

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 19 July 2010**

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; 9 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30

42 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons logged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Jo Kirkham and Sam Souster.

43 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sonia Holmes *personal* **item 47** RDC Member

Cllr Paul Osborne *personal* **item 47** RDC Member

Cllr Mary Smith *personal* **item 46** Member of FE Centre Group

44 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 June 2010 (C3).

45 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) **Planning & Townscape**

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 (PT04).

b) **Policy, Resources and General Purposes**

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 (PR01)

The meeting was adjourned for an update by Mike Eve (ME) on the work of the Rye FE Group (See Appendix).

46 FE CENTRE/LIBRARY SITE

Cllr Smith re-stated her personal interest in this item.

RESOLVED To suspend Standing Order 28(j) (not speaking more than once).

It was agreed generally that the financial information provided by SCCH to RTC was insufficient, unclear and inadequate. For example, the figures for general maintenance were very low – and there were unexplained gaps in the data.

RESOLVED 1 To support the FE Centre Group's request for further financial data and to pursue the request until the information is received.

Cllr Osborne observed that RTC had the power to borrow the monies necessary to purchase the FE Centre (assuming RTC had firstly determined that acquiring and

running the property was a viable proposition). He acknowledged that RTC would need to ensure it had the backing of parishioners.

6.51 Cllr Rogers arrived

The Mayor expressed a fear that, like other property in the town, the Lion Street site could end up being under-used or boarded up for a number of years. He expressed the (commonly-held) view that local groups had ceased to hire the Centre because of the substantial increase in hiring charges. Cllr Palmer expressed doubt that the Rye Natural History Society – which had met at the Centre for 30 years – would now return to it if the charges became more reasonable.

Cllr Fiddimore advised that, during the period she had worked at the Centre as the caretaker, the property was in virtually constant use.

Cllr Smith observed that it was more expensive to hire the Centre at weekends and on weekday evenings – precisely the times when most groups would wish to use it.

RESOLVED 2 To await the results of SCCH's consultation before considering RTC's next step.

The Town Clerk advised that a senior member of SCCH's staff had been asked to undertake the internal review into the College's handling of RTC's original information request. He suggested that a strategic advantage might be derived from withdrawing the complaint.

Cllr Smith considered that SCCH could interpret this as a sign of weakness and that it was important to keep up the pressure on the College.

It was agreed generally that there were pros and cons to withdrawing the complaint.

RESOLVED 3 To advise SCCH that RTC wishes it to cease further work on the internal review but, should RTC not receive the further information requested, it will expect the investigation to recommence. Clerk

RESOLVED 4 To note that the Information Commissioner had advised that if RTC had not received the information requested from SCCH before 20 working days had elapsed it should repeat the request before pursuing a formal complaint with the Commissioner's office.

Cllr Russell declared a personal interest in the item following a Member of RDC.

47 CROWNFIELDS REPLACEMENT BUS SHELTERS

Members were invited to agree the models of shelter and seating to be recommended to Rother District Council (RDC) and suggested funding sources – and to consider whether to accept a transfer of ownership and management of the new shelters from RDC to the Council (noting that it would cost RTC £105pa to add the shelters to its insurance schedule and that, in the *short term*, maintenance – except possible graffiti removal – should be low).

It was noted that most bus shelters within parishes are owned and maintained by the Parish Council. The model of shelter proposed had been 'approved' by the Police having good all round visibility. The area additionally had the advantage of being CCTV-monitored.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Smith, the Clerk advised that RDC would not pass on any savings realised – such as reduced maintenance costs – following transfer of the shelters to RDC.

RESOLVED 1 To recommend the purchase of the following: (Note: delivery is free and prices exclude VAT)

<i>From Barriers Direct:</i>	
1 x aluminium shelter 2.5m	£3,105.41
1 x aluminium bench 5m	£4,990.66
<i>From Whitehill Direct:</i>	
3 x Estoril bench (black, Europe fitting)	£1,140.81
TOTAL	£9,236.88

RESOLVED 2 To recommend that the funding sources be as follows:	RDC	£5,000.00
	Rye Environment Bequest*	<u>£4,236.88</u>
		£9,236.88

* Held by RDC – total = £11,722.50

RESOLVED 3 To agree to the transfer of ownership of the new shelters, following installation from RDC to RTC. Clerk

48 HERITAGE CENTRE BANK MANDATE

RESOLVED To note that:

- (a) **The Council provided the Nat West with a new bank mandate in May 2007 – but the Nat West has now advised that it never amended the authorised signatories;**
- (b) **the Nat West considers that the previous mandate (May 2006) is the ‘current’ mandate;**
- (c) **the only authorised signatories on the May 2006 mandate who remain serving Councillors are John Breeds, Paul Osborne and David Russell;**
- (d) **the Nat West wishes the Council to complete a new mandate but that the Council is not prepared to pass a resolution adopting the bank’s model mandate for clubs and societies because it would give signatories the authority to set up Direct Debits and bank electronically (in contravention of the LGA 1972 s150(5));**
- (e) **there is some doubt within the local council sector that any bank has the necessary systems in place to permit Parish/Town Councillors to authorise electronic transactions –**

and to AGREE that, as a temporary measure, any two of Cllrs John Breeds, Osborne or Russell be authorised to sign Heritage Centre cheques on the Council’s behalf. Clerk

49 GRANT APPLICATION

It was noted that the Rye Festival Council's accounts were in good health and that RDC would be making no contribution towards this year’s Festival.

RESOLVED To approve an application from the Rye Festival Council for a grant of £500 towards this year’s Rye Arts Festival. Clerk

50 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

The meeting ended at 7.26.

Date Chairman

RYE FE GROUP UPDATE

Mike Eve (ME) advised that Kenneth Bird was unable to be present.

Like the Council, the FE Group had received some financial data from Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH). However, the information provided was unclear and lacked detail. For example, £9,000 had, apparently, been spent on oil – yet there is a gas supply. The Group had written subsequently (9 July) to the Principal with 12 further questions – and also to the Chairman of the Board of Governors (a positive response had been received previously). Responses were awaited.

The Principal had advised that a consultation was to be conducted in Rye on the community's further education needs and the Group had accepted an invitation to assist with the drafting of the questionnaire. The exercise was being conducted by SCCH's Director of Partnerships, Oonagh Hague.

The 106 Agreement – a planning condition associated with the previous (expired) planning consent for the Lion Street site – had not been signed. The Group had contacted ESCC's Legal Services department with a view to arranging an examination of the original conveyance transferring the land from the Meryon family to the townspeople. Cllr Holmes confirmed that, as at the previous Thursday, no new planning application had been submitted.

The Group had been fortunate to receive a £500 donation towards its fighting fund.

Cllr Russell *Is the Group properly constituted and has it considered how the FE Centre's running costs could be covered?*

ME The Group is not purporting to be a constituted organisation. It has discussed a number of possible options for retaining the FE Centre for community use – including setting up a Community Interest Company (CIC). The Group is in the process of drafting an outline business plan.

Jonathan Breeds *What kinds of activity take place at the FE Centre currently?*

ME 120 people were present yesterday for the launch of the Rye Festival. The Group had a list of activities that had taken place at the Centre until recently. SCCH had spent c£80k on a re-fit and improving disabled access.