

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 21 September 2015**

- PRESENT** Councillors Mike Boyd (**Committee Vice-Chairman**), Jonathan Breeds (**Committee Chairman - Deputy Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore (Mayor), Rebekah Gilbert, John Izod, Jo Kirkham, Ray Prewer, Andi Rivett, Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart
- IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Charlie Harkness (*Rye News*) and Pat Hughes; 1 member of the public

*The meeting commenced at 6.55pm.*

**17 APOLOGIES**

There was none.

It was noted that the HCM, Peter Cosstick was unable to be present.

**18 CODE OF CONDUCT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Andy Stuart                    **item 23**                    *pecuniary*                    Trustee of Rye Arts Festival

It was noted that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Cllr Stuart wished to speak on the item – but would not participate in any vote.

**19 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2015 (PR01).**

**20 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.*

*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.*

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

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

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

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5.1b)(i) & (ii) (Providing Cllr Gilbert with breakdowns of 'Miscellaneous Income' and Mayoral expenditure and income) Actioned.

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7 Visitor Management: Public Conveniences (offering to fund an additional 2 hours of cleaning daily within Rye's conveniences) RDC had declined the offer on the grounds that it is paying its contractor to deliver an adequate level of service.

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5.5 Grants (£400 grant to Rye Short Mat Bowls Club) Actioned.

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9 Economic Development (referring the formation of a WG to full Council) Actioned.

10 Chamber Acoustics (inviting the company that assisted Lydd Town Council to assess the Chamber) Outstanding.

11 Engaging with Younger People (asking Cllr Gilbert to explore how RTC could engage more effectively with younger people) Cllr Gilbert advised that she, Cllr Rivett, Cllr Jonathan Breeds and the Mayor would be attending assemblies at Rye College (9-10<sup>th</sup> October).

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12 Memorial Plaque (inviting the family to submit proposals) Outstanding.

14 The Pump, Wish Ward (providing up to £250 to fund a low maintenance planting scheme) The border had been replanted and was being maintained by the Town Hall's contractor.

16 Rye Town Steward (recommendation that the post holder's hours be increased to 30 per week, July-September 2015) Approved by Council.

## 21 FINANCE

### 21.1 Town Hall

#### a) Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income (April-July 2015)

The Clerk advised that, following the accounting software upgrade, staff had been unable, thus far, to generate reports that included all income and expenditure.

**RESOLVED** To note that the reports would follow.

Clerk

#### b) Budget Monitor

Cllr Gilbert sought clarification on the linkage between 'HC Profit' (21.2d) and the 'Heritage Centre Income' in the TH Budget Monitor.

It was concluded that, for the benefit of newer Members, it would be helpful to arrange a briefing to run through the TH and HC accounting reports.

Clerk

### 21.2 Heritage Centre

#### a) Progress report (Appendix)

**RESOLVED** To seek the assistance of Rye's District Councillors in relation to RDC's delay in updating brown road signs and the Station information panels (following the closure of Rye TIC).

Clerk

**b) Resignation**

**RESOLVED** To note that the post of Heritage Centre Manager will become vacant on 30 April 2016 and that the Human Resources Working Group is considering the implications.

**c) Payments and Income**

**RESOLVED** To receive and adopt the Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for June 2015-July 2015.

**d) Budget Monitor**

**RESOLVED** To receive and note the actual income and expenditure to 31 July 2015 against budget.

**21.3 Account Balances**

**RESOLVED** To receive the Statement of Account Balances as at 31 July 2015.

**21.4 Earmarked Reserves**

**RESOLVED** To receive the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 31 July 2015.

**22 WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED** To receive the summary of the status of key tasks/projects as at 7 September 2015.

Cllr Erswell advised that there had been progress on replacing RTC's web site and a visualisation should be available by the month end.

**23 NEW EVENTS: RYE ARTS FESTIVAL**

Note *New Events Fund for 2014-15 balance: £3,696*

Members noted that the Town Council awarded £2,304 to the Rye Arts Festival to improve the online ticket sales system – and considered Rother District Council's concern that it had previously given the Festival £1,800 from the Rye Events Fund (2013-14) towards an online ticketing system.

On behalf of RAF Cllr Stuart summarised the background: 2 years ago RAF received £1,800 from RDC's New Events Fund to finance a rudimentary 'bolt on' online ticket ordering facility; however, volunteers still had to print off tickets and post them to customers. It was envisaged originally that this online facility would account for 10% of total ticket sales – but it turned out to be nearer 25%. In order to allow customers to print their own tickets – and capture valuable marketing data - RAF sought 3 quotations to upgrade its improved (but basic) system. RTC subsequently awarded RAF £2,304 for this purpose from RDC's New Events Fund. The total cost (£4,104) was reasonable for an online ticket facility.

Comments included: The enhancement had been explained to Members when the application had been considered earlier in the year; it is likely that the improved system will increase ticket online sales further – justifying the additional expenditure;

there appears to be no duplication of expenditure; the ability to capture more information about customers should increase sales.

**RESOLVED To provide RDC with the proportion of online ticket sales achieved this year (once known) and to advise it that RTC is satisfied with RAF's response to RDC's concern.**  
Clerk

**24 PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

**RESOLVED 1 To note that the Police & Crime Commissioner does not support Rye and Battle Town Councils' proposal to fund jointly a Traffic Warden and that Cllrs Boyd and Fiddimore are hoping to attend a meeting on 6 October at which the PCC will outline what responsibilities and powers could be bestowed upon (civilian) Community Wardens.**

**RESOLVED 2 To consider parking enforcement further once Members had attended the PCC's meeting on 6 October.**  
Clerk

**25 HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING GROUP**

**A Work in progress**

**RESOLVED To note that the WG is working on:**

- (i) The recruitment of a Town Crier Designate**
- (ii) A pay grading review**
- (iii) The resignation of the Heritage Centre Manager**
- (iv) A review of the Town Steward's job content and terms and conditions of employment**
- (v) Estimating the cost of pension auto-enrolment in 2016-17**
- (vi) A review of the Town Clerk's workload**

**B National Living Wage**

**RCOMMENDATION That RTC conforms with the National Living Wage (rather than the Living Wage Foundation hourly rates) from 1 April 2016 – but applies it to all employees of 16 years or age and over.**  
*Note Under the Government scheme the Minimum Wage applies to those under 25.*

**C Town Hall and Heritage Centre Budgets 2016-17**

**RESOLVED To note that, in addition to provision for a cost of living pay award, the Council's budgets will – or may – have to make provision for: pension auto-enrolment; the introduction of the National Living Wage; the pay grading review.**

**26 BUSINESS PLANNING**

Members noted the range of suggested Town Council objectives generated at the SSALC-facilitated visioning held on 17 August – and were asked to consider how to progress the production of a business plan.

Comments included: Members should focus on what is realistically achievable (given the resources); some suggested priorities are already being pursued (for example – acquiring property to let at affordable rents, a FT Town Steward, more effective youth engagement, economic regeneration, effective parking enforcement); although RTC has limited control over a number of the objectives it could still exert influence; glazing in the Buttermarket could increase usage and revenue, lower heating bills and the area would be more 'presentable'; increased letting of the Buttermarket could result in the loss of (more lucrative) wedding bookings; Members could be invited to email the Clerk with their 5-6 preferred objectives – with a view to identifying RTC's priority objectives; not all Members had attended the visioning – are they able to put forward their preferred objectives?; any detailed assessment of the suggested objectives should be undertaken at a separate meeting – with all Members being invited;

Members could be invited to categorise the objectives in to high, medium and low priority; in practice, only a proportion of the high priorities would be pursued at any given time; there was a risk of longer-term/high resource objectives being dismissed – even though they had considerable merit; any business plan/priorities list would need to incorporate an element of flexibility in order to respond to unplanned events; any priorities agreed by RTC might not have public support.

**RECOMMENDATION** That, for the time being, RTC should focus on those objectives identified at the visioning event that it has commenced already.

**27 FREDA GARDHAM PLAYING FIELD - DRAINAGE**

Members received an assessment of the drainage at the entrance to the field and car parking area. The surveyor was of the view that the drainage system is contributing to flooding to the rear garden of 67 New Road.

It was noted that RTC's underlease with Rye Rugby FC requires the Club to perform and observe RTC's obligations under its head lease with ESCC. These include a covenant not to do anything that might cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to the owners or occupiers of neighbouring property.

**RESOLVED** To invite the Club to submit a proposal within 21 days [so that it could be considered at the Council meeting scheduled for 26 October].

**28 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** Not to exclude the public and press from the next item.

*Note There were no members of the public present during the discussion on item 29.*

**29 TOWN CRIER & DEPUTY TOWN CRIER POSTS**

Members were invited to agree the proposed terms and conditions of employment – and basis of recruitment.

**RESOLVED 1** To incorporate payment of £25 for attending commercial events within the Parish within the Terms and Conditions Summary.

**RESOLVED 2** To proceed to recruit a Town Crier Designate and adopt the terms and conditions (as amended) for the Town Crier and Deputy Town Crier posts.

*The meeting ended at 7.53pm.*

Date ..... Chairman .....

# HERITAGE CENTRE UPDATE SEPTEMBER JUNE 2015

- **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – APRIL - AUGUST 2015**
  - Still a 'yo-yo' trading year currently 1% down on last year
  - Problems in Calais probably resulted in an estimated loss of income of £2500 (student groups cancelling etc) also impacting on the town
  - September trading looks promising
  - Close monitoring of costs in place to counter any significant fall of income generation, the centre is still on track to deliver a modest profit

- **VISITOR SERVICES**

- We have successfully absorbed 'face to face' visitor services with no major impact
- Brown road signs and station information boards have still not been updated by Rother DC
- Winter Closing/Opening times –will again come into operation from 17<sup>th</sup> November until early February. The centre will only open at weekends, post Christmas period, and days when we have group bookings

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APPENDIX

## **HERITAGE CENTRE UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2015**

- **STAFFING**

- After nearly 7.5 years the Heritage Centre manger will be standing down end of April 2016.
- Aspiration discussions will be taking place with staff during October and options explored

- **OUTLOOK/OBSERVATIONS**

- The Heritage Centre continues to be a key asset for the town - providing a 'face to face' information service , educating visitors about the town and its history. It also remains a profitable major attraction