The Development of

The Almonry

Strategic Plan

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. History

1.2 The Almonry since 197?

1.2.1 Purchase by Battle Town Council

1.2.2 Condition of the building

1.2.3 Upkeep

1.3 The vision for the Almonry

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2. Aim

To care for the Almonry building, while ensuring improved access and increased use by and for the people of Battle.

3. Objectives:

3.1 To improve the facilities at the Almonry to better serve the Town Council and the community:

3.1.1 Provide sufficient flexible meeting space for formal and informal Council meetings;

3.1.2 Provide a one-stop-shop for residents to access Town and District Council information, plus support from outside organisations when needed;

3.1.3 Provide flexible space for community organisations to meet and promote themselves;

3.1.4 Improve access to the above public space for all visitors and users.

3.2 To preserve and promote the heritage of the Almonry building in accordance with Battle Town Council's Heritage Charter:

3.2.1 Provide information for visitors to explain the history and development of the building within its historical context;

3.2.2 Highlight and describe interesting features of the building for visitors;

3.2.3 Enable residents to have wider access to their fine, historic asset.

3.3 To serve as a centre that will support and promote the heritage offering in the town for residents, businesses and tourists:

3.3.1 Create a Tourist Information Centre;

3.3.2 Promote the various walks and heritage trails around Battle;

3.3.3 Work with local groups and organisations to stage exhibitions about the town's heritage;

3.3.4 Provide space to extend the educational experience for students visiting Battle.

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4 The Facility

4.1 Description

4.2 Condition

4.3 Current Use

- 4.3.1 Battle Town Council offfices
- 4.3.2 Public areas
- 4.3.3 Battle Museum of Local History
- 4.3.4 Rented offices

4.4 Future use

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5 Council Need

5.1 Population served by Battle Town Council

5.1.1 Rother District Council, with a population of approximately 92,908, has a significantly older age profile compared to England. The District Council has significantly lower percentages of its population who are non-White British and who have English as a second language. In Rother the percentage of adults whose current marital status is separated or divorced is significantly higher compared to England however lone parent households are significantly lower. The percentage of the population who provide 50 or more hours per week unpaid care is significantly higher compared to the national average.

5.1.2 Indicators relating to life expectancy in Rother, are either similar to the national average or significantly better, and mortality from causes considered preventable is significantly lower. Rother has a significantly higher percentage of its population reporting bad or very bad general health and reporting a limiting long-term illness or disability compared to England.

5.1.3 In the 2011 Census, the population in Battle numbered 6673, with a slightly higher percentage of females to males. The working age population was only slightly higher than the 'dependent' population, with relatively low numbers of young adults (15-44) but much higher numbers of older age groups. Battle had a relatively high proportion of 0-14 year olds, not just in comparison to Rother district but also to the wider county, region and nation. The breakdown of households by type indicated a relatively high proportion of married couple households compared to England and Wales, combined with a relatively low proportion of both cohabitating couple households, and lone parent households. There were high numbers of one parent households, probably reflecting the relatively elderly population, living alone following loss of a spouse.

5.2 Town Council Services

5.2.1 Services provided

5.2.2 Expansion of services 1987 to present day

5.2.3 Present day forward

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6 Community Need

6.1 Community groups and organisations

6.2 Social support services

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7 Tourism

7.1

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8 Management

8.1 Governance: Battle is a town and civil parish in the local government district of Rother in East Sussex. Battle Town Council (BTC), consists of 13 elected Councillors, who meet on the third Tuesday of each month. The next level of government is provided by Rother District Council and Battle falls within two wards – North Battle, Netherfield & Whatlington Ward and South Battle & Telham Ward. East Sussex County Council provides the third tier of government. Battle falls within the Battle and Crowhurst Ward.

BTC governs through its Standing Orders and Policies and employs a Town Clerk, who is responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a local authority are carried out. The Town Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer, and is responsible for all financial records of the Council and the administration of its Finance.

BTC is the freeholder of the Almonry site and is responsible for the ongoing repair and maintenance of the building.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee is responsible for the Almonry and reviews its Committee Action Plan, which includes actions, aims and objectives in relation to the Almonry, at its six meetings through each year.

8.2 Maintenance: The building maintenance is undertaken in accordance with the Almonry Management and Maintenance Plan.

8.3 Repairs: BTC is responsible for the ongoing repair of the building and funds are included in the annual Council budget. Many repairs need to be undertaken by contactors specialising in heritage buildings

8.4 Marketing:

8.5 Health and Safety: A Health and Safety risk assessment is undertaken regularly as part of the Council's Policy.

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9 Finance

9.1 Income: A small charge of £18 per session is made for local organisations to hire the meeting room, but a higher commercial rate of £50 is charged for businesses.

The Almonry and Arbour in the Garden will continue to be a registered wedding venue after the Development of the Almonry. Between £350 and £450 is charged for the use of the facility, depending on the day of the week. Charges are lower for residents of the civil parish (£300 to £400).

The offices on the first floor that are not used by the Council will continue to be let in order to provide an income. Rents range from £<range>.

9.2 Repairs and Maintenance: The Council will remain responsible for its ongoing management, repair and maintenance once complete through the annual budget setting process.

Battle Town Council, the freeholder of the building, will oversee and have overall responsibility for the project management of the Development of the Almonry in conjunction with Architect.

9.3 Projected Project Costs:

<costs>

9.4 Projected Project Income Streams

Organisation	Amount	Date Applied	Confirmed	Comments
Battle Town Council EMR		N/A		
Rother District Council CIL bid				
Architectural Heritage Fund				
Heritage Lottery				
BTC CIL				

9.5 Financial Risk Assessment

9.6 Sustainability of the Project

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10 Monitoring and Evaluation

The aims and objectives of the Development of the Almonry, as identified in the Business Plan, will be monitored. Information will be gathered annually and reviewed annually at a Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting. Plans to make any improvements will be agreed and reported to Full Council and to the wider population in Battle, as well as to key funders.

Areas to be monitored and evaluated, will be:

<list>

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11 Appendices

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