

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Tuesday 22 April 2008**

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*, 2 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.35.

123 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Ian Potter.

124 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Brian Elliott	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 130	Submitted one of the proposals
Cllr Shaun Rogers	<i>personal</i>	item 133	Allotment holder (Love Lane)
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 130	Partner a Director of one the organisations submitting a proposal

125 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 (C14).

126 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 17 March 2008 (PT23) and 31 March 2008 (PT24).

(b) Public Services

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2008 (PS04).

127 BYE-ELECTION

Members were invited to consider whether to ask the Electoral Services Manager to issue poll cards in relation to the bye-election to be held on 22 May at an additional estimated cost of £1,000 (estimated cost of bye-election excluding poll cards: £3,500).

Cllr Bantick considered that issuing poll cards was an essential component of the democratic process. Poll cards provide a useful reminder to vote and advise electors which polling station they could attend – thereby avoiding confusion on the day.

RESOLVED Not to issue poll cards.

128 APPOINTMENTS

a) Property Crime Action Group

Members considered an invitation from the Safer Rother Partnership's Community Safety Co-ordinator to appoint a representative to the Group.

It was noted that the town's previous representative had been the Town Manager. Cllr Russell and Souster had both been approached by Cllr Patten, urging the Town Council to nominate a representative. It was noted that meetings were held during the day time which prevented a number of Members from attending.

**RESOLVED To accept Cllr Holmes' offer to represent the Council.
Clerk**

b) Rye Partnership

Cllr Wright explained that he had resigned as a Council Partnership representative mainly because of the limited opportunities for representatives to influence/guide the Board's decision making.

RESOLVED To fill the vacancy at Committee Formation on 12 May.

129 DOG CONTROL (EXCLUSION) ORDER

Members were asked whether they wished to make representations on Rother District Council's Notice of Intention (dated 11 April 2008) to introduce an Exclusion of Dogs Order. (Deadline: 16 May 2008.)

It was noted that whereas the original draft proposed the exclusion of dogs from all Rye's publicly-accessible open spaces, the latest prohibited dogs from the Gun Garden, Cemetery, Bowling Green and children's play areas.

RESOLVED To note the Order.

Cllrs Souster and Elliott restated their prejudicial interests in the item following.

130 MARKETING & TOWN MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Members were invited to give initial consideration to outline marketing proposals submitted to the Review by Rye Town Services, Rye & District Chamber of Commerce and Cllr Brian Elliott – as well as the Partnership Board's Review Discussion Document (Dec 07).

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct the Mayor adjourned the meeting to permit Cllrs Souster and Elliott to make statements.

Cllr Souster advised that following the 'unavailability' of the Town Manager he had agreed to the Partnership Board's request for him to Chair the Rye Marketing Group (RMG) on a temporary basis – a role he had undertaken until very recently. The RMG had obviously suffered by not having access to a paid co-ordinator; however, the work programme had been adhered to largely because of the voluntary efforts of Cllr Hall – with assistance from Cllr Elliott and John Izod. A convincing case would need to be made to ensure that RDC continued to fund marketing or town management.

Cllr Elliott advised that he had found working as part of the Rye Marketing Group over the past year or so frustrating – more pro-active, dynamic and energetic contributions were required. The Review presented such an opportunity.

Cllrs Souster and Elliott left the Chamber.

The Clerk explained that although these papers were to be considered by the RMG on 30 April the onus was on the Partnership Board to make a recommendation to the main funder. Rother District Council. The Partnership's position was that it would support whatever 'the town' thought was in its best interests. The challenge was to obtain consensus amongst the key stakeholders.

Cllr Hall advised that she had drafted her resume of the pros and cons of the proposals to prompt a debate. Her suggestion as to a way forward was something of a compromise.

The ensuing debate included the comments following: the Chamber had initiated an approach to RDC to explore the introduction of town management on the basis that its members do not have the time to do this and run their own businesses; the Council should ensure that the needs of the town's commercial interests (including visitors) should be balanced by the needs of residents; efforts should continue to be made to extend the main visitor season; traders needed a good summer in order to keep their businesses open in the winter – to the benefit of residents; in terms of a 'desirable shopping experience' Tenterden had overtaken Rye and was an appealing place to visit in terms of general appearance (including limited litter) and longer opening hours; the (SEEDA-backed) refurbishment of The George had reinvigorated the High Street and the company's marketing work produces spin offs for the town; the history of the town is based on fishing; why were efforts being made to attract visitors to a town with cracked pavements, loose cobbles and poorly maintained footpaths?; (until the Council obtained the new 'power of well-being') it would be difficult for the Council to take on marketing because the funds provided by RDC were intended to benefit 'Rye & District'; the work programme of the previous Town Manager reflected her interest/expertise in promotional work; RDC had clearly found it difficult to manage a member of its staff at a distance; none of the proposals appeared to provide the 'ideal solution'; the footpath from the Tillingham Sluice to the Fish Market needs to be improved and promoted; the Partnership and RMG need to be given a 'steer'; from where would the £50k-£100k mentioned in two of the proposals be sourced?; the education sector is the town's largest employer; whatever is put in place to deliver/guide marketing must involve all key stakeholders; the Scallop Festival was initiated by a business which served scallops; a sound case could be made for Rye employing both a Marketing Co-ordinator and a Town Development Officer; whoever held the funding would need to be accountable and be seen to operate in a transparent manner; it was preferable to delegate authority to an officer rather than attempt to make decisions 'by committee'; surrounding parishes could be asked for funding as these areas benefit from Rye's marketing activity; the longer the town was without a Town Manager the more it was losing out on financial support from RDC (guaranteed only until March 2009); the Council had precepted £4,500 towards employing an individual to take forward the production of a Local Action Plan.

RESOLVED That the Council advises the Partnership/RMG and RDC that it is prepared to contribute £5,000 towards the Year 1 costs of engaging a co-ordinator to develop the town (initially by working on a Local Action Plan) and to provide marketing support.
Clerk

Cllrs Elliott and Souster returned to the Chamber.

131 URGENT ITEMS

There was none.

132 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 on the grounds that the item following includes material which could form the basis of legal proceedings.

133 RYE ALLOTMENTS

Confidential – not included.

See Appendix.

Date Chairman