Battle Town Council

Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 21 APRIL 2026 at The Almonry, High Street Battle at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs S Burton (Chairman), V Cook, M Howell, C Maskal, P Morley, M-L Neill, A Ratcliffe, D Russell, D Silk and D Wheeler.
In Attendance: Three members of the public, Cllr K Field, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of Wild About Battle raised concern that Kingsmead open space had not been agreed as an asset for devolvement from Rother District Council and asked if this could be reconsidered.

A member of the public suggested that:

- Rother District Council should be approached for funding towards more trees and seating at the Coronation Gardens play area, which has been agreed for devolvement. It was also suggested that this site should be designated as a Village Green for protection purposes;
- The Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Battle CP NP)should be reviewed prior to completion of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Council's Dark Skies Policy has no significance without inclusion in the Battle CP NP;
- A demolished litter bin at Coronations gardens requires replacement by RDC with a metal bin;
- Urgent litter clearance is required by Fosters Motors and the verge at Coronation Gardens from the level crossing;
- Council should consider the use of the Abbey Green for the Boxing Day Meet based on community tradition and not prejudice.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs A Barton, J Exley and N McLaren.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.

3. **The Minutes of the Council meeting on 17 March 2026** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Burton.

4. **Report from the Town Clerk**

- With grateful thanks to Cllr Silk and a member of Wild About Battle, the Dark Skies pre-application has been successfully submitted.
- A clear boundary map is awaited from Rother District Council.
- A query has been raised with one of the prospective Christmas lights infrastructure contractors in relation to day, rather than night, working costs. Accreditations for both contractors have been identified from websites. A further quote has been assured. Other tasks in relation to this matter remain outstanding.

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

County

Cllr Field reported that with budget discussions and preparation for elections, there was no report.

District

Cllr Cook reported on the: Overview & Scrutiny discussions on rural policing and a request for data in relation to flytipping; Cabinet discussion on Battle Railway Station footbridge access; Planning had

approved work to trees at Kingsmead; increase in reserves draw-down required partly due to the increase in interim staff costs.

In response to questions, Cllr Field confirmed that the crossing on Battle Hill and proposals for Electric Vehicle Charging are moving forward.

6. Receive draft minutes and consider recommendations from Standing & Sub Committee meetings

a) Cllr Burton presented the draft Minutes from the **Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24 March 2026.** These were noted.

b) Cllr Neill presented the draft Minutes from the **Estates Committee meeting held on 7 April 2026**. As these had only been circulated earlier in the day, these will be formally be reported to the next meeting.

c) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes from the **Planning & Transport Committee meeting held on 14 April 2026.** These were noted.

7. Task & Finish Groups and agree any action

a) There had been no meeting of the **Civic Actions Task & Finish Group.**

b) There had been no meeting of the **Devolution Task & Finish Group.** Cllr Cook suggested that a meeting should be held following the notification of tree work to be carried out by RDC at Kingsmead, although it was highlighted that this work was only to a relatively small number of trees. The Clerk was asked to re-circulate the Tree Condition Survey Report received for Kingsmead. A meeting of the T&F group was agreed.

The Clerk reported on a meeting with the RDC Officer progressing asset devolvement who had confirmed that Battle assets should be completed within the 2026-27 financial year. An update had been requested for reporting at the Parish Assembly. There is a detailed process to be followed prior to the formation of the Transfer document by solicitors. As RoSPA inspections are not routinely carried out, the annual insurance reports and tree condition surveys had been requested.

8. Vacant suite at The Almonry and offer of its furniture

Members noted that the tenant of **Suite 8** had taken advantage of the Break Clause at the 2 year position and given notice that she will be vacating at the end of this April. The tenant had offered to sell some of furniture for the office. It was noted that officers felt that adequate space was available for working and confidential meetings and therefore the additional room is not required. The Clerk reported that current income for this Suite is £4800pa gross and the agency fees have been confirmed at £600. **Members agreed unanimously to offer the Suite for rent via Meridian Surveyors and to decline the offer of furniture.** The Clerk was asked to suggest that a private arrangement could be offered between the existing and a new tenant for the furniture, with any unwanted items to be removed by the existing tenant.

One member of the public left the meeting.

9. IT Policy to comply with Assertion 10

As requested by Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Clerk had further researched appropriate Policies and had circulated various Models. The Clerk recommended an IT Policy adopted by a neighbouring Parish and **Members agreed unanimously that the Clerk be delegated to amend the document to be appropriate for Council and circulate for formal adoption.**

10. Proposal to provide water butt at grounds staff building at recreation ground

Following the recent **Estates Committee meeting,** a formal proposal had been circulated. Following advice from the Clerk on the current water harvesting system and full discussion, **Members agreed that the current system will allow residents to use the harvested water during staff working hours via the office and arrangements could be made for weekend use.** This will be monitored.

11. Council Awareness

Members agreed a stand at the Community Sports event at the Recreation Ground on 10 May between 10am and 2.30pm. Cllrs C Moskal, A Ratcliffe for the morning session; Cllrs Cook, Morley, Neill and Wheeler for the afternoon sessions.

12. Use of Abbey Green for Boxing Day Meet

Members noted that the usual request has been received for use of the Abbey Green as a meeting place for the horses and hounds. It was noted that the Road Closure Order has been applied for and notification issued to Sussex Police. **Members agreed to await from comments prior to a full discussion on this matter.**

13. Scarecrow Festival

Although Members are fully supportive of this event, it was agreed not to participate this year.

14. Six monthly reports from Standing Committees

The reports from Estates, Planning & Transport and Town Development & External Relations Committees were noted, as attached. The Finance & General Purposes Committee report will be made to the next meeting.

15. Finance matters

a) The list of **income at £2,960.03 and expenditure of £80,952.09 for February 2026**; both net of account transfers, was noted as attached. The expenditure includes the penultimate contractual payment to Bellco Construction of £ 38,381.21.

16. Forthcoming events from Council Year document for May and June

10 May	**Battle Town Football Club Sports Event on the recreation ground**
15 May	**Vhelio Trophee**
19 May	**Annual Council Meeting**
23-25 May	**Medieval Fayre**
24 May	**Polish War Memorial Event**
1 – 7 June	**Volunteers Week**
13 June	**St Michael's Hospice Open Gardens**
16 June	**Sussex Day**

17. Correspondence and communications received post Agenda circulation

Members noted:

- A request from **Wellington Court** to coordinate a discussion with **Battle Bonfire Boyes**;
- An invitation from **Battle Twinning Association** to a lunch at Merriments Garden and lunch;
- An invitation to attend **Road Safety Team meeting at Brightling Village Hall** on 16 May at 2pm, in relation to safe pass of horses by motorists. *(Post meeting note: this was postponed)*

18. Reports from representatives of the Council and other reports

a) Reports from Councillors was noted, as attached. It was highlighted that reports should be made on those previously attended and include a report on pertinent information shared.

19. Future agenda items / matters to note

Parish Assembly 30 April at the Memorial Hall from 6pm

20. Date of next meeting: ANNUAL MEETING, 19 MAY 2026

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

For the consideration of sensitive information, Members agreed that public be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2) for the following item.

Cllr Field left the meeting.

21. Lease conditions for provision of Café

Notes from the Council's Solicitor had been circulated. Members discussed and agreed terms. It was noted that completion and installation of the café must be undertaken as a matter of urgency, preferably prior to the May school half-term.

22. Works to be carried out across Cemetery drive

A proposal to dig a small trench across the Cemetery drive, close to the entrance of the Cemetery gates had been circulated. Members discussed this request and agreed that works could be completed, subject to arrangements of suitable dates and receipt of a payment commensurate to a future reinstatement of the trench from the current owner of Sexton Cottage.

23. Battle Museum of Local History Lease

As agreed, a meeting was held with representatives of the Museum to discuss a fair review of rent to be included on the new Lease. Members agreed **£50 for Year 1, with a 5 yearly increase of £25. Additionally, a tenant only break clause at ten years and annual thereafter, subject to twelve months notice was agreed.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.03.

Cllr S Burton
Chairman