

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 25 October 2010

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Rex Swain – Acting as Town Sergeant; Captain Paul Tyler – Mayor’s Chaplain; County Councillor Keith Glazier; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 16 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30

67 PRAYERS

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

68 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons logged with the Clerk – were accepted from Councillors Brian Elliott and Bernardine Fiddimore.

69 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 71	Lives near – and uses – Deadmans Lane
Cllr Shaun Rogers	<i>personal</i>	item 74	Father works at the Centre
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 70a) & 71	Home adjacent to Deadmans Lane
Cllr Mary Smith	<i>personal</i>	item 74	Member of FE Centre Users Group

70 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Engagements A piece published recently in the *Rye Observer* summarised these over the last 6 months.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting for a presentation by Rupert Clubb, the Reports of the County and District Councillors, and Public Question Time. (See Appendices.)

The meeting reconvened.

71 DEADMANS LANE

Members were invited to consider Rupert Clubb’s presentation and to agree a course of action.

RESOLVED To support the introduction of an Experimental TRO and to ask to receive regular progress reports. Clerk

72 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 September 2010 (C6).

73 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Planning & Townscape

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on 27 September 2010 (PT10) and 11 October 2010 (PT11).

Cllr Rogers re-stated his personal interest in the item following.

74 FUTURE OF THE FE CENTRE/LION STREET SITE

Members were invited to receive an update from the FE Centre Group and, if appropriate, to agree a course of action.

With the approval of the meeting the Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow Mike Eve (ME) to provide an update on the work of the FE Centre Group/Fletcher Group.

It appeared that the planning consent for the site for housing to the rear remained valid – and that any developer would have to accept that the front of the FE Centre should remain as community use.

The Fletcher Group had approached Sussex Coast College Hastings seeking to acquire the whole site for its theatre/arts/community use proposal. The PCC was also interested in the front section of the FE Centre and might work in partnership with the Fletcher Group. RTC support would be welcomed. 'In principle' support had been obtained from the Conservation Society.

The Chairman of the Governors of SCCH had advised that it remained the College's intention to apply the proceeds from the sale of the site towards a new facility on the Rye College campus.

A suggestion had been made that the s106 associated with the site should be amended to require SCCH to repair the FE Centre roof prior to disposal.

The meeting reconvened.

The Clerk advised that a member of the PCC had asked if RTC would be interested in a joint purchase of the site – with the PCC being responsible for the FE Centre and RTC providing affordable housing on the remainder of the site.

Cllr Osborne considered that the planning consent for the Library/Fe Centre site had lapsed and suggested that the FE Group and Fletcher Group submit a planning application. If successful, it would reduce the value of the site by making it less attractive to potential developers.

The meeting was adjourned for a further contribution from a member of the public: the planning consent was in place but its duration would not start officially until all parties had signed the s106 Agreement.

The meeting reconvened.

A proposal that RTC should support the FE Group/Fletcher Group plan for the site was not supported by the majority of Members because details of the PCC proposal including costings for both proposals – had not been provided.

RESOLVED To note the progress report/update provided.

75 TRAINING

RESOLVED To:

- (a) **Note the training attended by Members and staff since June 2008 (excluding staff in-house training)**
 - (b) **Receive a summary of the results of the recent Training Needs Survey (September 2010)**
 - (c) **Adopt the Draft Training Statement of Intent**
 - (d) **Approve the delivery by SALC of Members' Update training at the Town Hall on Monday 29 November 2010, 6.30-9.30pm (6pm start) – noting that:**
 - (i) **The minimum cost for (up to) 20 delegates is £500;**
 - (ii) **The subsequent cost per delegate is £7.50;**
 - (iii) **To defray costs, the session would be open to other Rother Parish/Town Councillors at £25 per delegate;**
 - (iv) **The Council would be expected to provide tea/coffee;**
 - (v) **The Earmarked Training Reserve stood at £293.**
- Clerk**

Note Cllrs Potter and Smith voted against – the latter on the grounds that she was opposed to spending £500 on the training proposed. Cllr Potter suggested the training could be provided in house.

76 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

The meeting ended at 8.09.

Date Chairman

DEADMANS LANE

ESCC's Director of Transport & Environment, Rupert Clubb (RC) outlined progress towards identifying a solution to improve traffic management in Deadmans Lane:

Although, two-way, the lane was wide enough for one vehicle only – and this could lead to disputes around 'right of way'. The majority of traffic accesses the lane from the east (Rye Hill).

In 2003 ESCC consulted on a number of proposals: **(a)** making the whole lane one-way (from the east) or **(b)** one way to the Hillyfields footpath.

Considerations: 2 schools in the area; traffic travels faster on one way roads; vulnerable road users; no significant accident record; lane used predominantly by people living north of Rye.

Either one-way option would require – to conform with national regulatory requirements – provision for pedestrians and improved lighting. It had been estimated that a suitable scheme would cost £70,000-£90,000 – which cannot be justified in the current climate. Within the last 6 months RC had asked his team to review the options available to determine if it was possible to implement a cheaper scheme.

One (short-term) solution would be to obtain an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to implement option **(b)** – along with a 20mph speed restriction. Because the current average recorded speed for west bound traffic was 14mph, no traffic calming would be required (although it was likely speeds would increase subsequently).

Two out of the three property owners in the lane had said they would not need a turning head – and this would be discussed with the third next week. If a turning head was deemed essential, the necessary land would need to be acquired via a Compulsory Purchase Order (which could take a long time).

As well as property owners in the lane, the relevant statutory agencies would need to be consulted. If the Experimental TRO proved to be successful it would take approximately 18 months to make it permanent.

Cllr Hall observed that the Give Way sign at the bottom on Deadmans Lane was difficult to spot and suggested that a Stop sign would be appropriate. The Mayor commented that the existing sign was partially obscured by foliage.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Russell, RC advised that if a TRO was obtained a No Entry side would be needed at the bottom of the lane – as well as advisory signage at the junction of Cinque Ports Street and Rope Walk – and possibly elsewhere. He estimated the cost of temporary signage at £5,000-£10,000 and the timescale for obtaining an Experimental TRO at 6 months.

John Izod raised a concern in relation to inaccurate sat nav software. RC advised that ESCC does not work with software providers but it does work closely with the British Freight Transport Association (which works with sat nav providers who, in turn, work with Ordnance Survey). He urged residents to make their concerns known via ESCC's Local Transport Plan and Freight Transport Strategy consultations.

Addressing Cllr Souster's enquiry concerning pedestrian safety, RC suggested that Deadmans Lane is currently relatively safe because the typical 14mph vehicle speed is much lower than the most roads. The provision of pavements would escalate costs considerably and could require Compulsory Purchase Orders

The Mayor thanked RC for his attendance.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Former Tilling Green School Cllr Keith Glazier had worked with the Deputy Director of Corporate Resources to market the former schools site on a 3-year contract. Given that he was the Chairman of the Rye Partnership he had asked Cllr Souster (as a Partnership Director) to work up a Partnership bid for the site.

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) It was too early to work out the implications; however, ESCC was working on the basis of a £60m cut in funding over the next 3 years. ESCC was working with 6 other large authorities to identify joint working efficiencies. East Sussex was leading on a SEN proposal which had been submitted to Michael Gove for consideration. KCC was leading on highways and waste.

Cllr Smith *Was it correct that the plumbing and electrics within the former TG school had been vandalised soon after its closure?*

Cllr Glazier Vandals had entered the property and copper piping had been stolen. It would be the responsibility of the successful bidder to rectify this.

Cllr Bantick *What criteria had ESCC Highways applied when carrying out a safety audit of Tesco's proposed access to the former Lower School site?*

Rupert Clubb ESCC undertakes safety audits and analyses traffic movements in such situations to ensure the developer puts in place the necessary safety measures – or funds them through developer contributions.

Cllr Potter *Are Tesco and Sainsburys correct when they say they have 'Highways Authority approval'?*

Cllr Glazier Applicants do not have 'approval' until it has been obtained following the submission of a planning application. However, it is not uncommon for developers to have informal discussions with planning and highways authorities at the pre-application stage.

Keith Taylor *The creation of a new access for a supermarket in a Ferry Road is likely to result in increased traffic congestion: there are 46 scheduled trains a day passing through the adjacent level crossing. The access to the Fire Station is opposite and there is a GP surgery close by.*

Cllr Glazier All comments/concerns will be considered by the Planning Authority in due course.

John Howlett *Rye now has 3 former school sites with 'issues'. The town should have more autonomy in relation to planning matters.*

Cllr Glazier Rye has a District Councillor on RDC's Planning Committee. No permanent use of the Freda Gardham site can be considered until the Environment Agency has completed the tidal defence wall. The Tilling Green school site will be available for 3 years whilst there is a formal consultation on its disposal.

Mike Eve *The Creative Centre ('The School') on the Freda Gardham site is subsidised by the Arts Council. How can one obtain the Centre's accounts?*

Cllr Glazier The Centre is a private company run by Ian Ross. He was sure that Mr Ross would be happy to provide information. A regular newsletter is issued by email.

REPORT OF THE ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Russell

See Appendix B.

Cllr Sonia Holmes

RDC Budget Review In progress.

Unwanted batteries May now be taken to Rye CHP. RDC is discussing the collection of recyclables with HBC.

Housing RDC had linked up with a housing association to increase the provision of affordable homes.

Rye MUGA Now set up and successful.

Valley Park development The Planning Committee had approved the advertising hoarding but not the lighting.

Community Grants Project Fund Rye Scouts need a contribution from RTC as match funding towards its award of £20,000. Rye Cricket Club and Rye United FC were in a similar position.

Planning enforcement The Government had published new good practice guidance. The Mayor expressed concern about the lack of enforcement, that people seem to get away with contravening planning law – and that anonymous complaints are disregarded. The Clerk advised that RDC had decided recently not to renew their Temporary Enforcement Officer's contract.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Andy Hemsley *Could either of the District Councillors confirm that RDC's CEO had written to staff saying that no jobs would be lost as a result of budget cuts?*

Cllr Russell Agreement had been reached that there would be no job cuts in return for a pay freeze.

John Howlett (to Cllr Russell) *Is it right that there is no provision for public participation at RDC Planning Committee meetings? The public can speak at ESCC meetings.*

Cllr Russell Is it the case that a minority of councils do not permit public speaking at planning committee meetings. It was therefore more important for residents to make their views known to RTC and their District Councillors. The applications to be submitted by Tesco and Sainsburys would be thoroughly scrutinized.

Cllr Holmes added that letters from the public were copied to RDC Planning Committee Members.

John Izod expressed concern that the Scouts were fundraising for a new hut that would probably be used for just 4 hours a week. Cllr Russell understood that the Scouts had advised that there would be shared use.

Cllr Hall flagged up the Rye Marketing Group's Open Day at the River Haven Hotel on 23 November, noon-3.30pm. Standholders would include the Partnership, Chamber, Museum and HotCats. Councillors might like to assist with a HC/Town Hall stand.

RYE TOWN COUNCIL, 25th OCTOBER 2010: REPORT OF ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Tesco have now submitted a planning application for a retail store at Ferry Road. Rother are in the process of validating the application which is likely to be available to view on the website within a few days. In due course the plans will come here, and to other interested parties, for detailed examination and comment. Nobody should hesitate to send their observations to Rother. Meanwhile, it is not clear whether **Tesco's** application will be determined before **Sainsbury's** submit theirs; and it will not make any difference. It may be that the intense public relations work being effected by both parties is connected with the fact that neither controls access to the site. It must be hoped that they reach an accommodation long before there is any call for a compulsory purchase process.

In **Bexhill**, the West promenade is closed for a month to allow repairs to the sea wall and resurfacing of the promenade. There is continuing controversy over the new seafront shelters.

As to the **Comprehensive Spending Review**, it seems that core funding to Councils from central government will fall by more than 7 per cent a year. If Councils undertake to set a zero tax increase for 2011/12, there is an offer of modest grants over the next four years under a complicated formula. There will inevitably be cuts in Rother's spending which will be thrashed out, and consulted on, in the budget setting process.

At last, a contractor is starting work this week on the construction of the base for the new **bus shelters** in Station Approach. Existing vegetation will be cleared so that new planting can take place.

In respect of the **FE Centre**, a legal agreement has been signed by the College but has not been signed, as yet, by either ESCC or RDC. The matter will be reported to Planning Committee on the 18th November. Their authority is needed if Rother is to proceed with completion.

Essentially the agreement restricts the use of the eastern building to D1 use – preventing any type of business trade or residential application (but allowing public halls, day centres etc). We still understand that the whole site will be offered for sale as a package after the Planning Committee's consideration of the Section 106 Planning Obligation. The legal agreement does not deal with ownership and transfer of the building or future maintenance considerations. The College is undertaking to restore the fleche; but there are uncertainties as to the condition of the roof and parking entitlements. So it is now for the FE Group and their supporters to move ahead with their proposals for cultural and educational facilities at the site.