

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 22 June 2015**

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

The meeting commenced at 6.50pm.

1 APOLOGIES

There was none.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Jonathan Breeds **item 12** *non-pecuniary* Friend of family

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2015 (PR09).

4 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 – see agenda item 6.

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.

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.

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.

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

5 FINANCE

5.1 Town Hall

a) Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income

Responding to a question put by Cllr Boyd, the Clerk believed that the payment to *The Looker* was in respect of an ATM advertisement.

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income for February 2015-March 2015.

b) Budget Monitor

Cllr Gilbert asked:

(i) For a breakdown of 'Miscellaneous Income' (the figure being high) The Clerk thought this probably included short-term loan repayments – but would check. **Clerk**

(ii) Why the Mayor's Allowance expenditure was higher than budget. The Clerk advised that the Mayoral year and financial year span different time periods. He could provide a detailed breakdown of Mayoral expenditure and income. **Clerk**

(iii) If expenditure on promoting weddings/ceremonies should be increased in order to maximize the revenue derived from them. The Clerk advised that there had been a suggestion that RTC should create a dedicated web site for weddings/ceremonies.

The Clerk reported that final end of year accounts would be presented at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure to 31 March 2015.

5.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress report

The Heritage Centre Manager, Peter Cosstick spoke to his update – adding/highlighting:

- Growth to the year end was +16%
- Revenue was up in April, down in May and 'finely balanced' thus far in June.
- Following the TIC closure, finger posts and car park signage had been changed to direct visitors to the HC.
- RDC had undertaken to update the Station Approach information panels. Amending the brown signage remains with the Highways Authority.

- Since the TIC closure, more visitors have been requesting information at the HC; however, this does not necessarily generate income. The situation is being monitored.
- Brochure Connect has agreed to post out Rye Bay Guides for 12 months. The HC is currently receiving 8-10 Guide requests per week.
- Walk-in accommodation bookings have increased during June.

RESOLVED To bring forward item 7.

7 VISITOR MANAGEMENT: PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The HCM reported that:

- The HC receives quite a lot of negative feedback about the condition of Rye's conveniences – complaints usually start early afternoon and tend to be about the women's conveniences.
- The greatest period of demand is April-September.
- The toilets need (but do not receive) a thorough clean in the afternoon.
- The current (main) cleaner would be happy to work additional hours. She works 6 days a week – with the other day being covered.
- The specification provides for Rye's four pcs to receive 5 hours cleaning daily during the main visitor period. This reduces to 3.5 hours in the winter.
- He suggested RTC might like to consider supplementing the service by 2 hours a day from the start of the school summer holiday (20 July) to 30 September 2015 (73 days).

Comments included: the proposal was unlikely to be expensive and would be an opportunity to work with RDC; this could mean the difference between visitors leaving Rye with a poor impression of the town or not; contractors typically add 25% to their employee's wage to cover overheads.

RESOLVED (unanimous) To contact RDC to explore RTC funding an additional 2 hours of cleaning daily within Rye's public conveniences.
Clerk

5.2 Heritage Centre

b) Payments and Income

Responding to a question put by Cllr Rogers, the HCM explained that the payment of £1,264.07 to TSE was for the purchase of stock following the closure of the TIC.

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for February 2015-March 2015.

c) Budget Monitor

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

5.3 Account Balances

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

5.4 Earmarked Reserves

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

5.5 Grants

Members were invited to consider an application for £800 from Rye Short Mat Bowls Club towards two replacement short mat carpets.

Comments included: why could no suitable premises be found in Rye?; membership of this – and the Rye Bowls Club – overlap; as at 30.9.14 the Club had £3,415.98 in reserves; the Club used to meet at the former Freda Gardham School; hire charges at ARRCC – The School are considered to be rather high; the proposed new TG Community Centre might offer an opportunity for the Club to relocate back to Rye.

A proposal that no grant be awarded was lost.

RECOMMENDATION That a grant of £400 be awarded and the Club be advised that RTC would be minded to contribute more if the Club could find a way to move back to Rye. Clerk

6 WORK PROGRAMME

Responding to a question posed by the Mayor concerning the replacement of the damaged finial, the Clerk advised that he was in dialogue with a stone mason concerning suitable installation dates.

RESOLVED To receive the summary of the status of key tasks/projects as at 15 June 2015.

8 NEW EVENTS

It was noted that the balance of the New Events Fund (2014-15) was £3,696.

The Committee was asked to consider the applications following:

Applicant	Purpose	Requested	Notes
8A 18 Hours Ltd	Japanese dance and contemporary art (1 day)	£2,000	Re-submission – cost breakdown provided
8B Glow – Rye Christmas Festival	Promotional video	£1,500	Funds held by Chamber of Commerce

8A 18 Hours Ltd Comments included: the event would take place in the middle of the International Jazz Festival; it was not clear whether funding had been obtained from Hastings BC and RDC (in respect of Bexhill) nor how long the Rye event would last; the applicant was seeking 80% of the total estimated cost; it was uncertain how many visitors the event might attract.

RECOMMENDATION That the application be declined on the grounds that it does not appear to represent good value for money.

Cllr Fiddimore declared an interest in the application following by virtue of being a member of its committee.

8B Glow – Rye Christmas Festival Comments included: a sound case for the benefits of making the video had not been made; it should be possible to identify a project that would have a greater impact; there was an unexplained shortfall between the grant requested and cost of the video.

Cllr Fiddimore advised that the Festival Committee intended that the video should be shown at the Kino over the summer months with a view to encouraging cinema-goers from outside of Rye to return to the town for the Christmas Festival.

Members wholeheartedly supported the efforts being made to reinvigorate the Rye Christmas Festival.

RECOMMENDATION That the application be declined and the applicant be encouraged to submit a relevant application.

9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Members were invited to consider draft Terms of Reference for a working group to explore whether a new committee would be the most effective vehicle through which to pursue the Council's interest.

The Clerk suggested that if membership was considered at the next Council meeting then all Members would have the opportunity to put themselves forward.

RESOLVED To refer the agenda item to full Council. Clerk

10 CHAMBER ACOUSTICS

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Harkness asked the Committee to consider improving the acoustics in the Chamber – especially for the benefit of those with a hearing impairment. Even when sitting near the dais he had difficulty hearing what was being said on the dais. Although there are features within the Chamber that are not conducive to clear acoustics, some speakers are better at projecting their voice than others.

The Clerk advised that he had spoken with a company specialising in this matter and there were pros and cons to the possible solutions. He added that Lydd Town Hall had recently installed a system to improve amplification within its Chamber.

Cllr Gilbert observed that it was difficult for those in the public gallery to hear Members and wondered if the horseshoe-shape table arrangement could be 'splayed'.

Cllr Creaser advised that she needed to rely on a certain amount of lip reading.

It was agreed generally that this was a recurring concern and that something needed to be done.

RESOLVED To ask the company that assisted Lydd Town Council to assess the Rye Chamber. Clerk

11 ENGAGING WITH YOUNGER PEOPLE

The Mayor stated that she remained interested in engaging with younger people but now had limited time available. She had discussed the matter with Cllr Gilbert and was happy to propose that Cllr Gilbert should be asked to look into this in more detail.

Comments included: a Council meeting could be held at the Studio School (perhaps combined with one of its events); Hastings BC meets at different venues; students have been invited to a Council meeting previously; some Councillors had been involved in 'Councillor Speed Dating' at the College; the Academy is well-placed to suggest how RTC could fit in with its curricula.

RESOLVED To ask Cllr Gilbert to explore how the Council might engage more effectively with younger people (whether they live, work or study within the Parish) and to make recommendations. Cllr Gilbert

Cllr Jonathan Breeds re-stated his interest in the item following and handed the Chairmanship to Cllr Boyd for its duration.

12 MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Members considered a request from Claire Peters and Kevin Igglesden that RTC provides a memorial plaque in memory of Robert Igglesden.

Cllr Jonathan Breeds provided the clarification following: the applicants were happy to fund the proposed plaque (including its installation) and had identified the TH Garden as a desirable location. He added that Mr Igglesden Senior often used to sit outside Grammar School Records and in the TH Garden.

Comments included: The TH Garden wall currently displays a plaque dedicated to the memory of former Town Crier, Percy Sherwood; allowing another plaque in memory of a member of the public could set a precedent; (once RTC has confirmed ownership) the Millennium Wall could be utilised; the Wall is considered to be a piece of public art; it would be helpful to have a policy to refer to when considering such requests; it is common in Rye to provide/fund a memorial bench; it might be possible to lay a plaque in a suitable pavement; a plaque in the TH Garden could require advertising consent.

RESOLVED To support the request in principle and to invite the family to submit proposals.
Clerk

13 HONORARY FREEMAN SCHEME

The Clerk advised that Cllr John Breeds had requested that RTC's procedure be highlighted.

It was noted that the maximum number of (living) recipients had been set at 8 in order to avoid appearing to devalue the scheme.

The Clerk suggested that Cllr Gilbert could incorporate her thoughts that a 'scheme of recognition' should be introduced for younger people within the piece of work she would be undertaking in respect of 'engaging with younger people'.

14 THE PUMP, WISH WARD

The Clerk reported that the border fronting the (Grade II) Pump and brick cistern was not being maintained because it was no longer included for regular maintenance within RDC's Grounds Maintenance contract. He suggested that the Council might like to consider spending up to £250 on replacing the bed with a low maintenance planting scheme. RDC had indicated that it would be happy, in principle, for RTC to take on responsibility for the planting.

Cllr Stuart recalled that Rae Festing used to keep the border tidy. Cllr Fiddimore suggested that the Campaign for Action in Rye might provide a volunteer to maintain a new scheme.

RESOLVED To agree a budget of up to £250 to fund a low maintenance planting scheme.
Clerk

15 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 because item 16 is likely to entail discussion on the terms and conditions of employment of a member of staff.

Cllr Harkness elected to leave the meeting at this point.

16 RYE TOWN STEWARD

It was noted that the drier and warmer weather provided an ideal time to paint and repair street furniture but that the post holder has limited time to do this and undertake his other duties – particularly cutting back vegetation.

RECOMMENDATION That the post holder's hours be increased from 20 per week to 30 per week for the period 1 July 2015-30 September 2015.

The meeting ended at 8.19pm.

Date Chairman