Battle Town Council

MINUTES of the EVENTS SUB COMMITTEE MEETING held on TUESDAY 6 MARCH 2018 in the Almonry, High Street, Battle, at 6.00pm

PRESENT: **Committee Members: Cllrs A Russell (Chairman), G Favell, D Furness and M Howell. Invited Guests: Chris Bexhell (Parade Marshall), Esther Dunn and Mark Hirst (Battle Baptist Church), Dean John Edmondson (St Mary's Church), Don Fellows (Royal British Legion), Rev Margaret Heim (Battle Methodist Church), Natasha Williams (English Heritage)**
In attendance: Cllrs Fisher and Williams, approximately 17 members of the public, Carol Harris (Town Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence –** Cllr M Kiloh.

2. **Disclosure of interest –** None.

3. **The minutes of the Events Sub Committee meeting held on 20 February 2018** – this was deferred to the next meeting.

4. **Arrangements for 100 years Remembrance Sunday**

Cllr Russell reminded the meeting that invitees will be expected to participate in discussions. Others may be invited to comment at the discretion of the Chairman. He highlighted that the purpose of the meeting is to find common ground on which to progress plans for this event. The following items were all discussed with many opinions, disagreements and misunderstandings but the general agreements are highlighted in **bold writing.**

I. The purpose for the event proposed by the Council was stated: the coinciding of Armistice Day with Remembrance Sunday and the commemoration of 100 years since World War I ended. **There was a majority view that an additional/supplemental event take place on the Abbey Green or in the Memorial Hall if we had inclement weather.**

II. It is the Council's objective to encourage those who do not normally attend the Remembrance Sunday parade and/or church service to celebrate peace and pay homage to all service personnel who died and to take part in the 2 minute silence at 11am.
In addition, it was noted that the Council wished to recognise service personnel who have survived armed conflict and reflect on the difficulties faced by them and their families and civilians when armed conflict in world wars and later hostilities ended.

III. The event on the Abbey Green/Memorial Hall could involve music, readings, poetry and songs.
It was agreed that the procession would not pause at the Abbey Green and proceed directly to St Mary's Church.

IV. There had been concerns raised from some that the illustrative programme in an earlier draft discussion document was overtly and predominately pacifist in nature.

It was agreed that wreaths of white poppies would not be used in any of the Armistice ceremonials because it was seen to be divisive by some but not all present at the meeting. However this does not preclude the wearing of white poppies or red or none. It was noted that the Royal British Legion has no objection to white poppies or any group expressing their views. They see no conflict in wearing the red poppy alongside the white poppy. (see their website for details:
http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/280/~/poppy-faqs)
The uniformed youth groups in the parade will not participate in the Armistice event on Abbey Green although they will be involved in the church service at St Mary's as usual. Other young people from local schools and other groups who do not normally take part in Remembrance Sunday will be invited to participate.
Care will be taken to ensure that church groups such as the Mothers Union are not involved on the Abbey Green/Memorial Hall as they will be attending the church service.
A PA system for the Dean and others will be needed for the outside conditions. The church system will not be able to manage. An alternative PA system will have to be sourced.

V Consideration for how the two events could be integrated.
Those present felt that it is possible to have a combined assembly for all at the War Memorial in the churchyard at 11:00am on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. All present were grateful to the Dean for considering this amendment to the normal arrangements of wreath laying and readings of the roll of honour which is usually held after the church service and to English Heritage who agreed to open up the ramparts on the Abbey Wall to enable a larger number than usual to take part in the ceremony honouring the dead of the world wars. Representatives of the Royal British Legion agreed to liaise with the Bonfire Boyes so that the firing of a maroon may be made at 11:00am precisely. The Dean agreed to secure the services of a bugler.

At the end of the Act of Remembrance at the Memorial the parade and congregation will enter the church for the service. Those who wish will make their way to the Abbey Green/Memorial Hall for the Armistice event that follows.

VI The conduct of the church service and the wreath laying is for the Dean and the PCC to determine. Battle Town Council, formerly the Battle Royal British Legion, organise the Remembrance Day parade and march to and from St Mary's Church. The proposed additional/supplementary event is being organised by the Town Council. The nature and details of the event will be shared with town residents at the Parish Assembly and on the Council's website. Comments from the wider community together with opinions from this meeting will be heeded by the Town Council.
The respective jurisdictions of the Church and Town Council were noted.

VII The Town Clerk and Mayor had met with the Dean the previous week and discussed a possible compromise of having the parade take place in the normal way, leaving the church after the service and wreath laying and going to the Abbey Green. Another recommendation had been to hold the act of Remembrance and Respect as suggested by the Committee in the afternoon at the Memorial Hall.

An apparent consensus for a combined Act of Remembrance at 11.00am at the War Memorial, followed by the usual church service and, on this occasion, the event on the Abbey Green/Memorial Hall, if wet. There was agreement that if the Armistice event went ahead that the parade would set off later than usual but arrive in good time for the ceremonial at the War Memorial before 11.00am.

A revised draft programme will be produced and, subject to Council agreement, discussed at the Parish Assembly.

4. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Battle in Bloom Competition

6. Date of next meeting: 17 April 2018 at 6pm – Parish Assembly – Q/A Chairmen of Committees

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.08pm

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