

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 2 February 2015**

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, Mike Boyd, John Breeds,
Jonathan Breeds (**Committee Chairman** - Deputy Mayor),
Mike Eve (**Committee Vice-Chairman**), Bernardine Fiddimore
(**Mayor**), Sam Souster

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Peter Cosstick – HC Manager *[part]*;
Neil Cunliffe – Rye & District Chamber of Commerce Chairman; 4
members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

58 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from
Cllrs Jo Kirkham, Ian Potter and Shaun Rogers.

59 CODE OF CONDUCT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

60 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the **Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014
(PR04) as an accurate record of the proceedings.**

61 MATTERS ARISING

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*17(b) Flag flying – Landgate Tower (providing RDC with two appropriate flags to fly
during the main visitor season) RDC has advised that one of the two poles is not safe
enough to continue to use. Confirmation that RDC is prepared to fly a RTC- supplied
flag from the other pole is awaited. RDC will not be replacing the defective pole.*

*34 Thwarting gulls (ascertaining the cost of a suitable bag to protect plastic sacks –
and asking RDC if it would consider introducing a scheme similar to Thanet DC's)
Outstanding.*

53 Public Conveniences (establishing a working group) This had yet to meet.

*78 Accessibility – Chamber (seeking advice from those invited to provide structural
survey estimates) Outstanding.*

*19 Work Programme, Resolved 2 (prioritizing asset review after completion of Annual
Report 2013) Both outstanding.*

*51.2d) HC – Structure (seeking guidance on alternatives from Hedleys and SSALC.
Outstanding.*

52 Priorities – Review (special PRGP meeting) Outstanding.

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64 Former FE Centre and Library (asking Andy Hemsley to invite Observer readers to provide their written recollections of Sue Middlehurst's publicly-stated undertakings) Needs to be followed up.

5.5 Grant application (ascertaining whether the Rye Festival's Constitution provides for RTC representation) Outstanding.

11 Freda Gardham Playing Field (inviting the Rugby Club to attend a meeting to provide an update) Arranged for the Council meeting scheduled for 9 February 2015.

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50 Work Programme, Resolved 1 (summarizing the existing WGs before the next meeting) See agenda item 67.

50 Work Programme, Resolved 2 (updating Standing Orders prior to May 2015 Elections) Outstanding.

52 Supporting Local Businesses, Recommendation (Holding an annual reception for all Rye businesses – to coincide with Small Business Saturday) Outstanding.

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53 Annual Town Meeting, Recommendation (Re-format) Actioned.

53 Annual Town Meeting, Resolved (Booking the Rye Community Centre) Actioned.

55 Rye Cemetery, Resolved (To consider the need to identify additional burial space once the survey report is available) Pending.

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57b) Living Wage (Deferring further consideration until the outcomes of a number of employment law appeals are known) Pending.

62 FINANCE

62.1 Town Hall

a) Schedules of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income for October-November 2014 be received and adopted.

b) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 30 November 2014, against that budgeted, be received and noted.

62.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress Report

The HC Manager, Peter Cosstick (PC) spoke to his update (**Appendix**) – adding that it is still unclear what will happen to emails and telephone calls, that would have otherwise been dealt with by Tourism SE, after 31 March. The closure of Rye TIC may result in increased revenue at

the HC but it has insufficient resources to provide something equating to a TIC service.

b) Payments and Income

RESOLVED That the Income by Customer Summary and Expenses by Supplier Summary for October-November 2014 be received and noted.

c) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 30 November 2014, against that budgeted, be received and noted.

62.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 30 November 2014 be received and noted.

62.4 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30 November 2014 be received and noted.

62.5 Grant Applications

It was noted that the Grants revenue budget balance as at 19.1.15 was £5,250.

Members were invited to consider an application from ARRCC for £1,495.80 towards the purchase of 90 new chairs for the theatre. The Clerk advised that the application had originally been made, in error, to Rye Relief in Need.

Comments included: Rye already has sufficient theatre space (Milligan Theatre, Rye Community Centre); it is difficult to make a profit from theatre productions/events; ARRCC has a negative balance sheet of £50,000; how will its creditors be paid?; ARRCC has fundamental strategic financial issues that need to be addressed; ARRCC does not have security of tenure; what would happen to the seats when ESCC decides to dispose of the site for development? (following completion of the Eastern Rother Tidal Defence Wall); ARRCC has considerable community support but is financially precarious; where had the money allocated to improve the sound and lighting in the theatre gone?

62.6 Draft Budgets 2015-16

Councillor Eve suggested that if RTC disposed of the TH Cottage it would not need to earmark £9,000 for repairs. The Clerk advised that the employer pension contributions provision was based on the 'worst scenario' of all employees electing to join the LGPS scheme.

Cllr Souster advised that RDC is intending to free its share of the Council Tax for the 5th successive year; however, ESCC is increasing its Band D by 1.9%.

RESOLVED to Recommend adoption of the Draft Town Hall and Heritage Centre Budgets for 2015-16 – and to Recommend that the precept for 2015-16 be set at £108,767.

63 RYE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

(a) Grant Application

Members were asked to consider further the application from Rye & District Chamber of Commerce for £1,000 towards the organisation of the 2014 Christmas Festival.

Speaking from the Gallery, the Chamber Chairman, Neil Cunliffe advised that:

- Over the last 3-4 years running the Christmas Festival had drained the Chamber's reserves;
- Most of the reserves remaining are ring-fenced – for example, for Radio Watch (soon to be relaunched) and CCTV in the High Street;
- The Chamber is prepared to consider helping future organisers by underwriting PLI cover and providing an account;
- The Christmas Festival needs to be self-funding – the Christmas Raffle run for two years had been unsuccessful;
- The Chamber continues to support the Rye Maritime Festival;
- It costs £1,200 to take down the 'string lights';
- Other expenses include road closures, licences, the Grotto, publicity and equipment hire;
- RDC would be contributing £1,500 towards the 2014 total cost of £2,500.
- The advice received by the Chamber that the string lights could stay up all year had proved to be incorrect – weather exposure had result in them being damaged.

Peter Cosstick reported that RTC had funded (£100) the safety-testing of the lamp column motifs (which had been in storage for a couple of years) and they had been found to be suitable for future use.

RECOMMENDATION That RTC provides £1,000 towards the take down of the string lighting.

(b) 2015

The Mayor reported that she had recently facilitated a meeting of those interested in improving future Christmas Festivals. An embryonic steering group had been formed and she suggested that, given the importance of the Festival, RTC should take a supportive role (hence the provision of £4,500 in the Draft Town Hall Budget 2015-16).

Cllr John Breeds expressed his thanks to Neil Cunliffe for his substantial work on the Christmas Festival.

Speaking from the Gallery, Peter Cosstick suggested that if one of post's roles was to act as the overall Co-ordinator for the Rye Christmas Festival s/he would need to be recruited soon. He confirmed that he was happy to draw on the £4,500 provided in next year's Draft Town Hall budget to (voluntarily) co-ordinate the display of the motifs; purchase some additional motifs – and ensure the lamp column infrastructure was sound; the Rail Station was lit and the large Christmas tree was returned to the Strand Quay. He could also explore lighting the Landgate Tower. However, he could not take on the string lighting because of the various H&S issues involved.

A friend of the Mayor has suggested a 'Rye in Lights' scheme – traders and residents would be encouraged to light up their windows. This could potentially

make up for the absence of string lighting and extend participation in the Christmas Festival outside the town centre.

64 TOURISM AND EVENTS

The Committee considered the Clerk's briefing note on appointing a Tourism & Events Officer.

Speaking from the Gallery, Neil Cunliffe advised that he was wholeheartedly in favour of the proposed appointment – there is too much for volunteers to take on. The town's 'festival offer' needs pulling together. Traders might prefer to contribute to one festivals/ events pot rather than continue with a system which sees approaches being made by to individual traders by festival organisers. Work needs to be done also on bringing in visitors 'out of season'. The flag/Christmas tree holders could be utilized more to add colour throughout the year. This would be aided if Rye in Bloom could be resurrected.

Councillor Eve supported the concept but did not like the use of the term 'officer' within the job title.

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to prepare a costed proposal for the Council to consider. Clerk

65 WORK PROGRAMME

Responding to a question, the Clerk advised that he was intending to seek advice on installing a stair lift from the Buttermarket to the Antechamber.

RESOLVED To receive the summary of the status of key tasks/projects as at 19 January 2015.

66 MILLENNIUM WALL: PROPOSED TRANSFER

RECOMMENDATION To note that Southern Gas Networks is not inclined to consider granting the Council a licence and – whilst accepting the potential land contamination liability – to proceed with the proposed transfer of the Wall to the Council.

67 WORKING GROUPS

The Clerk summarised the groups and their membership/status:

Public Conveniences Eve, Fiddimore, Rogers, Mary Smith

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Clerk, Eve, Holmes

Local Affordable Accommodation Boyd, Jonathan Breeds, Eve, Foster, Potter, Rogers

Bus Shelters Boyd, Fiddimore, Rogers

Annual Town Meeting (Considered to have fulfilled its remit.)

Human Resources John Breeds, Eve, Foster, Potter, Rogers, Clerk

Adverse Weather (Considered to have fulfilled its remit.)

Rye Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Mayor, John Breeds, Eve, Foster, Jennings, Rogers – plus community members

RECOMMENDATION To:

- (a) **Disband the ATM and Adverse Weather WGs;**
- (b) **Merge the Bus Shelters and Public Conveniences WGs;**
- (c) **Ask the Affordable Accommodation WG to hold its first meeting;**
- (d) **Ask the Clerk to conduct the business of the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations WG by email.**

The meeting ended at 8.04pm.

Date Chairman