

# RYE TOWN COUNCIL

a Power of a Well Being Council



## Annual Report 2008-09



## Rye Town Council . . . . .

- is a Quality Council and a Power of Well Being Council
- continues a Mayoral tradition dating back to at least 1289
- has 16 elected Members and a 'Qualified Clerk'
- (in 2009-10) raised 65% of its annual income from sources other than Council Tax
- controls assets of just over £1m
- as one of its two Antient Towns, plays a full and active role in the Confederation of the Cinque Ports
- holds over 50 Council or Committee meetings a year, all of which are open to the public
- employs/retains a Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Town Hall Keeper, Town Sergeant, Town Crier, Second Mace Bearer, Seamstress, and four Heritage Centre Sales/Counter Clerks
- is the custodian of the Rye Town Model and the world famous Rye Gibbet Cage – containing the remains of John Breads, a local butcher who, in 1742, murdered mistakenly the Deputy Mayor (his intended victim was the Mayor!)
- owns and maintains a town hall, heritage centre, skate park, playing field and cottage
- is one of a diminishing number of councils in the UK still to require its Councillors and staff to wear robes and regalia at council meetings
- publishes, within Rye Fixtures, a quarterly newsletter
- nominates representatives to serve on over 20 local voluntary, public and community organisations
- holds monthly Councillor surgeries and hosts a monthly MP surgery
- hosts around 50 wedding and civil partnership ceremonies every year
- comments on around 100 planning applications per annum
- initiated the Rye Local Action Plan, the Rye Local Action Team (crime & disorder) and Rye Emergency Action Community Team (REACT)
- maintains two web sites:  
www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk and www.ryeheritage.co.uk



Having been elected Mayor on 3 May this year (which, sadly, deprived me of the opportunity to deploy my favourite 'May the Fourth be with you' *Star Wars* joke) I feel a little uncomfortable in welcoming you to a report on the Council's activities over the last 12 months – but only a little because, as many of you will know, I have 'served my apprenticeship' by undertaking the role of Deputy Mayor for the last 2 years.

Being a Ryer and past 'scrabblor for Hot Pennies' (which ceased when I graduated to long trousers), Mayor Making was a very special day for me and I feel hugely privileged to be Rye's Mayor.

But what of the year just gone? The Council's efforts to take repossession of the town's allotments from Rother District Council rumbled

on. Rother appears to be fearful that the Town Council might try and develop the sites; however, nothing could be further from the truth – we cherish Rye's green and undeveloped spaces and seek to preserve them . . . which appropriately leads me on to the despoiling of greenfield land north of Udimore Road. No-one disputes the need for affordable housing for our younger residents but how many of those accommodated will actually have a Rye connection? Surely it makes more sense to re-use brownfield sites and refurbish abandoned or neglected properties?

2009-10 demonstrated once again that there is never a shortage of issues to be addressed in Rye: will the FE Centre building survive?; when will Tilling Green get a community centre?; do we need another supermarket and, if so, where is the best place?; should we have more local control over planning?; is a library really the best use for the former Woolworth's store? when will the derelict cottages in Fishmarket Road be demolished (surely soon!)? Questions like these – along with the town's rich cultural heritage – combine to make Rye a vibrant and fascinating place to live and work and, now that the Town Council has the 'Power of Well Being' (meaning it can do virtually whatever it wants if it will produce a social, environmental or economic benefit and has 'popular support'), such discussion points take on even greater significance.

Returning to Mayoral matters, I would welcome an invitation to attend any local event you might be organising but please note that this should be made in writing (including by email) to me at the Town Hall. Please bear in mind though that I am what is known as a 'Working Mayor' – I have to try and fit my Mayoral duties around a proper job! Fortunately, if I really cannot make myself available, or am double-booked, I am able to call upon my very capable – and slightly more glamorous! – Deputy, Councillor Lorna Hall.

If you know me, I look forward to catching up with you again soon; if you don't know me, I look forward to making your acquaintance.

**Councillor John Breeds**  
**The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Rye**  
**(May 2010-)**



Photo: R. Farhall

## Hands off!

At the Rye Public Services Committee meeting held on 1 February – and at the 2010 Annual Town Meeting held in April - the Principal of Sussex Coast College Hastings (formerly HCAT), Sue Middlehurst outlined the College’s plans for the Lion Street site once the Library has relocated to the High Street. The

College is looking to dispose of the land and invest the monies realised into a purpose-built facility at Rye College for vocational training for younger people – as well as adult education.

Whilst it is encouraging to learn that SCC(H) is concerned about the needs of Rye’s younger NEETs (not in education, employment or training) – and acknowledging that the building is in need of external repair - there is a great deal of local affection for the FE Centre and a feeling that it has been, and is, under-utilised and could continue to play an important role meeting the community’s needs.

The Town Council’s position (which it is actively pursuing) is that the FE Centre building should be safeguarded for the benefit of the community.



## We have the power

On 9 November Rye Town Council became the first parish/town council in Sussex to be eligible to exercise the power of well being.

Previously the Town Council was restricted on how much it could spend on activities for which it had no statutory power. However, subject to certain caveats, it now has the power to do anything it considers would promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well being of the parish.

The new power gives the Council greater flexibility, should it be required. It could, for example, team up with a registered social landlord to build and rent out affordable accommodation, run a post office in the absence of another operator, support the fishing industry locally, or even sponsor a local contender for the Olympics.



Photo: R. Farhall

## Quintessential

In October, after the Council had learned that the no calls at all had been made from the red telephone kiosk in Udimore Road and that BT Payphone was considering removing it, the Council jumped at the opportunity to ‘adopt’ the kiosk for a £1, albeit minus the equipment inside.



## **Carbon cutting**

Rye Town Council and other stakeholders – including Rother District Council and Rother Environmental Group – have formed the Rye Low Carbon Community to identify opportunities to reduce the town’s carbon footprint by at least 10%.

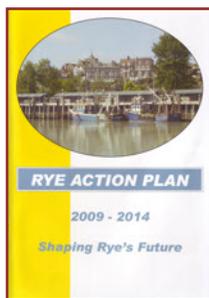
The scope of the Community’s work will focus on domestic housing (freehold and leasehold dwellings - and those provided by Registered Social Landlords); industry, commercial and public sector emissions – and all road traffic. It is hoped that the project will facilitate energy efficiency improvements to Rye’s buildings and also address fuel poverty.



Photo: A. Limber

## **Community support**

The Council was pleased to make the following grants during the year: Rye Marketing Group - £5,000; Rye Arts Festival - £500; Rye Art Gallery (new ‘link’) - £5,000; Rye Castle Museum (Women’s Tower repairs) - £5,000; Rye Cricket Club (artificial wicket) - £1,000; Rye Maritime Festival - £250; Rye in Bloom - £250; Rye Christmas Festival - £1000; Rye & District Community Transport (Dial a Ride) - £1,500.



## **Plan of action**

The Council played a key role in supporting the preparation of the *Rye Local Action Plan 2009-14* - which was formally launched with a stakeholders’ evening in April 2010. The Steering Group (which comprises Council representatives) was pleased to learn that a number of lead stakeholders are making tangible progress in respect of the Plan ‘actions’ associated with them.

Please ring 223902 if you would like a copy of the Plan.



## **Taxing**

Recognising that the adverse economic climate has presented difficulties for many members of our community the Town Council decided to restrict the local precept (Council Tax) increase for 2010-11 to just 1%. Rental income from the Town Hall Cottage, surpluses generated by the Heritage Centre and revenue derived from the hiring of the Town Hall – notably from

weddings and civil ceremonies – all help to keep down the Council Tax you pay to the Town Council. Currently, just 35% of the Council’s income comes from Council Tax



Photo: R. Farhall

## More on . . . allotments

The Town Council is continuing to try and wrest the freehold of Rye's two remaining allotments sites (South Under cliff and Love Lane) from Rother District Council. Regular readers will recall that the Town Council considers that it effectively delegated the function to

Rother in the 1970s – with the associated land – and can ask for the function to be returned to it at any time.

Last year

Rother offered the Town Council a long leasehold on both sites for a period of c100 years at a peppercorn rent. This offer was declined because, if accepted, it could be misconstrued as legitimising Rother's freehold claim.

The Town Council has subsequently instructed its solicitors to pursue three courses of action: asking the Secretary of State to make a fresh Order transferring the land back to the Town Council; inviting Rother to enter into a restrictive covenant; registering a notice or restriction on the land titles.



## Just in case

The Council has been pleased to support – and actively participate in – the work of the Rye Emergency Action Community Team (REACT) in preparing a generic and workable emergency plan for the town.

*Part I – The Overview* (which may be viewed at [www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk)) places responding to civil emergencies in context and outlines how local resources (knowledge, expertise and materials) can be deployed to assist Emergency Response Services and other agencies.

*Part II – The Details: Helping Ourselves in a Civil Emergency* (for example, flooding; transport and power failures; (human) pandemic and animal disease; and incidents at SRM or Dungeness) is being prepared. It is very much a working document – setting out local procedures, resources and contacts – and is intended primarily for the use of the members of REACT during an emergency situation

From this . . . . . to this



Photos: J. Breeds

Autumn 2009 saw the start of the unwanted 135-unit residential development on a greenfield site, north of Udimore Road, adjoining the High Weald AONB. As we go to print, work has not yet been completed to create the access road and the developer, Aroncorp has asked to defer payment of its section 106 contribution towards a cycleway between Ferry Road and The Grove due to 'severe financial restrictions in the availability of development funding'.



## Rye Heritage Centre

### what is it?

Rye Heritage Centre is an information and education centre located on the Strand Quay (A259). It comprises the Town Model (sound and light show), audio walking tours, old pier amusements, guided ghost walks, 'walk in' accommodation booking and a gift shop.

### who runs it?

Since April 2009 the Centre has been managed on the Town Council's behalf by Peter Cosstick. The four (local) members of staff are employed directly by the Council.



### What does it do?

Peter Cosstick, the Manager, explains:

*The Heritage Centre is a major local attraction and continues to provide thousands of visitors with information about Rye and eastern Rother.*

*Despite a challenging period (recession, swine flu, loss of grant funding from Rother District Council) the Centre is stable and goes from strength-to-strength - generating a surplus for the Council of £6,045 (the first since 2006-07).*

*The Town Model Sound and Light show remains popular, bringing our town's history to life and delighting visitors from all over the world. Improved links with other educational establishments - such as schools and colleges (UK and overseas) - have now been forged and this has increased the number of visiting students (including those from Rye).*

*The historic and ghost audio walking tours are still in demand and Autumn 2010 sees the launch of guided ghost tours for small groups. The old pier amusements 'penny' machines are still a great source of laughter for young and old.*

*Our experienced and knowledgeable staff continue to provide excellent customer service. During the summer months and school holidays our opening hours have been extended and we continue to offer a local accommodation booking service to personal callers.*

*We are of course, pleased to promote local events and do what we can to support local businesses.*

visit [www.ryeheritage.co.uk](http://www.ryeheritage.co.uk)

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*Cllr Lorna Hall,  
Committee Chairman*

## Leisure & Tourism

### what was it?\*

A Committee of 9 Councillors dealing with: visitor management, recreation, the Freda Gardham Playing Field, town marketing, public seats, allotments.

\*From 10 May 2010 L&T matters will be considered by the full Council.

### what has it done? (summary)

- Met five times
- Taken an active interest in Rye's food and Christmas festivals, Rye Marketing Group, the 1066 Country Campaign, Rye HotCats, the Farmers' Market and Rye Sports Centre
- Commenced informal inspections of Rye's public conveniences – ensuring also that more of these facilities are open for Rye Fawkes
- Pressed for greater provision of public seats within the Town Salts children's play area
- Agreed, in principle, that the Council should be prepared to take a leasehold on the Freda Gardham Middle Field
- Considered a request for a 'reciprocal link with a French town and the relative lack of Sports Centre summer holiday activities for younger people



*Cllr Frank Palmer  
Committee Chairman*

## Planning & Townscape

### what is it?

A Committee of 9 Councillors dealing with: commenting on planning applications, street naming, development/waste/minerals plans, highways, street cleaning, street furniture, the built environment.

### what has it done? (summary)

- Made recommendations to the Planning Authority on around 100 planning applications and met fortnightly
- Sent representatives to the Rother Parish Planning Seminar
- Considered: large goods vehicles damaging the Landgate Tower; ownership of – and access to – 'Camber Castle car park'; the future of the fire-damaged Rye Cemetery chapel; coach parking and Tourist Information Centre signage; gas mains renewal; land north of Udimore Road – gateway feature, lighting and street naming; the Gibbet Marsh rail crossing gates; land adjacent to Ferry Road and Cyprus Place; the Waste & Minerals Strategy review; the derelict cottages in Fishmarket Road; e-planning consultation; the former Central Garage and new library sites; Network Rail's over-zealous approach to trackside maintenance



*Cllr Ian Potter  
Committee Chairman*

## Policy, Resources & General Purposes

### what is it?

A Committee of 13 Councillors dealing with: Council property, finance (including audit), the Heritage Centre, events, funding applications, artefact reproduction rights and human resources.

### what has it done? (summary)

- Met five times
- Overseen the first full year of the Heritage Centre's return to the Council
- Supported the production and publication of the first Rye Local Action Plan
- Considered: outstanding Rye Town Services Heritage Centre liabilities; the devolvement of services; grant applications; a local key worker definition consultation; adopting a red telephone kiosk; adopting an employment stability policy; informal warding; the power of well being; Quality Council re-accreditation; the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill; burial space at Rye Cemetery; the case for a 'Dungeness C'; the Annual Town Meeting format



*Cllr Mary Smith,  
Committee Chairman*

## Public Services

### what is it?

A Committee of 5 Councillors and co-opted Community Members which makes recommendations to Council in relation to safety, well-being and quality of life.

### what has it done? (summary)

- Met three times
- Appointed a non-Councillor as Vice Chairman
- Continued to benefit from the regular attendance by the Police
- Further expanded its membership to embrace additional areas of community concern or interest
- Pursued concerns about the absence of custody suite facilities in Rye
- Considered: the work of the Rye Local Action Team and Rother Crime and Anti Social Behaviour meeting; the Kent Rail Utilisation Strategy, the County's Community Transport Review; the integration of bus and rail services; voluntary sector issues; Rye Emergency Plan progress; the absence of a local bulky waste 'bring to' facility; the future of the Community Learning Centre in Lion Street; the temporary transfer of patients from the Care Centre to Bexhill Hospital

## Rye Relief in Need

### what is it?

The Town Council's charity which distributes its investment income for the benefit of *Rye residents* in need, hardship or distress.

### what has it done?

Over the past year it has made the grants following:

- Individual resident      gas cooker, single bed, table and chairs      £250.00
- Vitalise                      subsidised care breaks                                      £124.50

### how do we/I apply?

Applications from both organisations and individuals may be made at any time and are considered within 2 months' of submission. There are two forms: one for individuals; the other for organisations – both available at [www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk).

**Contact** The Secretary, Rye Relief in Need, Town Hall, Rye TN31 7LA  
 t 01797 223902 e [townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk)



Source: [www.RXwildlife.org.uk](http://www.RXwildlife.org.uk)

## Rye Merchant Seamen's Fund

### what is it?

The Town Council is involved closely with this charity which was established in 1924 for 'the relief and support of maimed and disabled seamen connected with the town and port of Rye and the widows and children of such seamen as shall be slain or drowned in the merchant service.'

### what has it done?

The Charity Commission has advised that the charity trustees may consider applications from, and on behalf of others working on the sea. Further details are available from the Secretary.

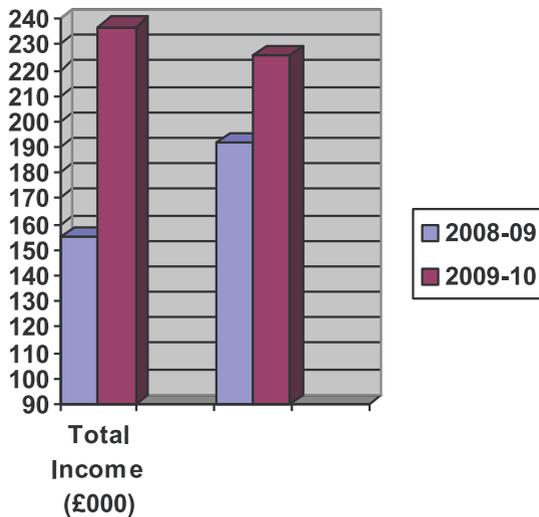
**Contact** The Secretary, Rye Merchant Seamen's Fund, Town Hall, Rye TN31 7LA  
 t 01797 223902 e [townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk)

# Annual Accounts 2009-10

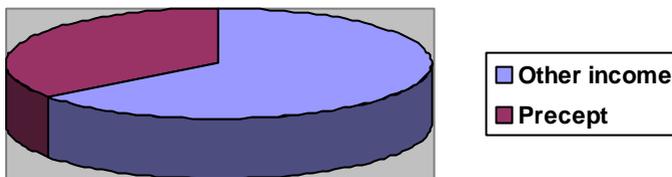
(overview)

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Account & Audit Regulations 2003 (Amended 2006). They are subjected to external audit and internal audit (by an independent auditor). Every year local government electors are given an opportunity to examine the Council's accounts and financial records – and to put questions to the Audit Commission-appointed auditor. Copies of the full accounts – and last Auditor's Opinion - are available on request or may be viewed at [www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk).

## Income & Expenditure (see notes)



## Precept (local tax) as a proportion of total income



Note: Income and expenditure for 2009-10 includes a full year of Heritage Centre trading; in 2008-09 it included trading for November-March only.



## RYE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall

Market Street

Rye TN31 7LA

t 223902 f 227706

e [townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk)

[www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk)

**Town Clerk** Richard Farhall  
**Assistant Town Clerk** Judy Pettitt

### Councillors

<b>BANTICK Granville</b>	25 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DS	t 227724
<b>BREEDS John</b> (Mayor)	71 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7EA e jabreeds@live.co.uk	t 222554
<b>BREEDS Jonathan</b>	The Standard Inn, The Mint, Rye TN31 7EN	t 225996
<b>ELLIOTT Brian</b>	The Windmill, Ferry Rd, Rye TN31 7DW e info@ryewindmill.co.uk	t 224027
<b>FIDDIMORE Bernardine</b>	8 Doleham Cottages, Doleham Hill, Guestling TN35 4NA e <a href="mailto:councillorfidmore@fsmail.net">councillorfidmore@fsmail.net</a>	t 01424- -814194
<b>HALL Lorna</b> (Deputy Mayor)	Rolvendene Farm, Love Lane, Rye TN31 7BB e rolvendene@tiscali.co.uk	t 229808
<b>HOLMES Sonia*</b>	23 North Salts, Rye TN31 7NU e <a href="mailto:cllr.sonia.holmes@rother.gov.uk">cllr.sonia.holmes@rother.gov.uk</a>	t 222068
<b>KIRKHAM Jo</b>	10 Cadborough Cliff, Rye TN31 7EB	t 222562
<b>OSBORNE Paul</b>	Cadborough Cott, 170 Udimore Rd, Rye TN31 6AA e paul@posborne7.orangehome.co.uk	t/f 222415 m 07973 742210
<b>PALMER Frank</b>	4 The Strand, Rye TN31 7DB	t 222603
<b>POTTER Ian</b>	146 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DZ	t 223453
<b>ROGERS Shaun</b>	103 Winchelsea Road, Rye TN31 7EL e <a href="mailto:councilor@ssoh.co.uk">councilor@ssoh.co.uk</a>	t 223942 m 07983 098284
<b>RUSSELL David*</b>	Mountsfield, Rye Hill, Rye TN31 7NH	t/f 227106
<b>SMITH Mary</b>	10 Tower Street, Rye TN31 7AT e <a href="mailto:mysdys@hotmail.co.uk">mysdys@hotmail.co.uk</a>	t 227569
<b>SOUSTER Sam</b>	96 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DX e sam.souster@yahoo.com	t 224305
<b>WRIGHT David</b>	11 Landgate, Rye TN31 7LH e <a href="mailto:councillorwright@hotmail.co.uk">councillorwright@hotmail.co.uk</a>	t 227696

\* also a Rother District Councillor for Rye

### Others

<b>East Sussex County Council</b>	t 01273 481000	<a href="http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk">www.eastsussex.gov.uk</a>
<b>MP Amber Rudd</b>	t 01424 850828	e <a href="mailto:amber@amberrudd.co.uk">amber@amberrudd.co.uk</a>
<b>Rother District Council</b>	t 01424 787878	<a href="http://www.rother.gov.uk">www.rother.gov.uk</a>
<b>Rye Heritage Centre</b>	t 01797 226696 e <a href="mailto:ryeheritagecentre@btconnect.com">ryeheritagecentre@btconnect.com</a>	<a href="http://www.ryeheritage.co.uk">www.ryeheritage.co.uk</a>
<b>Rye Tourist Information Ctre</b>	t 01797 229049	e <a href="mailto:ryetic@rother.gov.uk">ryetic@rother.gov.uk</a>
<b>Rother Homes</b>	t 0845 3550999	<a href="http://www.horizon-hg.org.uk">www.horizon-hg.org.uk</a>
<b>Rye Community Help Point</b>	t 01797 222293	
<b>Rye's County Councillor</b>	t 01797 229581	
<b>Keith Glazier</b>	e <a href="mailto:cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk">cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Rye Partnership</b>	t 01797 229600	e <a href="mailto:admin@ryepartnership.org.uk">admin@ryepartnership.org.uk</a>