

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 12 November 2007

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds, Brian Elliott, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (**Mayor**), Frank Palmer, Ian Potter, Shaun Rogers, David Russell, Sam Souster (**Deputy Mayor**), David Wright

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; George Brown – Town Sergeant; Hugh Moseley – Mayor’s Chaplain; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 24 members of the public; Kevin Boorman – 1066 County Campaign Manager and Head of Destination Management & Marketing for Hastings Borough Council; Emma Oldham – Rother District Council Tourism Officer; Noelle Ward and Jane Kilby.

The meeting commenced at 6.30.

Prayers were said by The Reverend Canon Hugh Moseley.

65 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Sylvia Willgoss.

66 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Granville Bantick	<i>personal</i>	item 71c)	Friends of Rye Library Secretary
Cllr Jo Kirkham	<i>personal</i>	item 71c)	Director of Rye Partnership
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>personal</i>	item 71c)	Director of Rye Partnership
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 71c)	Director of Rye Partnership

67 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remembrance Sunday The Mayor thanked Members for their attendance. Around 500 people had been present for the Service and many attended the War Memorial for an unveiling of a new listing – that of Corporal John Rigby. Sadly the weekend had been marred by the theft of three Poppy Collection tins from the George, River Haven and Rye Harbour Stores.

Rye Fawkes Somewhat amusingly Cllr Souster, who had been wearing a Burberry check coat, was ‘kidnapped’ by members of the Hastings Bonfire Society in (friendly) retaliation for a report in the *Hastings Observer* in which Rye Town Council was associated with a reference to ‘Hastings’ Chav image problem’.

6.36 *The Mayor adjourned the meeting for a presentation by Kevin Boorman, Public Question Time and the Reports of the County and District Councillors (Appendices A-C).*

7.30 *The meeting reconvened.*

Cllr Jonathan Breeds left the meeting.

RESOLVED 1 For the benefit of the members of the public present, to bring forward consideration of item 71.

RESOLVED 2 To suspend Standing Orders 28j) (not speaking more than once) and 29 (requirement to stand).

71 RYE PARTNERSHIP

(a) Reports from representatives

Cllr Wright advised that the last Partnership Members' Meeting took place on 27 September. Those attending had been informed that the results of the review into town management and marketing were likely to be available within the next couple of weeks. The *Rye Guide 2008* was on schedule and would be published by the end of October. As a result of unfavourable publicity concerning the Fish Processing Plant, the Partnership Chairman had stated his intention to meet with fishermen's representatives. The refurbished Animate Education and Training Centre had now attracted regular bookings – providing a valuable income stream – although an upgrade of the gas supply was still awaited. He had made the observation that Members' Meetings tended to be an exercise in information dissemination and added that he considered the Partnership would attract less criticism if it took positive steps to publicise its activities/achievements – for example by updating its web site, publishing a newsletter and securing a regular 'presence' in the *Rye Observer*.

He considered that the Mayor's/Council's involvement in the Information & Visitor Management Group had help to ensure that the disruption arising from repairs to Monkbretton Bridge had been minimised.

Cllr Rogers had not attend the last Members' Meeting but agreed that the Partnership should do more to publicise its activities – as well as its funding sources.

SS acknowledged that poor communications with the community had been a (relatively recent) Partnership failing.

Speaking from the Gallery, the Partnership Chairman, Cllr Glazier accepted that the Partnership had not communicated its work effectively but added that he always responded to direct requests for information. He was certain that his fellow Directors would support efforts to improve communications and emphasised that the Partnership was run largely by volunteers. Ideas for improving communications – or for projects – would be welcomed.

(b) Rye Town Manager

Cllr Hall observed that Rother District Council had advised that Yolanda Laybourne would not be returning to the role of Rye Town Manager and invited Members to consider a course of action. It could be an opportune time for the role to be reviewed.

The Clerk advised that the funding associated would the post was protected and that, later in the week, it was likely that the Partnership Board would be considering the Town Manager post as part of its consideration of the results of the town management/marketing survey.

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Glazier added that question to be addressed was how the money associated with the post could best be used to benefit the people of Rye.

The Mayor explained the background to the introduction of town management in Bexhill, Rye and Battle – which took place whilst he was a District Councillor. Rye & District Chamber of Commerce had sought it. Rye Town Council narrowly (on a casting vote) accepted the concept but considered that

it should fall under its auspices. It had been unhappy with the terms of reference on the resulting Rye Town Management Action Group which allowed for the Chamber and HotCats to have two (commercial) representatives each, with the Town Council being restricted to two.

Cllr Souster suggested that the need for a town manager should be reviewed and that, perhaps, a Town Improvement Manager would be more appropriate.

RESOLVED To ask explore the possibility of the Town Council employing a Town Manager and the funding associated with the post being re-directed from the Partnership to the Town Council.
Clerk

(c) Petition

Members were asked to note that the Mayor had been presented with a petition signed by 54 local people seeking an independent inquiry into the affairs of the Rye Regeneration Partnership, and were invited to agree a course of action.

7.54 *The Mayor adjourned the meeting to permit public comments on this item (see Appendix C).*

9.08 *The meeting reconvened.*

Cllr Potter considered that it was inappropriate for the Council to call for a (inevitably very expensive) Public Inquiry into the Partnership. He and the Clerk observed that the document presented could not be considered to be a valid petition – it was an unlinked list of signatures and addresses with an accompanying letter.

Cllr Russell was unclear to whom the petition would be sent. A number of members of the public cited either the National Audit Office or Audit Commission.

A proposal that Rye Town Council should support the holding of an independent inquiry through the National Audit Office was lost.

RESOLVED To consider this matter further when the organisers have supplied a better-supported petition in a conventional format.

9.15 *The Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow the representatives of 1066 and the majority of the members of the public present to leave the Chamber.*

9.20 *The meeting reconvened.*

70 DEVOLVED SERVICES WORKING GROUP

After summarising the background to the formation of the Group and its terms of reference, its Chairman, Cllr Wright spoke to the Notes of its last meeting (29.10.07) - highlighting the 'devolved services criteria' supplied by RDC and the Group's Recommendation.

Members of the Group had considered that the criteria were largely acceptable and had formed the conclusion that further progress on negotiating a package of devolved services would not be possible without accurate core financial/management information for RDC services provided within Rye only (the major obstacle being that RDC tends to spread income/costs across the District, rather than apportion them by

Parish/town). RDC had suggested engaging one of its retired senior accountants for this purpose at a total cost of £4,400 – to be split equally between RDC and RTC.

RESOLVED (unanimous) To adopt the Group's Recommendation that the Council budgets up to £2,250 as its contribution towards the consultancy work proposed, subject to RTC agreeing the Brief.

68 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2007 (C8).

69 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 3 September 2007 (PT09), 17 September 2007 (PT10), 1 October 2007 (PT11), 15 October 2007 (PT12) and 29 October 2007 (PT13).

(b) Policy, Resources & GP

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2007 (PR03).

(c) Leisure & Tourism

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2007 (LT03).

72 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

The meeting ended at 9.34.

Date Chairman