

Minutes of an Urgent Council Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 3 November 2008

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; 3 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.01 and was chaired by the Deputy Mayor.

60 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Frank Palmer and Sam Souster (**Mayor**).

6.01 *Cllr Kirkham arrived.*

61 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest at this stage.

62 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2008 (C5).

6.02 *Cllr Elliott arrived.*

63 RYE HERITAGE CENTRE

a) Staff wages

The Clerk reported that Rye Town Services had advised that it had no funds with which to pay those who had worked at the Heritage Centre during the month of October 2008. Members were asked to consider making emergency payments to the Council's staff based at the Centre.

It was considered generally that RTS's Directors had a moral obligation to pay all members of staff employed at the Centre for the month of October – if necessary drawing on their own funds.

It was noted that making a payment to the RTS 'short term contract' employee (who had subsequently been appointed by RTC) would not stand up to audit scrutiny.

RESOLVED (unanimous) That the Council should:

- a) make emergency salary payments for the month of October;**
 - b) seek to recover the cost from RTS**
 - c) put it to the RTS Directors that they have a moral obligation to pay their staff.**
- Clerk**

6.12 *Cllr Jonathan Breeds arrived.*

Cllrs Osborne and Russell declared personal interests in the item following by virtue of being Members of the authority making payment of the Rye TIC grant to RTC from 1 November.

b) Working balance

The Clerk advised that it would be necessary to have a working balance in RTC's Heritage Centre account to cover any salary shortfall and miscellaneous/unanticipated minor expenditure – pending approval of a budget to 31 March 2009.

Speaking – with the permission of the Council – from the Public Gallery, Paul King observed that at RTS's AGM the question of it trading insolvently had been raised and that last two years' (filed) Annual Accounts had been identified as being inaccurate. At that meeting the Chairman had stated that the Directors were not personally liable. He suggested that the Rye TIC grant provider, RDC should consider investigating whether the grant funding had been managed appropriately.

Cllr Russell observed that the RTS Chairman had stated previously that RTS was not trading outside of the law because it had an authorised overdraft in place.

Cllr Smith suggested that the Council should act to recoup the monies owed to it and should, given RTS's reported precarious financial position, take this action at the earliest opportunity. The Clerk advised that he needed more time to assess the extent of each party's liability to the other.

RESOLVED (unanimous) To transfer £5,000 from the Council's General Reserves to the Council's Heritage Centre account, pending the Council approving a Heritage Centre Budget covering the period 1 November 2008 to 31 March 2009. Clerk

64 NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED (unanimous) To postpone the meeting scheduled for 10 November until 6.30pm on Tuesday 18 November in order to give the Clerk sufficient time to:

- (a) Prepare a Heritage Centre budget for 1 Nov 2008-31 March 2009.**
- (b) Obtain the information necessary to determine the monies owed to either the Council or Rye Town Services in respect of the Heritage Centre Management Agreements in place between 1 April 2005 and 31 October 2008.**
- (c) Allow the Clerk to attend a Clerks training day which would include guidance on implementing a revised publication scheme (required under the Freedom of Information Act) by 1 January 2009. Clerk**

The meeting ended at 6.24

Date Chairman