# Battle Town Council

**Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on**
**TUESDAY, 16 JUNE 2026 at The Almonry, High Street Battle at 7.15pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Sue Burton (Chairman), Andrew Barton, Vikki Cook, Jenny Exley, Margaret Howell, Nicola McLaren, Pete Morley, Andy Ratcliffe, David Russell, David Silk and Dale Wheeler.
**In Attendance:** Three members of the public, Carol Harris (Town Clerk).

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Two representatives from the organisers of the Boxing Day Meet reported on last year's event, highlighting that the Abbey Green is requested particularly for the pen for the hounds. It was suggested that it is a traditional event for the rural community to gather and display the horses and hounds, with no illegal activity carried out.
A member of the public expressed concern at the proposal to continue the Boxing Day Meet suggesting that it is archaic and would be better located in a rural village for safety of all.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr ML Neill.
   Cllr C Moskal was absent.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.

3. **The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2026** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Burton.

4. **Report from the Town Clerk**

- The electoral ward map, as provided by Rother District Council, had been circulated.
- The Christmas lights infrastructure replacement had been published on the Government Portal, as required by legislation due to the anticipated cost of the project.
- Slow Mow Summer guidance had been passed to the Netherfield PCC and acknowledged.
- The consultation on the modification to the proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove had been completed on 12 June.
- The Council's RALC (Rother Association of Local Councils) representatives had completed its consultation, as requested. Cllrs Exley, Howell and Wheeler were thanked.
- It has been noticed that item 5.6 is contra to item 5.7 in the Financial Regulations. This will be an item for the next Agenda.
- The Deputy Town Clerk had today been advised that she has successfully completed her CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) qualification. Members unanimously congratulated B Rieu on her achievement.

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

**County**

Cllr Field had apologised for her absence but provided a brief report confirming that she had submitted 3 written questions to the next County Council meeting in July:

1. When will the contract for Electric Vehicle Charging points be signed and implemented?
2. Will there be an urgent meeting with Balfour Beatty to work out how to do a better job repairing potholes within the contract?
3. How can the relationships between Highways and Parish Clerks be improved?

She had also submitted a Notice of Motion asking the Executive to end the booking system at Household Waste and Recycling Sites (tips) with immediate effect.

**District**

Cllr Cook reported that there had been meetings of the Planning Committee and Overview & Scrutiny: There had been no Battle applications at the former meeting but training on the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been provided; the responses to the recent Local Plan consultation are being analysed and summarised. The Final Plan including development management policies must be submitted by end of year and it is proposed to take to Full Council in September.

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

a) Cllr Burton presented the draft Minutes for the **Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 26 May 2026.** She highlighted that a Project Priority Assessment form had been agreed together with allocation of completion of the form for each project identified. Due to the change of next meeting date, it had been agreed to bring these to the next Full Council meeting for consideration. All Councillors were invited to make comment prior to the meeting. The minutes were noted.

b) Cllr Barton presented the draft Minutes for the **Estates Committee meeting held on 2 June 2026** and these were noted.

c) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes for the **Planning & Transport Committee meeting held on 9 June 2026** and these were noted.

*The Chairman proposed bringing forward item 11. This was agreed.*

**11. Use of Abbey Green for Boxing Day Meet**

The Clerk reported that proof of insurance, a Risk Assessment and confirmation of the Road Closure Order, including the lifting of the Public Spaces Protection Order in relation to the keeping of dogs on leads, had been received. A constructive email from Sussex Police was reported. It was highlighted that there had been two emails of objection to the event and one in support. The Clerk reported a Government consultation on the option to ban Trail Hunts completes this month and, whilst English Heritage do not allow the trail hunts on its land, it had been indicated that Council's decision as managers of the Abbey Green will be supported. It was emphasised that Council is considering the use of the Green for the Meet, not the Parade down the High Street, or actions post Meet. Members had a detailed discussion on safety matters, the impact on businesses in the town and obstruction of surrounding road. **Members voted on the proposal to allow the Boxing Day Meet on the Abbey Green for 2026 and this was agreed by a majority.**

*All members of the public left the meeting.*

**7. Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 (Section 1)**

Members noted that the **Annual Internal Audit Report and full Auditor's Report**, as circulated and attached, had raised no recommendations or concerns, including the new item in relation to the IT and data management at item 10. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26 had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Members noted that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had carefully considered each statement and recommended that **a positive response for Section 1 of the AGAR be signed by the Chairman of Council. This was agreed unanimously and the Chairman duly signed.**

**8. Accountability Return 2025/26 (Section 2)**

Supporting documents had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Members noted the Internal Auditor had scrutinised the accounting documents and was satisfied that these are correct and

the Clerk had signed the document, as required. The Finance & General Purposes Committee had considered the documents and recommended **Section 2 of the AGAR be approved and signed by the Chairman of Council. This was agreed unanimously, as attached.**

**9. Terms of Reference; membership; updates from Task & Finish Groups and consider any recommendations:**

a) Cllr Barton presented the notes from **Civic Actions Task & Finish Group** discussions, as attached. He highlighted that a meeting is arranged to meet with the Lord Lieutenant on 29 June and other actions are ongoing. The decision not to apply for the Town of Culture was noted. **Members agreed that the group should continue with its actions** in accordance with the Terms of Reference, which were noted.

b) Cllr Cook reported that the **Devolution Task & Finish Group** will be meeting on 19 June at 9am by Zoom. All Members are welcome. The Clerk reported that at the recent meeting with Rother District Council representatives, it was confirmed that: the Mount Street toilets would be available as a Freehold asset, without onerous restrictions although toilet facilities must be retained within any additional use; that no financial contribution will be available; a site visit could be arranged; in relation to the request for documentation for all proposed assets, these will be available at the point that Battle assets are considered, due to workload throughout the district. It was agreed to review the Terms of Reference at the next meeting.

**10. Marketing Sub Committee**

Cllr Cook reported that there is currently the minimum of three Council members but an additional member would be welcomed.

**12. Finance matters**

**a)** The list of **income of £16,657.50 and expenditure at £57,904.99;** both net of account transfers for **April 2026 was noted as attached.** Members noted the purchase of bulbs for the town and suggested that those removed bi-annually should be offered to all residents.

**13. Forthcoming events from Council Year document for July and August** were noted:

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| 11 July - 26 July | **Scarecrow Festival** |
| 16 July | **Battle In Bloom awards ceremony** and Council 'thank you' event – Members were invited to forward nominations to the Deputy Clerk |
| 10-26 July | **Battle Festival** |
| 13 August | **International Youth Day (UN)** |
| 29 & 30 August | **Folk & Fable Festival** |

A monthly market to be held on the first Sunday of every month in the Market Square was reported.

**14. Correspondence and communications received post Agenda circulation**

An offer to award a prize for the winner of Battle in Bloom 2026 from Castcan at the Tapestry Development will be presented to the Town Development & External Relations Committee to consider.

**15. Battle Town Mayor**

Cllr Burton reported that she has already been busy representing Council at various events in the town. In addition, she would like to support two Charities: Church of Uganda Kisiizi Hospital and Sussex Wildlife Trust, who had offered to do guided walks. Cllr Burton hopes to arrange a fundraising event in early July.

**16. To receive reports from representatives of the Council and other reports**

**a)** The report from Councillors was noted, as attached.

**17. Future agenda items / matters to note**

- To receive recommendations from the Devolvement Task & Finish Group
- To receive recommendations from Civic Actions Task & Finish Group
- To consider Project Priorities
- Grant applications will be considered at the August meeting, following the change of date for the scheduled Finance & General Purposes Committee in July.

**18. Date of next meeting: 21 July 2026**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.41.

Cllr S Burton
Chairman

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