Battle Town Council

Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026 at The Almonry, High Street Battle at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs S Burton (Chair), J Exley, M Howell, N McLaren, P Morley, M-L Neill, D Russell, D Silk and D Wheeler.
In Attendance: 4 members of the public, Cllr K Field, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public highlighted the concerns of the Asten Fields Residents' Association to the inclusion of a potential 80 homes close to this development in the Rother District Council (RDC) draft Local Plan 2025-40. He highlighted poor infrastructure with potential flood risk to the Shaw.
The Chairman highlighted the importance of all residents responding to the RDC consultation.

A member of the public reported that importance of the Remembrance Sunday Parade and asked that the Council continue to support the administration of this event.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs A Barton, V Cook and A Ratcliffe.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – Cllr ML Neill disclosed a personal interest in item 11 as a member of St Mary's Church. Cllrs S Burton and N McLaren disclosed a personal interest in item 8 as District Councillors.

3. **The Minutes of the Council meeting on 20 January 2026** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Burton.

4. **Report from the Town Clerk**

- The precept request for £523,568 has been submitted to Rother District Council.
- General information emails are no longer being circulated and it is hoped that Members have subscribed to those organisations of interest. Any items considered pertinent will continue to be circulated to all Members.

5. **Reports from County Councillor and District Councillors**

County

Cllr Field reported that elections will now take place in May 2026 and a budget of £55m had now been agreed, with no use of reserves, and an application made to Government for a special fund of £70m, which is relied on. This will result in a Council Tax increase of 4.99%, plus 2% adult social care.
In response to questions, Cllr Field confirmed that updates on the crossing at Battle Hill are awaiting following alterations at the Esso/Tesco site. She agreed to look at the issue of the raised paving slab at the entrance to Market Square, from High Street.

District

Cllr Burton reported that the draft budget and medium terms plans have been agreed with a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, all fees and charges approved and no use of reserves.
Cllr McLaren confirmed that there will be a Local Plan exhibition in the Memorial Hall on 10 March and an interesting presentation on the Local Plan and National Planning Policies Framework had been held for District Councillors.
In response to a question, Cllr Field reported that work to provide Electric Vehicle Charging points are ongoing.

Members agreed to bring forward item 11.

These minutes were ratified on 17 March 2026. A signed hard copy is held in the Council Office.

11. Remembrance Sunday Parade

Members noted that historically the Parade was organised and attended by the Royal British Legion. Following the demise of the local group, Council was asked to coordinate the Parade and order the wreaths for laying at the War Memorial. Following some discussion on the format and concerns at inclusivity, members of St Marys Church agreed to take on the coordination of the Sunday Parade to St Mary's Church. The Council developed the Armistice Event on 11 November at the Abbey Green as an all-inclusive community event; with all local schools being invited. However, the Church has not been able to arrange its own insurance to cover the event to obtain a Road Closure Order.

Following a thorough discussion, **Council agreed this year to:**

- **accept a member of the Poppy Appeal's offer to assist with the coordination of the Remembrance Day Parade;**
- **request better timetable from the Dean to facilitate a more accurate road closure; and**
- **facilitate the Remembrance Parade both to and from the War Memorial at St Mary's Churchyard.**

Three members of the public left the meeting

6. Pavilion project

a) The Clerk reported that:

- **54 padded, vinyl chairs** (10 with arms) for the Community and Club Rooms, **two tables** (for the Club Room) and a chair trolley have been ordered at a cost of £1,589.15, inc delivery;
- The **Fire Assessment** is awaited, although all documents have been passed through Building Control successfully. There has been a suggestion that a fail-safe relay is necessary for the two automatic entrance door shutters. This is being investigated and a provision sum has been allocated by the Quantity Surveyor;
- The **toilets are now opened** by grounds staff Monday to Friday and the Council's existing cleaner on weekends. The facilities are cleaned and locked by the Cleaner seven days a week. A professional cleaning company will clean and close the toilets during the Cleaner's annual leave next week. Cllr Wheeler was thanked for his kind offer to be emergency key holder for opening the toilets when the Cleaner is unavailable in future;
- Subsequent to the Expression of Interest submitted, RDC has decided not to invite an application for the **Climate Emergency Bonus Fund**. This means that the work agreed to provide the underground water harvesting system at an additional cost of £3,065, additional solar storage battery £9,240 and underfloor heating £9,000 will need to be funded by existing budgets;
- The Quantity Surveyor's **Cost Plan** had now been circulated to Members, as attached. The Clerk had updated an income and expenditure spreadsheet and anticipates that, after additional expenditure for miscellaneous items including potential shutters for the café area, the project may be under budget by approx. £40k.
- a request had been received from the **ParkRun coordinator** to store their trolley in the storage area. It was noted that a barrier has been erected for the safety of visitors and protection of the solar and electricity system, and that space is required by paying users of the facilities. **Members agreed to provide one key for the storage of one trolley.** It was suggested that the Cleaner be asked to open the toilets at 8.30am on a Sunday, if possible. Members highlighted that the Community Area will be for the use of the Café during its opening hours and for hire out of those hours.

b) Members agreed that as the rebuild project is now complete **the Pavilion should return to the Estates Committee** for management**.**

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

a) Cllr Burton presented the draft Minutes of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** meeting held on **27 January 2026.** These were noted.

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b) Cllr Neill presented the draft Minutes of the **Estates Committee** meeting held on **3 February 2026.** These were noted.

c) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes of the **Planning & Transport Committee** meeting held on **10 February 2026.** These were noted.

8. Devolution

Members noted that all three sites: Kingsmead open space, Coronation Gardens recreation ground and play ground, and Netherfield recreation ground and playground have been offered for devolvement, with Business Plans requested by 2 March. Following a thorough discussion, **it was agreed to submit Business Plans for Coronation Gardens recreation ground and play ground, and Netherfield recreation ground and playground,** but not Kingsmead open space. It was noted that these areas will be included on the Estates Committee Action Plan when devolution is complete.

9. Civic Actions Task & Finish Group

Members agreed the Terms of Reference as attached.

10. Annual Report 2025-2026

As the draft document had not been circulated until the day of the meeting, Members agreed to email any significant errors or comment by close of business on Thursday for submission to the publisher on Friday.

12. Marbles Competition

Cllrs Neill and Wheeler agreed to coordinate teams and submit entries for the women and men categories.

13. Dark Skies

Members noted that a Dark Skies Policy has been adopted and, following a detailed discussion, agreed to submit a without obligation pre-application for submission to the International Dark Skies Association (IDSA) before the end of March.

One member of the public left the meeting.

14. Battle Town Council logo

Members noted that the helmet logo will be adopted for the 2027 Year of the Normans literature.

15. Finance matters

a) The list of **income of £58,173.99 and expenditure of £191,600.17 for December 2025**, both net of account transfers, was noted. The Clerk highlighted that income includes donation towards the William 1000 Tree project, which is not the Council's scheme but accounted by a budget line within the accounts of £1290, and the sponsorship of Christmas trees £1,100; and expenditure is again primarily the Pavilion project at £158,151.39.

16. Forthcoming events from Council Year document for March & April were noted**:**

21 March	Litter Pick Spring Clean
10 March	SLR meeting (Strengthening Local Relationships)
March	Allotment inspection
3 April	Marbles Competition

17. Correspondence and communications received post Agenda circulation

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- Thanks to the Mayor from organisers of the Pancake Race and an offer of crockery from Battle Chamber of Commerce.

18. Reports from representatives of the Council and other reports were noted:

a) Minutes from Rother Association of Local Councils meeting on 14 January 2026;
b) Advice on Age-friendly Towns and Parishes;
c) Reports from Councillors, as attached;
d) Report from meeting between Rother District Council and Battle Town Council.

19. Future agenda items / matters to note
Christmas lighting

20. Date of next meeting: 17 March 2026

Cllr Field left the meeting.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS
For the consideration of sensitive information, Members agreed that the press and public be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2) for the following item

21. Terms of Lease for provision of Pavilion café
Following a discussion, Members agreed that a Lease should be attempted for occupation of the Café from 1 April 2026. It was noted that shutters should be provided for the safety and security of visitors and the Café lessee. The Clerk was delegated authority to instruct a solicitor and discuss options of shutters with the Café lessee. Cllr Morley agreed to provide a provider of suitable shutter equipment.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.42.

Cllr S Burton
Chairman

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