

Cinque Port Town of Rye

Rye Town Council

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The Editor
Letters Page
Rye Observer
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Dear Sir

Referring to its 2009-10 Annual Report, Bob Stephenson asks what it means for Rye Town Council to be a Quality Town Council and Power of Well Being Council (Letters 9 July). I will not waste space by addressing the latter because an explanation appears within the Review section of the said Annual Report.

The Town Council became a Quality Council in 2006. The scheme enables accredited local councils to provide their parishioners with an assurance that they are properly managed, work closely with local voluntary and community groups, communicate effectively, work in partnership with other local authorities and agencies, and uphold high standards of conduct.


This might sound like 'gobbledegook' but in practical terms it has resulted in the introduction of monthly Councillor surgeries, a quarterly newsletter (via 'Rye Fixtures'), a web site, an annual report, an improved Annual Town Meeting format, and greater engagement with the community.

Mrs Goldsworthy states that the Government has decided to freeze the County and District Council Tax demands for 3 years and suggests doing the same to Parish Councils. I am not sure a 3-year freeze is being considered and I understand the Chancellor is currently looking at ways to freeze the Council Tax of these principal local authorities in 2011-12 only at this stage. The detail is expected to be announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review, due on October 20.

Unlike the County and District Councils, Parish/Town Councils are not subject to capping to limit Council Taxes increases (typically 5%), presumably because their expenditure tends to be tiny in comparison with the multi-million pound budgets of principal local authorities and the Police and Fire Authorities.

It is a distinct possibility that, as the grant funding from Central Government to the County and District Councils is reduced, these bodies may well look to the voluntary/community sector and Parish Councils to take on some of their services. Although it is likely that Parish Councillors in Rother will be sensitive to the prevailing economic and political climate when considering next year's Parish Council Tax (precept), especially with Parish Council Elections due on 5 May 2011!, I would hope the response to any such approach will be guided by what is on offer, whether a service can be delivered more efficiently (perhaps in a different way), and just how important retention of the threatened service is to the well being of our local communities, particularly our more vulnerable residents.

Yours faithfully


Richard Farhall
Rye Town Clerk

