



Battle Town Council

MINUTES of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY, 26th JANUARY 2021 via Zoom at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs G Favell (Chairman), V Cook, J Gyngell, M Kiloh and H Sharman.

In Attendance: Cllr A Brown, C Harris (Town Clerk)

Public Question Time –None.

1. Apologies for absence – None.

2. Disclosure of interest – None.

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2020 were agreed and duly electronically signed by Cllr Favell.

4. Clerk's report – Nothing that is not an agenda item.

5. Correspondence and communications received post agenda publication – None.

6. Almonry Development Working Group

Members were delighted to note that the application for £25,000 to Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund had been successful. This is for the essential repairs to windows etc and must be completed prior to the remainder of the project. It was agreed to consult with the Architect and Quantity Surveyor to ensure this can proceed as soon as possible.

7. Almonry Management Plan

It was highlighted that this document is correctly titled Almonry Maintenance and Management Programme. The document had been amended to reflect the tenancies from February due to two tenants vacating the offices as a result of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was highlighted that an annual maintenance budget of £10,000 should be included and placed into Ear Marked Reserves to ensure a regular repair programme is ongoing. The document was agreed as attached.

8. Almonry Garden

- As previously reported, **Beautiful Battle** has not been working in the garden through January and will reconsider their position in light of Government restrictions as they are changed.
- **South & South East in Bloom 2021** Members agreed that, in light of Beautiful Battle not working in the garden currently, combined with the anticipated works to the Almonry in early spring, it is impossible to enter the competition this year.

9. Photocopier equipment contract

Comparison quotes for the contract renewal had been circulated. Following further negotiation, the current provider had agreed to move equipment to temporary accommodation free of charge, to hold copy prices for the duration of the contract and offered a competitive rate. They had also provided a good service to date. **Members agreed to a three year contract with Insight Systems at £160 per quarter plus photocopies at £0.003 mono and £0.03 colour.**

Battle Town Council

10. Grant applications in accordance with Council Policy

Battle Preschool Playgroup had made an application for a grant of £1,000 towards the cost of replacing their perimeter fence with secure metal fencing used for educational settings, which will cost over £12,000. An application had also been made to Rother District Council for a Community Grant for 50% of the cost, which needs to be match funded. Cllr Brown requested that an increase to the grant offer or the use of CIL funds to assist with this project be considered. It was highlighted that a policy for the use of CIL funds must be initiated to ensure proper use. The Clerk reported that £2,250 remains in the Grant budget. **Members agreed that the Battle Preschool Playgroup be invited to resubmit its application to £2,250 for recommendation to Full Council.**

Cllr Brown left the meeting.

11. Reserves Policy

This was agreed, as attached.

12. Post Covid-19 Recovery Grant Terms and Conditions

Members were reminded of previous discussions and amendments to this document. It was noted that there was some confusion in relation to more than one application being permitted. The unexpected period of the current Pandemic was emphasised. Following discussion it was agreed that if a full report, as requested at condition 12, had been satisfied and a minimum period of six months had transpired, further applications would be considered. The document was agreed as attached. The Asst to Town Clerk to record the date of successful grant and receipt of reports. New applications are to be encouraged.

13. Allocation of policies from 2019/2020 review schedule

These were allocated for review at the next meeting:

- **Adverse Weather Policy – Cllr Sharman**
- Almonry Meeting Room Hire – Cllr Kiloh
- Bee Keeping Policy – Cllr Favell
- Confidential Reporting Policy – Cllr Gyngell
- Document Retention Scheme – Cllr Cook
- **Grant Awarding Policy – Cllr Sharman**
- Internet Usage and Email Policy – Cllr Kiloh
- Members' Allowance Policy – Cllr Favell
- **Health & Safety Policy Statement- Cllr Gyngell**

The Clerk was asked to forward the Word version and Sussex Association of Local Council's login details for Model policies, as appropriate.

14. PA system

Members were reminded that a grant to the ELF scheme had been approved for this purchase but, when it was not taken advantage of, Council agreed to purchase the equipment for its own use, for example at Remembrance ceremonies, Council functions in the garden. **Members agreed that a re-chargeable battery operated PA system with a minimum of two microphones should be purchased.**

15. Tax free sum for home working November 2020

Members agreed the tax free sum of £6 per week to Officers to assist with electricity and heating expenditure for the four week lockdown in November.

Battle Town Council

16. Action Plans

Members noted that BACS is currently being successfully used for both payments and receipts and agreed that the research for an on-line payment system for residents is no longer applicable. The Actions Plans were noted, as attached.

17. Financial matters

- **The budget report for F&GP to 31st December 2020** was noted, as attached.
- Members discussed a **request for donation from Give Us Time. It was agreed to contribute £100 from the Chairman's allowance.**
- No applications for **Post Covid-19 Recovery Grant** had been received.

18. Matters for information and future agenda items

19. Date of next meeting: 23rd March 2021

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.37pm.

CLLR G FAVELL
CHAIRMAN

Minutes approved and signed electronically 16th February 2021 - *G Favell*