Deputy Town Clerk** and our **new Cleaner**, we met to agree a job specification and advertisement for both posts and set a timetable for shortlisting, interviewing and recommendation of the successful candidates to the Full Council. We also met to receive the **annual appraisal reports** of grounds staff and office staff from our Town Clerk. The Town Clerk was appraised by the Chair of Personnel, and the report shared with members of the Personnel sub-Committee.

The **work of the Town Council continued throughout a year of restrictions, sickness and isolation**, as a consequence of the continuing Covid 19 pandemic, meaning staff were working from home at short notice when necessary. This sub-Committee has also been very mindful of the **disruption caused by the refurbishment of the Almonry**, which necessitated the staff being relocated to offices at the Old Court House in North Trade Road for several months, and their hard work to re-settle back into new offices at the Almonry. We extend our **grateful thanks to all the staff** for their steadfastness and commitment through a second difficult year.

Cllr Vikki Cook, Chairman

Town Clerk's Report

It has been an interesting year, with **many new experiences to adapt to and learn from**. As with many organisations and businesses, we have endeavoured to offer a full service to our residents while remaining conscious of the health and safety for both visitors and staff. I am grateful **for the understanding and patience of our community** and we look forward to welcoming visitors to the newly refurbished Almonry.



Following training and the purchase of appropriate machinery, **Council grounds staff carried out the verge cutting within the urban area** of Battle for the first time. This is in addition to their usual tasks and I would like to **thank Adrian, Steve and Shania** for their commitment to keep the Council's areas looking so good.

Due to other commitments, the Deputy Town Clerk/Town Development Officer decided not to continue her employment with the Council at the end of her probation period. Consequently, the Council considered its changing requirements, particularly with the proposals for a Tourist Information Point within the Almonry, and agreed to appoint a Deputy Town Clerk with increased hours. Although starting at a challenging time with the return of Officers to the Almonry, I am pleased to report **Nick Acuna has now completed four months** with us and has already implemented a new, easier to navigate, website.

Although visitors to the office have not been encouraged, **Jane continues to respond to queries** particularly in relation to the cemetery, allotments and street lighting in her well-known friendly manner.

Finally, I must highlight the **dedication of your Councillors** who, despite the many challenges, have continued to consider and discuss issues that affect the Parish, and move projects forward for the benefit of the town and its residents. Please do contact me if you would like to know what being a Town Councillor involves.

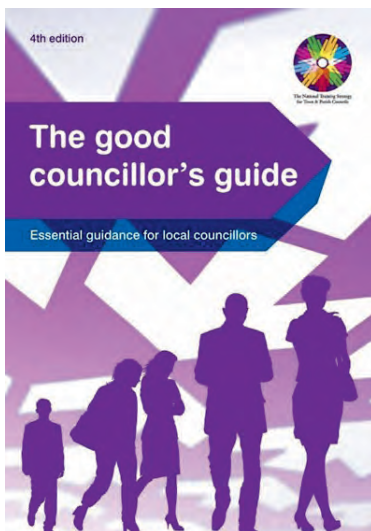
Carol Harris, Town Clerk

A Message From Your MP

Last summer, I visited the **Town and Parish Councils which make up the 200 square miles** of the constituency. It is here that you will find the local challenges and those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and deliver the solutions.

A case in point was presented to me when I met your Mayor, Glenna Favell, the Councillors and Town Clerk, Carol Harris, along with representatives from local youth groups. We met at the North Trade Recreation Ground, so I could see what **an amazing job the Town Council**

have done at transforming the sporting and leisure areas. The Rec is not just a focal point for exercise and play but a haven for nature as well. Alas, the Pavilion and changing rooms were more akin to my days playing Sunday League football in Hackney. I'm so pleased that the Town Council is now moving ahead to redevelop the space in order to **deliver modern changing rooms, a club room for indoor pursuits and a café for those who want to unwind.**



With all of this positivity, it's a shame that we **struggle to attract Town and Parish Councillors.** With more people working from home, I hope we can recruit more local champions for their area. This could be you, in Battle. I've worked with this Town Council for 7 years and have always been struck by a **proactive and can-do attitude.** From the new cemetery, the redeveloped Almonry and the Rec, there is much to be proud of. I remember your previous Mayor, David Furness, whipping out a model of the sculpture, of what is now the Ten Sixty Six roundabout, from a plastic carrier bag. This would, he declared, be fundraised and delivered in time for the 950 Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. I was doubtful this could be done. 6 months later, I was at its unveiling. So if **you think your local town can be improved, get involved.** You can't leave a lasting legacy on the Facebook comments page but you can when you become a Town or Parish Councillor.

Speaking of a legacy, it's great to see the **Blackfriars site progressing after decades on the shelf.** There are 1,800 families on Rother's housing register. I'm keen to see local people being given the chance to own a home of their own. For many, the deposit is just too much to afford but the monthly mortgage could be lower than the rent. This is a particular problem for our community because we have one of the UK's worst average wage to house price ratios. Step forward a solution with shared ownership. The Government Agency, Homes England, is aiming to give funds to our area which will allow more shared ownership homes to be delivered. Crucially, these would only go to those with an existing local link. Provided we build these homes in appropriate places, I hope everyone will support giving a local family the chance to own a home of their own.

Huw Merriman, MP for Bexhill and Battle

Community Event and Parish Assembly

Saturday 23rd April—Battle and Langton School

This event, to which all residents are invited, will be **hosted by Battle Town Council**.

Family event

The Mayor will **greet visitors** from 4.30pm.

Find out about some of the many **local organisations** that may interest you and perhaps have go at their challenges and activities.

Visit displays by your **Town, District and County Councillors**, who will be on hand to answer your questions and listen to your ideas.

Meet members of **East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**.

Have a go at **Battle Rocks** - paint a rock to illustrate environmental issues.

Teas, coffees, cakes and biscuits will be served by Battle & Langton's PTA to see you through to the Parish Assembly ...

Parish Assembly

This is a Residents' Assembly, chaired by the Chairman of Battle Town Council.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------|
| 18.00 | Welcome | |
| 18.05 | Presentation of the Community Awards | |
| 18.15 | Guest Speakers who will answer questions after their presentations: | |
| | Local Voluntary Work | Rother Voluntary Action |
| | Sport & Getting Active | Rother District Council |
| | Modern Slavery | Sussex Police |
| 19.00 | Residents' Forum - a chance to put your ideas to the whole community. | |
| 19.30 | Close | |

Address: Battle and Langton School, Market Road, Battle, TN33 0HQ.

Please come using active travel if possible.

If you can't, please use the car park next door.

Please do not park in the road as yellow lines indicate that this is not allowed at any time.

Our thanks go to Battle and Langton School for hosting this event.

Group	Contact	Contact No	Email	Details
1st Battle Scout Group	Mark		join@1stbattlescouts.org.uk www.1stbattlescouts.org.uk	1st Battle Scout Group offers fun, challenge and everyday adventure to boys and girls aged 6 - 14yrs in the Battle, East Sussex area. Adults welcome too.
88 (Battle) Squadron Royal Air Force Air Cadets	Paul Mockridge		oc.88@aircadets.org	St Mary's Church Hall, Upper Lake, Battle, East Sussex. TN33 DAN. Parade Monday and Thursday nights 7.15pm to 9.30pm
Battle & District USA	Diane Wilson	07787 514861	https://u3asites.org.uk/battle/home	The USA (University of the Third Age) is a UK movement of retired and semi-retired people who come together to continue their educational, social and creative interests. Members draw upon their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other. Our monthly speaker meetings offer a diverse range of topics from 'The Climate Crisis' to 'Sussex Literary Landscapes'. We have a range of interest groups including Current Affairs, Short Tennis, Family History and Petanque. The USA is an informal, co-operative, volunteer-led organisation which embraces everyone of all backgrounds, religions, and cultures. The USA draws on the strengths and enthusiasms of all its members.
Battle and District Historical Society		01 424 775955	www.battlehistorysociety.com	The Society holds a lecture a month (excluding August). For members, also a Reading Group and Research Committee, an archive accessible to members and an annual journal.
Battle Area Green Drinks	Sue Burton	07952 166 819	burlonbananas@hotmail.co.uk	A relaxed sociable get together for people who are interested in the Environment. Meeting is on 10th of every month, 7.30 to 9.30 pm usually at a local pub. Contact the organiser for further information.
Battle Baptist Church	Jo Reeves		office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk	Caterpillar Toddlers Mondays 9-11am 50p per child Tuesday Fellowship (singing, a talk, chat and refreshments) Tuesdays 2pm Renew - a quiet shared space where it is OK not to be OK. Wednesdays 10am-12noon Activities, craft, chat, refreshments (free) After School Club for children in years 3-6 Thursdays 3.30pm - 5pm Games, craft, fun, refreshments 1 (currently full and running a waiting list) Coffee Club Fridays 10-12noon chat and refreshments
Battle Bowls Club	Alison Collard	01 424 254299	http://battlebowlsclub.org.uk	Battle Bowls Club, situated near the Railway Pub, plays both friendly matches and in the Rother League. We welcome new members, whether experienced or not, and we shall be holding open days at the beginning of the season in April. We are open to all, regardless of age, gender, race, or disability, and prospective bowlers can be sure of a friendly welcome.
Battle Community Singers	Julia Johnson	07543119501	secbattlecommunitysingers@gmail.com	Singing is fun and good for you. Our exuberant Choir Leader is Alisa Vinson. We meet on Wednesday evenings at Emmanuel Centre, Battle from 7-9pm.
Battle Festival	David Furness		info@battlefestival.co.uk www.battlefestival.co.uk	Battle Festival is an artistic gem and is a firm fixture in South East England's cultural calendar, attracting world class performances and encouraging and mentoring local talent.
Battle Floral & Horticultural Society	Colin Fuller	01 424 774666		Friendly gardening society founded in 1868
Battle Memorial Hall	Lisa Keenan	01 424 772044	battlememorialhall@outlook.com	The Memorial Hall is a community hub conveniently situated in Battle High Street. It provides for a wide range of activities including meetings, exercise classes and private functions. As well as the main hall, rooms of different sizes are available together with kitchen facilities. Most rooms include modern audio visual equipment. The Hall is fully licensed. Film shows monthly every last Wednesday.
Battle Muffin Club	Pete Parry		parrypr@hotmail.co.uk	Primarily a dining club but we also support local events and good causes
Battle Museum of Local History			www.battlemuseum.com	Displays include artefacts from pre-historic and Roman times, 1066, the world's oldest effigy of Guy Fawkes, the gunpowder industry, country life, Victorian and the two World Wars.
Battle Ramblers	Margaret Hollamby		https://www.battleramblers.org	The walking club is affiliated to the national Ramblers Association Walks of between 4 to 8 miles are arranged for members on Sunday mornings within a 10-15 mile radius of Battle. A Walks Programme is produced every quarter. Those interested are invited to join us for a couple of walks before considering membership of the Club. Membership fee is £5 pa.

Group	Contact	Contact No	Email	Details
Battle Rocks	Amanda Kerr	07736521790	amanda.kerr01@gmail.com	A community group that everyone can join. Members paint pebbles and hide them around the town for others to find. The idea is to post on the Facebook page and then rehide the pebble and/or paint your own to add to the game. Much fun has been had by young and old and it has been astounding to see the artistic talents of Battle residents! Special thanks to Brian and Angela Buss who must have painted thousands of pebbles since the start.
Battle Yarn Bombers	Amanda Kerr	07736521790	amanda.kerr01@gmail.com	A group of knitters and crocheters who like to share their creations with the community. Established for around 5 years now and have brought much pleasure to the town with their quirky displays. These range from postbox toppers to a full sized Santa Clause, bollard covers to bunting. They like to mark special occasions and Remembrance Day saw a spectacular display of woolly poppies and life size woolly servicemen and women.
Beautiful Battle	Alan Gavin		www.beautifulbattle.org	Beautiful Battle plants and maintains gardens throughout Battle with a team of 20 volunteers. We are supported by Battle Town Council and sponsored by local Associations and Businesses. We source plug plants and bulbs to meet specific colour schemes, such as for the Platinum Jubilee colours chosen by Battle Town Council this year. Plug plants are grown on in a greenhouse rented from Uckham Lane Nursery and then planted out in Spring and Autumn to provide floral displays in containers, hanging baskets and gardens in Battle. Most Thursday mornings, you may see our gardeners in Battle.
Country Market			a.norbury@btopenworld.com	Back on Friday January 21st 10 - 11.30am at The Memorial Hall, Battle. The talented and committed group who make and bake what they sell open every Friday
Pickleball club			hbadcock@btinternet.com	We meet on Monday evening at Claverham College from 7.00 pm to 8.00 pm. We usually have two courts available and would welcome people interested in learning about the game
RNLI	Diane Cheeseman	07729 915173		RNLI team members will be present on the Abbey Green and will set up a small stand to contain literature and small gifts for those who become supporters. We generally work from 9-4 or 10-5 depending on the location and daylight hours when outside.
Rother Environmental Group	Barbara Echlin		info@rotherenvironmental.org.uk https://greenerother.wordpress.com/	Aims to protect and enhance the environment in Rother and the local area. Activities: Informative talks mainly on zoom. Walks and visits.
Wild About Battle	Amanda Kerr	07736521790	amanda.kerr01@gmail.com	A group of volunteers who carry out various projects around the town with the aim of increasing biodiversity. They have a particular interest in roadside verges and have worked tirelessly on a number of areas but their main focus has been on Caldbeck Hill to maintain the wide green area as a wildflower meadow. Also have an ongoing project at the Station where they have a newly seeded wildflower area and plans to maintain a number of the verges around the carpark. They are involved in a new project to rewild and manage the churchyard at St Mary's and have donated seeds, shared expertise and helped to create the first wildflower areas. Pre-pandemic they created a new wild area at Battle and Langton School which has flourished and brought pleasure to the children and teachers as well as providing food and habitats for wildlife.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Jubilation in the Square from 1.45pm on Thursday, 2nd June in Market Square

The Town Council invites **residents to bring a picnic** (and possibly an umbrella) to Market Square for an afternoon of entertainment by various groups from Battle Civil Parish. Please bring something to sit on, though some extra seating will be provided.

The programme, to be published nearer the time, will include **music, drama, poetry and dancing**, culminating in a community sing-along. Song sheets, Union flags and kazoos will be provided!

Jubilee Beacon Lighting from 9.30pm on Thursday, 2nd June at Kingsmead, Caldbec Hill (subject to permissions)

Later in the day, the Council invites everyone to be part of a massive event across the UK and the Commonwealth. A **Song for the Commonwealth** will be performed and it is hoped that a piper and bugler will also be attendance, as well as a huge number of residents at this historic event. A permanent **beacon has been created by a local blacksmith and will be lit at 9.45pm.**

Medieval Fayre & Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Abbey Green, 3rd - 5th June

Battle Medieval Fayre is back! This year is a **very special free event**, joining in with the Jubilee celebrations from **Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th June**. There will be fighting knights, jesters, games galore, maypole dancing, drumming plus craft and food stalls.

The opening parade down the High Street from Battle and Langton School will be on Friday 3rd June at approximately 1pm. There will be a **heraldry stall where youngsters can invent and decorate their own heraldic shield** which is being organised by the History Department at Claverham Community College. See our Facebook page or email any enquiries to medfayre@battleevents.org.



Racing Snail Events throughout the Jubilee weekend

Racing Snail will have a marquee in the Market Square which will run various events throughout the weekend which will include **Battle Bake off for adults and children** supported by Jempsons who will also look to provide teas/coffees etc.

A **giant queen will be part of the procession on Saturday** and will also be used on Thursday with some of the other events that are planned. She will have a removable head and become Gytha, King Harold's wife. Racing Snail are hoping to have 2 or 3 more giants.

- **A new song** has been written and commissioned. This will be performed by Battle Community Choir.
- **Battle**, a specially commissioned **play for the Festival**, which tells the story of women in battle, will be performed over the weekend by SwanWing Productions.
- Needle meets Hook have been busy **knitting and crocheting medieval shields and bunting**. They already have quite a few but would love more people to get involved—please contact the shop.

East Sussex County Council Report

Once again I shall begin with the money. The **County Council's portion of this year's Council Tax will rise by 4.49%**. This is made up of 1.99% of "normal" tax rise plus an extra 1.5% for Adult Social Care from last year and 1% for this year. Unlike in previous years we are not allowed to be flexible about when we use the money. The Council will also receive some extra government funding to help to mitigate the extra costs involved following the legislative changes to Adult Social Care. Local Government is expecting a funding review from central government.



The County Council has a **target to be carbon neutral by 2050** and is committed to reducing its carbon output by 13% a year. County Hall is to have a further 128 solar panels on its roof and it is estimated that these will generate all the electricity used in the building and save 11t of CO₂. The County Council is keen to stress that all its climate change mitigation work is evidence based. Currently work is centred on those areas over which the Council has direct control but the highways contract is being reprocured and this presents an ideal opportunity to influence the sustainability plans of a major supplier of services to the Council.

The Council is working on **sustainable transport** and has a **Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan** which aims to make these activities safer and therefore easier for us to leave our cars behind. All such schemes have to be compliant with Department for Transport rules. The Council is also working with partners to improve bus accessibility.

The County Council has been judged **outstanding for its children's social care** and here I will put in a **plea for foster carers**: we need more! This rewarding work is well supported by the County Council and the East Sussex Foster Carers Association which has worked hard and successfully in spite of the pandemic to enrich the lives of both children and carers. The Children in Care Council which is made up of young people in care is an integral part of the service and provides valuable advice and insights. The Council's residential homes are small and intimate and are real homes for the young people who live there; a new one is opening in the east of the county.



Locally plans are moving forward, slowly, to **install a safe crossing point on Battle Hill**; there have been considerable legal matters to resolve. Following the start of the building of 50 homes at Lillybank Farm the County Council proposes to move the 40mph north to protect the development. I am campaigning to have it extended even further so that it includes the junction with Canadia where, as many of you will know, there have been accidents and fatalities over the years.

Cllr Kathryn Field

District Council Report



During 2021 RDC's Officers and Councillors continued to **support residents in practical ways**: at vaccination centres; collecting prescriptions and shopping; visiting businesses to offer support grants to sustain our High Streets.

In May **meetings returned to the Chamber at Bexhill Town Hall** although non-Committee Members were encouraged to watch from home via You Tube unless they wanted to speak. The Council is now able to **live stream meetings** (except confidential items) and Councillors can join remotely from home if they wish to speak, although they cannot vote. Many Officers now work part of each week at the Chamber and from home with remote meetings for briefings. This enables us all to do our bit to save the Council travel expenses and to significantly reduce our carbon footprint by reducing emissions.

The **Rother Corporate Plan 2020-2027** was adopted in July 2021: our vision is to put residents at the heart of all we do. The Plan can be found on our website at [Rother District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2027](#).

Housing - 'Alliance Homes (Rother)' was pleased to receive an award for the design of the development at Blackfriars and work is underway.

At Tollgates some of the affordable homes are already occupied with others reserved.

Parking – Following last year's reduction in RDC car parks season ticket rates for Battle users, a maximum £3 daily rate at Lower Market Car Park for long stay use has been agreed.

Climate Emergency – Training has been completed with various partners; tree surveys carried out by local volunteers; and worked with contractors to facilitate bio-diversity, reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy usage.

The Council's Climate Change Steering Group recently considered electric vehicle charging, carbon baselining and other specific projects to reduce carbon emissions and increase bio-diversity across the District.

Finance - A financial stability programme has been established to identify savings and smarter working to ensure a financially secure Council for the future. The levy for Council Tax increase remains at 2% for the year 2022/23

Community Grants paid out over £150,000 to 23 completed projects, including £30,000 for Battle Health Pathway and £10,000 to Robertsbridge Cricket Club, as well as numerous small grants to celebrate HM Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The next funding round opens in April 2022.

Further Projects

- investing in developing business space in Bexhill for existing employers and new developments
- looking to improve visitor facilities in Camber
- investing in local temporary accommodation so people are housed locally rather than elsewhere
- researching cost neutral electric vehicle charging points to the District
- working with healthcare providers to provide new facilities
- completing a review of a Policy for use of Community Infrastructure Levy from new housing to make the money work better and greener

Cllr Vikki Cook, Cllr Kevin Dixon, Cllr Kathryn Field

Request for recommendations for Community Infrastructure Levy projects

Call for Need - Your Recommendations:

Each year the Council asks **residents of Battle Civil Parish** to put forward any **additional ideas** of how they think the Local CIL money could be **best spent to serve the community**.

Battle Town Council will consider all suggestions that are feasible, are popular within the community and that it believes will **benefit residents within the Parish**.

If you would like to **make a recommendation**, please complete an online form at www.battletowncouncil.gov.uk; email enquiries@battletowncouncil.gov.uk; or send to The Almonry, High Street, Battle, TN33 0EA. Residents are able to make as many recommendations as they would like.

Please state the recommendation and how this would benefit the community **by 30th May 2022**. The short list of potential projects will be published on the Battle Town Council website.

Battle CP Neighbourhood Plan

September 16th 2021 marked a milestone in Battle. After more than **six years of diligent deliberation, analysis, consultations and presentations**, the residents of Battle voted in favour of accepting the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan. A real vindication of the dedicated work put in by a team of volunteers (unpractised in the art of developing a Neighbourhood Plan), comprising Councillors and residents.



Our **Plan was formally “made” by Rother District Council on 18th October 2021**, joining an exclusive club, along with five parishes within RDC: Rye, Sedlescombe, Salehurst and Robertsbridge in 2018, Crowhurst and Ticehurst in 2019. Other parishes are in the pipeline.

This **formal adoption now brings legal force** into play, and with which all future planning applications must comply. Probably the most considered is that housing design must not stick out like a sore thumb, and has to comply with the **Battle Design Guidelines, and the High Weald Housing Design Guide**.

There is emphasis on **biodiversity, protection of the local green spaces and a heritage charter** which will protect our historic buildings from damaging inappropriate development.

The timing of the Plan could not have been more apposite – the Minister for “Levelling Up, Housing and Communities”, Michael Gove, has called for a complete re-think of the reforms contained in the White Paper of 2020, and has supported a report by MPs for **a return to “localist” policies**, and recommends making neighbourhood planning universal across England.

With a Neighbourhood Plan, **Battle is now ahead of the game!**

Cllr Margaret Howell, Last Chair of the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Grants to Local Organisations

The Town Council sets aside a sum of money each year to be awarded in grants to organisations for projects that will be of benefit to local residents.

If you feel that your group or organisation could benefit from a grant, the criteria and an application form can be found on the Council's website.

Reports on grants awarded in the previous year are outlined on the next 2 pages.

New Fencing for Battle Preschool

The staff and trustees were delighted to receive a grant of £2250 from Battle Town Council in August 2021 to help towards the costs of replacing the perimeter fence.

The old fence was looking very dilapidated and beginning to be a concern for the children's safety.



Battle Preschool is a Registered Charity and run by trustees as a not for profit preschool for over 50 years, and in its current location since the early 1970's. Funds for repairs and renovation have to be fundraised and this is very challenging for a small charity.



Thanks to grants from Battle Town Council, Rother District Council, the Foyle Foundation and the hard work of the parent fundraisers, we were able to get new fencing installed over the summer and we now have a safe and secure premises for the children to attend, and look smart too!

Battle Festival events

Battle Festival Committee members were delighted that the Town Council was able to support the Festival in 2021. This support enabled us to stage two wonderful events proposed for the English Heritage site: a Community Day for residents and visitors to access the Battle Abbey and grounds to enjoy free family entertainment; and the long-awaited return of a Prom Night featuring the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra and three popular soloists providing a programme of favourite classics.



Due to inclement weather the Prom Concert was moved to the Memorial Halls which, unfortunately, greatly reduced the number of attendees. It is hoped to stage this event in future years.

Without the long-standing relationship between Battle Festival and Battle Town Council the Festival would not be able to continue.

Battle for Tennis

After years of campaigning to promote tennis in Battle, Battle for Tennis was delighted to be awarded a grant of £500 from the Town Council and a Community Grant by Rother District Council towards a Tennis Practice Rebound Fence on the courts at the Recreation Ground.

The official opening took place on the tennis courts on 4th June 2021 with representatives from grant funders and many well-wishers attending. Fortunately, the rain held off for the enjoyable gathering and some youngsters had a “go” at the rebound fence.



The practice fence is a simple design installed as part of the netting on the north side of court 2. It provides a practice and warm up for players of all ages and abilities. At present there is no need to book to use it.

Netherfield Village Hall—Kitchen project 2021



Lockdown was an ideal time for local traders to come together to refurbish the kitchen in the Hall. The old kitchen was very outdated and was beginning to fall apart which meant it was not as hygienic as we would have liked. Not all appliances were fully functional either.

With the aid of grants, we were able to purchase and install a modern kitchen along with dishwasher, oven, hob and fridge-freezer. The new work tops and sleek design of the doors and drawers mean we can wipe down thoroughly; keeping the kitchen clean and tidy, with lots of storage for the new cutlery and crockery etc.

The new kitchen will be more inviting to Hall hirers and the Committee would like to thank Battle Town Council for the contribution of £1000.

Battle Chamber of Commerce – Christmas Committee

Many thanks to the Town Council for the financial support and involvement in the events last year. All were successful and the atmosphere throughout was fantastic, with a real feel of a community drawing together and enjoying the return of its Christmas events.

Father Christmas in his sleigh was escorted into town and was greeted by a cheerful Battle Town Band on the Abbey Green prior to switching on the festive lighting.

The grant received was for the Lights On celebrations. Father Christmas and his team were delighted to welcome just under 250 local children in his magical grotto in the Memorial Hall, paid for by the grant received from the Town Council.



Council's Commitment to the Environment

At the Battle Town Council meeting in November, Members agreed **to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**. We **acknowledged the climate emergency in 2019** and remain mindful of it in our decision making. We now have to consider ecological aspects, too.

In fact, Battle Town Council has been **actively working on a natural approach to improving the environment** since 2016, when an alder hedge was planted on the slope above the football pitch to absorb rainwater. The hedge has also increased the biodiversity by providing food for caterpillars, moths, birds and bees.

The Council has continued this ecological approach to managing the town's estate. When **the cemetery** in Marley Lane was extended, the plans included **a Natural Burial area to provide a wildlife corridor**. Various species of trees were planted, around which the graves and ashes plots are arranged. The grass is left uncut through spring and summer to encourage wildflowers and help insects to thrive. Informal paths are mown through the grass, though, to enable visitors to access graves.

The designation of the cemetery as a **Site of Nature Conservation Importance** in 1993 had highlighted the need to care for the wildflowers, and orchids in particular. Now, a formal management plan for the Council's estate has resulted in spectacular areas of wildflowers that attract many visitors to the cemetery - insect, bird, animal and human! The hedge around the Children's Cemetery was recently replaced with single bloom roses that attract pollinators. Various nature walks, led by guides with specialist knowledge, have been well attended. (If you visit our beautiful cemetery and think that you would like to be laid to rest there, please contact the Council office for details about pre-need purchase.)

In 2017, **part of Telham Playing Field** was left as meadow, but the whole field is now being managed as a wildflower meadow with mown paths meandering through it. The **'amenity field' next to the primary school**, which the Town Council leases from the County Council, is also being actively managed as a **wildflower meadow**. Piles of cut grass are left along the perimeter to provide a habitat for small invertebrates.



The Council published a **Statement on the Protection of our Environment** in 2019, expressing our aim **to reduce pollution, waste and water use** and to conserve, enhance and, if appropriate, restore habitats for wildlife. It also obliges us to consider the impact on the environment in our decision-making. This statement had a major impact in the Recreation Ground, which has been transformed from a large expanse of mown grass into a marvellous sports and leisure area. The planting was designed to attract wildlife and provide new habitats in which it could thrive. **The Taste Garden** contains fruit and nuts for the wildlife (and humans) to eat. All the banks in the Rec are left uncut during the summer to increase biodiversity. When moss on the tennis courts became problematic, the Council again turned to nature. The tall leylandiis that blocked the sunshine were removed and 150 native hedging plants, that will support wildlife, were planted in the area below the courts. Whenever possible, any trees that need to be felled around the estate are being used to make additional seating for the Rec.

There's a lot more to be done - including tackling the contentious issue of cutting grass verges!


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The Impact of Covid 19

The Annual Report would not be complete without a mention of the impact that Covid19 has had on the work of the Council in the last year. **Communication with residents** has unfortunately been adversely affected by the cancellation of the Parish Assemblies in 2020 and 2021, **cancellation of meetings** of the Town Forum and the constraints on attendance at Council meetings imposed by social distancing rules. **Delays to building work at The Almonry** and consequent knock-on effects, delays in staff recruitment, staff illness and absence have also been related to the impact of Covid.

Throughout the pandemic the Council has **done its best to continue to conduct its business**. Until May 2021 it used Zoom to hold meetings, after which space was hired to hold socially distanced Council meetings as required by Government. Councillors and staff have worked from home, in difficult circumstances, to comply with the rules..

Community Resilience Plan for Battle, Netherfield and Telham

As we have seen over the last two years, there are times when the Community must work together to meet the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. **This has also been highlighted following the recent storms**. We are grateful that the Battle residents are amazing and so were able to assist their neighbours. However, coordination and efficient communication in these situations is essential.

The Council has been working on a **Plan that complements the emergency services for any future crises**.

There are many ways in which **you would make a difference**, and we are asking volunteers to come forward so that we are prepared for any situation. For more information or to express an interest please go to: www.battletowncouncil.gov.uk/community/community-resilience-plan or contact the Office. **We will be holding an event in the New Year to discuss the Resilience Plan in more detail. If you wish to attend please contact the Town Council Office.**

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