

**Minutes of an Urgent Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye,  
on Tuesday 29 May 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)

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

*The meeting commenced at 6.35*

**26 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Wright.

**27 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

|                        |                    |                |                                                                       |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cllr Granville Bantick | <i>personal</i>    | <b>item 29</b> | Rye Wheelers member (cycle path might pass over land to be auctioned) |
| Brian Elliott          | <i>prejudicial</i> | <b>item 29</b> | Live adjacent to land to be auctioned                                 |
| Cllr Shaun Rogers      | <i>personal</i>    | <b>item 29</b> | Work at property adjacent to the land to be auctioned.                |

**28 COUNCIL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on  
14 May 2007 (C1 – Mayor Making)**

*Cllr Elliott restated his prejudicial interest and left the Chamber.*

**29 SURPLUS RAILWAY LAND**

Members noted that BRB Ltd had disposed of, or was disposing of surplus railway land in the town and were asked to consider a course of action in relation to the auction, on 31 May 2007, of two freehold sites (one Lot) south-west of Ferry Road – which could be utilised partly for a proposed cycle path.

The Clerk advised that the impending sale had been drawn to his attention by Cllr Bantick the previous week and emphasised that if the Council was minded to acquire the land it would need to be for a lawful purpose – such as cycle path, amenity/leisure area or conservation area.

*6.41 Cllr Fiddimore arrived*

After consulting the BRB web site, the Clerk had ascertained that the surplus railway land at Rope Walk had been sold already and the land adjacent to the Rye Station was under offer (sale prices unknown).

Members expressed disappointment that their response to the formal consultation on disposal of the land prior to Christmas – including retention for possible track dualing, cycle/foot path and conservation area – appeared to have been ignored.

Members noted that if the Council was minded to proceed with a bid it could draw on £50-£60,000 in the General Reserve. The Clerk advised that an auditor would expect

to see evidence that the Council had examined the pros and cons of purchase – and observed that the auction was just one clear day away. It was unusual for a parish council to purchase land at market value.

A number of Members highlighted the likely post-purchase costs – including, maintaining fencing, grounds maintenance, ensuring safe public access, public liability cover. These would need to be assessed.

Cllr Souster reminded Members that the Council had purchased the Freda Gardham Field from East Sussex County Council and found subsequently that it was difficult to generate sufficient income to pay for grass cutting. Cllr Kirkham added that the Field had been purchased, on a leasehold basis, with Rye Lottery monies.

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

The Mayor suggested that the surplus land might sell for £50,000 (say, 6 lock up garages) to £100,000 (bungalow).

The Clerk observed that it was unclear who owned the lane serving The Windmill and Fire Station. Cllr Rogers advised that he was aware that a property developer had approached neighbouring businesses/residences.

Responding to a question about the progress made by the Cycle Path Working Group, the Clerk advised that 'appropriate experts' had still to be approached for advice on the proposed route.

*The Mayor adjourned the meeting briefly for public participation.*

*Jim Hollands considered that it was crucial that the proposed cycle path went over part of the land under consideration.*

Cllr Jonathan Breeds observed that, as a statutory planning consultee, the Town Council would have some influence over any planning application submitted in respect of the site. Cllr Hall suggested that if the lot did not sell the Council could make a private approach. The Council needed also to obtain a Legal Pack.

A proposal to monitor the situation was lost.

**RESOLVED To exclude the public and press on the grounds that the discussion ensuing was likely to be commercially sensitive.**

A debate followed on the funding available for purchase of the Lot, associated costs, use of the land, anticipated ongoing revenue costs and likely interest in the land.

A proposal to submit a nominal maximum bid of £5,000 + £1 was lost.

**RESOLVED To take no action but, in due course, determine the purchasers of all the surplus railway land being sold currently in the town.**  
Clerk

*The meeting ended at 7.31*

Date ..... Chairman .....