

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Tuesday 16 December 2008**

PRESENT	Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Brian Elliott, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall, Jo Kirkham, Sonia Holmes, Paul Osborne, Frank Palmer, Ian Potter, Shaun Rogers, David Russell, Mary Smith, Sam Souster (Mayor), David Wright
IN ATTENDANCE	Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; County Cllr Keith Glazier; Andy Hemsley – <i>Rye Observer</i> ; Peter Cosstick; 5 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30.

84 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

6.31 *Cllr Kirkham arrived*

6.33 *Cllr Fiddimore arrived*

85 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr John Breeds	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Trustee of Rye Art Gallery
Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Member of authority (RDC) which had agreed to part fund the project
	<i>personal</i>	item 92	Member of authority awarding the contract
Cllr Keith Glazier	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Member of the authority which owns the site of the proposed Centre
Cllr Jo Kirkham	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Personal acquaintance of Ian Ross
Cllr Paul Osborne	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Member of RDC Cabinet, which had agreed to part fund the project
	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 92	Member of authority awarding the contract
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 86	Member of RDC Cabinet, which had agreed to part fund the project
	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 92	Member of authority awarding the contract

Cllr Sam Souster *prejudicial* **item 90** (RTS Partner a RTS Director
item to be
raised)

The Mayor adjourned the meeting for a presentation by Ian Ross on the proposal for a Creative Arts Centre on the site of the former Freda Gardham Community School. (see Appendix B).

7.12 The meeting reconvened

Cllr Osborne re-stated his personal interest in the item following.

86 PROPOSED CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE

Members were invited to consider the preceding presentation and, if appropriate, to agree a course of action.

Members were largely supportive of the project; however, given the economic downturn Cllr Smith remained concerned about public monies being used to fund the project.

RESOLVED To support the proposal to create a Creative Arts Centre on the former Freda Gardham school site.

87 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

RESOLVED To adopt the new Model Publication Scheme for all public sector bodies prepared by the Information Commissioner's Office and to adopt the Draft Schedule of Information Available from Rye Town Council (distributed with the agenda).

88 ROTHER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The meeting noted that Cllr Souster had resigned as one of the Council's two RALC representatives.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Smith's provisional offer to be the Council's second representative.

89 FREDA GARDHAM PLAYING FIELD

The Clerk advised that, with the approval of Rye Rugby FC, Rye Cricket Club had expressed a wish to install an artificial wicket on the field during the summer months. Members were invited to consider giving 'in principle' support to the proposal.

It was noted that Rye United FC was in urgent need of a more suitable location and that a meeting of interested parties had been held recently to explore the Freda Gardham 'middle field' being used for sport. Unfortunately it appeared that Rye United would not be able to access easily this field and it would not be worthwhile for it to invest in facilities (including a stand) on the site because it might be required for development purposes once the tidal defence scheme had been completed.

RESOLVED To support, in principle, the Cricket Club's proposed use of the Freda Gardham Playing Field.

90 URGENT ITEMS

(a) PCSO Dan Bevan

Cllr Hall expressed disappointment that PCSO Bevan had been redeployed to Iden, Playden and Rye Harbour.

PCSO Bevan had been well-established, highly-respected and valued by both residents and businesses. He was quick to respond, had considerable local knowledge and had provided an effective and accessible 'conduit' between the community (of all age groups) and the police. There was widespread concern that Rye had lost such a popular officer

Members generally concurred with this view but acknowledged that the police might have had legitimate operational reasons for PC Bevan's redeployment.

RESOLVED To ask Acting Chief Inspector Keating to review the decision. Clerk

Cllr Souster re-declared his prejudicial interest in the item following and left the Chamber.

(b) Rye Town Services

Members were invited to consider Rye Town Services's latest 'Statement to Creditors' (5.12.08 – tabled).

The Clerk advised that, following RTS's premature withdrawal from the Heritage Centre, RTC staff had spent considerable time repairing damaged trading relationships and the suggestion that RTC owes a 'substantial sum' (to RTS) was not helpful.

Cllr Russell suggested that the Statement was potentially damaging to RTC's reputation.

Cllr Hall observed that, despite requesting an urgent meeting with Councillors, RTS had not felt able to agree to a number of dates put to it and that it would not now be possible to meet before Christmas/New Year.

Cllr Elliott advised that he was a RTS creditor and suggested that the Statement indicated that RTS was 'clutching at straws'.

RESOLVED To write to RTS expressing disappointment that it had issued a statement which was potentially damaging to RTC – and to emphasise that RTS's claim on RTC had not yet been demonstrated to RTC's satisfaction. Clerk

91 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2): (with the exception of Peter Cosstick) to exclude the public and press on the grounds that the item following could form the basis of a tender application.

Cllrs Osborne and Russell re-stated their prejudicial interests in the item following and left the Chamber after both had made statements in accordance with para 12(2) of the Code of Conduct (See Appendix A).

92 RYE TIC CONTRACT 2009-12

Confidential – not included – see Appendix A.

The meeting ended at 8.30

Date Chairman

RYE CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE PRESENTATION

Ian Ross (IR) advised that he conceived the idea for a creative arts centre 18-24 months ago. He believed that many people were interested in visual entertainment but some found theatres a little 'imposing'.

IR had recently organised the *Class and Corruption* performance at Rye Fisheries and had run theatres and worked with the Arts Council. He was of the opinion that those running theatres were often not proficient in addressing building infrastructure issues.

IR had consulted with local educational establishments and individuals/groups involved in the arts and determined that there was a need for artists to have their own studio space and also for Rye College (which now has arts enterprise status) to find suitable accommodation to teach their students performing arts. The school building was ideally suited: the first floor could provide units to let to artists and the ground floor could be used for performance-related activities – and there was the space to create very large art installations.

He had drafted a proposal which make use of the redundant school site in New Road and had received backing from SE Arts and RDC.

IR acknowledged that there were a number of relevant local groups/stakeholders that he had not consulted initially but he now spoken with the Rye Arts Festival Committee, Rye Players and Rye Art Gallery (which had particular concerns).

It was envisaged that the project would last for 2 years and would complement that which was being provided already in the Rye area.

Around two-thirds of the running costs would be met by grant funding; the remaining third by earned income. ESCC and RDC had agreed to meet the utilities costs; RDC would provide a capital grant for equipment and the Arts Council would subsidise the actual art undertaken within the building. A large studio would cost £500 per month; a smaller one £117.

Cllr Glazier emphasised that the project would be responsive to the needs of the community and that it was appropriate to use the site for short-term purposes until the flood defence works had been completed. The project would ensure that the building was not demolished or boarded up.

Cllr Smith queried whether, given the economic downturn, it was appropriate to spend public monies on this kind of project. Cllr Glazier suggested that both ESCC and RDC would only contribute what they could afford and would do so only if they thought the benefits of the project justified their contributions.

Responding to a question from Cllr Souster, IR advised that the 'performing arts function' would comprise about 70-75% of the activity at the Centre.

Addressing questions put by Cllrs Breeds and Hall, Cllr Glazier suggested that the project could be extended by mutual agreement; however, it was possible that Rye College could put in a bid to the Building Schools for the Future programme and build a designated arts facility.

John Izod advised that Rye Players had been in discussion with IR concerning storage and rehearsal space. Neale East considered that Rye Film Club might also be interested in getting involved. George Shackleton had liked the proposal initially but had observed that officers appeared rather lukewarm towards it and questioned whether the budgets of ESCC and RDC could accommodate the project.