

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 20 October 2008**

**PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (**Deputy Mayor**), Jonathan Breeds, Brian Elliott, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne, Frank Palmer, Ian Potter, Shaun Rogers, David Russell, Mary Smith

**IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; County Cllr Keith Glazier; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 12 members of the public

*The meeting commenced at 6.30 and was chaired by the Deputy Mayor.*

**52 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Sam Souster (**Mayor**) and David Wright.

**53 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Lorna Hall	<i>prejudicial</i>	<b>item 59a-b)</b>	Applicants known to her personally
Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56b)</b>	RDC Member
Cllr Jo Kirkham	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56a-c)</b>	Rye Partnership Director
Cllr Paul Osborne	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56a)</b>	RDC Rye Partnership appointed Member
	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56b)</b>	Member of the authority offering to release £15k funding
	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56c)</b>	Member of the authority funding the Rye TIC contract
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56a)</b>	Rye Partnership Director and Rye Marketing Group Chairman
	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56b)</b>	RDC Member and Rye Partnership Director
	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 56c)</b>	RDC Member
Cllr Mary Smith	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 59b)</b>	Applicant is a neighbour

**54 COUNCIL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2008 (C4).

55 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(a) **Planning & Townscape**

It was noted that, following the recent resurfacing of Tower Street and Landgate, ESCC's contractor had failed to replace three Tower Street parking bays. The Highways Authority had asked May Gurney to rectify the error.

**RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 15 September 2008 (PT11), 29 September 2008 (PT12) and 13 October 2008 (PT13).**

56 **MARKETING**

(a) **Rye Marketing Group**

Members were invited to receive the draft revised Terms of Reference and a verbal report of the meeting held on 15 October, insofar as it affected the Town Council's role within the group.

Cllr Hall reported that the RMG had agreed changes to the draft Terms of Reference as follows:

*Scope, final bullet point* Altered to read:

To ensure that the marketing campaign complements the 1066 Country and other campaigns as appropriate, avoiding duplication as far as possible.

*Desired outcomes, point 4* Now reads:

Support and involvement of all stakeholders

*Membership* '(Camber?) and (Winchelsea?) have been replaced with:

Co-opted members 2

**RESOLVED To note that RTC's two RMG representatives are Cllrs Hall and Rogers – and to nominate Cllrs Bantick and Fiddimore as substitutes. Clerk**

The next RMG meeting is scheduled for 17 December.

(b) **Additional marketing monies**

The meeting was asked to give further consideration to the RDC's Cabinet decision that it will release £15,000 of Rye town management monies for marketing if Rye Town Council contributes an additional £5,000 – especially in the light of:

- (i) a verbal report on the conclusion of an investigation of a complaint about the running of Rye Tourist Information Centre.
- (ii) Rye Town Service's decision to withdraw from delivering marketing on behalf of the town
- (iii) Relevant deliberations at the Rye Marketing Group meeting held on 15 October.

The Clerk had been informed that RDC's investigation into a complaint about the running of Rye TIC had been concluded and that a press release would be issued on 21 October. However, he had had sight of a private and confidential letter addressed to the subject of the complaint, Rye Town Services and he advised that RDC had found no evidence that TIC staff are favouring Rye Lodge. However, a number

of procedures in place – as well as the familial relationship between the TIC manager and an employee of Rye Lodge - had made staff vulnerable to accusations of bias. To address the former RDC had made a number of recommendations.

Cllr Hall advised that the RMG was awaiting the outcome of RTC's deliberations before giving further consideration to the release of the £15k Rye town management monies for marketing. She was pleased to advise that a very capable member of 1066 Country, Jane Ellis had been made available to Rye to assist with its marketing.

The RMG Chairman, Cllr Russell added that the RMG had awarded £500 to the Rye Christmas Festival and £1,000 towards the food festivals – including the 2009 Scallop Festival (20-28 February). Proofs of the *2009 Rye Guide* – being prepared by 1066 – had been considered at the last meeting and the Mayor had attended to speak about the current work of the Cinque Ports Promotions Working Group.

It was noted that, in addition to withdrawing from Rye Heritage Centre/TIC (*see below*), RTS had withdrawn also from delivering marketing functions on the town's behalf.

Cllr Hall reported that the last RMG meeting had been very positive, with those attending possessing a range of relevant skills and able to draw on considerable expertise in this field. The RMG's new Terms of Reference engaged all key stakeholders and provided a reasonably democratic and fair structure to facilitate the distribution of marketing monies.

She proposed that RTC should facilitate the release – to the Rye Partnership - of £15,000 of Rye town management funding by contributing an additional £5,000, on the understanding that the Partnership would make no deductions to cover administration costs.

Responding to Cllr Smith's concern about public monies being given to an unelected organisation, Cllr Russell advised that the RDC Cabinet considered the Rye Partnership to be the appropriate body to receive the additional funding. Cllr Smith suggested that it was more appropriate for the funds to be administered by RTC. A number of Members – and the Clerk – observed that the decision-making process could become protracted, with the RMG having to make expenditure recommendations to full RTC Council meetings which occur every 7-8 weeks.

Cllr Smith proposed – and Cllr Bantick seconded - an **amendment** to Cllr Hall's proposal that **the additional marketing monies should be given to RTC rather than the Rye Partnership.**

Cllr Bantick requested a named vote.

**For the proposed amendment** Bantick, Elliott, Holmes, Smith (4)  
**Against** John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds, Fiddimore, Hall, Osborne, Palmer, Potter, Rogers (8)

**Abstentions** Kirkham, Russell (2)

The amendment was declared lost.

**RESOLVED To facilitate the release – to the Rye Partnership - of £15,000 of Rye town management funding by contributing an additional £5,000, on the understanding that the Partnership would make no deductions to cover administration costs.**

*statutory power: LGA 1972, s144*

*Note Cllrs Kirkham and Russell abstained from voting.*

**(c) Rye Heritage Centre/TIC**

Members noted that Rye Town Services had advised Rye Town Council and Rother District Council that, on 31 October, it was withdrawing from both the Heritage Centre management agreement and the Rye Tourist Information Centre contract. The Clerk invited Members to agree that the Town Council would take over the TIC contract until permanent arrangements had been put in place.

The Clerk advised that the RTS Board was determined to proceed with its early withdrawal from the HC agreement and TIC contract – even though this constituted a breach of contract in both cases because the other parties had not given their consent.

The Directors of RTS had issued a joint statement (distributed prior to the meeting) outlining the reasons for their decision.

It was accepted that, to ensure the continuation of a TIC service, RTC had effectively been placed in a position whereby it had no choice but to take over the contract. The Clerk advised that this was an acceptable short-term solution to RDC and it would pay to RTC the Rye TIC grant of £2,727.75pcm. It was noted that RDC was intending to re-tender the Rye TIC contract as soon as practicable.

It was accepted generally that, given that RTS is believed to have limited funds, there might not be much value in seeking recompense; however, this was not ruled out.

It was accepted that the priority was to ensure a smooth handover and was noted that a stock take had been arranged. The Clerk observed that, pending the final report of the Heritage Centre Working Group and the outcome of the re-tendering process, it would be necessary for the Council to maintain the Centre as a viable business and that this could entail the injection of additional funding.

**RESOLVED 1 (unanimous) To advise RTS that RTC does not give its consent for the company's early withdrawal from the management agreement and that the Council considers that RTS has effectively forced the Council to take back the management of the Heritage Centre in order to ensure the continuation of a tourist information service for the benefit of the town.** Clerk

**RESOLVED 2 (unanimous) To request payment of the Occupancy Fee due to the Council for 2007-08.** Clerk

**57 URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**58 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** (on the Chairman's casting vote) **Not to exclude members of the public and press.**

**59 RYE RELIEF IN NEED APPLICATIONS**

Members recognised that whilst considering the applications following they needed to ensure that nothing was said in relation to them which could identify the applicants.

*Cllr Hall restated her prejudicial interest in applications a) and b) and left the Chamber.*

*7.17 Cllrs Elliott and Kirkham left the meeting*

It was noted that previously-owned electrical goods needed to be safety tested and were provided often with short warranties - and accepted that a responsible funder should take steps to ensure that a beneficiary did not place themselves at risk.

**RESOLVED 1 To agree the grants following:**

a)	<b>Mr W</b>	<b>washing machine</b>	<b>£206</b>
b)	<b>Mr I</b>	<b>roof repairs</b>	<b>£500</b>

*Cllr Hall returned to the Chamber.*

**RESOLVED 2 To agree the grant following:**

c)	<b>Ms W</b>	<b>fridge-freezer</b>	<b>£200</b>
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*The meeting ended at 7.30.*

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