



Battle Town Council

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Minutes of the additional COUNCIL MEETING held on TUESDAY, 23rd MARCH 2021 via Zoom at 6.30pm

Present: Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), A Brown, V Cook, C Davies, J Gyngell, C Hartley, M Howell, M Kiloh, A Russell, H Sharman, D Wheeler and C Would.

In Attendance: Five members of the public, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME 7.30pm to 7.45pm

A member of the public noted that professional fees had been increased and grant fund applications of £50,000 for the Almonry project had raised only £7,000. In his view the delays for planning permission had been due to insufficient detail submitted. Confirmation of costs for the compliance with the conditions for this planning permission was requested. The resident recommended that Council should reconsider agreement of the loan application as he felt it was not compliant with the criteria. The Clerk was asked to justify that this Council does not intend to further increase the precept to fund the loan as the current cost is £5400 more than previously budgeted. A written response will be provided to the local resident.

1. **Apologies for absence** – None.
2. **Disclosure of interest** – None.
3. **Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th March 2021** were agreed and duly electronically signed by Cllr Favell.
4. **To formally agree to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £600,000 over the borrowing term of 50 years for the repair and refurbishment of The Almonry and installation of items to make the building fully accessible. The annual repayments will come to around £26,400. It is not intended to further increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.**
It was reported that an email from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has been received regarding the Council's PWLB application. It explained that the minutes of the Council meeting at which it was agreed to apply for the loan needed to contain specific wording. Unfortunately, this was not picked up when the application was checked by Sussex & Surrey Association of Local Councils(SSALC) before the application was forwarded to the Secretary of State.

For the clarity it was highlighted that the resolution on the agenda reaffirms agreements made previously by Council regarding The Almonry.

Cllr Russell highlighted that any shortcoming in the application, approved and submitted by SSALC, would be for the MHCLG to identify. The necessity for constant and clear updating of the website was emphasised. It was noted that there is no guarantee that future Councils will not raise the precept for other purposes.

Members agreed unanimously to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £600,000 over the borrowing

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term of 50 years for the repair and refurbishment of The Almonry and installation of items to make the building fully accessible. The annual repayments will come to around £26,400. It is not intended to further increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

5. Future agenda items / matters to note

- To consider proposal that the Annual Report is approved by Full Council prior to publication

The Clerk reported that:

- confirmation had been received from Cllr Field that East Sussex County Council has allocated £30k into the capital programme for a **safe crossing scheme on Battle Hill**. It is close to final design and is approaching the safety audit stage. It will be light controlled with a push button for pedestrians. It was highlighted that Tesco and ESSO had been cooperative with ESCC to progress the project;
- Cllr Dixon had forwarded a report stating that the MHCLG are being pressed to bring forward primary or secondary legislation to give councils powers to **hold remote and hybrid meetings beyond 7th May 2021**. The proceedings have been expedited but may not pass judgement until close to the 7th May 2021 deadline. RDC will continue to give this matter its full attention but acknowledge that many councils are working on contingency plans relating to their meeting arrangements from 8th May onwards.

6. Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 20th April 2021

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.55pm

CLLR G FAVELL
CHAIRMAN

Minutes approved and signed electronically 20th April 2021 – *G Favell*