

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

a Power of a Well Being Council



Annual Report

2010-11



Rye Town Council . . .

- is a Quality Council and a Power of Well Being Council
- continues a Mayoral tradition dating back to at least 1289
- has 16 elected Members and a 'Qualified Clerk'
- (in 2010-11) raised 64% of its annual income from sources *other than* Council Tax
- controls assets of just over £1m
- as one of its two Antient Towns, plays a full and active role in the Confederation of the Cinque Ports
- holds over 50 Council or Committee meetings a year (all of which the public may attend) plus meetings of working groups
- employs/retains a Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Town Hall Keeper, Town Sergeant, Town Crier, Second Mace Bearer, Seamstress, and four Heritage Centre Sales/Counter Clerks
- is the custodian of the Rye Town Model and the world famous Rye Gibbet Cage – containing the remains of John Breads, a local butcher who, in 1742, murdered mistakenly the Deputy Mayor (his intended victim was the Mayor!)
- owns and maintains a town hall, heritage centre, skate park, playing field, cottage, red telephone box, and black and silver finger posts
- is one of a diminishing number of councils in the UK still to require its Councillors and staff to wear robes and regalia at council meetings
- publishes, within *Rye Fixtures*, a quarterly newsletter
- nominates representatives to serve on over 20 local voluntary, public and community organisations
- holds monthly Councillor surgeries and hosts a regular MP surgery
- hosts around 50 wedding and civil partnership ceremonies every year
- comments on around 100 planning applications per annum
- initiated the *Rye Local Action Plan 2009-14*, the Rye Emergency Action Community Team (REACT)
- maintains two web sites:
www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk and www.ryeheritage.co.uk



It was with a feeling of both relief and delight that I was re-elected by my Council colleagues to serve a second Mayoral term on 16th May this year - after all, there was no guarantee that, on 5 May, you would re-elect me to serve as a Councillor for another 4 years (but you did – thank you!) and the newly-elected Councillors might have had another Mayoral candidate in mind (they hadn't – phew!).

You can never be entirely certain that you are performing the dual roles of Mayor and Council Chairman to everyone's satisfaction. Therefore, being re-appointed for a second year was a bit like having a big pat on the back! I must confess that a combination

of work (unforeseen) and family commitments meant that I initially struggled somewhat to fit everything in. This remained the case through much of my first year – and even into my second term! - however, the difference is that I am now positively enjoying the roles.

Casting a cursory eye back over the previous 12 months it would appear that little happened of any consequence. The Town Council got no further with wresting back the ownership of Rye's two remaining allotments from a 'bloody-minded' Rother District Council which, it is now clear, suffers from a pathological aversion to giving up the freehold of anything – despite Rye's allotments and open space being of little monetary value (according to its Assets Register) and the Coalition Government requiring it to save £1.5m over two years. You would have thought Rother would have jumped at the chance of 'offloading' some (relatively worthless) land, miles away from its HQ in Bexhill, together with the associated commitments and responsibilities. Instead, it insists that only leaseholds are on the table and that running costs must transfer to other bodies – including local sports clubs and allotments associations.

2010-11 was not all about frustration and intransigence though: there was a notable triumph for 'people power' when the County Council agreed to introduce an 'experimental' one-way traffic scheme in Deadman's Lane; the Fletcher Theatre Group and St Mary's Church were close to completing the purchase of the FE Centre and (old) Library site from Sussex Coast College Hastings; the new Library – incorporating the Rye Community Help Point – provided us with much-improved and spacious library facilities (although the Town Council still has concerns about both functions sharing the same reception desk); not one – but two – major food retailers are vying to provide us with a wider choice of baked beans on the former lower school site in Ferry Road; and the Town Council got its Quality Council re-accreditation for another 4 years.

'Austerity Britain', 'Benefit Cuts', 'Rising Inflation', 'Double Dip Recession Risk' . . . interesting times. By working together and supporting each other I know Rye can weather the storm.

Councillor John Breeds
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Rye
(May 2010-)



Store Wars: Part 1?

2010-11 was the year when two big hitters in the retail sector vied for our affection as they prepared applications for planning consent to build a 'second supermarket for Rye' on the former Lower Thomas Peacocke School site (and ex railway land) in Ferry Road. The fact that one of them,

Tesco, does not own the site proved to be no deterrent – it had made some strategic acquisitions of adjacent property which will – or may – be necessary to create an adequate access to the site – and it is perfectly lawful to apply for planning permission on land that is not yours.

Tesco's interest in the land had been an open secret for many years and it was a huge surprise when East Sussex County Council, after appearing to have agreed that it should go to Tesco, sold it to Sainsbury's instead.

Both supermarkets embarked on 'charm offensives' and have submitted planning applications which have gone back and forth to Rother District Council's Planning Committee whose Members are, doubtless, aware of the sensitivity of the applications and the need to make robust – and defensible – decisions.

Aside from the appearance of whichever store ends up on the site, one of the main areas of concern is the close proximity of a level crossing to the likely entrance (where the Queen Adelaide PH is situated) and the likely implications for pedestrian safety and increased traffic congestion.

Having taken careful note of the views of local interest groups, those neighbouring the site, and others, the Town Council decided to support both applications subject to a number of key concerns being addressed.

At the time of writing the Planning Authority has yet to decide whether both, neither, or one (possibly the company that does not own the land) will be granted planning consent – along with a long 'shopping list' of conditions. Both supermarkets have invested heavily in support of their respective planning applications and it would appear that an acceptable development cannot proceed on the site without the co-operation of the other. Therefore, at this stage, it is far from certain that Rye will find itself with an accessible alternative to Budgens/Jempsons (which itself has plans to expand) in the near future.



We have the power

In a victory for 'people power' and local democracy, East Sussex County Council proposed an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order [now in place] which would introduce a westbound one-way system (local practice!) from Rye Hill to the Hillyfields footpath, becoming two-way for the remaining stretch to Love Lane.

Local people and the Town Council had been pushing for a scheme such as this for many years: an appropriate one-way 'solution' to vehicles having to back out on to the A268 (Rye Hill) was an 'outstanding action' within the Rye Area Local Transport Strategy - but County argued that, at an estimated £70,000-£90,000, the cost could not be justified in the current funding climate.



Good intentions

In April 2010 the Town Council received a request from Rother District Council to contribute towards the cost of new bus shelters in Station Approach – the current ones being in urgent need of replacement. The District Council – owner of the existing shelters - was prepared to contribute £5-6,000 and also to improve the appearance of the area by spending an

additional £20,000 on a new planting scheme, hard standing, edging, low level railings and litter bins.

The Town Council wholeheartedly supported the replacement of the shelters and set up a working group to investigate the options available and to consider the implications of taking on responsibility for the shelters. The group took advice from the Police (one of its members) on features which would serve to reduce levels of criminal damage to shelters. A suitable model of shelter, which was aesthetically 'in keeping', was sourced and the Town Council suggested to Rother that it purchased this shelter – together with some bench-style seating. It agreed also to take on responsibility for the shelters ordered after their installation.

Unfortunately, although attractive, the new shelters proved not to be entirely 'fit for purpose', allowing rain to enter during certain weather conditions, rendering the seating inside unusable. The Town Council subsequently asked Rother to seek the advice of its in-house solicitor on whether there were grounds for complaint to the supplier. This request was declined on the basis that shelters vary in their design and therefore their degree of protection varies. At no point during the selection process did Rother (which has experience of installing shelters in the District – notably Bexhill) suggest that the model of shelter chosen would not, well, actually do what would reasonably be expected of a shelter.

Until this unsatisfactory situation has been resolved the Town Council will not formally accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the new shelters.



Pleased to help

During 2010-11 the Council agreed the grants following: Rye College (making carnival costumes) - £300; Rye Community Centre Association (emergency lighting) - £750; Rye Cricket Club (practice nets) - £750; Rye & District Chamber of Commerce (2010 Christmas Festival) - £1,000; Rye Maritime Festival (2010) - £500; Rye Scouts (new scout hut) - £5,000; Rye United FC (hard standing & walkway) - £2,000. Applications for funding may be made at any time of the year. An application form may be found at: www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/moneygrants.aspx



What's the problem, Rother?

How could another year pass without mentioning these?!

The Town Council has suspended its legal efforts to wrest the freehold of Rye's two remaining allotments sites (South Undercliff and Love Lane) from Rother District Council because it has no wish to subject Rye and Rother Council Tax Payers to further expense. Regular readers will recall that the Town Council considers that it effectively delegated the 'allotments function' to Rother in the 1970s – with the associated land – and can ask for the function to be returned to it at any time.

Rother's doggedness and (now withdrawn) offer of a long(-ish) lease instead is perplexing: it states that it (like the Town Council) has no wish to develop the land in question – and values both sites at just £14,781 apiece – yet it point blank refuses to return the freeholds to their rightful owner.



Safeguarded

The Council was delighted to learn that, subject to contract, the joint acquisition offer put together by the Fletcher Theatre Community Interest Company and St Mary's Church for the FE Centre/former Library site has been accepted by the Governing Body of Sussex Coast College Hastings. The intention is that the Church will manage the oldest section of the FE Centre (fronting Lion Street) and that the Fletcher Group will convert/develop the remainder of the site into a digital cinema/arts facility.

Rye Heritage Centre

what is it?

Rye Heritage Centre is an information and education centre located on the Strand Quay (A259). It comprises the Town Model (sound and light show), audio walking tours, old pier amusements, guided ghost walks, 'walk in' accommodation booking and a gift shop.



who runs it?

Since April 2009 the Centre has been managed on the Town Council's behalf by Peter Cosstick. The four members of staff are employed directly by the Council.



what does it do?

Peter Cosstick, the Manager, explains:

The Heritage Centre continues to be a major local attraction and provides thousands of visitors with local information about Rye and Eastern Rother. The Centre receives no grant funding but, despite another challenging year, it continues to grow – generating a surplus for the Town Council of £8,451 (40% more than 2009-10).

We continue to build on links with educational establishments throughout the world and, once again, our visitor numbers to the Story of Rye (Town Model Sound & Light Show) have increased. The walking audio tours are still popular. Between October and February – in collaboration with Rye Museum - we ran a number of guided ghost tours. These proved to be an enormous success, attracting visitors into the town during the leaner winter months. They will continue to run in 2011-12 – and an additional walking tour is planned.

Visitors to the Old Pier Amusements 'penny' arcade machines (first floor) were also up. Two new machines are to be introduced.

Our range of gifts has expanded and we would like to think that there is something for everyone! We sell a small range of Rye Pottery and are the sole Rye agent for Romney Marsh Ceramics (provider of hand painted house plaques).

Lastly, do check out are revamped web site (address below).

visit www.ryeheritage.co.uk

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*Cllr Frank Palmer,
Committee Chairman
May 2010 - May 2011*

Planning and Townscape

what is it?

A Committee of 11 Councillors dealing with: commenting on planning applications, street naming, development/waste minerals plans, highways, street cleaning, street furniture, the built environment.

what has it done? (summary)

Made recommendations to the Planning Authority on around 100 planning applications; met fortnightly; considered a request to support the provision of additional signage for Rye Tourist Information Centre (Lion Street); asked Rother DC to remove the dead trees (planted 18 months previously) and associated fencing adjacent to the River Tillingham; made representations about the removal of a post box at the top of Udimore Road during the construction of the entrance to Valley Park; continued to support the expansion of Lydd Airport in order to benefit the local economy and provide employment; determined the location and design of new/additional signage to reduce damage to the Landgate Arch by high-sided vehicles; continued to push for permanent cobbled streets repairs; suggested street names for the Valley Park development; worked with Rother DC on re-drafting the Rye & Rye Harbour section of the LDF Core Strategy; commented on proposed changes to the Rye Bay Area Special Protection Area; responded to Tesco's planning application in respect of the former Lower School site; re-stated – and strengthened – the Council's opposition to Sussex Coast College Hastings' residential planning application for the FE Centre site; backed the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order in Deadman's Lane.



*Cllr Ian Potter
Committee Chairman*

Policy, Resources & General Purposes

what is it?

A Committee of 13 Councillors dealing with: Council property, finance (including audit), the Heritage Centre, events, funding applications, artefact reproduction rights and human resources.

what has it done? (summary)

Met five times; reviewed – and amended – the Draft Budget 2011-12; considered applications for funding from local community, sporting and voluntary organisations; organised a meeting of Rye Local Action Plan stakeholders for the purpose of encouraging them to take forward the 'actions' within the plan;

undertook the preparatory work necessary for the Council to obtain Quality Council re-accreditation; established a Human Resources Working Group; reviewed the rent paid by Rye Rugby FC for exclusive use of the Freda Gardham Playing Field; monitored the operation of the Heritage Centre; recruited a Town Sergeant; backed Rye & District Community's Transport's response to County's Review of Supported Bus Services; established an Adverse Weather Working Group; considered the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting; expressed concerns to Rother DC about its stray dogs contract with Animal Wardens.



*Cllr Mary Smith,
Committee Chairman*

Public Services

what is it?

A Committee of 5 Councillors and co-opted Community Members which makes recommendations to Council in relation to safety, well-being and quality of life.

what has it done? (summary)

Met four times; benefited from regular Police attendance at meetings; made representations about the absence of custody facilities at Rye Police Station; received regular updates on the work of the Rye Emergency Action Community Team (REACT) and the Marsh Link Action Group (rail); took a keen interest in the future of the FE Centre and adult education – and development of the Tilling Green Community Centre; continued to press for the provision of a local bulky waste collection point; commented on the level of allowances available to members of the Sussex Police Authority; received a presentation on the proposed Rye Learning Hub.



**Rye from the
Rother**
by Ron Dellar

By kind permission of the artist, part of this painting appears on the cover of this Report.
Enquiries:
01903 773382.



Rye Relief in Need

what is it?

The Town Council's charity which distributes its investment income for the benefit of *Rye residents* in need, hardship or distress.

what has it done?

Over the past year it has made the grants following:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------|
| • Individual resident | Fridge-freezer, cooker, pram/pushchair | £300.00 |
| • Vitalise | subsidised care breaks | £124.50 |
| • ARRCC | Continuation of complementary Therapies art and ICT | £915.00 |

how do we/I apply?

Applications from both organisations and individuals may be made at any time. There are two forms: one for individuals; the other for organisations – both available at www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/moneygrants.aspx

Contact: The Secretary, Rye Relief in Need, Town Hall, Rye TN31 7LA
 t 01797 223902 e townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk

Rye Merchant Seamen's Fund

what is it?

The Town Council is involved closely with this charity which was established in 1924 for 'the relief and support of maimed and disabled seamen connected with the town and port of Rye and the widows and children of such seamen as shall be slain or drowned in the merchant service.'

what has it done?

The Charity Commission has advised that the charity trustees may consider applications from, and on behalf of others working on the sea. Further details are available from the Secretary.

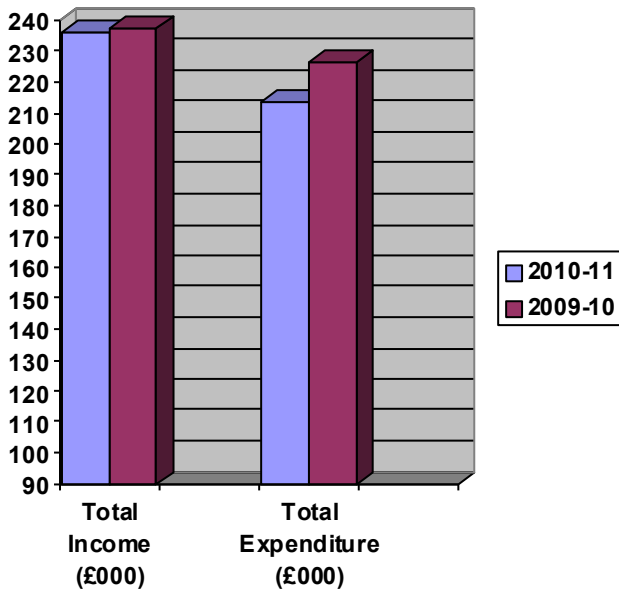
Contact The Secretary, Rye Merchant Seamen's Fund, Town Hall, Rye TN31 7LA
 t 01797 223902 e townhall@ryetowncouncil.gov.uk

Annual Accounts 2010-11

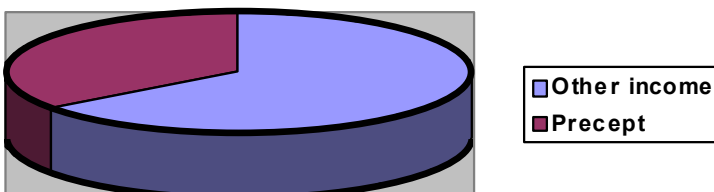
(overview)

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2011. They are subjected to external audit and internal audit (by an independent auditor). Every year local government electors are given an opportunity to examine the Council's accounts and financial records – and to put questions to the Audit Commission-appointed auditor. Copies of the full accounts – and last Auditor's Opinion - are available on request or may be viewed at www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/moneyannualaccounts.aspx

Income & Expenditure



Precept (local tax) as a proportion of total income





Town Clerk Richard Farhall
Assistant Town Clerk Judy Pettitt

Councillors

AMPTHILL Lord*	Mountsfield, Rye Hill, Rye TN31 7NH e cllr.david.russell@rother.gov.uk	t/f 227106
BANTICK Granville	25 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DS	t 227724
BLUMIRE	43 Marley Road, Rye TN31 7BD e gemma.blumire@btinternet.com	t 224759
BREEDS John <i>(Mayor)</i>	71 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7EA e jabreeds@live.co.uk	t 222554
BREEDS Jonathan	The Standard Inn, The Mint, Rye TN31 7EN	t 225996
EVE Mike	Chequer, East Street, Rye TN31 7JY e mikeweve@btinternet.com	t 225026
FIDDIMORE Bernardine	8 Doleham Cottages, Doleham Hill, Guestling TN35 4NA e councillorfiddimore@fsmail.net	t 01424- -814194
FOSTER Heidi	17 Strand Court, Strand Quay, Rye TN31 7AY	t 229103
HOLMES Sonia	23 North Salts, Rye TN31 7NU	t 222068
JENNINGS Nigel	16 Love Lane, Rye TN31 7NE	t 226603
KIRKHAM Jo	10 Cadborough Cliff, Rye TN31 7EB	t 222562
POTTER Ian	146 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DZ	t 223453
ROGERS Shaun <i>(Deputy Mayor)</i>	36 Ferry Road, Road, Rye TN31 7DN e shaun.rogers156@btinternet.com m 07983 098284	t 225632
SMITH Adam	24 Tillingham Court, The Link, Rye TN31 7BT e cllr.adamsmith@yahoo.com	t 229096
SMITH Mary	10 Tower Street, Rye TN31 7AT e mysdys@hotmail.co.uk	t 227569
SOUSTER Sam*	96 Udimore Road, Rye TN31 7DX e cllr.sam.souster@rother.gov.uk	t 224305

* also a Rother District Councillor for Rye

Others

Amicus/Horizon	t 0845 3550999	www.horizon-hg.org.uk
East Sussex County Council	t 01273 481000	www.eastsussex.gov.uk
MP Amber Rudd	t 01424 205435	e amber@amberrudd.co.uk
Rother District Council	t 01424 787878	www.rother.gov.uk
Rye Heritage Centre	t 01797 226696	www.ryeheritage.co.uk e ryeheritagecentre@btconnect.com e ryetic@rother.gov.uk
Rye Tourist Information Centre	t 01797 229049	
Rye Community Help Point	t 01797 222293	
Rye's County Councillor	t 01424 814513	
Keith Glazier	e cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk	
Rye Partnership	t 01797 229600	e admin@ryepartnership.org.uk