



Battle Town Council

**Minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held on
TUESDAY, 16th FEBRUARY 2021 via Zoom at 7.30pm**

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

In Attendance: County/District Cllr Field, District Cllr Dixon, one member of the public, C Harris (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME 7.30pm to 7.45pm

None.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr A Brown.

2. Disclosure of interest – None.

3. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19th January 2021 were agreed and duly electronically signed by Cllr Favell.

4. Report from the Clerk

- Confirmation that to replace the **wall at Tills Courtyard/George Meadow** with a fence would require Conservation Area Consent and Planning Permission had now been received. Further communication with the owner of 19 High Street is awaited.
- An online consultation has been published to establish residents' views on the **rural verge trial**, as requested by East Sussex County Council.

5. County Councillor and District Councillors

County

Cllr Field(KF) reported that the **council tax budget** had been set at 1.99% plus 1.5% for the adult social care levy with a further 1.5% increase next year.

District

Cllr Dixon reported that:

- the **council tax** has been set to rise at £4.61 for Band D properties which is a 2.5% increase. It had been impossible not to apply an increase in the current climate;
- ~~special~~ expenditure of £16m will be recommended to Council for the ~~formation of the~~ **2021/22 budget and special expenses of £628,100 for Bexhill Town Council;**
- the development of a **local lottery** that will raise funds for the Community Grant scheme has been agreed. Good causes that raise funds will receive a share of the income;
- a **hybrid meeting system** is to be installed at the Town Hall. If Government do not extend permission for virtual meetings, this will still be used by Officers;
- plans to **redevelop the Town Hall** to include office space and residential units while retaining the Chamber and historic area is being pursued. An anticipated cost of £460,000 was recommended to progress detailed designs for the future of the Town Hall. It is suggested that the scheme will be cost neutral;
- booked **tennis courts** to be charged;

Battle Town Council

- the **CIL Working Group** has suggested 3 pots of fund: 35% RDC; available for bids 60%; and climate change 5%.
- 6. Correspondence and communications received post agenda publication**
- A **Public Realm Campaign from Sussex Heritage Trust**, as attached, had been circulated to Members.
 - Several emails and telephone calls during the recent snow to report **icy pavements** throughout the town. It was noted that ESCC have published a policy not to grit pathways.
- 7. Draft minutes and consider any recommendations from Committee meetings:**
- a) Minutes of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** meeting on 26th January 2021 were presented by Cllr Favell and noted. An additional meeting had been held earlier this evening and Cllr Favell reported the agreement to set up a **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group**, reporting to the Committee with the aim to produce a CIL Policy. The draft Terms of Reference were also agreed as attached. The Membership will comprise:
- Cllr Kiloh, who is Ward member for Telham, will represent F&GP,
 - Cllr Gygell will represent P&T,
 - Cllr Sharman, who is Ward member for Netherfield, will represent ER&TD
 - Cllr Cook, who is also a Rother District Councillor, will represent Environment
 - Cllr Howell, who is Chairman of the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, will represent that Group.
 - Cllr Dixon, as Rother District Councillor.
- It was agreed that Cllr Favell act as convenor and she confirmed that work will commence in the near future.
- b) Minutes of the **Environment Committee** meeting on 2nd February 2021 were presented by Cllr Cook and noted. She highlighted: that quotes are being obtained for the repairs to pathways at St Mary's Churchyard; that an online tennis court booking system has been agreed; a Cemetery entry will not be made to the South & South East in Bloom competition this year; the order of gym equipment is progressing.
- c) Minutes of the **Planning & Transport Committee** meeting on 9th February 2021 were presented by Cllr Gygell and noted.

8. Almonry Development Working Group and consider any recommendations

The Clerk confirmed that applications for the **option to tax the Almonry** and the **Public Works Loan Board** had been submitted, as agreed.

Cllr Kiloh reported that the aim is for work to start on April 1st. Revised drawings have now been received and provided to Vulcan Ellis for the changes to the previous scheme as approved by Council, as attached:

- removal of south wing extension;
- provision of accessible toilet within existing kitchen store area;
- adaption to level of ground floor wc;
- reconfiguration to the outside wc, which will make it into a single unisex cubicle accessible from the corridor to the first courtyard;

Battle Town Council

- the improvements to the gradient of the driveway from the main gate. The gradient will be 1 in 12, which, with the addition of a handrail, is the closest to a preferred gradient of 1 in 15 that can be achieved within the current area;
- provision of external lift into a relevelled porch to provide entrance for all to the building.

Confirmation of grant from Rother District Council Community Grant Fund and conditions for the Historic England Covid19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Fund are awaited. Once funding is secured, a contract will be signed with Vulcan Ellis.

9. Pavilion project

Members were reminded that Step Up Sports Consultancy had been appointed to pursue grant funding for the Pavilion project. As many funders require current opinions on the plans, a further more formal consultation is required. A proposal from the Consultant had been circulated to Members. **Members agreed unanimously to assign the formal consultation on the Pavilion to Step Up Sports Consultancy at a cost of £315. from the Project budget.**

10. Annual Meeting and Parish Assembly

It was noted that there are currently no plans to extend the law to allow Councils to hold virtual meetings beyond 7 May 2021 and this is of concern in relation to availability of suitable venues and individuals' concerns about face-to-face meetings. **Members agreed to bring forward the Annual Meeting to Tuesday 27th April 2021 to allow for it to be held via Zoom.**

As it would be extremely difficult, and could preclude some residents, to hold a virtual meeting for the Parish Assembly, **it was agreed to postpone the meeting until later in the year** when face to face meetings should be possible.

11. Sussex Day

Members agreed that, in addition to the flying of the Sussex flag on Sussex Day (16th June), a copy of the Sussex Charter on noticeboards and the website on Sussex Day.

12. [Rother District Council's Corporate Plan consultation](#)

The Clerk was asked to circulate a doodle to agree a date and time to respond to this consultation prior to 17th March.

13. Finance matters

- a) The **list of income of £45,028.63 and payments of £73,866.54;** excluding account transfers, for December 2020 were noted, as attached.
- b) **Covid-19 Recovery Grant applications.** None.
 - An application for £1,000 from Battle Preschool Playgroup was received for consideration by F&GP at its meeting in January. Members felt that the replacement of the perimeter fencing is of significant importance and recommended a revised application be submitted for £2,250; the remaining grant budget for 2020/21. This had now been received and circulated. Cllr Brown had circulated an email proposing that the remainder of the funds is offered from CIL funds. This was discussed. **Members agreed unanimously that £2,250, the remainder of the grant budget for 2020/21, be granted to Battle Preschool Playgroup for the perimeter fencing.**

Battle Town Council

14. Reports from representatives of the Council and other reports

- Cllr Cook - **Biodiversity Net Gain; Design Code; Resilience Plan; RVA; Post-Covid Recovery Group; RDC Community Grants** to speak in favour of the application for disabled access at the Almonry; **Community Led Housing**; host at the **vaccination centre in Etchingham**.
- Cllr Gyngell - **CIL** discussion; RDC early discussion on **electric vehicle charging**; proposed **road names** for new developments;
- Cllr Howell - **BCPNPSG** meetings; communication with **Cllr Vine-Hall** coordinator for the Forum for Neighbourhood Plan groups asking; meetings about **CIL funds**.
- Cllr Russell - **BCPNPSG** meetings.
- Cllr Sharman - **Post Covid Recovery Group**; meeting to discuss proposed **road names**.
- Cllr Wheeler - **BCPNPSG** meetings; proposed road names discussion; **Biodiversity Net Gain; Community Led Housing**.
- Cllr Favell - Activities as Chairman: informal meeting to discuss **CIL**; an initial meeting to hear about plans for **electric vehicle charging** in RDC Car Parks and Battle; informal meeting to discuss future **road names for Battle Civil Parish**; **SSALC Chairs networking** meeting. Unfortunately, the discussion regarding the future of the local association had not started before she left the meeting to attend P&T. The Town Clerk had previously briefed Members regarding the breakaway of West Sussex from the association and the implications thereof; **Battle Post Covid Recovery Group**. A report will be submitted to ER&TD, but Cllr Dixon mentioned that the uptake of Government business grants, administered by RDC, had not been as high as expected.

Activities as Councillor: a **Biodiversity Net Gain** planning presentation through RDC. This referenced future legislation and planning regulations and will be reported to P&T; a **Chamber of Commerce** meeting. Members were reminded that Government grants were available for businesses through RDC. Matt Southam is building a new website.

15. Future agenda items / matters to note

Concern was raised at the **anti-social and criminal behaviour** close to the new **Cycle Skills Area** in the recreation ground and a further suggestion for CCTV was suggested. The Environment Committee will discuss options at its next meeting. In the meantime, the Clerk will report to the Police and request further patrols of the area.

16. Date of next meeting: 16th March 2021

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.23pm

CLLR G FAVELL
CHAIRMAN

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