

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 11 April 2016**

PRESENT Councillors John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds (**Deputy Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Mike Boyd, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore (**Mayor**), Rebekah Gilbert, Charlie Harkness, Pat Hughes, Ian Potter, Ray Prewer, Andi Rivett, Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Kevin Barry – Town Sergeant; Rother District Councillor David Ampthill; Jack Duggan - *Rye Observer*; 2 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

127 PRAYERS

These were said by the Mayor.

The Mayor invited those present to observe a minute's silence in memory of Councillor John Izod, who passed away on the evening of 7th April.

128 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reason (as notified to the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllr Jo Kirkham.

It was noted that Cllr Stevens was unable to be present.

129 CODE OF CONDUCT

There was none.

130 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had attended recently Walk for the Wounded (raising funds for wounded ex service personnel) and Winchelsea Mayor Making – which had been well-attended.

*The Mayor adjourned the meeting for the reports of the District and County Councillors – and Public Question Time (see **Appendix**).*

The meeting reconvened.

131 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2016 (C13).

132 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Townscape Committee held on 1 February 2016 (PT13), 15 February 2016 (PT14), 29 February 2016 (PT15), 21 March 2016 (PT16) and 4 April 2016 (PT17).

(b) Policy, Resources & GP

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy, Resources and GP Committee held on 21 March 2016 (PR05).

133 HONORARY FREEMAN SCROLL

It was noted that, since the last PRGP Committee meeting Members had been given the opportunity to view examples of Andrew Izod's work.

RESOLVED To ask Andrew Izod to produce a suitable scroll – to present to Frank Palmer - for £350 + VAT, noting that future scrolls would cost c£50.
Clerk

**134 RYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members were asked to consider increasing the Steering Group Council representation by one to allow Cllr Fiddimore to remain a member at the end of her Mayoralty.

Cllr John Breeds indicated that he would be happy to step down from the Group.

RESOLVED To defer consideration of this item until Committee Formation (which includes reviewing the membership of working groups).

135 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/6015>

The meeting was invited to consider the draft recommendation of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of Rye – that Rye and Winchelsea should form a 2-Member District Ward. (*Deadline for responses: 16.6.16.*)

Cllr Ampthill advised that the review of Rother could be seen as a 'giant jigsaw puzzle'. There are 38 Rother Members serving a population of c77,000. Each Member should represent around 2,037 people. Combining Rye and Winchelsea achieves this level of representation. Altering this arrangement would make it difficult to hit the representation level elsewhere in the District.

Comments from Members of the Council included: a number of Winchelsea residents are known to favour closer association with Rye (both have the status of 'Antient Town' – as well as being members of the CP Confederation); when RTC had last considered this matter it had concluded that the Rye-Winchelsea configuration was not ideal but was the best available given the complexities and requirements of the Commission; Rye has a greater natural affinity with Rye Harbour/Rye Foreign; 'natural affinity/fit' should take precedence over 'balancing the numbers'; combining Rye with Camber and East Guldeford would achieve the desired representation level;

the Commission's recommendations are likely to be a foregone conclusion; communities are not simply 'numbers'.

RESOLVED To advise the Commission that whilst RTC accepts (with some reluctance) the recommended Rye-Winchelsea two-Member ward, it considers that Rye has a greater natural affinity with Rye Harbour - and would be minded to support the inclusion of Rye Foreign within a Rye-Rye Harbour ward if this was necessary to achieve the desired level of representation.
Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.08

Date Chairman

Adjournment**a) Report of the County Councillor**

Cllr Glazier was not present.

b) Report of the Rye District Councillors**Lord Ampthill**

*Item 135 on the Agenda allows for consideration of the draft recommendation of the **Local Government Boundary Commission for England** as it relates to Rye and our hinterland. Rother's scheme, which is largely supported by the Commission, allows for 12 rural wards (8 - 2 member wards and 4 - 1 Member wards) and 9 Bexhill wards (each being 2 Member wards). The electorate of Rother is expected to increase from the current 71,000 to 77,000 by the year 2021. The Commission supports the creation of a RYE & WINCHELSEA ward for the District - which we have discussed on a previous occasion; and a RYE & EASTERN ROTHER ward for the County which will include the towns and villages of Rye, Winchelsea, Icklesham, Pett, Camber, East Guildford, Iden, Playden, Winchelsea Beach and Rye Harbour - an expected electorate in 2021 of 8,400. The consultation, which is now open, closes on the 16th June.*

*As regards the RDC grant relating to **Events Funding**, I understand that a revised draft Service Level Agreement accommodates the Town Council's request for up-front funding. Rother's main request is that events are monitored and that there is a brief evaluation afterwards - thus creating a linked simple audit trail between successful applications and future funding decisions.*

*Regarding the **devolvement of Rother assets**, the programme has partially been successful in that a fair number of sites have been leased or are under negotiation. I have just written to the Mayor about the **public conveniences** at Rye Station. The site is leased to Rother by Network Rail (formerly British Rail Property Board) and there is no progress on devolvement. The lease does not permit alternative uses - so it will be useful to have a discussion about the on-going management of this heavily-used facility - not least since the cleaning contract with SHS is about to be reviewed. The current contract terminates on the 31st December and was jointly procured with Hastings and Eastbourne Borough Councils (with HBC acting as the lead). There are currently 30 Rother units within the cleaning schedule (4 in Rye at Station Approach, The Strand, Gun Garden and Lucknow Place); and the Council's current policy looks to the devolution of a number of PCs to local communities. Thus it will be helpful to look carefully at what we have and what we need and can afford to keep.*

***Five Council-owned sites are due to be auctioned** by Savills on the 9th May. These include Camber Fields, at New Road, and a small strip of land at Wish Ward. Rother is seeking to pass on the freeholds of these sites.*

*Amber Rudd's third **Transport Summit** took place recently in connection with desired improvements to our road and rail services. The strategy is to press for further dualling of the A21; and deliver fast rail services from London to Rye, Hastings and Bexhill. We heard about lithium battery technology which impacts upon the need for full electrification of the Marsh Link line; and the expectation that the remodelling of Ashford Station and development of so-called hybrid trains will feature in this year's Kent Route Study.*

In respect of the **Landgate**, I am conscious that time is moving on. The architect, Mr John Bailey, has been working up a vision document for imminent discussion with interested parties. This will be a tool to inspire and interest the big funders, Heritage Lottery Fund and others, as we seek a permanent solution.

I was asked last time about the success or otherwise of **gull-proof reusable sacks**. These have been deployed by the Council where there are known problems or where they are requested - most likely because wheeled bins cannot be used. The bags cost £7.50 each, need to be cleaned regularly and are not fool-proof as can be seen when herring gulls or foxes attack them. In Rother, there are about 150 properties which are served by weekly collections and use these sacks. The roll-out is still at the "pilot" stage.

There are 16 **pay & display car parks across** the District - containing 27 ticket machines. All are to be up-graded (as at Mount Street, Battle) to accept card payments with pay on exit on all machines. Car parks at Camber Central and Western will retain manned kiosks in the peak season.

Before the end of the year, it is hoped to introduce **public speaking at RDC Planning Meetings**. This will be a petition-based scheme similar to the HBC model. Unlike Hastings, the Rother arrangements will allow both the Head Petitioner (presumably the objector) and the Applicant or Applicant's agent to address the Planning Committee for up to five minutes. A petition should have 10 or more signatories. Members of the Planning Committee can ask questions of the speakers when issues need further clarification. This is not an opportunity for new material or documents to be introduced - more a chance to emphasise the crucial issues on which a decision might be reached.

On-Street Parking. I was pleased to read Minute 59 of Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee. It is good that senior Police officers have noted some of the problems and that habitual offenders are being chased up. I wonder which car parks the Police have in mind for off-street permit schemes because the locations currently offered, not least at Gibbet Marsh, are taken up sparingly. As the Clerk has observed, the pros and cons of civil parking enforcement have yet fully to be debated. The problems of delivery drivers are on-going.

Can I report an extract from the recent budget consultation responses: "The parking situation in Bexhill also needs attention. There are far too many cars that are parked on the streets free of charge but stay all day and do no shopping - genuine shoppers cannot find spaces and so go to the retail park to the benefit of larger stores/chains but no help to small traders in Bexhill. Where cars are parked on double yellow lines around junctions these can cause accidents by the very reduced visibility. We are fortunate this does not cause more accidents because so many drivers are aware of the problems, but a few speedy drivers are not". So we are not alone on this issue.

Can I also clarify the position between the various Authorities? RDC has no legislative powers to enforce on-street parking. On-street parking is the responsibility of East Sussex County Council as the Highway Authority. Currently, enforcement rests between ESCC, which ensures that the regulations are implemented, and the Police who enforce those regulations. Rother has no role in this. However, we all talk to each other: and Rother continues to assess all the evidence in order to make representations. We look to Rye Town Council to influence this process.

Cllr Potter Why are car parking ticket machines not being installed at RDC's Camber car parks when it is accepted that the staffed kiosk system exacerbates queuing and traffic congestion?

Lord Amptill I will make enquiries. Not everyone will be comfortable using cards in ticket machines.

Cllr Stuart observed that RTC had previously expressed interest in land that RDC intended to dispose of but RDC appears to have given RTC little time to consider the auction of two of the assets on 9 May.

The Clerk advised that he had arranged an additional Council meeting (18 April) to consider this matter – as well as RDC's wish to transfer responsibility for the Crownfields Public Convenience. Savills had notified RTC about the intended auction of Camber Fields but not the land adjacent to 7 Wish Ward. The owner of 7 Wish Ward had been contacted by Savills.

The Mayor would check whether the current tenant of Camber Fields had been contacted by RDC. **Mayor**

There was a brief discussion on asking RDC to postpone the auction of the two parcels of land. The Clerk advised that formal consideration would need to wait until 18 April.

c) Public Question Time

There was none.

d) Appointment of Deputy Mayor Elect 2016-17

Cllr John Breed proposed – and Cllr Rogers seconded – Cllr Boyd. Cllr Boyd accepted the nomination.

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