

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye,
on Monday 23 May 2016**

PRESENT Councillors Mike Boyd (**Deputy Mayor**), Jonathan Breeds (**Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore, Pat Hughes, Ian Potter, Ray Prewer, Shaun Rogers

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Rother District Councillor Lord Ampthill; Gerard Reilly – *Rye News*.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

29 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons (as notified to the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllrs John Breeds, Rebekah Gilbert, Charlie Harkness, Jo Kirkham, Andi Rivett and Andy Stuart.

30 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures of interest nor dispensation requests.

31 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED 1 Appendix F, Economic Development WG To delete Prewer and insert Harkness.

RESOLVED 2 To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2016 (C2), as amended.

32 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Townscape Committee held on 3 May 2016 (PT19) and 16 May 2016 (PT01).

33 DISCOUNTED ACCOMMODATION: PROVISION

(a) Survey

Members received – and considered – a summary of the results of the recent survey (distributed to all households in the Parish) to gauge support for the Council's proposal to borrow £210,000 to purchase a two-bedroom property in Rye to let to a young Rye household at a discounted rent.

It was noted that, of the 107 Rye parishioners/businesses that responded, 94 (88%) were in favour of the proposal.

Members were invited to consider whether the response to the survey was sufficient to support an application for borrowing approval.

Cllr Hughes recalled that at the last Town Council elections electors commonly expressed concern to candidates about the lack of affordable housing - and this issue had been a key feature of her manifesto. She had discussed RTC's discounted accommodation proposal with a wide range of people (100+) of different ages and in various environments. There was overwhelming support for the initiative – with just one person with no children being against it. Those consulted appreciated that RTC had listened to their concerns about young

people having to find accommodation outside the parish – and the consequent loss of skills and contributions to the life of the town. They appeared to appreciate also that RTC was providing a 'local response to a local need' and was not relying on RDC, Orbit, ESCC or AmicusHorizon. People seemed to understand that the proposal needed to start small – ie with the purchase of a single dwelling. Cllr Hughes was aware that Cllr Kirkham was concerned about the Council entering into a long-term commitment but she considered that RTC had received a strong mandate to proceed.

Cllr Fiddimore observed that RTC had been considering purchasing one or more properties for the last 18 months or so and the reaction had been consistently largely supportive. It was not usual for surveys to attract a relatively low response.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Boyd, the Clerk confirmed that one letter of objection (distributed previously) had been received.

Cllr Creaser considered that the fact that 88% of those responding to the survey suggested that there was a high level of support for RTC's innovative proposal.

RESOLVED To note the response to the survey.

(b) Engagement

Cllr Erswell invited Members to consider whether to hold a drop in session in order to explain the thinking behind the proposal in greater detail. A number of parishioners had advised him that they would appreciate more information. Given that this is a new initiative it would be appropriate to extend RTC's engagement with parishioners in a clear and easy to understand way. He suggested that this could be achieved by holding a drop-in session.

Cllr Hughes considered that the survey flyer had been very clear and it was unlikely that anyone had trouble understanding it.

Cllr Fiddimore was broadly supportive of the suggestion. Although it was possible that many of those attending will have completed the survey, the event could attract those interested in being considered for the accommodation. She added that if RTC's intention to provide discounted accommodation was not successful the Council would still have the benefit of owning a valuable asset. Cllr Boyd agreed.

Cllr Boyd suggested that, additionally (and in conjunction with the event), a briefing sheet could be published.

The Clerk observed that much of the initiative's detail, such as the eligibility and assessment criteria, had yet to be worked up and asked if the proposed drop-in session would form part of the consultation process or would be used purely to convey information.

It was concluded that it would be less problematic if the session did not form part of a consultation process.

**RESOLVED To arrange a drop in session and publish a briefing sheet once more information about the proposal was available.
WG, Clerk**

(c) Costing (updated)

The Clerk advised that he had amended the note relating to the 'surplus' THC rental contribution; however, the bottom line figures were unchanged.

RESOLVED To receive and note the updated costing.

(d) **Borrowing approval**

RESOLVED To instruct the Clerk to apply for consent to borrow £210,000 to purchase a two-bedroom property in Rye to let to a young Rye household at a discounted rent by way of the completion of the required DCLG-NALC form – for approval at the next scheduled Council meeting (27 June 2016).
Clerk

34 CAMBER FIELDS

The Council was invited to consider whether to make representations to RDC concerning the application of the proceeds arising from the recent auction of Camber Fields.

With the consent of the meeting, Cllr Lord Ampthill advised that RDC's Cabinet last year resolved to set aside the capital receipts gained from the disposal of assets to purchase new revenue-generating assets. That said, it might be possible to vire capital monies from other funds towards, for example, the restoration of the Landgate Tower. RDC is continuing to work up a restoration proposal and he was optimistic that RDC would make a reasonable financial contribution.

A proposal for resolution that RTC should wait until the likely cost of the restoration was known before making representations to RDC regarding the Camber Field auction proceeds was not successful.

Cllr Prewer observed that it was unlikely that a restored Landgate Tower would generate revenue – therefore RDC would not make available the Camber Field receipts. Cllr Ampthill responded that monies might be released from other RDC funding pots.

RESOLVED To write to RDC to seek confirmation that the proceeds generated from the sale of Camber Fields – or an equivalent sum – would be made available for capital expenditure within the Parish of Rye.
Clerk

35 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 the item following on the grounds that it would comprise an update on the proposed purchase of property.

36 LAND ADJACENT TO 7 WISH WARD

The Clerk gave an update on the Council's interest in acquiring land adjacent to 7 Wish Ward.

RESOLVED To ask RDC how the District Valuer had arrived at his/her valuation.
Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.07pm

Date Chairman