

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 28 November 2011**

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, Gemma Blumire, John Breeds
(**Mayor**), Jonathan Breeds, Mike Eve, Bernardine
Fiddimore, Heidi Foster, Sonia Holmes, Nigel Jennings,
Jo Kirkham, Ian Potter, Shaun Rogers (**Deputy Mayor**)

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*;
8 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm

82 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons logged with the Clerk – were accepted from
Cllrs Lord Ampthill, Adam Smith and Sam Souster.

83 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

84 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 October
2011 (C10).

85 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) **Planning & Townscape**

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meetings held on
17 October 2011 (PT10), 31 October 2011 (PT11) and
14 November 2011 (PT12).

b) **Public Services**

RESOLVED Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held
on 10 October 2011 (PS02).

86 CAR PARKING REVIEW

Members were asked to consider an invitation to attend RDC's Car Parking Review
Working Group meeting on 30 November in order to make representations on
recommendations relating to parking charges and alternative uses/management of
Rother's car parks.

The Clerk advised that Cllrs Eve and Potter had expressed interest in representing
the Council. He had booked the 3.00-3.20pm time slot at the Working Group
meeting. The 2.40-3pm slot would be used by Rye & District Chamber of Commerce
and the 3.20-3.40pm slot by Battle Town Council.

RESOLVED 1 To accept the offers from Cllrs Eve and Potter to attend the
Car Parking Review meeting on behalf of RTC.

Members then considered RDC's Car Parking Review Guidelines – particularly the
'Recommendations under Consideration'. Comments made (forming the basis of
RTC's presentation) included:

- RTC should oppose any increased/additional charges: it is not unusual for visitors to the town to complain about parking charges and there is a risk that they won't return – which the local economy cannot afford.
- Rye's RDC car parks already generate £250,000pa in receipts - out of a total across the District of £1.06m – ie 25%. RDC's operating surplus is c£600,000 – Rye's car parks provide £150,000 of this. Rye is currently contributing more than its fair share.
- 'Less is more' – there is a sound business case for *reducing* existing charges: RDC's charges are uncompetitive; there are more private sector providers of off street parking spaces in Rye and their charges are below RDC's; lowering prices would increase occupancy.
- Overnight parking charges – RTC should oppose this because: residents parking overnight already pay a day-time rate; employing enforcement officers to check tickets outside normal working hours is unlikely to be viable; free overnight parking helps to attract to overnight visitors – which supports the local economy.
- Parking permits – the proposed increases are substantial and would take a large chunk of the disposable income of those who work in Rye, at a time when they can least afford it.
- Changing the minimum tariff from 1 to 2 hours – this represents a 100% increase for short-term parking and is likely to lead to customers of local retailers deciding to shop in other towns outside the District (such as Tenterden).
- Free parking at Christmas – free parking during the week-ends leading up to Christmas draws business into the town.
- Rye Harbour car park - providing the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is willing, RTC should support the proposal that the Reserve be invited to manage the car park in order to generate an income.
- Generating car parking receipts suggestion - improved signage to the under-utilised Gibbet Marsh car park and reducing the 24-hour charge to £1 (which would be less - or equal to - that charged at the privately-run Rye Cattle Market car park in the town centre) – perhaps for a trial period. Local businesses would automatically promote the car park to the customers/guests.

During the discussion the Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow the Chairman of Rye & District Chamber of Commerce, Neil Cunliffe to outline his organisation's position:

- *RDC's car parking charges should be reduced – visitors are leaving thinking Rye is expensive.*
- *£6.60 a day is excessive.*
- *Hotels advise their guests to park overnight in RDC's car parks – and this will be at a time when there is little demand. If an overnight charge is introduced they may lose business.*
- *The (currently free) weekend suspension of charges in the weeks leading up to Christmas help to make the town an attractive Christmas shopping proposition.*
- *The Chamber's cash back scheme is on hold because the record of participating businesses is inaccurate. It may be that some businesses will be unable to absorb the costs.*

87 GRANT: CHANGE OF USE

Members were invited to consider a request from the Tilling Green Residents' Association that it be permitted to use c£500 of the Town Council's recent grant to purchase a larger external noticeboard to be positioned at the Tilling Green Community Centre.

RESOLVED To agree to the request - subject to RTC's agendas being displayed.
Clerk

88 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items to consider.

The meeting ended at 7.01pm.

Date Chairman