

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning & Townscape Committee held
at Rye Town Hall on Monday 8 June 2026**

PRESENT Councillors Michael Boyd, Bernadine Fiddimore, Vagn Hansen (**Committee Chairman**), Chris Hoggart (Mayor), Pat Hughes (Deputy Mayor), Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart and Sophie Thorpe (**Committee Vice Chairman**).

IN ATTENDANCE Amy Head –Town Clerk; Colonel Anthony Kimber – Rye Neighbourhood Plan coordinator; Peter Connock and James Stewart – *Rye News*.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Boyd proposed and Cllr Hughes seconded the appointment of Cllr Hansen as Chairman. This was unanimously agreed and Cllr Hansen accepted the appointment.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Rogers proposed and Cllr Fiddimore seconded the appointment of Cllr Thorpe as Vice-Chairman. This was unanimously agreed and Cllr Thorpe accepted the appointment.

3 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received from Cllr Willy Everett.

4 CODE OF CONDUCT

No declarations of interest or Disclosable Interest.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for public comments/contributions. There was none.

The meeting was reconvened.

**5 MINUTES – PLANNING AND TOWNSCAPE MEETING – 7 APRIL 2026
(PT17) – TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES.**

RESOLVED The Chairman signed the minutes of the Planning and Townscape meeting held on 7 April 2026 (PT17).

6 MATTERS ARISING

There was none.

7 SOUTH BROOKS SOLAR FARM CONSULTATION 28 MAY – 9 JULY 2026

RESOLVED RTC should respond to this consultation as this farm has a wide impact on the surrounding area as it is so large (it covers 1208 hectares of land). The Clerk to draft a reply and send to the Committee Chair for approval incorporating the concerns that Committee members have regarding the size of the farm, the environmental impact on the area including damage to the views of this protected landscape from Rye. Cllr Stuart cited examples of climate change in countries like Morocco where such solar farms have been installed. Cllr Hughes reported concerns about damage to wildlife and in particular birds who may experience scorched air from the solar farm.

The response as agreed by the Chair of the Town and Planning Committee is attached in Appendix A.

8 RYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Colonel Kimber reported about the latest regulation stage of the NDP in the earlier Full Council meeting. He also reported that there was a lot of speculation about the status of the Section 106 agreement between Aldi/the other developers of the former Jempsons Yard site. At present, he believes that the Section 106 agreements are still ongoing.

Colonel Kimber also reported that Martello Developments had just submitted plans for the development of the Freda Gardham site. He would hopefully have a meeting with Martello in due course when they are able to reveal more about their plans.

9 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED To submit the following comment:

[RR/2026/0486/HOU](#)

104 Udimore Road, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7DY
Rear extension and erection of a front porch

SUPPORT APPROVAL

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.47pm

Date Chairman

Appendix A

South Brooks Solar Farm Consultation – RTC response by 9th July 2026

Rye Town Council's Planning and Townscape Committee wish to strongly object to this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the obvious impact it will have on the area where it is built but also for the impact it will have on Rye residents. One of the key objectives of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan is stated on page 21:-

Objective 4: Rye must continue to have a meaningful relationship with the surrounding countryside (The High Weald National Landscape and Romney Marsh). "In the same way that most residents live within about 15 minutes' of the Town Centre, they also are within 15 minutes' walk of open countryside. We need to retain the green spaces that bring the countryside into our town and allow the town to 'breathe'. We need to ensure that the size, form and location of new buildings do not cut us off from the glorious views from inside the Town and the stunning look of Rye rising from the Marsh from surrounding areas. The preservation of sight lines is important to most. In making this plan, we must do everything to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, biodiversity, historic built and cultural heritage of the area."

Rye Town Council's Planning and Townscape Committee is also concerned that this vast development covers 1,208 hectares of land which is designated as 'Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Farmland'. This land is protected by UK planning policy in the interests of food production. Although the solar farm does not sit directly on ecologically protected land such as SSSI or Ramsar Sites (Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay), its proximity to these sites and surrounding villages and towns will have untold impacts on the environment, wildlife and ecology. It is unknown how it will affect the flight path of rare birds in the area or other forms of wildlife with the change in their environment. It has also been suggested that microclimates could be created with the introduction of solar panels – such as have been reported by residents living near Morocco's vast solar farms.

In conclusion, Rye Town Council's Planning and Townscape Committee cannot support this project as it contradicts the objectives of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan. The environmental damage, loss of natural landscape and BMV Farmland far outweighs any environmental or economic gain.