



Battle Town Council

VC



MINUTES of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY, 6th OCTOBER 2020 via Zoom at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs V Cook (Chairman), C Davies, G Favell, C Hartley, M Kiloh, H Sharman and C Would

In attendance: Two members of the public, Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded those present that the meeting will be recorded to aid minute taking. She invited Members to switch off mobile phones.

Public Question Time

Nothing raised.

1. Apologies for absence – None.

Members noted that Cllr Samms had resigned due to work commitments. The Clerk was asked to pass on the Committee's thanks for her contribution.

2. **Disclosure of interest** – Cllrs Favell and Cook declared an interest in item 11a. Cllr Cook also declared an interest in item 13.

3. **Minutes of previous Meeting held on 6th August 2020** were approved by members and duly electronically signed by Cllr Cook.

4. Report from Town Clerk

- The service provided by the Local Planning Authority in relation to the **Cycle Skills Area** has been less than satisfactory. Despite early advice from a Rother District Council Officer that Planning permission was required, it was recently reported that a Certificate of Lawful Development is appropriate. This had now been received and the preferred Contractor will commence work shortly.
- Work to the **ceremonies room** is contracted for November.
- A request for **recreation ground 'warning' signage** at North Trade Road was made and acknowledged but no further advice has been received. This was highlighted at the recent Strengthening Local Relationships meeting and a request for an update has been made.
- Two of the three **allotment skips** were not delivered on time but were successfully filled by tenants. We will not be using the supplier in future.
- A site meeting had been held with the PCSO responsible for rural crime and tenant farmer to discuss the constant **cutting of fencing at Mansers Shaw** which results in the escape of cattle. The PCSO aims to raise funds to replace the fence and provide a police sign to warn against this criminal damage. If this is not successful, she will investigate the installation of CCTV to allow prosecution of offenders.

5. Correspondence & Communications

- Due to restrictions of **football pitch** availability due to Covid-19, Battle Town Football Club had requested further use of the adult pitch at the recreation ground. Subject to the careful monitoring of the pitch condition this was agreed for a temporary period.
- A request for an adjustment to the time schedule for **part-night lighting** had been received. Members noted that the change to Greenwich Mean Time will result in lights coming on earlier in

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the morning. It was highlighted that the part-night lighting had been subject to public consultation and agreed to reduce light pollution and energy costs.

- An **allotment** tenant had advised that a shed break-in had occurred and there had been inappropriate use of the allotments during the summer. It was hoped that this was a reaction to the Covid-19 restrictions and would not occur in future. This will be monitored.
- A request that a **laurel at the cemetery**, adjacent to a property in Norman Close, be included within tree works was agreed.

6. Environmental matters

- The **RDC Environmental Strategy Manager** did not join the meeting.
- Following a complaint regarding the piles of rotting grass at the edge of the recreation ground, enquiries had been made with other authorities find more environmentally friendly ways of composting. This had proved unsuccessful. Information on **mobile composting equipment** had been circulated to Members. It was noted that whilst this would reduce green waste volume by an average of four, the smallest version at 9m³ currently costs approximately £31k and would require a small tractor for movement at an additional £10k. It was agreed that this would be a long-term project requiring research to produce a business case.
- The groundstaff and Chairman of Council had attended a demonstration of a **heat generation weed control system**. Staff indicated that the system would work well on new small weeds but not on established growth and it would therefore be unable to cope with an allotment left in a poor state of cultivation. It was also highlighted that a small area of grass had to be manually extinguished as the grass had caught fire. The current cost of the mobility pack is £1,995 plus gas canister. Staff had recommended the continued use of the current weed killing regime which is more cost effective and does not leave any residual chemical in the soil. This was agreed

7. Terms of Reference

The Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council the Terms of Reference as attached.

8. Membership of Fit for Battle and Battle Health Pathway Groups

It was agreed that Members for both groups should remain for the remainder of the projects:

- Fit for Battle: Cllrs Glenna Favell and Jill Gyngell. The revised Terms of Reference to acknowledge the outstanding Pavilion scheme will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Battle Health Pathway: Cllrs Glenna Favell and Caroline Would. It was noted that Cllr Cook and Cllr Wheeler sits on the group as a non-Councillor members of Battle Health Pathway

9. Allotments

- a) The **report from the Asst to Town Clerk** had been circulated, as attached. As the allotment had been vacant for some time, Members agreed that plot 11a at Watch Oak be split from 358sqm into 2 to encourage a new tenancy. It was noted that Optivo had now mown the land adjacent to Netherfield Hill allotment site.
- b) The **minutes from Senlac Allotment Association meeting of 16th September 2020** had been circulated and noted. The allotment rent renewal letter will highlight the SAA AGM. A section of fencing at Watch Oak had been repaired to attempt to deter deer. The Council's maintenance plan included maintenance to hedges over the winter period. It was noted that the swing at Watch Oak had now been removed. The Clerk reported that it is not possible to facilitate a Zoom meeting at the time requested.

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- c) Members agreed that a tree surgeon be asked to advise on appropriate **works to an Oak tree at Virgins Croft entrance**. It was noted that the adjacent landowner had agreed to share the cost. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Members were asked to visit the site if they could
- d) It was noted that **allotment rents for 2021-22** will remain the same as the current year.
- e) The **detailed action plan for allotments** was noted as attached.

10. Cemetery

- a) The **annual memorial inspection** had been completed and notification published. In accordance with our Regulations, a letter had been sent to both owners of plots in the children's area to request removal of excess items. Request for a statement from the Chairman of Council had subsequently been received for an article in the local newspaper. This had been provided. Members reiterated that the Cemetery Regulations must be adhered to.
- b) A quotation for raking out and tuck pointing the **south west wall of the Chapel/ceremonies room** in hydraulic lime at a cost of £9,800 had been received. Members agreed that works already agreed should be monitored for success and a budget for this potential work accumulated over a period of time to ensure the protection of this asset.
- c) Members noted that there is a further **water leak on the cemetery path**. It was noted that the water is now turned off and that a more thorough investigation is required to prevent any further water leaks. The Clerk reported that obtaining firm quotes for this work is proving challenging. This is continuing.
- d) Members agreed that a relative of a Battle resident whose ashes have been scattered could provide **crocus bulbs for Council to plant in the scattering area**.
- e) The **detailed action plan for the Cemetery** was noted, as attached.

11. Recreation Grounds

Cllrs Cook and Favell repeated their interest in the following item.

- a) A short report had been circulated from Mrs Burton, the Co-ordinator of the **Battle Health Pathway Group**. Mrs Burton reassured the Committee that the surface will 'weather' to a golden colour over time. The Clerk reported a further request to use the tennis courts for cycle training sessions. Members reiterated its decision not to allow any wheeled activities on either the multi-use-games-area or tennis courts.
The Chairman expressed the Council's sincere thanks for all Mrs Burton's, and her group members', hard work in achieving this wonderful facility for Battle.
- b) Photographs of the existing and agreed wording for new **notice boards** had been circulated to Members. It was agreed that wording should be combined to prevent a proliferation of signs. The Clerk was asked to email the proposed design for recycled plastic notice boards for comment and agreement.
- c) A slightly revised **quote for a flood lighting scheme on the MUGA**: 8m poles rather than 10m, as requested by Rother District Council had been received. Further quotes are being sought and will be brought to the next meeting.
- d) The **detailed action plan for the Recreation Grounds** was noted, as attached.
 - It was noted that the **zip wire** is outstanding. It was agreed that further quotes and identification of a suitable location are required. It was agreed that this should be considered when the Battle Health Pathway(BHP) and Cycle Skills Area(CSA) have been completed.
 - **Bench locations** for petanque court and close to Asten Fields entrance had been identified. It was agreed to await the completion of the BHP and CSA to agree further sites.
 - The tender timetable for the **Pavilion** was agreed by Members, as attached.

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- The **outdoor gym equipment** is currently out for consultation and the results will be brought to the next meeting.
- Members agreed to meet on site to discuss the siting of play equipment and **swings for young children**. The Clerk to arrange.
- A bucket style swing for **physically disabled children** to be included for 2021-2.
- It was noted that the **annual play inspection** report will be carried out in November and the timescale will need to be amended to reflect this.
- Members felt that the provision at **Telham play area** will be considered following the annual inspection.

12. Street Furniture & Lighting

- a) The **detailed action plan for Street Lighting and Furniture** was noted, as attached.
- There had been no response from East Sussex County Council in relation to provision of a **seat in Marley Lane**, opposite Norman Close. This will be pursued. No other locations had been identified.
 - Cllr Cook reported that all **signage and fingerposts** appeared in good condition, although Glengorse, Abbots Close and Market Square appeared not to be regulation style. It was noted that the 'Battle Golf Club' had been blanked out.
 - It was noted that the existing **street lighting contractor** would be notified that renewal quotes for contracts will be sought.
 - A request for the **part-night light** times to be altered was discussed. It was highlighted that to change the times is a costly and difficult process. Members noted that the scheme had been instigated for environmental and economy purposes.

13. Remainder of BTC's Estate

- a) Notification of **extensive footpath repairs in St Mary's Churchyard** had been received. This will be will need to be considered within budget setting, although quotes have not yet been received. The grounds staff to clear drains. It was agreed that the Church should be asked to contribute towards the cost of repair.
- b) Report of a further **water leak on footpath beside cricket pitch** had been received. We are endeavouring to obtain quotes for the repair but this proving challenging. One quote of £520per day has been received but with no clear indication of what is the problem or how long it may take to repair. Further quotes are being sought.
- c) The **detailed action plan for the Remainder of BTC's Estate** was noted, as attached.
- The **Risk Assessment** was reviewed and agreed as attached.
 - The **Management Programme** was reviews and agreed as attached.
 - Communication with English Heritage in relation to the **Abbey Green surface** is outstanding. It was noted that a budget of £500 had been agreed for this year.
 - The grounds staff had suggested that a **John Deer ride on mower** would enable grass cutting of large areas to be undertaken in-house. Costs are being researched.
 - There has been no response from East Sussex County Council in relation to the **skate ramp**. This will be pursued again.

14. Financial Matters

- a) The **budget report at 31 August 2020** was noted as attached. The Responsible Finance Officer highlighted significant variances:

200	1200-1215	All cemetery fees are below anticipated
200	4205	Cemetery drainage system £3860 transferred from 345 EMR PWLB

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210	4195	Electricity is higher than previous year and will be monitored
210	4800	Projects – this is the Battle Health Pathway, majority to be recovered from Grant funders
240	1900	Misc income – insurance claim for tools stolen
240	4320	Abbey Green – to be recovered from Battel Bonfire Boyes for damage
240	4380	New machinery – offset by 1900 above: insurance claim
240	4390	Tree work – tree survey transferred from 330 EMR Tree work

b) Budget recommendation for 2021/22

Members agreed that this important item should be discussed at a single item additional meeting. **NB** date changed post meeting to 10th November 2020 at 6pm.

15. Matters for information / future agenda items

- To consider lighting scheme for the Ceremonies room
- To agree designs for gym equipment

16. Date of next meeting: Additional meeting - Budget 2021-2
1st December 2020

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

CLLR V COOK
CHAIRMAN

Minutes approved and signed electronically 10th November 2020 – *V Cook*