



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

held on TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs B Brown (Chairman), A Barton, S Burton, D Buss, V Cook and C Sprong.

In attendance: One member of the public, C Harris (Town Clerk)

Public question time

An organiser of the **Junior Park Run** updated Members on the encouraging number of attendees at this free weekly event on the Battle Health Pathway at the recreation ground on Sundays at 9am. He thanked the Town and District Councils, Battle Local Action Plan, individual Councillors and members of the public for their support.

The member of the public left the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence** – None.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – Cllr Buss declared a pecuniary interest in item 11f.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 November 2023** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Brown.
4. **Clerk's Report**
 - Booker & Best have started the **Chapel/Ceremonies roof repair work**.
 - The purchase of **dual-purpose litter bins** and the donated bin will be completed shortly.
 - The lock has been replaced on the **notice board** within the Abbey Green bus shelter and is now being used by Council. The Clerk was asked to promote the availability of this additional notice board.
 - Following our objection to the **black top surface** replacement, we have been advised that a new Local Transport Plan is in formation and it is hoped that there will be additional funds attached to this. As an indication of current cost: £60psm black top; £90psm red; and £250psm for flag/block paving. The consultation on this has been circulated to Members and we will arrange completion via doodle poll. It was reported that it is not feasible to do a pothole repair with a heritage colour due to the supply and adequacy of the material used. This also applies to the 18 roads highlighted for sensitive replacement. It has been suggested that we put forward our objection to major resurfacing to the Conservation Officer at Rother District Council.
 - The new **blower** has been received.
5. **Financial matters**
 - a) The **budget report to 31st October 2023** was noted, as attached. The Clerk highlighted that the overspend for Play Equipment (210 4335) is predominantly for the toddler play equipment, which was purchased with a Community Lottery Grant (200 1800).
 - b) Members noted that Council had approved the re-allocation of funds from cancelled Multi-Use-Games-Area floodlighting scheme within the Estates budget. **Members agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.**
6. **Trees & hedges**
 - a) Cllr Burton reported on discussions held with tree experts and had produced a draft a policy for discussion. **Members agreed a tree felling policy as attached, for review in one year.**



Battle Town Council



- b) The **tree survey** had been circulated. Members thanked the grounds staff for their comments and **agreed that urgent works identified as high risk should be completed by staff, as appropriate, and quoted for by contractors where necessary.** A record of works undertaken and comments to reasons for contractor requirement is to be retained. It was suggested that grounds staff be invited to undertake some practical tree health training.
- c) **Members agreed that the Climate & Ecology Sub-Committee consider a proposal to carry out a hedge audit.**

7. Allotments

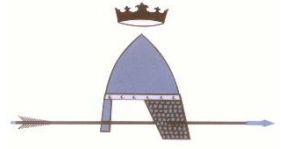
- a) The report from the Asst to Town Clerk was noted as attached. **It was agreed that a review of the Allotment Agreement should be undertaken at the next meeting.**
- b) Members noted that Wild About Battle had been granted permission to develop a Community garden at the recreation ground, subject to sufficient interest in volunteers. This has not been progressed. Additionally, Council had approved, in principle, to provide a plot for less mobile people, should an appropriate site become available. A large plot has now been relinquished, close to the gate at Cherry Gardens. **Members agreed that Wild About Battle be offered plot 13 Cherry Gardens at a reduced deposit of £50. All other terms and conditions to remain as standard.**
- c) The minutes from the **Senlac Allotment Association AGM** on 9 November 2023 were noted.
- d) The **action plan for allotments 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. *Review usage of allotments with regard to rationalisation of plots/sites* Members noted that most sites are very successful and that a leaflet has been agreed to promote the allotments at Netherfield Hill.
- e) Cllr Buss had produced an allotment leaflet for circulation at Darvel Down and Netherfield, as requested. **Members agreed that this was an excellent document but that it should not be circulated during the road closures for sewerage work are ongoing.**

8. Cemetery

- a) Members noted that two quotes for demolition of the disused workshop had been received at around £5,000. This does not include the disconnection of electricity and water supply. **Members agreed that there are no funds available to carry out this work and asked that regular inspections are completed and "Danger – keep out" signs are erected.**
- b) **Members agreed that pallets, of suitable provenance, be sourced for grounds staff to build formal compost heaps, close to the new storage shed.**
- c) Members noted that the claim following the **underground water leak** has been successful, although the financial settlement figure is not yet known.
- d) It was noted that, despite one repair, there is evidence of a further leak. It is possible that the old underground pipework **may be worn and subject to constant leaks.** The Clerk was asked to seek advice on possible solutions and likely costs for consideration at the next meeting. **Members agreed that a repairs Ear Marked Reserve should be discussed at next year's budget setting.**
- e) Members noted that all **floor coverings in the Ceremonies Room** are in a stained and dirty condition. Two providers have been asked to provide recommendations and quotes. Members agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
- f) Members noted that there had been no response to emails and a recorded delivery letter for a site meeting to discuss the **erection of a fence** on Council land. The Clerk was asked to send a



Battle Town Council



further letter with two suggested dates and notification that legal advice would be sought if no response is received.

- g) A report following the Cemetery guided walk on fungi had been circulated, as attached. **Members agreed to accept the kind offer of G Favell to liaise with Haine & Son as sponsor, presenter of the informative walks and Council to arrange a spring, summer and autumn walk.**
- h) The **action plan for Cemetery 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. *Review cemetery regulations and agree any necessary changes* **Members agreed to include a maximum size of grave space, coffin and kerb-set to the Regulations.**
 - ii. *Review maintenance of cemetery in relation to Council's Statement on the Environment and the Estate Management Plan* **Members agreed that the Estate Management Plan should include correct composting methods and careful references to hedge cutting.**
- i) Cllr Cook reported her visit to review the condition of the disused workshop, to identify a suitable compost site and clarify the fence position.

9. Recreation Grounds

- a) Following the agreement by Council to take forward to Pavilion project, **Members agreed to form two Task & Finish Groups: Pavilion Fundraising and Pavilion Technical Team.** Cllrs Barton, Burton and Buss agreed to take forward the Fundraising task with the assistance of experienced members of the public. Cllrs Brown and Cook agreed to approach Cllr D Russell and appropriately qualified members of the public to verify the tender documents and prepare a contract for the works.
- b) An **inspection report on play equipment at North Trade Road** had been undertaken as part of a free bi-annual safety check for five years provided by Sovereign Play following the purchase of the toddler play equipment. The wooden play area had not been included and is being raised as a query. The report had identified a high-risk issue on the aeroskate. This has been made safe and the appropriate parts identified for replacement. A quote for the repair to the basket swing and its surface had been received but this was considered low risk and will be carefully monitored.

Members noted the time and agreed to continue for a further fifteen minutes.

- c) The **action plan for recreation ground 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. *Review maintenance of the open space at Telham in relation to the Council's Statement on the Environment and the Estate Management Plan* This was noted.
- i. Cllr Buss had nothing to report.

10. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) The Streetlight contractor had submitted a recommendation for **replacement to LEDs and one cracked column** for 2024-25. It was noted that there still remain several LED replacements required. The Clerk confirmed that the Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN) will be revised following recent works to replace some columns with LED lamps. **Members agreed to recommend to F&GP that the cost of these works at £13,225 be budgeted from the EMR CIL (431).**
- b) The action plan for street furniture and lighting 2023-2027 was noted, as attached.
- c) Cllr Barton reported that repairs to benches had been repaired well and requested that he be advised of any damaged benches.

11. Remainder of BTC's Estate



Battle Town Council



- a) The **Amenity Field Ecological & Biodiversity Assessment** was noted as attached. This will be examined by the C&E S-C.
- b) Members noted that an indicative quote to repair a further section of the St Mary's Churchyard pathway had been received. A sum of £7000 will be added to the budget request for consideration by F&GP. As the wall is not comparable to that at George Meadow, it was not possible to guess a cost for this work. **Members agreed to instruct Meridian Surveyors to a maximum cost of £500 to carry out a survey and specification of required works to allow for quotes to be obtained.**
- c) Members noted the suggestion from the previous South & South East in Bloom T&FG that the potted hornbeam trees opposite Abbey Green be moved. Grounds staff had confirmed that extra care had been taken of them this year and they are surviving, despite being in small tubs. Cllr Burton agreed to look at the trees and **Members agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.**
- d) Members noted that there had been many reports and complaints in relation to cows accessing public areas; particularly the rec football pitch and the Claverham Community College grounds. Despite phone calls and a formal letter, no response had been received. Cllr Sprong agreed to speak with the tenant farmer informally.
- e) Members noted that **tenants at Tills Courtyard do not wish to be included on any signage. A simple sign on both sides, stating where the gate leads to and times of opening/closing (Monday to Saturday 8am to 4pm) was agreed.**

Cllr Buss repeated his pecuniary interest in this item and took no part in the formal discussion

- f) A request for two commercial vehicles to be placed on the Abbey Green in support of a wedding fair in Battle Abbey School on Sunday the 27th October 2024 was discussed. It was noted that it is hoped that many of the Battle businesses will have a stall at the event. **Members agreed to this use for a fee of £100 and £50 deposit against damage.**
- g) The **action plan for remainder of BTCs estate for 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
- h) Cllr Burton requested that the grounds staff check the Mansers Shaw pathway.

12. Correspondence & Communications – none.

13. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Battle Pre-school

14. Date of next meeting: 6th February 2024

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.20

Cllr B Brown
Chairman