Battle Town Council

Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2026 at The Almonry, High Street Battle at 7pm

Present: Cllrs A Barton (Chair), S Burton, V Cook, J Exley, M Howell, N McLaren, P Morley, M-L Neill, A Ratcliffe, D Russell, D Silk and D Wheeler.
In Attendance: 2 members of the public, Cllr K Field, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public thanked the Chairman for his kind words at the **Pavilion Opening Event** for herself and many others that had assisted with the Pavilion Project over the ten years of action. She highlighted the previous projects that the Clerk had been involved in over the years in her role as Deputy and Clerk for the Council, involving a great deal of time and tenacity to complete, including improvements and extension to the cemetery and the many schemes to provide the modern sport and leisure facilities now available at the recreation ground. However, she emphasised that, despite the skills the Clerk has demonstrated, in the event of an emergency outside of working hours, she and her Officer colleagues listed on the **Battle Emergency Plan** would likely be unable to coordinate the activation and suggested that Council may wish to consider this.
One member of the public left the meeting.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – None.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.

3. **The Minutes of the Council meeting on 16 December 2025** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Barton.

4. **Report from the Town Clerk**
   Quotes for the repairs and replacement to the **Christmas lighting infrastructure** are awaited.

5. **Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors**
   County
   Cllr Field congratulated the Council on the successful completion of the **Pavilion** project and opening event.
   She reported that decisions on **elections** and **Local Government Reorganisation** are awaited.
   In response to a question, Cllr Field suggested that the issues on **Netherfield Road/Hill** are included on the SLR (Strengthening Local Relationships) meeting.
   District
   Cllr Burton reported that a **Nature Emergency** had been declared that the road design will necessitate a **20mph speed limit** will be a condition on new housing developments.

6. **Pavilion project**
   a) Clerk a site visit had been held with a majority of Councillors and previous Task & Finish Group members prior to the official Opening event. An independent Fire Assessment has been carried out and the report is awaited. Some additional items have been purchased eg internal door mats in anticipation of Sunday's opening event. Following a discussion, **Members agreed that the rooms should remain as Club and Community rooms**. As there had been no comment from the preferred café lessee in relation to furniture, **Members asked the Clerk to source stackable, padded vinyl chairs for the Club and Community Rooms.** Communications had been made with the preferred cafe lessee but nothing firm was agreed in relation to cleaning or locking of the toilet facilities. The

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referees and solicitor details had now been received. The revised Cost Statement at 19 December from the Quantity Surveyor was noted, as attached.

b) **Pavilion Monitoring & Implementation Task & Finish Group**: the Pavilion Plan had been updated, as a live document, the Pavilion is complete and was officially opened on 18 January. As the tasks have been completed, **Members agreed to disband this Group.**

c) **Marketing Sub Committee, 9 January 2026:** Members discussed and **agreed the proposed hire fees and charges** as attached, to include a hire of the Officials room and an additional charge for any lights left on.

d) **Personnel Sub Committee, 20 January 2026: Members agreed that the Council's current cleaner should carry out the cleaning and caretaking role**, as indicated in the current Pavilion Plan on a flexible basis to claim hours worked as required **for the forthcoming year**. The grounds staff will be asked to open the toilet facilities Monday to Friday. The Clerk was asked to investigate a substitute arrangement for any annual leave or sickness cover. It was noted that the Community Ownership Fund provides £14,000 for this service. The arrangement will be monitored and reviewed in one year's time.

7. Draft minutes and recommendations from Standing & Sub Committee meetings:

a) the draft Minutes of the **Town Development & External Relations Committee** meeting held on **6 January 2026** were noted. Members noted that Cllrs Barton, Burton and Cook have agreed to form a Parish Assembly Task & Finish Group. There were no additional Members appointed.

b) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes of the **Planning & Transport Committee** held on **13 January 2026**. These were noted. A discussion on a change in time of meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation, Monitoring & Review Sub Committee concluded that no additional interest would be forthcoming and Cllr Russell agreed to remain on the SC.

c) As the **Personnel Sub Committee** meeting had been held immediately prior to this meeting, the Clerk reported the recommendations:

- To **reduce the Clerk's hours from 33 to 26 per week, effective by June 2026**, as requested by the Clerk;
- to **recruit a further senior officer for between 11 and 14 hours per week** at an approximate additional cost of £5,000per annum.

Members agreed these recommendations and invited the Finance & General Purposes Committee to consider a recruitment programme.

8. Budget & Precept submission for 2026-2027

As agreed at the previous meeting, the revised calculations had been circulated following receipt of the Council Tax Base received post meeting from Rother District Council. It was noted that this had a significant effect on the proposed Precept request. Members increased the budget for salaries as discussed at 7c, and considered additional projects and planned income and expenditure. **Members agreed to a Precept for 2026-27 of £523,568, an increase of 3p per week, or 0.81% to the Band D Council Tax, to be made to Rother District Council, as attached.**

9. Freedom of Battle and Coat of Arms

Cllr Barton had circulated a discussion document following a suggestion from a Deputy Lord Lieutenant to consider developing the title of "Freedom of Battle" as an honorary civic title to be awarded by resolution to persons of distinction or those who have provided exceptional service to the town. It had been highlighted that many historic towns and cities have adopted this honour.

Following exploration of this, it has been suggested that there is no specific heraldry for the Town and that the 2027 Year of the Normans and celebrations may be an important time to consider this.

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Members agreed that Cllrs Barton, Cook, McLaren, Morley and Neill would form a Task & Finish Group to consider these items.

10. UK Town of Culture competition

It was noted that an expression of interest is required by 31 March 2026. **Members agreed that this should be considered by the above agreed T&FG with representatives invited from Battle Festival and Battle Marketing Group.**

11. Council and Standing Committees meetings start time

Members agreed that, to assist with reduction in costs of parking, **all future Standing Committee and Full Council meetings should commence at 7.15pm.**

12. Circulation of emails

It was highlighted that emails add to the carbon footprint and to the workload of Councillors and Officers, even on matters not of specific interest to all. **Members agreed that emails would continue to be circulated for a period of two weeks** to allow individual subscriptions. Circulation would then cease.

Members were also reminded not to "respond to all" unless it was necessary to do so.

13. Community Toilet Scheme

a) **Reports on existing High Street facilities.** Members agreed that the current providers are satisfactory. The Clerk was asked to ensure that publicity is improved including notice boards, providers, website and on social media.

b) **Almonry courtyard facility** it was reported that over the winter period, the facility was primarily used by volunteer gardeners. However, the Clerk was asked to ensure better signage is provided.

c) **Transfer of CTS responsibility** Members agreed that as the scheme is now fully operational, the Town Development & External Relationships Committee should take responsibility for this scheme.

14. Devolution Task & Finish Group

There has been no additional information from Rother District Council, although an offer to discuss Kingsmead informally will be accepted prior to the meeting with Officers at RDC on Thursday.

15. Bayeux Tapestry replica in Battle

Members noted that a Bayeux Tapestry replica is being made over a period of 11 years: Facebook page Mia's Bayeux Tapestry. Battle scenes are currently been worked and the project is expected to finish in a year. The tapestry will be sold or auctioned. The Clerk was asked to send the email to Cllrs Cook and Neill for discussion by the Battle Marketing Group.

16. Finance matters

a) The **list of income at £19,447. and expenditure of £155,304.19 for November 2025**; both net of account transfers, and including payments for Almonry Public Works Loan Board at £10,169.78 and Bellco Construction for the Pavilion project at £106,233.65 was noted, as attached.

17. Forthcoming events February & March

February	Seedy Sunday 1/02/2025	For launch of Battle in Bloom
February	date tbc	Mayors Charity Event
March	17 March – 2 April 2026	Litter Pick Spring Clean
March	10	Strengthening Local Relationships meeting

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18. Correspondence

- A **letter of thanks from the High Sheriff** for successful completion and opening event of the Pavilion.
- An email request to consider a recently deceased **Battle resident for an honorary award**. This will be passed to the Task & Finish Group agreed at item 9.

19. Reports from representatives of the Council and other reports

a) **Reports from Councillors** were noted as attached.

b) Draft notes from the recent **Rother Association of Local Councils** meeting were circulated to Members.

20. Future agenda items / matters to note – None.

21. Date of next meeting: 17 February 2026

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.31.

Cllr A Barton
Chairman

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