

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 10 April 2017

PRESENT Councillors Sam Barnes, John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds (**Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Mike Boyd (**Deputy Mayor**), Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore, Rebekah Gilbert, Charlie Harkness, Pat Hughes, Jo Kirkham, Andi Rivett, Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Paul Goring (deputizing for the Town Sergeant); East Sussex County Councillor Keith Glazier; Anthony Kimber – RNPSG Vice-Chairman; Gerard Reilly – *Rye News*; 1 member of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.34pm.

138 PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend Canon David Frost.

139 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons (as notified to the Clerk) - were accepted from Councillors Ian Potter and Ray Prewer.

It was noted that Rother Councillors David Amphill and Gennette Stevens – and the Mayor's Chaplain - were unable to be present.

140 CODE OF CONDUCT

The interests following were disclosed:

Cllr Fiddimore	item 145	Member of the Sea Festival Committee
Cllr Gilbert	item 145	Member of the Sea Festival Committee
Cllr Hughes	item 147	RDCT employee
Cllr Rivett	item 145	Member of the Sea Festival Committee
Cllr Rogers	item 147	RDCT Chairman

141 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor read the text of a thank you card received from former Heritage Centre employees, Peter Cosstick and Debbie Beverley.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting (see Appendix A).

The meeting reconvened.

142 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2017 (C14).

143 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Townscape Committee meetings held on 27 February 2017 (PT16), 13 March 2017 (PT17) and 27 March 2017 (PT18).

(b) Policy, Resources & GP

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy, Resources & GP Committee held on 27 March 2017 (PR05).

144 RYE GREENWAY

Members were advised that Dominic Manning and Colonel Anthony Kimber are developing a feasibility study – and were requested to consider asking the Clerk to draft Terms of Reference for a small project group, which would fall under the remit of RTC.

Speaking from the Gallery, Colonel Kimber advised that: the project (a cycle/footpath from Valley Park to Rye Academy) was a long-standing aspiration; Aroncorp had provided the Cooper Road bridge and a £45,000 s106 developer contribution which is held by RDC). He and Dominic Manning had spoken with the interested landowners/agencies: ESCC, RDC, the EA and Frank Langrish.

ESCC had just disclosed that it had already asked its contractor, CH2M to undertake an initial feasibility study (which was proceeding).

Public consultation would follow.

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to draft Terms of Reference for a small project group. **Clerk**

145 NEW EVENTS FUND

Note: Cllrs Fiddimore, Gilbert and Rivett abstained from voting on this item.

The Clerk advised that the Fund balance remaining (2014-16) was £4,120.

Members were invited to consider an application from the Rye & District Chamber of Commerce for £4,000 towards the Rye Festival of the Sea.

The Mayor advised that members of the public would be permitted to speak on this item.

Cllr Fiddimore introduced the initiative (see **Appendix B**).

Comments included: There is no certainty that RDC will enter into another SLA – it might be wise to check this, or at least retain a proportion of the balance; the festival proposed is ideally suited for Rye and is likely to attract new visitors (in addition to those who used to attend the Maritime Festival and Raft Race); one of the reasons the Maritime Festival ended was because of the (older) age profile of the organisers; the application form suggests that approaches have not been made to other funding sources.

Cllr Gilbert advised that the Festival Committee would be exploring additional sources of funding – such as the Wind Farm. She added that two of the biggest costs were insurance and first aid – but it was difficult to find sponsorship to cover these 'less glamorous' expenses.

Speaking from the Gallery, Neil Cunliffe reported that the Festival organisers had taken advice from those who had been involved with the Raft Race and Maritime Festival – and brought with them their experience of running Christmas in Rye. The event is likely to be popular with the potential to grow significantly.

RESOLVED To award the grant requested.

Clerk

146 GRANT APPLICATION

The Clerk advised that the (available) Grant Revenue Fund provision for 2017-18 was £5,000. The Clerk reminded Members that this provision was smaller than that allocated in previous years and that the General Reserve was forecast to drop to a low level during 2017-18. It was rather early in the financial year to consider viring monies from earmarked reserves.

Members were asked to consider an application from the RNLI Station (Rye Harbour) for £500+ towards the purchase of a new boat.

Comments included: the service provided by the RNLI is valued one; it would be reasonable to expect the EA to contribute to/support the appeal; the boat is likely to be well-used – particularly during the summertime; RTC could always increase its donation at a later date; the RNLI is a well-supported charity – it recently received a single donation of £150,000 from one individual; the Confederation of the Cinque Ports should be asked to make a contribution.

RESOLVED To:

(a) Donate £2,500;

(b) Consider making a further contribution later in the year;

(c) Invite the Confederation to contribute to the appeal.

Clerk, Mayor

147 FORMER COUNCILLOR JOHN IZOD

Note: Cllrs Hughes and Rogers abstained from voting on this item.

Council was invited to consider a request from Rye & District Community Transport that, instead of funding a memorial bench, the Town Council makes a contribution towards the new John Izod community bus.

The Clerk advised that the balance of the Street Furniture Earmarked Reserve and Street Furniture revenue budget was £3,185 – and that a proportion of that had been allocated for replacement Town Hall noticeboards. If Members were inclined to support the request he suggested a maximum of £1,000.

Cllr Boyd suggested that a community bus would provide greater benefit to the community than a replacement bench.

RESOLVED To contribute £1,000.

Clerk

148 DISCOUNTED ACCOMMODATION

The meeting considered the Draft Tenancy Eligibility Criteria drawn up by the Discounted Accommodation Working Group and the WG's Recommendations.

Cllr Stuart suggested that it was unlikely a letting agent would have encountered a letting scheme like the one constructed by RTC previously and would not have the legal expertise to comment knowledgeably on the draft criteria. If it was discovered that action had been taken against one member of the household for ASB, might this mean that RTC would ask all the occupants of its property to vacate it? Would RTC take into account ASB due to the inconsiderate use of a motor vehicle? It would be more appropriate for RTC to seek the opinion of a lawyer rather than a letting agent.

Cllr Creaser responded that RTC is seeking to create an assured shorthold tenancy and was confident that a letting agent would be able to offer RTC an informed opinion. It is not in an agent's interests to recommend potentially problematic tenants. Obtaining specialist legal advice would greatly increase the cost associated with the initial tenancy. She was confident that the WG had considered this matter thoroughly - and the draft criteria reflected this.

Cllr Boyd highlighted the flexibility that had been built into the criteria.

Cllr Gilbert acknowledged this but considered that it would be more appropriate for the Mayor to chair the proposed assessment panel.

RESOLVED 1 To approve the Draft Tenancy Criteria (Appendix C).

RESOLVED 2 That:

- (a) **An opinion on the Draft Tenancy Eligibility Criteria be sought from Harris & Rigby;**
- (b) **An agent be appointed to provide a 'letting only' service (ie management of the tenancy will be undertaken by the Council);**
- (c) **Lets be overseen by an assessment panel comprising:**
 - (i) **A representative of the letting agent (the Panel Chairman);**
 - (ii) **The Town Clerk – or nominated member of staff;**
 - (iii) **The Mayor – or Deputy Mayor (if the Mayor has a conflict of interest), or other Council Member (in the event of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor having a conflict of interest).**

Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.29pm

Date Chairman

Adjournment**a) County Councillor's Report**

Rye ATM Cllr Glazier had progressed a number of concerns raised – including:

(a) Deadmans Lane – Unfortunately, this street is not in the Highway Authority's resurfacing programme for the next 2 years; however, some serious repairs had been undertaken recently.

(b) Some white (re)lining had been carried out on TG Estate and around the town.

TG Community Centre Cllr Glazier reminded the meeting that he is the Leader of ESCC (freeholder) and Chairman of the Rye Partnership (leaseholder). At its June meeting the RP will be considering whether to renew/extend its current lease. In relation to the future of the Centre, the RP will continue to engage with residents and interested persons/stakeholders. The RP is keen to help achieve a viable Centre.

ASC Since the last meeting the Government has responded to pressure from principal authorities with responsibility for social services by establishing a commission to look at the future of ASC. The Government had provided also more funding. For ESCC this equates to £22m over the next 3 years. This – and other funding sources (including the ASC precept) means that none of the planned ASC service reductions now need to be implemented.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Rivett, Cllr Glazier advised that, following approaches from him and South Undercliff residents, Highways England had been responsible for the re-lining in the vicinity of the Kettle O' Fish.

Cllr Fiddimore reported that she was very satisfied with East Sussex Highways' helpfulness in relation to concerns about the Southern Water road closure at Three Oaks.

b) District Councillors' Reports

The Clerk reported that Cllr Ampthill had advised him that he would shortly be able to provide a 'potential timetable for progressing Landgate options' - and had suggested arranging a RTC-RDC Liaison meeting. In relation to the latter, the Clerk asked Members to email him with possible discussion topics. **all**

c) Public Question Time

Colonel Kimber referred to the update he had provided for the P&T Committee meeting following – and added that the RNP had reached a key stage, with papers going to RDC for comment.

d) Deputy Mayor Elect 2017-18

Cllr John Breeds proposed – and Cllr Erswell seconded – Cllr Boyd.

There being no other nominations, the Mayor declared Cllr Boyd to be appointed.

Everybody here will remember the intense disappointment felt by residents, local people and visitors to Rye when the Raft Race paddled to a close a few years ago and this disappointment and dismay was echoed more recently when the organisers of the Rye Maritime Festival decided they too had come to the end. The demise of these two waterside activities represented the end of any festival which celebrated Rye's connection with the sea and its rich Maritime history with the one gourmet based exception of Scallop Week.

Equally, everybody here will remember the intense disappointment felt when, over the years, our Christmas Festival declined to a shameful low ebb. Then in 2015, a small number of people, passionate about bringing it back to life, formed an action group and look what happened. Such was their commitment that with the backing and support of this Council, they sourced untapped energies and funding and produced the magnificent Christmas in Rye Festival of which we are rightly all so proud.

Now we are presented with another opportunity to feel proud of what Rye can achieve. A similar small group of people, passionate about Rye's waterside heritage are seeking to produce Rye Festival of the Sea, comprising all of the very best elements of both the former Raft Race and the former Maritime Festival. Some of these volunteers are involved with Christmas in Rye and bring therefore intimate knowledge of event management and some of them are Rye Councillors, keen to support the initiative and see our Town thriving as it should. The support from Traders, all of whom have been visited over the past couple of weeks, has been overwhelming. Not a single person has voiced doubts. One has actually cancelled a scheduled closure for their silver wedding celebration.

A great deal of the groundwork is already covered; hours and hours of work has been put into the Health & Safety aspects, the Insurances, the permissions and the vast reams of paperwork required to host an event such as this. Additional large car parking facilities have been identified and marshalling technicalities tackled. It is anticipated that with the efficient uses of media both new and traditional, very large numbers of potential visitors will be reached and their presence will benefit traders, accommodation providers, restaurants, pubs and cafes. Further, many of these will return to Rye, bringing the additional benefits of their spending power at other times of the year.

The mention of Spending Power now brings me to money! As with any new event or new enterprise, nothing can happen without funding. The organisers of Rye Festival of the Sea, therefore, apply to this council for £4,000 from the New Events Fund generously granted by Rother District Council for this very purpose. We have been careful to fit the required criterion and are confident that with the support of this council the Festival will go on to become self-funding for years to come. It will also become another keynote of Rye's now very famous Festival calendar and will indicate to RDC that Rye can take and use responsibly the funding it offers us and encourage that funding to be maintained for years to come.

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

DISCOUNTED ACCOMMODATION

DRAFT TENANCY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Background

The aim of Rye Town Council's Discounted Accommodation Scheme is to help younger Rye households remain within – or return to - the Parish of Rye by providing them with accommodation let at below market rent.

Local connection

Discounted accommodation provided by Rye Town Council shall be occupied by at least one applicant, aged 18 years or over, who, immediately prior to taking up occupation of a dwelling, meets one of the local connection criteria following:

- (a) Resides currently in the Parish of Rye and has done so for at least 10 years of his/her lifetime; or
- (b) Resides currently outside the Parish of Rye but has lived previously within the Parish of Rye for at least 10 years of his/her lifetime.

- and is able to provide evidence in support of the 10-year residency requirement. For example, a selection of old utility bills, school certificates or (dated) letters addressed to this applicant at an address within the Parish – and/or bills or letters sent to this applicant's parents/guardians.

Other qualifications

Applicants will be required to demonstrate – with reference to their actual household income – why they are unable to afford the prevailing market rents in the Parish of Rye.

Priority will be given to those households in which, immediately prior to taking up occupation:

- (a) One member of the household is under the age of 10 years;
- (b) No member of the household is older than 35 years of age;
- (c) At least one member of the household, aged 18 or over, is employed or self-employed.

Disqualification

Applicants shall not qualify for consideration where:

- (a) There is evidence that legal or other serious action has been taken against any member of the household, due to anti-social behaviour (ASB).

- (b)** A member of the household has a property-related arrear owed to a local authority, housing association or private sector landlord – unless six months or regular repayments have been made.
- (c)** There is evidence that they have deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify.
- (d)** They are found to have deliberately given false information, not disclosed full facts, or not disclosed relevant changes to their situation.