Battle Town Council

MINUTES of the TOWN DEVELOPMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE held on Tuesday 5 May 2026 at 7:15pm, at The Almonry, High Street, Battle, TN33 0EA

Present: Cllrs S Burton, V Cook (Chairman) N McLaren, C Moskal, P Morley
In attendance: B Rieu (Deputy Town Clerk)

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - None

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1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs A Barton, M-L Neill

2. **Disclosure of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr Cook, who presided at the meeting.**

4. **Deputy Clerk's Report**
   - The Annual Report was distributed to residents – Councillors were thanked for their assistance with hand delivery in Netherfield and for audio recordings provided.
   - Congratulations to the Council's women's marbles team on their recent triumph.
   - Town preparations are underway for the Medieval Fair over the late May bank holiday.
   - Arrangements for the St Valery Twinning visit are underway for July 2026.
   - Battle's Scarecrow Festival is currently inviting entries.

5. **Finance**

a) The Budget Report to **31 March 2026** was received and noted as attached.

6. **Committee Task & Finish Groups (T&FG)**

a) **Youth Forum 2025/26** – Members received an update on the Youth Forum it was noted that good engagement from participating young people continued; Successful presentations were delivered by the Youth Forum at the Parish Assembly; Discussions are underway with East Sussex County Council regarding youth provision and outreach initiatives in Battle. There is planned future attendance by Youth Forum representatives at Council meetings.

b) **Battle in Bloom 2026 – members** considered arrangements for the retirement and replacement of Battle in Bloom trophies and **agreed to**: replace existing trophies with engraved "Battle in Bloom" vases for winners to retain; issue certificates; give officers given delegated authority to purchase vases within the agreed competition budget; approve a paid Facebook advertising campaign for the summer competition up to £50. Members noted that the Terms of Reference for the Battle in Bloom Task & Finish Group may require review and clarification.

c) **Parish Assembly 2026** – members received a debrief following the 2026 Parish Assembly and noted: Positive community engagement and successful participation from community groups and the Youth Forum; more space to be allocated for community group stands; Technical issues experienced with microphones and projection equipment; the need for improved time management arrangements for future speakers and presentations. The WI Saxonwood were thanked for providing refreshments. **Members agreed to**: disband the Parish Assembly T&FG following completion of the event.

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7. **Media & Communications Policy** – Members considered the revised Media & Communications Policy and noted that further review of the tracked changes version was required prior to adoption. It was agreed that the revised draft would be circulated to members and returned to a future meeting of the Committee before referral to the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Cllr Morley was thanked for his work.

8. **Community Toilet Scheme** – members thanked councillors who had sent feedback. Public awareness, accessibility and signage were discussed. Suggestions were made for improving visibility of participating venues including: use of QR codes and online mapping; promotion through council communications and the website; potential improvements to signage and publicity materials. **It was agreed that** members review the condition and visibility of revised notices and signage and that Cllr Silk is consulted on a potential replacement venue for *'Little Battle'.*

9. **High Street Planters Scheme** – members received an update on the High Street Planters Scheme and noted ongoing maintenance and planting arrangements. **Members agreed** to accept the offer from Beautiful Battle to plant up the High Street Planters and suggest further consideration is given to sponsorship with a naming opportunity at £25 per box.

10. **Tourist Information Point (T.I.P)** - members received an update and noted current visitor trends and volunteer arrangements. Members discussed the development of a volunteer training video to support recruitment and provide guidance for volunteers delivering talks and visitor information. It was agreed that Councillor McLaren would continue development of the training resource for future review.

11. **1066 Country Membership Structure** – members considered the revised 1066 Country membership structure and discussed the level of membership appropriate for Council. Following discussion, **the agreed level of bronze membership was approved**.

12. **Year of the Normans 2027** – Members noted: ongoing discussions regarding a potential royal visit arrangements; partnership work involving the British Museum, local museums, St Mary's Church and other organisations; Development of exhibitions, educational activities and wider promotional opportunities linked to the commemorations; report as attached.

13. **Town Sign** – members received an update regarding the condition and visibility of the Town Sign. Members noted that English Heritage had advised against locating the sign on Abbey Green and that relocation to Checkers Corner would require permissions, licences and potential excavation works. Following discussion, **members agreed** that the Town Sign should be repainted and renovated in its current location.

14. **Spring Clean Litter Pick 2026 debrief** – members received a debrief on the Spring Clean and Litter Pick event and noted good community participation, including involvement from Youth Forum members and volunteers. Thanks were recorded to all those who supported and participated in the event. Ideas for expanding the activity will be considered for the next Litter pick, scheduled for Autumn 2026.

15. **Forthcoming Events** – members noted the following events:

a) **Volunteer Week** commencing 1 June 2026; **Members agreed** that a Volunteer Week email

sign-off/banner should be added to Council email communications during the campaign period.

b) **Open Gardens** on 13 June 2026 – Councillor volunteers are sought

c) **Sussex Day** on 16 June 2026 – Council will fly the Sussex Flag

16. Resident engagement and communications

a) **Thank you** cards / letters - members discussed introducing Battle Town Council thank you cards to recognise residents and volunteers undertaking positive community actions. Members supported the principle of recognising community contributions at the Council's summer event. Cllrs are asked that all nominations for the guest list are sent to the DTC for collating.

b) **Role of community groups** – this item was deferred to the next meeting.

c) Proposal to **host a small reception – members agreed** to host a reception for the first female fire fighter on 22 August in the Almonry

d) **Town Model**, volunteer recruitment – **members agreed** the poster subject to minor amendments

e) **Slow Mow Summer – members agreed** to the proposed social media schedule

f) **Summer newsletter**, **Members agreed that the newsletter** will include: an update on Devolution, and the Pavilion. A final draft will be confirmed via email. **Members noted the print deadline of 30 June.**

g) **Statistics for digital communications and social media –** this item was deferred to the next meeting.

h) **Website review –** this item was deferred to the next meeting.

17. Action Plan 2023-2027 – members reviewed the Action Plan as attached.

18. Correspondence and Communications received post agenda – None.

19. Matters for information / future agenda items

- High Street Planters scheme – Cllr Neill
- Battle Emergency Plan
- Communication Schedule and relevant guidance from Communication and Media policy - Cllr Morley
- Christmas Lighting Update
- Reception for Britain's first female retained professional fire-fighter Mary Joy Langdon

20. Date of next meeting: provisionally, 7 July 2026

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:45

Cllr V Cook
Chairman

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