

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 7 September 2015**

PRESENT Councillors Jonathan Breeds (**Deputy Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Mike Boyd, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore (**Mayor**), Rebekah Gilbert, Charlie Harkness, Pat Hughes, John Izod, Jo Kirkham, Ray Prewer, Andy Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Kevin Barry – Town Sergeant; The Reverend Canon David Frost *[part]*; Rother District Councillor David Amphill; Rother District Councillor Gennette Stevens; County Councillor Keith Glazier; Colonel Anthony Kimber – RNPSG Vice-Chairman; Derek Rankin – JD Architects *[part]*; 10 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

58 PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Mayor's Chaplain.

59 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons (as notified to the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllrs John Breeds, Ian Potter, Andi Rivett and Shaun Rogers.

60 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures of interest.

61 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had attended recently the Deal Castle Walmer weekend and the Hythe Venetian Fete. Rye benefits from the successful Rye International Jazz Festival and Rye Arts Festival. The new Rye Christmas Festival group needs everyone's support – donations can be made via Just Giving. Festivities (Dickensian themed) will kick off on 12 December.

Cllr Izod flagged up Rye Bonfire.

*The Mayor adjourned the meeting (see **Appendix**)*

7.35pm The meeting reconvened.

62 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meetings held on 29 June 2015 (C4), 6 July 2015 (C5) and 6 July 2015 (C6).

63 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) **Planning & Townscape**

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning &

Townscape Committee held on 6 July 2015 (PT04) and 20 July 2015 (PT05).

(b) Public Services

It was noted that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2015 (PS01) were not yet available.

64 PLANNING APPLICATION - RR/2015/1323/P (amended)

Rock Channel - Unit 2-4, Rye TN31 7HL.

Redevelopment of existing commercial site with development of 30 mixed residential units including houses and apartments along with parking and ground floor retail and commercial spaces. Proposals to include landscaping works including a public river side walk and junction improvements to A259.

Applicant: Bourne & Sons Ltd Attn: Mr Eric Bourne, Bourne & Sons, Harbour Road, Rye

RESOLVED To await the (further) amended plans before re-considering the application.

65 LOADING BAY (OUTSIDE THE GEORGE)

The meeting noted that the (6-month) Experimental Traffic Regulation Order expired on 6 August 2015 and the Highways Authority had received no formal objections to the bay (and waiting area). Members were invited to form a view on whether the Order should be made permanent.

RESOLVED To advise the Highways Authority that RTC wishes the Order to be made permanent. Clerk

66 RYE TOWN STEWARD

RESOLVED To ratify the Human Resources Working Group's Recommendation that, subject to agreement on terms and conditions, the post holder be offered a permanent contract, effective 6 January 2016. Clerk

**67 HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING GROUP:
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

RESOLVED To alter the membership from 'Five Elected Members plus the Town Clerk' to Between 4 and 6 Elected Members (including the Mayor) plus the Town Clerk. Clerk

68 MILLENNIUM WALL

RESOLVED That the document transferring the title of the land upon which the wall has been constructed to the Council be sealed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Clerk

69 FORMER TILLING GREEN SCHOOL

The meeting considered AmicusHorizon's response to the Council's questions concerning the proposed redevelopment of the site and representations made by Tilling Green resident, John Wylie.

Cllr Glazier (Rye Partnership Chairman) emphasised that both the Partnership and AmicusHorizon wished to work with Mr Wylie. The Partnership had been preparing the ground for a new community centre at TG for the last 3 years. The Partnership had formed the impression that stakeholders would prefer the new centre to be run by local people (perhaps TGRA or a CIC). The Partnership would consider running the centre if no other appropriate organisation was willing to do so. It was committed to assisting with the new centre's set-up. RVA had been asked to work with TGRA in order to determine the most suitable governance structure.

John Wylie considered he had identified some important flaws with the plans and business model he had seen thus far and was frustrated that there appeared to be a reluctance to re-think the scheme. It was disappointing that no 3D drawings had been presented thus far. The dwellings would be 4 storeys high and it was difficult to assess their likely impact. The new centre needed to have a high ceiling.

Colonel Kimber advised that AmicusHorizon and its architects had promised to provide 3D visualisations.

RESOLVED 1 To ask AmicusHorizon to commission a 3D model.

RESOLVED 2 To ask AmicusHorizon what plans will be put in place to ensure that the needs of the current users of the centre will be accommodated 'inbetween centres'.

Clerk

70 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2): to exclude the public and press from item 71 because it entailed consideration of quotes.

71 TOWN HALL ACCESS

Council was asked to consider purchasing a stair climber to enable wheelchair users – and others with significant mobility difficulties - to access areas of the Town Hall (including the Buttermarket, Chamber and Reception).

The Clerk advised that, for many years, RTC had struggled to identify a practical way to improve access to the Town Hall for wheelchair users and those with significant mobility difficulties.

The number of wheelchair users and physically disabled ambulant attending wedding/ceremonies appeared to be increasing – presumably because of rising average lifespans. Enquirers were advised about the poor access but there could be a considerable gap between booking a ceremony and it actually taking place – and circumstances change.

Because installation of a stair lift would present practical difficulties – and would provide a partial solution only – staff had been testing equipment that would easily transport someone up and down steps with/without a wheelchair. Options were narrowed down to either a 'tracked chair' or a stair climber. The former requires the wheelchair user to be transferred to it; the latter carries (securely) the user's own wheelchair (or one provided).

Staff – and the occupant - found that the tracked chair did not feel particularly stable nor did it inspire confidence. These chairs are designed primarily for narrow staircases.

In contrast, the stair climber tested felt solid and robust – and instilled a high level of confidence in the operator. Of the two machines tested, the Sherpa N908 had the most going for it: it was more compact (which meant that it was easier to manoeuvre) and would take up less storage space. It also has a greater range of safety features - and the ride appeared to be smoother.

A physically disabled ambulant person could opt to use the climber in a wheelchair supplied by the Town Hall. However, more people could attempt the stairs themselves if the hand rope was replaced by a solid handrail (which may require Listed Building consent).

The two stair climbers tested were:

Sherpa N908 Supplied by the Stair Climbing Co Ltd

SA3 Supplied by Swallow EMP

Quotes compared

	SA3	N908
Model with couplings/adaptor (for different size wheels)	£5,495	£5,060
Wheelchair	£300	£174
Delivery/Import	£100	£185
Training	£350 (4-5)	£500 (up to 6)
Annual service/test [recurring cost]	£300	£295
Total (Year 1)	£6,545	£6,214

One advantage of a stair climber has over a stair lift is that it is portable: it could be used to transport people from Market Street into the Buttermarket; from the road into Reception and (just) from the Chamber (close to) the first floor toilets. The N908 can be carried reasonably easily in a car – which means that it could be made available for community use – eg transporting wheelchair users at events/premises in the town where there are steps/stairs.

With some reorganisation of the Cell there is space to store (and trickle charge) the N908.

Comments included: RTC had been trying to address the problem of poor disabled access to the Town Hall for 40 years or so – technology had now provided a solution; the stair climber would not be able to cope with heavy loads (for example, an electric wheelchair and/or larger person) – the maximum capacity was 130kg; the availability of a stair climber should increase weddings bookings; the climber could be hired out; 'equality of access' should take precedence over revenue generation considerations; the climber should be able to accommodate 95% of wheelchair users.

RESOLVED 1 That RTC purchases one N908 at a cost of £6,214 + VAT (financed from the General Reserve).

Clerk

RESOLVED 2 That RTC applies for Listed Building Consent (if necessary) to replace the staircase hand rope with a wooden hand rail (budget: £300).

Clerk

The meeting ended at 8.01

Date Chairman

Adjournment**a) Planning application RR/2015/1323/P (amended) – proposed redevelopment of part of Rock Channel**

Derek Rankin (DR) of JD Architects provided an update: There had been a lengthy pre-application process; he had just submitted a viability appraisal to RDC; the key issues for RDC were the number of affordable dwellings and the height of the development; in order to maintain the view of the Citadel from the river, the development had been planned as three main 'blocks' – running at a right angle to the river; as it is currently presented the development will not be financially viable and so there would need to be further discussion with RDC – followed by another amended planning application; the EA is happy with the proposed riverside path and the scheme allowed for repairs and improvements to St Margarets Terrace; the new scheme will need to balance aesthetics and height.

Mayor *What provision would there be for retail/commercial space?*

DR Because the site lies within a flood risk zone this will be confined to the ground floor. Any space provided is likely to be of low value to the developer – and there is no wish to divert trade from Strand Quay. The development will be largely residential; however, RDC would like to see 50% of ground floor space allocated for commercial use. This is an area of contention.

Mayor *What improvements would be made to the A259:St Margaret's Terrace junction? (It is a key RTC concern.)*

DR The junction would be 're-made' – the surface and splay would be improved. It was anticipated that smaller, lighter vehicles would accompany the predominantly residential use.

Lord Ampthill *Is it possible to re-orientate the 'development blocks' so that they are pointing further to the east?*

DR The original plan was for a 'random' development but RDC requested a more regimented scheme; he preferred the former.

Lord Ampthill *How does the intended height compare with the development on the old Central Garage site?*

DR The Central Garage site development is 4-storey and the height is comparable.

Cllr Boyd *Would total traffic flow be reduced?*

DR If the current heavy goods vehicle use was run at full potential, yes.

Cllr Boyd responded that, unlike the current situation, there would be traffic flow associated with (primarily) residential use 24/7. Presently, there were low levels of vehicle movements at weekends – particularly on Sunday – and most of the lorries leave early and return later in the day. Post development there would be more vehicle movements – leading to congestion on the A259.

DR The proposed junction improvements would provide for 2-way access. Highways England is happy with the junction as it is.

Cllr Hughes suggested that most people would probably drive to/from any commercial units provided.

The Mayor suggested that an improved and wider St Margaret's Terrace could be used as unofficial car park.

Cllr Gilbert started that she was against residential development because Rye needed jobs and asked for live-work units to be incorporated into the scheme. She was concerned the design of the scheme was not sufficiently 'distinctive'.

DR responded that that the orientation (desired by RDC) was dictating the layout, number of units and values. The developer needs more flexibility from RDC – and is not keen on live-work units.

b) Report of the County Councillor

Cllr Glazier's report included:

Cycle path The final section of the Rye Harbour Cycle Path would be opened formally on 15 September. It will be known as Graham's Way and Gordon Matthews would be present.

Rye Hill: Military Road He had received representations concerning pedestrian safety. Although this had been looked at a number of times previously he had asked Highways to re-assess the issues.

Devolution ESCC, WSCC and Surrey CC had submitted a bid supporting regional devolvement of decision making and funding to them and other partners (eg Sussex and Surrey Police forces).

Budgeting Work had commenced on the 2016-17 budget. ESCC expects to lose another £90m of Government funding over the next 3 years.

Rope Walk Resurfacing of the final section is in this year's programme.

The Mayor had observed that eroded areas between the carriageway and verge in county lanes were being patched with hard material (rather than soil) – and this has the effect of widening the carriageway – especially when the erosion continued adjacent to the repair.

Cllr Glazier advised that ESCC had allocated additional resources to unclassified roads – and requested specific examples. The Mayor undertook to provide photographs.

Cllr Hughes recalled that, during the construction of Graham's Way she had suggested that, for safety reasons, parking restrictions should be introduced at the 'top end'. Cllr Glazier would seek the opinion of Highways.

Heidi Foster added that Rye Wheelers had used the cycle path last weekend and had identified a danger spot on a bend, near the bridge. The Mayor wondered if the installation of an appropriate advance warning sign would be helpful.

Colonel Kimber Had ESCC now sold then former TG School site to AmicusHorizon?

Cllr Glazier The legal process had commenced but contracts had yet to be exchanged.

b) Report of the Rye District Councillors

Lord Ampthill (see Appendix A)

Lord Amptill added that he just received an update on the Landgate Tower from Tony Leonard: All recommendations contained within the condition survey had been assessed and were awaiting 'signing off' by officers. A report would be going to Cabinet in Oct-Nov. Remedial work costs were likely to be considerable – but he anticipated that RDC would look to make a contribution.

Gennette Stevens

Cllr Stevens advised that she had spent much of the time since her election in May attending training. She had been appointed to the Planning and OS Committees – as well as the Public Realm WG. She had monitored Rye's PCs and found the cleanliness to be adequate. She had also visited Rye Sports centre and helped residents with concerns – including rats and a maintenance issue at Rye Cemetery (now resolved).

The Mayor reported that she had seen the grass cutting schedule for the Cemetery – there was provision for 3-4 cuts a year.

Cllr Jonathan Breeds *How long would the seagull proof bag trial last in the High Street?*

Lord Amptill anticipated that, at some stage, it would be rolled out to cover the whole of the Citadel.

Cllr Creaser *What had Cllr Stevens learned from her Sports Centre visit?*

Cllr Stevens had had just a few conversations with staff about the Centre's facilities and how these might be better publicised.

Lord Amptill added that he was aware that there are those interested in taking over the Centre from Freedom Leisure – and he anticipated that a progress report would be presented to Cabinet shortly. It was too early to tell whether the contract specification would be similar to the existing one.

Cllr Stuart *Are there any plans to check the condition of the Pump House in Church Square?*

Lord Amptill would enquire.

d) Public Question Time

Granville Bantick was pleased that the Highways Forum was focusing on improving pedestrian safety in Station Approach.

The Mayor added that RTC had had informal discussions with Battle Town Council regarding sharing a traffic warden.

Chris Coverdale sought responses to his 4 questions *[tabled]* on the Community Infrastructure Levy. He was unhappy with the way in which RTC had handled representations from members of the public and asked if any Member would be interested in meeting with him.

The Mayor observed that Members had only just seen the questions.

Mr Coverdale agreed to the suggestion that RTC should treat the questions as a formal complaint and move straight to the penultimate stage of RTC's Complaints Procedure – ie the complaint being considered by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Policy Committee – with a view to them making a recommendation to full Council.

Col Kimber (RNPSG Vice Chairman) advised that there was considerable material about CIL on the RNP web site – and it addresses some of Mr Coverdale's concerns.

Rye Town Council

From: David Amptill <dwerussell@btopenworld.com>
Sent: 08 September 2015 11:40
To: Rye Town Council
Subject: Fwd: RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 7TH SEPTEMBER 2015, REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 7TH SEPTEMBER 2015, REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Rother's Annual Meeting on the 27th May formally launched the new Council's 4-year cycle. As before, the Cabinet will meet once a month and, when necessary, take executive decisions. These may be called in for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the application of three members of that Committee. The Leader has formed a Cabinet of ten members - five each from Bexhill and Rural Rother. The Chairmen of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees are rural members and the Chairmen of the Planning Committee, which meets every four weeks, and of the Licensing Committee are Bexhill members. For those who consider that RDC is a Bexhill-centric organisation and that the biggest town in the District gobbles up our increasingly scarce revenue and capital funds, it is the mission of your representatives to show and ensure that that is not the case.

My responsibilities include finance, resources and member development - under the slogan, Value for Money. I am a director of Sea Change Sussex which is concerned with the construction of the North East Bexhill Gateway Road and the opening up of major housing and employment sites as part of the District's economic regeneration strategy. I attend meetings of the Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee, the Dungeness site stakeholders group and I am a member of the Licensing Committee and sit on panels dealing with taxi and alcohol licensing issues.

The Electoral Review of the County Council and five Districts and Boroughs in East Sussex is under way. RDC has been asked to recommend to the Boundary Commission for England how many Councillors we need to carry out the Council's business. Given that our electorate is expected to grow from 70,000 to 77,000 by the year 2021, we have proposed remaining at 38 members - itself a reduction from 46 members prior to 2003. The calculation is that each member will, on average, serve just over 2,000 electors. Town and Parish Councils and interested individuals will have the same status as RDC in the forthcoming consultations. Meanwhile, the Boundary Commissioners are working up their proposals over the next month or so.

Against the background of the truly appalling problems created by the current mass migration of peoples, whether fleeing from war, poverty or oppression or for whatever reason, our own difficulties seem moderate in comparison. Nevertheless they are real. Due partly to the success of the Javelin train operating from Ashford to St Pancras, Rye has become a commuter town. Car parks are bursting: and the increased level of "informal" parking on our streets - not least in the town centre as well as arterial roads such as South Undercliff, Udimore Road and Military Road - is startling. Enforcement, which remains a police responsibility, is extremely low priority such that the need for a solution is pressing. Not only this Council but RDC too is talking to the Police & Crime Commissioner as well, of course, as the County Council, the Chief Executive of ESALC and the police themselves. The proposal that Battle and Rye should share a Parking Warden could work: and the cost and scope of the exercise and the likely responsibilities of the individual are being explored by all of us.

In some parts of the District, the recent performance of the waste collection service has been unsatisfactory. Some problems stem from the deployment of vehicles which are too big to work in narrow streets. Collections from the two Jempson's recycling sites have been erratic and I have presented photographic evidence to RDC officers of receptacles stuffed to the brim with rubbish strewn around. It is said that missed bins amount to some 400 a week; and the total should be a tenth of that. We must and will get on top of it. Meanwhile, we are two weeks into the seagull-proof sack experiment, testing in the High Street area, and are hoping for positive feedback.

Anyone who has not sampled the "My Alerts" weekly e-mails might consider giving this brief newsletter a try. Register on MyAlerts@rother.gov.uk and receive information on planning applications relating to properties near you - and other topics.

Matters which we can discuss in a moment and on which we are looking for progress include: the Sports Centre; the Landgate including the clock, floodlighting and flag flying; public conveniences; the cemetery; open spaces; the disposal of Rother assets; and a variety of planning issues.

Neighbourhood Planning was discussed at Cabinet this morning. Members will recall that the minimum target recommended by the Inspector who examined our Local Plan Core Strategy was 5,700 net additional homes between 2011 and 2028 (equivalent to 335 dwellings each year). The Strategy was adopted last September. Neighbourhood Plans are now in preparation for Battle, Sedlescombe, Robertsbridge, Ticehurst, Crowhurst and Fairlight as well as Rye. To help with robust plan-making, a Principal Planner has been identified to co-ordinate support and advice and will be known as the Neighbourhood Plan Liaison Officer.

I thought that the "Visioning Evening" offered recently by Trevor Leggo was a useful exercise; and hope that Members may decide to move forward with the suggested business plan or choose to update the excellent Action Plan 2009-14. It remains the case that Rother officers are ready to visit Rye for a liaison meeting or to receive Town Councillors in Bexhill if that would be of interest.

DA/06.09.15

C-1 APPENDIX B

Questions for Rye Town Council

re; the Community Infrastructure Levy

1. Earlier this year Rye Town Council (RTC) took a decision to support the Introduction of a new housing tax, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which will cost 160 residents of Rye £2.25m over the next 13 years with no discernable benefits.
Why?
How will this benefit the residents of Rye, and in particular those who do not own their own home?
2. The legislation requires residents to be consulted about this new tax.
What has RTC done to discover the views of (50%) residents on CIL?
What has RTC done to ensure that a fair and balanced case is presented to residents and that their responses are accurately re-presented back to RDC?
3. The legislation requires the Charging Authority to demonstrate that a genuine funding shortfall (funding gap) exists before it can introduce the new tax. RTC was informed last year (2014) that the Funding Gap Analysis (claiming a £133m shortfall) put forward by RDC was fictional and was a fraud and did not justify the introduction of CIL. But In March 2015 RTC said: "Support is given to the findings of the Funding Gap Analysis".
Why?
Knowing that the funding gap and shortfall did not exist, why are Rye Town Councillors so keen to support the fraudulent case and the introduction of the new housing tax?
4. On three occasions over the past year I have asked for a meeting with councillors to discuss these serious, potentially criminal, issues but on each occasion it has been rejected.
Why?
What do I have to do to get a (fair) hearing from this council?

Chris Coverdale
51 The Mint
01797 214 103

7th September 2015