

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 11 April 2011

- PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (**Mayor**), Jonathan Breeds, Brian Elliott, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall (**Deputy Mayor**), Sonia Holmes, Paul Osborne, Frank Palmer, Shaun Rogers, David Russell, Mary Smith, Sam Souster
- IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Kevin Barry – Town Sergeant; Captain Paul Tyler – Mayor’s Chaplain; County Councillor Keith Glazier; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 10 members of the public
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The meeting commenced at 6.30

99 PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Captain Paul Tyler.

100 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons logged with the Clerk – were accepted from Councillors Jo Kirkham and David Wright.

101 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 106	RDC Member
Cllr Paul Osborne	<i>personal</i>	item 106	RDC Member
Cllr Shaun Rogers	<i>personal</i>	item 105	Family member employed at the site
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 106	RDC Member
Cllr Mary Smith	<i>personal</i>	item 105	Member of the Rye FE Group

102 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor requested Members to be mindful that there were elections coming up and asked them to avoid blatant electioneering.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting for the Reports of the County and District Councillors, and Public Question Time. (See Appendix A)

The meeting reconvened.

103 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 February 2011 (C9).

104 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 February 2011 (PT20), 28 February 2011 (PT21), 14 March 2011 (PT22) and 28

March 2011 (PT23).

b) Policy, Resources & General Purposes

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2011 (PR05).

c) Public Services

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2011 (PS04).

Cllr Rogers and Smith restated their personal interests in the application following.

105 FE CENTRE SITE

The Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow Mike Eve (ME) to provide an update.

ME confirmed that Sussex Coast College (Hastings) had accepted, in principle, the joint offer from the Fletcher CIC and St Mary's Church to purchase the FE Centre/former Library site. The legal formalities had yet to be concluded.

Management of the site had been discussed with St Marys and informal discussions had taken place with English Heritage and RDC Planning – resulting in positive feedback. The project would be split into two phases: planning and conversion – and both would require fundraising.

Cllr Smith commended those who lead the joint bid and suggested that the Fletcher CIC's plans for a digital cinema would be appreciated particularly by younger residents.

John Howlett hoped that the new RTC would continue to support the retention of the FE site for community use.

John Izod wondered whether the Boys Club was becoming unnecessary and suggested that someone should assess the sale of the Club because this would generate useful revenue.

The meeting reconvened.

106 FILMING REVENUE

Members noted that:

- (a)** For a number of years RDC had been referring those who wished to film in Rye to RTC;
- (b)** RTC liaises with – and advises – film companies and photographers on an informal basis, encouraging them to make a donation to Rye Relief in Need;
- (c)** RDC had observed that it does not actively seek filming revenue and had therefore asked Hastings BC (which has expertise in this area) to administer filming on RDC land and ESCC land which RDC manages on County's behalf – in return for a share of the revenue generated.

The Clerk added that he had been briefed by the relevant RDC officer within the last week only. RTC had been obtaining charitable donations on an informal basis in relation to filming on the public highway; however, it might be that this was encroaching on ESCC's domain. Rye Relief in Need had already received a £50 donation from HBC under RDC's new regime but the Clerk had yet to meet with the HBC officer concerned.

It was noted that HBC had considerable experience in this area.

With Members' consent, the Mayor adjourned the meeting to permit John Howlett (JH) to speak to this item.

JH advised that there could be considerable sums of money involved and he suggested RTC would need to be careful to ensure the town was not disadvantaged in relation to any arrangements agreed with HBC.

Cllr Fiddimore observed that Rye was a valuable asset and agreed that RTC should ensure that the town/parishioners should derive as much benefit as possible.

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to enter into discussions with HBC and report back. Clerk

107 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

The meeting ended at 7.18pm

Date Chairman

REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Deadman's Lane Work to support the proposed Experimental TRO was scheduled for 2 days 3-7 May. Cllr Glazier had suggested avoiding working on the 5th because this would inconvenience electors to the north.

Rye's public/community assets The previous week Cllr Glazier had given ESCC's Lead Cabinet Member and Estates Manager a tour of the town's public/community assets – including The School and Tilling Green Community Centre.

Cobbled streets repairs He continued to press for a start date.

REPORT OF THE ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Russell

See Appendix B.

Cllr Sonia Holmes

Services OSC The Committee had considered its work programme for the year. The matter of devolved budgets to Ward Members should be monitored. A Devolution Committee would be established to evaluate a draft devolved services framework and it had been suggested that a devolution code of practice be drawn up between RDC and parishes. A community assets register was being drawn up and detailed risk assessments would be required when the devolution of services was being considered.

Partnership working RDC was intending to work as closely as possible with Wealden DC and share services. The motivation was to reduce costs, achieve greater VFM, deliver better services and increase customer satisfaction – whilst preserving and respecting each authority's characteristics. The CEOs of both authorities will meet quarterly to review progress.

Flytipping A man was recently fined £100 and £400 costs for paying two people to dispose of waste unlawfully on his behalf.

RVA Was setting up a network of community neighbours to encourage voluntary activity and self-help in those areas where it was lacking.

Cllr Souster expressed surprise that neither District Councillor had mentioned that the Bexhill Alliance had gathered 2,100 signatures calling on RDC to reduce its subsidy of the De La Warr Pavilion from £500,000pa to £400,000 – and that RDC had rejected the petition. Furthermore, RDC had decided that it would not be conducting any further customer satisfaction surveys.

Cllr Russell responded that the Alliance's petition had been fully debated and its representatives had been invited to meet with two directors of the De La Warr Pavilion Trust (who were also RDC Members). He added that members of the public were free to make known their views to RDC on any matter.

Mike Eve suggested it was ridiculous that RDC takes the view that it is acceptable to subsidise the Pavilion at the current level and it was, perhaps, the right time to consider an

alternative business model. He asked Cllr Russell if the cost savings associated with RDC sharing services with other authorities had been costed.

Cllr Russell anticipated that detailed figures on cost savings would come through as joint services 'went live'. Personally, he considered that the Pavilion's programme should be more 'middle brow'; however, in practice because the Arts Council was a major funder it had considerable influence on the programme.

John Howlett thanked the two District Councillors and Town Councillors for their support helping to save the FE Centre for Rye.

Cllr Osborne (not contesting the Town Council election) took the opportunity to say that he had enjoyed his 8 years on the Council, working with his colleagues and the Clerk.

Andy Stuart asked what would happen to the revenue generated arising from RDC disposing of assets. Cllr Russell emphasised that RDC had no intention of doing this – it was focusing on managing them differently.

C10 APPENDIX B

RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 11th APRIL 2011: REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Arts Council England has confirmed its continuing revenue support, to the tune of more than £500,000 per annum, for the next four years for the **De La Warr Pavilion**. This comes as a result of the leverage of Rother tax payers. Without the joint support of national and local tax payers, the Trust could easily fold: and we alone could be left holding the baby (as was the case ten years ago). RDC will continue to use all its influence to bear down on the costs of this enterprise and insist that it becomes more self-sufficient.

The **Tesco** planning application comes up for the third time for consideration at Committee on Thursday. Last month, members were outspoken in their dislike of the design of the building which, they said, was formulaic and offered nothing in sympathy with the Rye vernacular and roofscape. Consideration of the **Sainsbury's** application will follow shortly: so there is every opportunity for us to find the best solution for the site and keep an eye on the public realm improvement monies – so-called planning gain – which will obtain from the development.

The matter of **Food Hygiene Ratings** is in the news. The purpose of the scheme is to allow consumers to make informed choices about where they eat out or shop. The rationale is that businesses will be encouraged to improve their hygiene standards. All the restaurants, takeaways, cafes, sandwich bars, pubs and hotels in Rother District have been given a rating ranging from zero (urgent improvement necessary) to five (very good). Rother District is a pilot for the national scheme. There are undoubted anomalies – some depending on when the inspection took place and whether the paperwork was complete. Inconsistencies can be put right: and before long the public may come to appreciate seeing the relevant stickers or certificates on display at the catering businesses which they support.

This afternoon, Rother's Cabinet was considering an interim report on the so-called **Resetting** programme. Given the bleak national financial outlook, which Rother is better placed than most Authorities to cope with, the Council is currently finalising the arrangements relating to some voluntary redundancies. Following that, there is expected to be a minor restructuring of the officer establishment. The Corporate Plan 2006-16 is being reviewed and reshaped; will become more revenue focused - in the sense of producing a better return on investment rather than new buildings; and will be put to the new Council for approval.

There are some 46 individual projects and I will just report progress on a handful.

1. Staff at Beeching Road will be relocated to the Town Hall and the premises re-let

2. RDC will manage Building Control for Hastings B.C. resulting in a saving to both Authorities
3. RDC will review all car park operations (including current free car parks) and pricing in order to further increase income
4. RDC will manage the Food, Health & Safety services across Rother and Hastings
5. Hastings will manage the Grounds Maintenance contract for the two Councils
6. In respect of H.R., Wealden D.C. will take the lead on personnel and Rother on training and development
7. Wealden will manage RDC legal services
8. RDC will manage the Licensing service for Wealden and perhaps for the other local authorities in East Sussex
9. There will be a joint performance management function across Wealden and Rother
10. RDC will deliver its printing service also to Wealden
11. There will be a single property and facilities management function across Wealden and Rother
12. There will be a joint Revenues function across Wealden and Rother
13. It is hoped to form a joint Waste Authority embracing Rother, Wealden, Eastbourne B.C. and Hastings.

So there has been plenty happening at Rother H.Q. But now, since it is the end of term and we are in holiday mood, I will tell you what I think of the Council. The thing is that Rother is much less remote, much less insensitive and much more efficient than some Rye folk allow. I have enjoyed working with Cllr Mrs Holmes and Cllr Osborne. Contrary to what we read in some publications, there is almost no political posturing at RDC but plenty of co-operation and respect. It may be that after 5th May, Rye Town Council will decide to operate in angry isolation. I hope that it will opt to WORK WITH other authorities and agencies – co-operating on service issues; sharing information and management decisions where appropriate; sharing, in some instances, ownership of public assets. Thereby, progress will be made.

DR 11/04/11