Battle Town Council

Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2026 at The Almonry, High Street Battle at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs Sue Burton (Chairman), Vikki Cook, Margaret Howell, Nicola McLaren, Pete Morley, Christian Moskal, Marie-Louise Neill, David Russell and Dale Wheeler.
In Attendance: Cllr Kathryn Field, Carol Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

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1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Andrew Barton.

2. **Disclosure of Interest:** None.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2026 were agreed, subject to amendment at item 2 "Cllr Wheeler declared an interest in item 11f as a member of the First Foodie Sunday organising committee, and duly signed by Cllr S Burton.**

4. **Town Clerk's Report**

- **Grant funds** had been issued as agreed.
- No further quotes for **landscaping works around the Pavilion** had been received and it was now considered that works should be carried out in the spring. This will be discussed at the next Estates Committee meeting.

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

County

Cllr Field reported on the Government's decision to **pause Local Government Reorganisation(LGR)**. She confirmed that County elections will be held in May 2027 and that a request for refund from Government of money spent on this process has been discussed.

District

Cllr Field reported that **Almonry Field** has been removed from the draft **Rother Local Plan**, following the many comments from the Town Council and residents reflecting the access and historical significance of the site.

Cllr Cook advised that a quiet August was followed by a robust meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**. An update on the progress with updating the **De La Warr Pavilion**, justifying the amount of grant money received from both Rother, also reflecting on the completion of the Sidley Hub building. Presentation of the **Local Plan for Regulation 19** approval was debated at length. It was noted that only 58% of Government requirements for new dwellings has been identified. Following the announcement of the postponement of LGR, there are some budget questions outstanding. Cllr Cook reported that Cabinet had agreed to **defer any further devolvement of assets** for one month, although three Councillors had voted against this.

Cllr McLaren reported on the new **National Scheme of Delegation on planning matters** that will remove the 'call-in' of planning applications by District Councillors from 31 October 2026. Subject to strict criteria, local Councils and members of the public may request the Head of Planning to refer an

application to Committee. It was highlighted that Neighbourhood Plans are important to this process as a primary influence on local matters.
Members noted that the Planning & Transport Committee will discuss this matter in full.
Cllr Field left the meeting at this point.

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 **1 September 2026.** She invited Members to join the **Santa Tours between 7 and 10 December and the Town Tidy on 24 October**. Please let the Deputy Clerk know if you wish to volunteer for either of these events. Cllr Cook reported that members from the East Sussex Area Group of Gscale Society have volunteered to carry out repairs and cleaning of the Town Model.

b) Cllr Wheeler presented the draft Minutes of the **Planning & Transport Committee** meeting held on **8 September 2026.** He reported on the **Appeal against Enforcement Action at Park Lane** following clearance and construction of car park without permission. Comments to support the enforcement action had been considered via email and Council agreed these should be submitted to the Inspector.

7. Update from Task & Finish Groups and agree any action

a) Civic Actions The next meeting is scheduled for 13 October 2026. Cllr Neill reported on the progress of the provision of a heraldic flag, which will be formally discussed at the next meeting of the T&F Group.

b) Devolution of Assets. Cllr Cook reported on an online presentation from a potential contractor, arranged by Cllr Russell, to discuss options for the **Mount Street car park toilets**. A report on the discussion had been circulated to Members. A formal design and report should be available shortly. The Clerk highlighted that a firm design, drains survey and plans will be required to obtain Planning Permission, prior to any tender invitation. It was agreed that the T&F Group will consider options and designs for the property. It was noted that the toilets were build in 1972 by the local Council, not the District Council. The Clerk reported that the Expression of Interest had been submitted for the Mount Street car park toilets.

In relation to the **Coronation Gardens and Darvel Down play areas**, the Heads of Terms had now been received from RDC and it is suggested that their solicitor may be able to act for both parties to keep costs down. The HoT will be passed to the T&FG with an invitation to make recommendations to Estates and F&GP for budget setting in relation to equipment and staff. No communication has yet been received in relation to the pausing of devolvement of assets. It was agreed that local schools would be consulted to determine community requirements for these play areas.

8. Update on Christmas Lighting Infrastructure works and agree any action

The Clerk reported that most properties in the High Street and Mount Street have been written to or emailed, following a previous letter hand-delivered in June to all High Street properties. She highlighted that Land Registry searches are being sought for unoccupied premises, or those that have not responded. It was noted that three property owners had refused permission for the replacement of electrical equipment or cabling. Legal advice from Council's insurer had confirmed that owners must give authority for any equipment to be replaced, a no-response is not sufficient. Agreement has been sought from Rother District Council to treat the works as maintenance so that no formal permissions are required. No response has been received to date. We are seeking confirmation that only a licence for a MEWP (Mobile Elevating Work Platform) is required for these works, which will be carried out during off-peak hours to minimise disruption to residents, visitors and drivers. The contractor has

confirmed that the 15% uplift for out of hours works applies to the labour costs only, not materials and equipment hire.

9. Finance matters

a) The list of **income at £8,933.92 and expenditure of £37,820.55 for July 2026**; excluding account transfers, was noted as attached. The Clerk highlighted that expenditure included a further payment to Battle Memorial Hall of £8,329.48 and £2,340 for the handrails in the Almonry garden.

b) The Clerk reported that the **conclusion of Audit 2025/26** had been received satisfactorily, subject to two minor exceptions: a typo on the remaining loan figure £739,153 (input as £736,153); and the asset value at Section 2, box 9 was not restated for consistency. There was an additional note that Council had not recorded in the Minutes that the independence of the appointed internal auditor had been considered.

c) Members noted advice from National Association of Local Council and **agreed the recommendation for an all-staff annual pay increase of 3.3% from 1 April 2026.** The Clerk highlighted that 5% had been budgeted.

10. August Full Council

Following a full discussion, **Members agreed to remove the August Full Council meeting from next year.**

11. Councillor training

Members were invited to submit recommendations for training topics to the Clerk for the current year and for the new Council term. It was suggested that for the initial three month period from May 2027, a training session should be offered at 6pm prior to Full Council meetings. All Members are encouraged to explore the Council's website to increase awareness.

12. Forthcoming events from Council Year

27 September	Battle Big Green Day
10 & 11 October	Battle of Hastings reenactment
12-25 October	Fight Fly tipping fortnight
24 October	Autumn litter pick – all welcome to volunteer
7 November	Battle Bonfire
8 November	Remembrance Sunday
11 November	Remembrance Day
21-29 November	National Tree Week
28 November	Battle Christmas Lights Switch On, Festival in Market Square
21 November-1 December	St Marys Christmas Tree Festival

13. Correspondence and communications received post Agenda circulation

- The Minutes from the previous **RDC/BTC meeting** held on 28 July 2026 had been circulated to Members. It was noted that the next meeting is on Tuesday 22 September and matters for discussion were invited.
- A response had finally been received from **Southern Housing** confirming that the terms of the **Netherfield Hill allotment** site does not give rights of access and that they do not wish to change this arrangement. The matter will be discussed at the next Estates Committee meeting.

14. Reports from representatives of the Council, other reports and correspondence

a) Reports from Councillors as attached.

b) The Minutes of the Sussex Branch **Society of Local Council Clerks** meeting held on 7 July 2026 had been circulated to Members.

c) Notes of thanks from **grant recipients** were reported.

d) **A PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order) to protect areas against wildfires** had been made by RDC. This need had been reviewed by RDC Cabinet on 14 September 2026 and rescinded.

e) **An East Sussex County Council invitation to propose volunteers for an event** had been circulated and recommendations for invitees are to be submitted to Cllr Vikki Cook.

f) Notification that **Rother Community Grants Scheme** is now open for applications.

g) A letter from Government on **Local Government Reorganisation** had been circulated, as attached.

15. Future agenda items / matters to note

16. Date of next meeting: 20 October 2026

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.43

Cllr S Burton
Chairman