



# Battle Town Council



## MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2022 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle and Zoom at 7.30 pm

**Present: V Cook (Chairman), S Burton, M Kiloh, G Favell, H Sharman**

In attendance: C Harris (Town Clerk)

Via Zoom: Cllrs C Davies and H Sharman.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Public question time

None.

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr A Barton.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021** were approved by Members and duly signed by Cllr Cook.
4. **Clerk's report**
  - In a personal capacity, attended the **Boxing Day Meet** and found it peaceful and well attended, despite the poor weather. A member of the East Sussex Romney Marsh Hunt Club arrived first with a wheelbarrow and shovels. The hounds were safely enclosed on the bull-ring area. There was no hunt, it was a meet on the Green as part of the annual tradition. There had been several emails of praise for allowing the event and two Freedom of Information requests. Prior to the event, Sussex Police indicated that they may require more stringent processes in place in future eg a road closure order.
  - The existing concrete base at **Marley Lane** is considered inadequate to allow a **6ft bench** and East Sussex County Council suggest it would be inappropriate to allow a smaller bench in the current climate. The Clerk was asked to provide full costs to provide a bench in this area for the next meeting.
  - Cleaning of the **1066 statue and roundabout** has been undertaken and Mr Furness is aware. The painting of the base of the statue cannot be undertaken until the ground conditions improve.
  - The **statue information board** includes a reference to Mr Higgs and has been **refurbished** to a high standard by an anonymous resident.
  - A meeting with **St Mary's Church** representatives will be held prior to grass cutting season to agree areas for **wildlife meadows**.
5. **To receive Correspondence & Communications**
  - The **Battle Cricket Club** propose reinstatement of the **fence** on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
  - A **letter of thanks**, also printed in the local Observer, for the wonderful **care of the cemetery**.
  - A request for a **Forest School group** to assist with an **allotment plot at Watch Oak**. It had been confirmed that the plot is located on the perimeter and activity should not impose on other tenants. Members supported this proposal in principle and asked the Clerk to confirm dates and hours of attendance and that insurance cover and risk assessments are in place.

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- A request by one of the managers of **Market Square** to consider an agreement for cleaning of the area. The Clerk was asked to clarify detail and refer to Full Council.
- A request for sites that might benefit from the **creation or restoration of habitat for great crested newts** from the Newt Conservation Partnership. There would be no costs for the capital works and an annual payment to landowners could be made to compensate for any loss of income and management requirements. The Clerk was asked to research the suitability of the Almonry pond, Cemetery attenuation pond and Virgins Croft allotment site.

## 6. Allotments

- a) The **report from the Asst to Town Clerk** was noted, as attached.
- b) Following extended investigations, the de-activation of the **water supply at Cherry Gardens** had identified the owners of the water supply that Council has been charged for several years. An invoice will be sent to New House Farm shortly.
- c) The detailed **action plan for allotments 2021-2022** was noted, as attached.

## 7. Cemetery

- a) Members agreed to enter the Cemetery into the **2022 South & South East in Bloom competition**.
- b) It was highlighted that **yellow rattle seed** suppresses grass and allows flowers to grow. It was suggested that the seed is scattered between the natural burial area and attenuation pond, if not too late.
- c) The detailed **action plan for the Cemetery 2021-2022** was noted, as attached.
  - i. Digitising cemetery records – this will be carried forward once the Almonry project has completed. The Historical Society will be approached for advice.

## 8. Recreation Grounds

- a) The notes from the recent **Fit for Battle** meeting had been circulated, as attached. Members discussed contracting Steve Scott to raise funds for the demolition and rebuild Pavilion. This was agreed in principle with costs from the Ear Marked Reserves (376). Further details on anticipated cost if applications were unsuccessful was requested prior to appointment.
- b) Following a **visit to the North Trade Road rec**, Members discussed minor items that had been recommended for grounds staff to rectify. The Clerk confirmed all had been reported to staff and many had been completed. The possible siting of the Beacon at the top of the rec was discussed and the Clerk confirmed that, due to the height, planning permission will be required. It was agreed that further information should be sought for reporting to Full Council.

The Clerk reported that CJ Thorne had responded that the Health Pathway surface is as contracted. Members felt that the finish was not as specified and that the no dig section, close to Asten Fields/football pitch was completely unacceptable. The Clerk was asked to follow this up with Thornes and to discuss possible solution of the latter with grounds staff.
- c) Members agreed the proposal from **Beautiful Battle** and the **Horticultural Society** for two **additional trees to commemorate Queen's Platinum Jubilee**.
- d) A request to provide a **catering facility** for the recreation ground **during the summer** had been received. The Clerk was asked to obtain further information for consideration as a temporary agreement.
- e) Members noted that **floodlighting** for the Multi Use Games Area is an item on the Action Plan and asked that "To consider floodlighting for the Cycle Skills Area" be added to the long-term actions.

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- f) The proposal to add **sign language signs** had been circulated to Members. It was felt that these would be inappropriate at this time but that feedback from other providers would be helpful to consider in the future.
- g) Members considered **potential uses for Telham Playing Field** which is approximately 2809m<sup>2</sup>:
- retain as existing: play area with wildlife meadow section;
  - additional trees / hedging, although this is considered by High Weald AONB to be of less ecological urgency than the provision of meadows within the High Weald due to the area already having a considerably higher proportion of trees compared to other parts of the country;  
solar panels within a wildflower meadow to provide electricity.

It was agreed to circulate the questionnaire and await responses for further discussion.

- h) The detailed **action plan for the Recreation Grounds 2021-2022** was noted, as attached.
- i. The 2021 inspection report was noted.
  - ii. It was agreed to postpone research for an additional piece of accessible equipment for one year.
  - iii. It was agreed to postpone the review of the 2021 inspection report and agree which equipment should be removed and repairs to remaining equipment for Telham until the results of the questionnaire are available.

## 9. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) The detailed **action plan for Street Lighting and Furniture 2021-2022** was noted, as attached.

## 10. Remainder of BTC's Estate

- a) **Battle Arts Festival** had presented a proposal for **Landart Sculpture in Amenity Field** to the previous meeting. East Sussex County Council had confirmed that the existing Lease expires in December 2025 but that a further lease should be available at that time. In principle, the proposal was supported subject to assurances as to maintenance, safety and insurance and the right to have the structure removed. Members agreed to support this proposal unanimously. The Clerk was asked to discuss further with the Festival and ESCC.
- b) Members considered the requests to use the Abbey Green:
- i) **Battle Memorial Hall** – for vehicles of the Blood Transfusion Service. This had been withdrawn.
  - ii) **Chamber of Commerce** for Marbles Matches - Good Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April and Jubilee Medieval Fayre 2<sup>nd</sup> June (set-up day) through to 5<sup>th</sup> June. This was agreed.
  - iii) **Battle Barks** for Cancer Research UK – 11 September. This was agreed.
  - iv) **Royal National Lifeboat Institution** – February / March. This was agreed in principle subject to days and times being provided.
- c) The **Conservation Volunteers** had confirmed that oak railway sleepers would be used to increase the size of the **access bridge at Mansers Shaw** at a cost of approx. £27.50 each. The Clerk was asked to request a width of at least 1m. It was agreed to split the labour cost, if agreed by Planning & Transport, with the cost taken from the general maintenance (4205).
- d) Members noted the kind donation from **Battle Muffin Club** of a **picnic bench** for Battle Skate Ramp Park. As this is additional to the Rotary Club donation, it was suggested that Full Council be asked to relocate the picnic table to the recreation ground.
- e) The detailed **action plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate 2021-2022** was noted, as attached.

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## **11. Climate and (Biodiversity) Ecological Working Group**

A proposal to form a group to organise and improve the Council's activities in relation to the climate and ecological emergency had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members agreed that this is a commendable proposal and suggested that, in light of the current workload of Council, this should be discussed again when some of the existing Working Groups had completed their tasks.

## **12. 6 month report**

The report to **Full Council** was agreed as attached.

## **13. Financial Matters**

a) The budget report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 was noted, as attached.

## **13. Matters for information / future agenda items**

The Clerk was asked to consider the virement of unspent budgets: Tools and equipment (4315); Machinery repairs (4375); New machinery (4380) be transferred to EMR 415 New machinery in anticipation of the purchase of the proposed replacement battery operated equipment.

The parking of motorbikes on the Abbey Green was increasing again. The Clerk will confirm that new signs have been erected.

## **14. Date of next meeting: 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Cllr V Cook  
Chairman