



Battle Town Council



MINUTES of the ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

held on TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2024 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: C Harris (Town Clerk)

Public question time – None.

1. **Apologies for absence** – None.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – Cllr Cook declared a personal interest in matters relating to St Mary's Church and item 18 as an interest in the Guide Hall lease.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 December 2023** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Brown.
4. **Clerk's Report**
 - The **keep out signs** had been erected at the cemetery.
 - Two formal **compost areas** had been erected with pallets are of a suitable provenance.
 - The grounds staff have now removed the **see-saw at Telham**.
 - The parts to repair the **Aeroskate** are on order.
 - The Meridian Surveyor had been to **St Mary's Church** to carry out the **repair schedule report for the rear wall**, as agreed.
 - Signage had been erected at the gate for **George Meadow/Tills Courtyard access**. Keys have been passed to Battle Cricket Club and an Agreement to acknowledge the arrangement had been signed. This is awaiting the signature of the Tills Courtyard owner.
 - Some remedial repairs had been carried out to the **footpath at Mansers Shaw**.
5. **Financial matters**
 - a) The **budget report to 31 December 2023** was noted as attached. The Clerk highlighted, in addition to previous items reported:

200	4190	we are awaiting a refund of £4486.42 towards this overspend
200	4205	water leak £1020; Chapel roof repair £1859
210	1230	additional Club using the pitch. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to continue as the Youth Club have declined to renew the seasonal hire due to poor facilities available
220	1260	allotment rents have now been received.
230	4205	this sum includes some LED replacement £7910 which will be allocated from EMR 395
240	1900	this is 50% contribution towards the rebuild of Tills Courtyard/George Meadow wall and gate. It has been offset to the EMR 400
240	4205	£1293.50 will need to be vired as an expenditure to Planning & Transport for repairs to the Netherfield bus shelter roof
 - b) Members noted the decisions regarding **budget and Ear Marked Reserves for 2024-25**, which had resulting in the postponement of some proposals including not to continue with flooring replacement in the Ceremonies room until the damp issue has been resolved, a sum of £1500 has been agreed to carry out identification of works for this. Also agreed:
 - LED replacement will continue with £13,225 from EMR CIL 431.



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- Grounds staff will be asked to carry out patch work to the St Mary's Churchyard pathway at a cost of £500.
 - £600 towards a two-yearly tree condition survey was agreed.
 - £4000 for tree work identified in the latest tree condition survey
- c) It was agreed that there are **no appropriate virements** for year-end.

6. Urgent tree work

Members noted that two quotes had been received. A third contractor had not responded. **Members agreed to contract the tree works to fell: two Ash and one Sycamore at the Cemetery; one Ash at the recreation ground; and two Ash at Watch Oak to K McKay, who has satisfactorily carried out previous work, at a cost of £1890 net.** Cllrs Barton and Burton agreed to meet with the contractor to discuss the Council's tree felling policy in relation to these trees.

7. Allotments

- a) The current allotment position report from the Asst to Town Clerk was noted, as attached.
- b) Members agreed the provision of skips for three allotment sites for the May bank holiday weekend.
- c) The Allotment Agreement was discussed in relation to environmental impacts: bonfires; use of pesticides. **Cllr Sprong agreed to draft amendments for agreement via email.** It was noted that the replacement Agreement would apply to new tenants only.
- d) The **action plan for allotments 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. Agree report regarding plot rationalisation for submission for F&GP in March **It was agreed that, based on the report at 7a, the current position is appropriate.**
- e) Cllr Buss reported on the **Senlac Allotment Association** meeting and **Members agreed the use of the Cherry Garden for a summer BBQ**, subject to a satisfactory Risk Assessment and all appropriate environmental measures, including the removal and disposal of waste.

8. Cemetery

- a) The **Cemetery Regulations** were agreed with a revision to state the maximum coffin size, and that larger coffins would require the purchase of two plots.
- b) The dates and details for **2024 guided walks** were noted, as attached. The Clerk reported that the Dawn Chorus walk is oversubscribed with a waiting list. G Favell and Haines Funeral Directors were thanked for their coordination of these.
- c) It was noted that the tap is now mostly turned off to prevent further **water loss**. The Clerk was asked to ascertain the cost of leak detection for discussion at the next meeting.
- d) The action plan for Cemetery 2023-2027
 - i. Consider options for conserving the Mortuary **Members noted that contact with local colleges for apprentices to carry out work has been unsuccessful. Cllr Silk agreed to look at the structure and report to the next meeting.**
- e) Cllr Cook: congratulated the grounds staff on the innovative use of pallets into compost units and suggested that ways of sharing the compost with residents should be considered; confirmed that flooring contractors had been met but this had been put on hold, as previously reported; confirmed that the replacement fence has reduced the area available for staff to undertake hedge trimming; had looked at a recently felled tree on the border of a property at Langton Close but had been unable to establish if it had fallen naturally.

9. Recreation Grounds



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- a) Cllr Barton presented the notes from a meeting of the **Pavilion Funding Task & Finish Group** held on 16 January 2024, as attached. He confirmed that several avenues of funding had been identified and will be followed up. Due to other commitments, Cllr Buss expressed a wish to pass this obligation to another Councillor when possible.
 - b) Cllr Brown reported that a meeting of the **Pavilion Technical Team Task & Finish Group** will not be arranged until more funding is in place, to avoid wasting time of the preferred tenderer.
 - c) Cllr Burton confirmed the successful **grant of £5061 from Sussex Lund** for work to remove and replace trees at the recreation ground and Guild Shaw, and reported a draft schedule of action has been produced. It was agreed that good publicity of the scheme is necessary and Cllrs Burton and Silk agreed to work with the Deputy Town Clerk to ensure that this was actioned.
 - d) **Tennis courts:**
 - i. The update on the **booking system** was noted, as attached. The Clerk was asked to arrange promotion of tennis courts via the E-Bulletin.
 - ii. **Members agreed the renewal of certification for two Officers** that is required for renewal of membership to the Tennis Lawn Association at an approx. cost of £30pp.
 - e) **Members agreed the use of the recreation ground by Battel Bonfire Boyes on 29th June 2024** for the Battle Summer Fair subject to proof of appropriate insurance and satisfactory Risk Assessment and all appropriate environmental measures, including the removal and disposal of waste.
 - f) The **action plan for recreation ground 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. Receive report on condition of pitches & agree post season renovation **Members noted the improved condition of the pitches and agreed the post season renovation, as suggested by grounds staff.**
 - g) Cllr Buss reported on the successful Junior Park Run being coordinated at the recreation ground.
- 10. Street Furniture & Lighting**
- a) Members noted that, following the re-siting of **two lights for the Blackfriars development at Harrier Lane**, the lights had worked for some weeks. However, there are now two lights that have not worked for a period of time and it is suspected that a cable has been broken during the installation of the footpath. Further information from the streetlight contractor is awaited.
 - b) The **action plan for street furniture and lighting 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - c) Cllr Barton reported that previous work identified had been repaired well be grounds staff. Members noted that the **benches** on the Abbey Green have been fixed with larger parts to prevent movement.
- 11. Remainder of BTC's Estate**
- a) Members discussed the **We Love Parks 2024** scheme but agreed that it is not relevant to Battle at this time.
 - b) It was noted that comment was made by the South & South East in Bloom Judge that the **Hornbeams opposite Abbey Green** may not be thriving under current conditions. The grounds staff had increased attention recently and felt that the move would be extremely challenging and potentially costly. Cllr Sprong agreed to seek advice for discussion at the next meeting.
 - c) The **action plan for remainder of BTCs estate for 2023-2027** was noted, as attached.
 - i. Review, update as necessary and agree risk assessment **It was agreed that Cllr Brown and the Clerk would work on this for the next meeting.**



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- ii. Review, update as necessary and agree Management Programme **Cllr Burton agreed to look at this for discussion at the next meeting.**
- iii. Review record of land and property maintained by Estates Committee for recommendation to F&GP **The Clerk will update this for reporting at the next meeting.**
- d) Cllr Burton confirmed that the Ecology and Biodiversity audit carried out on the Amenity Field will be discussed by the Climate & Ecology Sub Committee and recommendations made to Committees. It was suggested that a summer update of the Audit should be carried out. She highlighted some graffiti on a tree at Mansers Shaw and a deep vehicle track made at George Meadow/Upper Stumblets.

12. Six-month report

Cllr Brown agreed to prepare this for presentation to Full Council in April.

13. Correspondence & Communications

- An email of concern that the **shed at the Cemetery** may be broken asbestos had been received. Cllr Brown and the grounds staff will investigate any damage and ensure that the structure is safe.
- An email of **thanks from a new tenant for the great condition of a prepared allotment plot.** This will be shared as good news.

14. Matters for information / future agenda items

The Clerk was asked to chase **UK Power Networks** to repair the hole in the hedge at Virgins Croft.

15. Date of next meeting: 2 April 2024

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no members of the press or public.

16. Erection of fence on Council land

Members agreed one further attempt to meet with the owner of the adjoining property.

17. George Meadow / Upper Stumblets lease conditions

Members agreed that Cllr Sprong suggest to the tenant farmer a meeting at the Almonry to discuss tenancy.

Cllr Cook reiterated her interest in the following item.

18. Battle Pre-school lease conditions

Members agreed to notify a rent increase to £400 from April 2025.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.58.

Cllr B Brown
Chairman