Battle Town Council

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

Present: Cllrs A Barton (Chairman), S Burton, V Cook, J Exley, M Howell, M-L Neill, A Ratcliffe, , D Silk and D Wheeler.
In Attendance: 1 member of the public, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public: reminded all residents to make objections to the Rother District Council (RDC) draft Local Plan 2025-42 consultation; highlighted the large increase in Council Tax for Sussex Police when there appears to be a small representation in Battle and the Police Station is inaccessible; reported a slip on a pathway at Battle Cemetery that had resulted in a broken ankle. The Clerk apologised that she had not been passed a telephone number to respond to the last item.
The member of the public left the meeting.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr C Moscal and D Russell.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.

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**

- **Pavilion** responsibility has returned to the Estates Committee. The commissioning of the solar panels is ongoing, with the contractor and Octopus Energy providing support.
- **Pavilion Cafe** - Solicitors have been instructed with an agreement to progress as speedily as possible. Unfortunately, the provision of a barrier between the kitchen and Community Area remains challenging: Cllr Morley was unable to provide a recommendation and advice from a supplier that the proposed café tenant had approached had advised that the position of the lights, height of the ceiling and lack of floor fixing meant that they could not assist. The Solicitor has been instructed to include the provision of a barrier/screen but not to allow this to delay the Lease. It is suggested that no hire of the Community Room is agreed prior to the fitting of a low-grade barrier. This will be discussed at the next Estates Committee meeting.
- **Annual Report 2025–26** – now published and being delivered to residents via door-to-door delivery. Volunteers are needed for delivery to Netherfield and for the audio recording. Members are asked to report any missed delivery addresses to the Deputy Clerk.
- **Dark Skies pre-application** – is being progressed by Cllr Silk and a member of Wild About Battle.
- **Great British Spring Clean** – will take place from the Pavilion on Saturday and additional participants are welcome.
- **Tourist Information Point** – there are currently 23 weekends with no or limited volunteer cover. Additional volunteers are needed.
- **Open Gardens (13 June)** – As agreed, the Almonry garden will be hosted by Councillors. Cllrs Barton and Neill agreed to assist with hosting this event.
- **Consultations** – it was noted that the recent National Planning Policy Framework consultation included 200 questions and took approximately 3.5 hours to work through. How these may be more streamlined will be considered.

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

County Cllr Field had given her apologies.

Cllr Cook confirmed that County Council elections will be held in May.

District

Cllr Cook reported that devolvement of assets continues and several negative responses to the Draft Local Plan 2025-2042 had been received.

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

a) Cllr McLaren presented the draft Minutes of the **Town Development & External Relations Committee** meeting held on **3 March 2026**. Cllr McLaren highlighted the recommendation to Finance & General Purposes for the responsibility of the Town Model to be passed to this Committee. It was noted that outreach in the form of 'surgeries' could be facilitated in other areas of the Parish. The Clerk was asked to seek a clearer boundary map.

b) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes of the **Planning & Transport Committee** meeting held on **10 March 2026**. These were noted. It was highlighted that the Council's comments in response to the RDC draft Local Plan 2025-42 had been published as an attachment to these Minutes.

7. Reports and recommendations from Task & Finish Groups

a) **Devolution Task & Finish Group –** Cllr Cook confirmed that there had been no meeting. The Clerk reported that Business Plans had been submitted for the two play areas and open spaces at Coronation Gardens and Netherfield, as agreed. There will be an update on asset devolvement at a forthcoming Clerks' training session, and Cllr Cook and the Clerk will meet with RDC Officers next week to discuss the process in detail.

b) Civic Actions Task & Finish Group – Cllr Barton gave a verbal report on the various aspects of the 2027 Year of the Normans activities; Town of Culture applications; Civic Award and Heraldry; and proposal for a Royal visit. He highlighted that meetings are being held with interested supportive groups.

8. Battle In Bloom 2026

Cllr Neill had circulated the notes and recommendations from the **Task & Finish Group** meeting held on **9 March 2026.** Members discussed the proposals and **agreed by a majority the motions:**

- **to adopt the new competition of Battle in Bloom**
- **to stand down all cups and replace with one-off, keepable gifts and certificates.**

The members of the T&FG were thanked for their work on this.

9. Christmas Lighting Infrastructure

Two quotes had now been received which are of a significant difference in cost. An additional three companies had been reminded of the urgency of quotes to allow for a detailed discussion. Members considered the options for not carrying out the work and contributing towards the retailers own festive lighting, although it was noted that existing infrastructure will still need to be removed. The Clerk was asked to: commence contacting property owners for authority to remove and replace infrastructure on their buildings; to check that all the contractors are NIC EIC registered; to contact the proposed night time contractor to seek a cost for day-time work; check guarantees and life expectancy of the replacement; ascertain type of cabling; any repairs to properties included. It was noted that Gala Lights have not been contacted.

10. Use of the Pavilion by Vhelio

Cllr Neill had circulated a request for use of the solar power at the Pavilion for charging of the Vhelio bike batteries to enable the return journey to Rouen. She highlighted that the battery charging will be supervised by a member of Vhelio team and Cllr Neill. Cllr Neill confirmed that the batteries are compliant with safety requirements in England at 36V, 15Ah, 540Wh respectively. Subject to confirmation that:

- The chargers used are set up so that they charge efficiently (advice on series or in parallel). The adapters (French to UK plugs) would also need to be checked as suitable;
- There is no access for any other user of the facilities on that evening at that time;
- Insurance from Vhelio would be provided, and council insurance also permits this.

this was agreed unanimously.

11. Finance matters

a) The list of **income at £39,688.19 and expenditure at £31,656.20 for January 2026**, both net of account transfers, **were noted as attached.**

12. Forthcoming events for April & May

3 April	Marbles Match
30 April	**Parish Assembly**
10 May	Battle Town Football Club Sports Event on the recreation ground
19 May	Annual Council Meeting
23-25 May	Medieval Fayre
31 May	Polish War Memorial Event (tbc)

13. Correspondence and communications received post Agenda circulation

The annual sports event organised by Battle Town Football Club will be held on the recreation ground on 10 May. The Café Lessee will be advised of this.

14. To receive reports from representatives of the Council and other reports

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

b) Cllr Howell had circulated the slides from the training on the proposals for the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. Future agenda items / matters to note

- **Six monthly reports from Standing Committees**

16. Date of next meeting: 21 April 2026

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no members of the public

17. Community Award 2026

Members agreed the recommendation from TD&ER unanimously. It was noted that other worthwhile nominations had been received.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.55.

Cllr A Barton
Chairman