

PRESENTATION BY JEMPSONS

New Parking Scheme

Stephen Jempson (SJ) advised that Jempsons took over the Budgens store in 2006. A survey of car park usage undertaken Dec 06-Jan 07 revealed that the parking facility was being abused. A flyer was handed out to foot customers and put on cars which had been parked a long time, seeking the co-operation of car park users. This proved to be ineffective.

Jempsons considered four parking schemes, weighing up the dis/advantages before setting on the current scheme (Option 4). This option involves no labour and administration costs on the part of Jempsons because enforcement is contracted out to a licensed company and it is administered electronically. The customer does not need to find change for a ticket machine. The maximum stay is 1.5 hours. Initially, the scheme was operated 7am-10pm. However, now it is in force 8am-6pm, Mon-Sat. Jempsons is happy to consider any genuine complaints.

Jempsons was proposing to better sign post the parking restrictions and increase the maximum period of free parking to 2 hours.

Cllr Fiddimore suggested that the scheme had not been publicised sufficiently at the outset and that this – as well as the fact that people had been used to parking there without charge over many years - was responsible partly for the general discontent within the town. Furthermore, letters from aggrieved tourists were (effectively) bringing the town into disrepute. There should have been a prominent notice at the car park entrance.

SJ responded that the store 'greeter' had distributed 5,000 flyers to customers but conceded that, with the benefit of hindsight, more could have been done.

Cllr Fiddimore considered that the intended 2 hours free parking limit was a fair compromise.

Cllr Souster stated that one of the main complaints reported to him was that the first 'offenders' new of their transgression was when a fine was received in the post. Many did not like the vehicle recognition system which was used (albeit legitimately) to obtain their contact details from the DVLA. The information could be 'sold on' to others. Cllr Wright agreed, suggesting it smacked of 'Big Brother'. He suggested that it was easy to fail to spot the current signage. SJ responded that Rother DC had told them to reduce the number of signs.

Cllr Souster added that there seemed to be more support for a 'double ticket' system, whereby one portion of a ticket remained displayed in the vehicle and the other was presented at the check out to gain a full/partial refund.

Cllr John Breeds suggested that customers were more likely to adhere to time limits if they were given printed notification – ie a ticket displaying the maximum permitted parking time.

Proposed Store Expansion

Andrew Jempson (AJ) explained that the company was intending to submit a planning application to extend its Crownfields store from 9,000sq ft to 15,000 – raising it to 'supermarket status'.

The existing store needed to be modernised. Local produce would be increased – as would the ranges of organic and Fair Trade products. There would be more fresh food counters, an

in-store bakery (hopefully), a free ATM and the car park would be re-designed. Through reducing the loading bay area only a few parking spaces would be lost (89 to 83). There would be more facilities for non-car-using customers and those with mobility problems. RDC was supportive because it wished to discourage unnecessary car journeys.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Hall, AJ confirmed that the store would remain open for the duration of the works.

AJ confirmed to Cllr Wright that the resulting increased (and combined) purchasing power should see prices fall.

Jempsons' policy of closing on Sunday was not open for negotiation. SJ suggested that Sunday closure provided an opportunity for other traders. The Chamber's cardboard recycling collection point would remain.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

George Shackleton congratulated Cllr Hall on her attempt to introduce a weekly static bulky waste collection point.

George Shackleton *Why were supporting papers for agenda items not available and what were the benefits of Quality Status?*

The Clerk advised that, following Mr Shackleton's request at a previous Annual Town Meeting, a set of agenda papers was provided at every meeting and located on the window seat at the rear of the Chamber.

George Shackleton *In 2005-06, despite Government grants of £56,177 and a Rother DC contribution of £36,000, the Rye Partnership made a loss of £9,533. Did the Council agree that the Partnership had passed its 'best before' date and that its functions should be transferred to the Town Council?*

The Mayor observed that it remained the case that the Partnership could access funds not available to the Town Council. Cllr Russell confirmed that SEEDA was now less willing to deal with small-medium size partnerships. Cllr Glazier stated that his previously-made offers to meet with Mr Shackleton still stood. The Partnership had acquired a range of assets on behalf of the town and remained keen to work with the Town Council. However, it was prepared to give up services if it could be demonstrated that others could deliver them to a higher standard. The Mayor observed that if the Partnership was dissolved its assets would be passed to the town.

Clifford Jordan *Was the Town Manager still employed?*

Cllr Glazier advised that the post holder was employed by Rother DC and it was dealing with a personnel issue. As soon as the matter was resolved, a statement would be prepared. The results of the recent review of the Partnership's marketing and town management activities would be known within the next 2-3 weeks.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Last meeting Cllr Glazier apologised for his non-attendance: he had recorded the date incorrectly in his diary.

New primary school Construction was underway. He hoped that any remaining issues could be resolved within the next 12 months.

New GP surgery The opening was likely to be delayed by one month. Rother DC had stipulated, within the planning permission, that the facility could not open until appropriate

traffic calming measures had been installed. Unfortunately, it had not communicated this to the County Council and the building contractor had not picked up on it until at a late stage.

REPORT OF THE ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Russell

Council Russell read from his written report (*see Appendix B*).

Responding to a query put by Cllr Potter, Cllr Russell estimated that tourism promotion accounted for around 2.5% of Rother DC's total budget.

Cllr John Breeds observed that 8,000 households had failed to complete an electoral registration form.

RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 28 AUGUST 2007: REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT CLLR

Voter registration form 2007/08

Members will be aware that this annual canvass is under way. Voters can return the form or register via the telephone or internet. As reported in last week's Observer, some 10,000 reminders were issued last year and, eventually, Council staff were obliged to visit 8,000 properties - a costly and time-consuming exercise.

Udimore Road

Now that a planning application has been lodged, and fees amounting to some £13,000 have been paid, Rother has no alternative other than to let the application take its course. Everyone is aware that Udimore Road is a reserve site – not to be released until all alternatives across the whole District have been explored – but Rother is not able to refuse to accept an application. When submitted, it enters the planning process. The most likely scenario is that officers will place a full Report for members' consideration at the November meeting of the Planning Committee. The officers' recommendation, which members may or may not accept, will be likely to include a review of the realistic land supply expectancy, particularly brown-field sites, during the next five years or so. I am certain that all of us will continue to strenuously oppose the release of this land.

Cabinet

Next Monday's meeting will consider, among other matters, the closure of the Monkbretton Bridge and what Rother can do to help – particularly regarding car parking. There will be a further Health debate, this time concerning the potential application by East Sussex Hospitals for Foundation Trust status. Some of the apparent advantages would include the right to retain any budget surpluses; the ability to borrow; and the installation of an extra tier of governance.

Tourism

There was a written question at last week's Council about the budget for this service. The answer included the information that RDC spends £213,500 on tourism per year. This figure includes £61,000 to the two TICs in Rye and Battle; £40,000 for the Regeneration and Tourism officers' costs; and £100,000 on marketing the District. These may be relevant figures as we get closer to being able to consider the results of the consultation exercise into Marketing and Town Management issues which was called for by the Rye Partnership.

Joint project

Members may have noticed that Northiam Sports Hall is a reality. It is a joint project between Rother, East Sussex C.C., Northiam School and local interests. £1.65 million

was raised from the Big Lottery and through partnership funding – which remains the principal way by which these substantial schemes can be delivered – including a capital contribution of £300,000 from Rother.

Environment Agency

A liaison group met last week in Lydd to receive an update on the Folkestone to Cliff End Flood and Erosion Risk Management Strategy. A document will be issued soon for consultation: and a main sticking point currently is the appropriate protection for Lydd Ranges. The plans put forward by Natural England in connection with habitat protection do not entirely correspond with the Army's needs to make full use of their land for military purposes because we are at war.

DR 28/08/07