

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Tuesday 18 November 2008**

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne, Frank Palmer, Ian Potter, David Russell, Mary Smith, Sam Souster (**Mayor**), David Wright

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; George Brown – Town Sergeant; The Reverend Canon Hugh Moseley – Mayor’s Chaplain; County Cllr Keith Glazier; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 5 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30.

65 PRAYERS

Prayers were said by The Reverend Canon Hugh Moseley.

66 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Jonathan Breeds and Shaun Rogers.

67 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 73 Item 76b)	Member of RDC (freeholder) Member of Rye TIC funder (RDC)
Cllr Paul Osborne	<i>personal</i>	item 73 Item 76b) Item 70b) - Minute 27	Member of RDC (freeholder) Member of Rye TIC funder (RDC) Member of the principal authority
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 73 Item 76b)	Member of RDC (freeholder) Member of Rye TIC funder (RDC)
Cllr Mary Smith	<i>personal</i>	item 72	Member of Fair Trade Steering Group
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 79	Partner a RTS Director

68 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Standing Orders The Mayor reminded Members that these needed to be adhered to – unless the suspension of any of them had been moved and agreed.

Public Question Time The Mayor asked prospective questioners not to make long personal statements prior to putting a question.

Disrobing The Mayor intended to adjourn the meeting for disrobing just before item 76.

6.34 *The Mayor adjourned the meeting for Public Question Time and the Reports of the County and District Councillors (See Appendices B and C).*

7.04 *The meeting reconvened.*

69 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2008 (C6).

70 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 27 October 2008 (PT13) and 10 November 2008 (PT14)

(b) Policy, Resources & GP

It was noted that no Members had been prepared to discuss the Recommendation of the Devolved Services Working Group at the meeting.

Cllrs Holmes, Osborne and Russell declared a personal interest in the discussion on devolved services as Members of RDC which provided, currently, many of the services of potential interest to RTC.

The Chairman of the CDR, Cllr Bantick advised that it would be making a statement on this matter when it next appeared on an agenda.

RESOLVED 1 To agenda the progression of devolved services for the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED 2 Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2008 (PR03)

71 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2009

Members were invited to agree the membership of the Annual Town Meeting Working Group for the coming year.

RESOLVED To appoint Cllrs Bantick, Fiddimore, Smith, Souster and Wright.

Cllr Smith declared a personal interest in the item following by virtue of being a Member of the Rye Fair Trade Town Steering Group.

72 FAIR TRADE

The Council was asked to appoint a representative to the Rye Fair Trade Town Steering Group.

It was noted that RTC had previously passed a resolution committing itself to providing Fair trade tea and coffee only at its meeting/events. Cllr Smith advised that the town was close to achieving Fair Trade Town status. Responding to concerns expressed about the need to install 'Fair Trade Town' road signs – as well as the associated cost – Cllr Smith responded that such signs would not be necessary.

RESOLVED To appoint Cllr Smith as RTC's representative.

Cllrs Holmes, Osborne and Russell declared a personal interest in the item following as Members of the local authority owning the freehold.

73 PUBLIC SPACE: WISH WARD

The meeting considered a request (made to Rother District Council) from the owners of number 7 Wish Ward to take possession/manage the area of public land situated between number 5 and number 7 Wish Ward.

The Clerk advised that the owners of number 7 had suffered for many years with people urinating, late at night, against their property. They maintained the area at their own expense but wished to take possession of the area in order to prevent access to number 7.

Cllr Palmer observed that the single bench located on the amenity area was used by local people.

RESOLVED That the amenity area in Wish Ward should be retained for public use.
Clerk

74 CODE OF CONDUCT

The Council was asked to consider appointing a Member – or Members – to draft a response to the proposed revisions to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001 and the introduction of a model code of conduct for local government employees (deadline: 24 December 2008).

It was noted that the Council's existing policy was to support, in principle, the introduction of a code of conduct for employees.

Having drafted previously a response to a previous consultation on behalf of RTC, Cllr Potter questioned whether doing so was worthwhile. He observed that local councilors are subject to more regulation than MPs.

The Mayor considered that the local system of assessing Code of Conduct complaints was flawed. Standards Committees would be tempted to go to great lengths to avoid referring complaints to the Standards Board for England in order to avoid their principal authority incurring considerable costs.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Potter's offer to review the document.
Cllr Potter

75 RYE RELIEF IN NEED

Members considered an application for £4,800 towards the provision of music therapy sessions at Rye Primary.

It was concluded that Members would benefit from additional information – especially the length of a session, the target Year group, and the level of funding provided by – or via - ESCC and the SEN budget.

RESOLVED (with Cllr Potter voting against) To obtain further information before considering the application further.
Clerk

7.43 *The Mayor adjourned the meeting for disrobing.*

7.50 *The meeting reconvened.*

76 RYE HERITAGE CENTRE

a) Interim Budget

Members were asked to consider a draft Heritage Centre Interim Budget (1 November 2008-31 March 2009).

Referring to Rye Town Services's premature withdrawal from the Heritage Centre, Cllr Potter observed that the HC staff were having to suffer for a situation not of their making.

RESOLVED To adopt the draft Heritage Centre Interim Budget, adjusted to reflect a reduction in opening hours from 42 to 36 hours a week (producing a forecast deficit of £7,497).

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

b) Future use

The Council was asked to consider the Heritage Centre Development Working Group's suggestion that the Council explores establishing a charitable trust to manage the Centre and distribute grant funding.

The Clerk advised that RDC had now initiated a tendering process to award a contract to run Rye TIC for a 3-year period from 1 April.

Speaking to the draft trust document, Cllr Potter added the following:

- The trust would not be able to operate a retail function on the premises but could set up a charitable trading subsidiary. The shares would be owned by the trust and the trustees would also be directors of the trading company.
- The motivation behind the proposal was to avoid a situation in which the Centre – and the assets within it – were used by an operator for commercial gain.
- A charge could be made to view the Model because it is an educational facility.
- Surpluses would be distributed to local not-for-profit organisations.
- RTC would grant a 999-year lease to the trust with (probably) an early termination clause.
- The trust could be established quickly.
- Trustees would consist of Council 'representatives' and individuals drawn from key local stakeholder groups.

Cllr Osborne queried whether RDC would be prepared to contract with a trust (in respect of providing a TIC).

RESOLVED To support the principle of establishing a Heritage Centre Educational Trust.

77 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

78 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 from item 79 on the grounds that it includes material which could form the basis of legal proceedings.

79 RYE TOWN SERVICES

Confidential – not included.

The meeting ended at 8.32

Date Chairman

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

George Shackleton *When would the Council be taking positive steps to clean up the former Central Garage site?*

Mayor It remained the case that the site is in private ownership. He – and others – are advised regularly by the owner that work on the new Library project is imminent. Most of the complaints about the site relate to the delay in construction work; however, the Council would consider the questioner's concern about its appearance.

George Shackleton *What action – if any – would the Council be taking in response to the proposal to turn the Freda Gardham School Building into a Creative Arts Centre?*

Mayor The Council had not been consulted; however, he was aware that RDC's Cabinet had earmarked funding for the scheme, should it proceed.

Cllr Glazier observed that he had mentioned this proposal at previous Town Council meetings. There had been consultation with Rye College which needed performing arts facilities. Other relevant stakeholders had been approached. A 'joint use' agreement had been drafted and should be signed w/c 24 November. He did not envisage that the Town Council would be approached for funding.

Cllr Osborne declined to answer a question from Mr Shackleton, put to him as a Cabinet Member on the grounds that he was not a District Councillor for the Rye ward.

Keith Taylor *When would the Council be considering the LDF Core Strategy: Strategic Directions consultation?*

Clerk At the Planning & Townscape Committee on 24 November.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Deadman's Lane Officers had provided him with a 2-page report outlining the traffic flow options available and highlighting the low incidence of Road Traffic Incidents. Despite this he remained of the view that addressing safety concerns in the lane was a local priority.

Rye Primary School The Duke of Kent would open the school officially on 19 November. Cllr Glazier had been supplied with the school's forecast running costs.

New Road 'middle field' There would be a meeting of all stakeholders on 19 November to consider whether the field could meet the needs of local sporting organisations - especially Rye United FC. Cllr Glazier hoped that RTC would consider leasing the field from ESCC and then making it available for a peppercorn rent.

Devolved Services Cllr Glazier noted that, at the last PRGP Committee meeting, Members – including those associated with the Campaign for a Democratic Rye – had not progressed this issue.

The Mayor added that one of the reasons for RTC applying for Quality Council status had been the desire to take back services from the principal authorities. However, he recognised that 'affordability' was an important consideration.

In anticipation of the discussion on agenda item 75, Cllr Osborne asked if ESCC provided funding for music therapy. Cllr Glazier was uncertain but was happy to investigate.

Cllr Glazier would suggest to Rye College that a presentation on the proposed Creative Arts Centre be given to RTC.

REPORT OF THE ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Russell

See Appendix C.

Cllr Smith expressed concerns that RTC – and the general public – had not been aware that it was proposed to spend £165,000 of public money on a creative arts centre. The 'business plan' provided to RDC by Ian Ross contained little financial information. The Rye Art Gallery was under-funded and the local arts organisations generally appeared not have been consulted.

Cllr Russell acknowledged that some 'unknowns' remained but these would be addressed in due course.

Referring to the 'letting out' of the former public convenience in Tower Street/Rope Walk, Cllr Smith suggested that there were insufficient conveniences in the town. Cllr Russell observed that Rye contains four of the 32 in the District.

The Mayor highlighted the LDF Core Strategy: Strategic Directions exhibition to take place at the Further Learning Centre on 20 November.

Cllr Sonia Holmes

Cllr Holmes had nothing further to add to Cllr Russell's report.

RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 18 NOVEMBER 2008: REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT CLLR

Soon after our September meeting, there was a meeting of Rother's full Council. Two debates took place in relation to the **Bexhill Seafront Improvement Scheme**. Council turned itself into a Planning Committee – as it does now and again to consider a strategic, difficult or controversial application. Members found no *planning* reason to refuse permission – which was granted by a large majority. There is, however, opposition to the so-called Next Wave Scheme which, if implemented, could cost in excess of £5 million. Speakers at a meeting of Bexhill Town Forum were scathing about the proposals: but no clear message emerged as to what they did want.

By a narrower majority, Council voted to take the Strategic Design Framework to the next stage – detailed estimates and, most importantly, the exhibition and public consultation. More than 800 submissions have been received; and these are currently being analysed. £1 million of external funding has been offered (C.A.B.E.). The scheme is part of the Council's declared Corporate Plan, agreed in 2006; and earmarked capital reserves exist to meet the cost. A substantial part of the investment would be devoted to the Colonnade where over 9,000 square feet of subdivided lettable space would be created. Should no tenants materialize, it is possible that the overall scheme could eventually be reduced in scale: but there are restoration works which have to be tackled.

The Consultation on the **Local Development Framework Core Strategy** runs until 30th January. It is essential that we study it – both for the accuracy of what it says and for the changes which it seeks to impose over 20 years.

Members will be interested that Rother has increased the capital programme this year for **Disabled Facility Grants**, which are mandatory where there are valid applications, by £155,000 on top of £802,000 already allocated. These grants provide funding for adaptations such as stair lifts, level-access showers and so forth, and enable disabled persons to remain living at home. The Department for Communities & Local Government used to grant 60 per cent of these costs: but such funding appears to be less certain nowadays.

The **public conveniences cleaning contract** expires in March 2010 – so the Council will tender for a service period of 6 years. Little progress has been

made regarding the potential transfer of responsibilities to parishes: and this work has to start. 32 conveniences are included in the contract; and Rye has 4. The current annual budget for cleaning works is £174,000; but Rother has a small Direct Services unit which undertakes much of the maintenance and repair works.

Rother's **fees and charges** for the year beginning April 2009 have been agreed. There are to be very modest increases in respect of Park Games and Special Events booking fees plus damage deposits; interments and rights of burial; beach cabins; filming; car parking; bulky waste collections and so forth. But there is no change to the charges for allotments i.e £21 per small plot and £42 per large plot.

Rye Creative Centre at the Freda Gardham site. It is intended that Rother will make a £25,000 revenue contribution together with a capital contribution towards this imaginative project which will greatly benefit the eastern end of the District - in particular Rye College for which it will be a significant resource. Many local people were involved in the musical event, **Class and Corruption**, which was rehearsed at the Fish Processing Building in March. This represents substantial investment by ESCC and Arts Council England South East in our area.

DR 18.11.08