

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Leisure & Tourism Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 4 February 2008**

**PRESENT** Councillors John Breeds (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Brian Elliott, Lorna Hall (**Committee Chairman**), Sonia Holmes, David Russell, Sam Souster (Deputy Mayor), David Wright

**IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Frank Palmer and Shaun Rogers; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 7 members of the public

---

*The meeting commenced at 7.14.*

**59 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Paul Osborne (Mayor).

**60 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

*7.15 The Chairman to adjourned the meeting for a presentation by Simon Hickmott, County Council Group Manager (Environment) on how the Council might support the Rye Bay Wildlife Weekend 2008. (See Appendix.)*

**61 WILDLIFE WEEKEND**

Members were asked to consider the presentation and to agree a course of action. There was no consensus on the role (if any) the Council should play in organising/funding/publicising the Weekend.

**RESOLVED To refer the matter to full Council. Clerk**

**62 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of 4 December 2007 (LT04) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

**63 MATTERS ARISING**

*Page 3*

*53b) Allotments (to reconsider proposed rent increases after Counsel's Opinion had been considered by Council) See main agenda item – 65.*

*Page 4*

*55 Station Approach-Ferry Road (raising issue of pavement area at time of Rye LATS consultation on revised Station Approach scheme) The Clerk advised that the consultation had been delayed to April-May.*

57 Section 106 Agreements (asking Highways Agency if it was holding such monies).  
Actioned – nothing held.

58 Rye Skate Park (asking Rye District Councillors to help with the release of the two  
outstanding Community Project Grants) See main agenda item – 68.

59 Rye Sports Centre (raising Cllr Kirkham's concerns about slippery pool tiles) The  
Head of Amenities had advised that changing room and shower area tiles were to be  
replaced over Christmas. The pool tiles had passed the HSE 'slip test' but needed to  
be cleaned regularly to prevent the build up of body grease.

#### 64 ROTHER WOODS PROJECT

The meeting was invited to consider whether – and how – to support the Butterfly  
Conservation's Rother Woods project.

It was concluded that there was little that could be contributed from within the Parish.

#### 65 ALLOTMENTS: RENTS

Following Council's consideration of Counsel's Opinion in relation to the ownership  
and status of Rye's allotments, Members were invited to re-consider whether to  
support Rye Allotment Holders Association's objection to Rother District Council's  
proposed 10% increase in allotment rentals.

**RESOLVED To support the Allotment Holders Association's position.**  
Clerk

#### 66 MARKETING

##### (a) Rye Marketing Group

Cllr Hall's report included:

- The RMG having met on 7 December
- The Acting Chairman thanking those volunteers involved in  
organising a Taste of Rye and Community Rail Festival
- A shortage of volunteers for the Rye Maritime Festival and the  
organiser, Charles Bronsdon being invited to join the Group
- The allocation of £1500 towards marketing the 2008 Scallop  
Festival
- A sub group being established to consider distribution of the 2008  
Town Guide (official launch in January)
- RDC asking the RMG to consider a simpler Town Guide
- 50% of those visiting the visitRye web site are UK residents; a  
surprising 33% are from the US
- An open day at Simmonds Quay may be held in May

Cllr Souster suggested that there was some confusion about the Town  
Council's involvement in the RMG. Like a number of other Partnership  
organisations RTC was represented on the Group - by Cllr Hall – who  
happens to be the Chairman of this Committee.

He suggested that by stating that the Partnership had 'virtually  
disintegrated' because of the absence of a Town Manager the  
Chamber of Commerce's Christmas newsletter was misleading. A

number of volunteers – including Cllr Hall, Cllr Elliott, John Izod and those comprising the Christmas Festival Committee - had ensured that planned promotional events had proceeded.

**(b) Rye Town Guide**  
**(i) Rother Cabinet**

The Clerk reported that, unexpectedly, the Cabinet had decided to reduce the £10,000 Town Guide grant for Rye, Battle and Bexhill to £9,000 each.

Cllr Souster stated that he had emailed the Leader about this on 30 December but had not yet received a reply. The Cabinet appeared not to have been aware that the Head of Regeneration and Tourism Officer had invited Cllr Souster (as RMG Acting Chairman) to meet with them on 19 November to discuss how the funding allocated for the Rye Guide could be used more efficiently.

The next RMG would consider whether Rye could utilise the 'Hastings model' which could entail producing separate accommodation and attractions publications.

**RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to write to the Leader echoing Cllr Souster's sentiments. Clerk**

Cllr Souster to supply a copy of his email to the Leader to Cllr Russell to pursue. **Cllr Souster, Cllr Russell**

**(ii) Town Guide format**

Cllr Hall quoted from an email to her from Rother's Tourism Officer. In it the Officer suggested that 1066 County Marketing could collate accommodation and attractions details and produce separate leaflets – one accommodation only; the other map-based.

She emphasised this was a suggestion only and it would be discussed at the next RMG meeting.

**(c) 1066 Country Campaign Committee**

Cllr Hall reported that the meeting held on 7 December considered mainly a survey of each key town in 1066 Country by Arkenford Market Modeling and Research – the objectives being to ascertain visitor awareness levels and perceptions of 1066 Country destinations. The survey targets were based in Greater London and the Home Counties.

Selected findings:

- Hastings rated higher than Bath for day trips
- Top 3 regions for visiting: Coastal Kent, Rural Kent, Coastal East Sussex
- 1066 Country perceptions: history, castles, countryside, maritime history, family friendliness
- Rye is perceived as being 'safe' and having a 'quality feel' – with great historical attractions, very interesting architecture,

gourmet pubs and restaurants, and eateries selling local produce

- Rye's four main festivals – Rye Fawkes, the Rye Festival, A Taste of Rye and Scallops Festival – are among just seven for the 1066 area (with Rye Fawkes coming top)
- Interestingly, the 25-34 visitor age group figured most prominently
- Most people visit by car

**(d) Marketing & Town Management Review**

The Clerk advised that the Chamber, HotCats and RTS had stated that they had not attended the Marketing and Town Management Discussion Evening because they did not recall receiving an invitation. It was likely that another meeting would be arranged for their benefit.

**(e) Scallop Festival (15-24 February)**

Cllr Hall advised that, since the promotional booklet had been published, more businesses had expressed interest in getting involved in the Festival. There had been much media interest and the 'latecomer' businesses could benefit from inclusion on the Festival web site.

**(f) Travel Agents' Visit**

In Quest of the Classics had arranged for around 20 leading travel agents from the US to visit Rye briefly on 9 March. Ideas to 'entertain' them were welcome. The TIC was involved and the visitors would be invited to the Town Hall to (hopefully) meet the Mayor.

**67 RYE IN BLOOM**

Fortunately, four enthusiastic individuals – including Cllr Fiddimore – had come forward to ensure that Rye in Bloom survived as an organisation. They were likely to concentrate on running the local In Bloom competition.

**68 RYE SKATE PARK**

The Clerk advised that the Rye Youth Services Manager was preparing another application to the County's Youth Opportunities fund for £5,000 towards the cost of installing the items of Skate Park equipment outstanding. He was confident that one of the outstanding two £5,000 Community Project Grants would be released by RDC shortly; however, the other continued to be 'under consideration' by an officer.

**69 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

**(a) Condition**

Cllr Hall sought Members' opinions on the accessibility and condition of Rye's public conveniences.

Cllr Souster – who had initiated informal monitoring of them in the past – suggested that their cleanliness and condition generally was much-improved. The inspection forms remained available. There were sometimes problems with monitoring the contract because RDC had only 3 Contract Compliance Officers.

Cllr Hall stated that she would undertake some monitoring.

**Cllr Hall**

**(b) Rye Fawkes**

Members were invited to consider further making another approach to Rother with a view to ensuring that sufficient public conveniences are available during Rye Fawkes. The Police had confirmed that the closure of Crownfields in particular last year had caused problems – especially because visitors had been encouraged to use the train.

**RESOLVED To reiterate to RDC the case for Rye's toilets being kept open for Rye Fawkes and to seek the support of the Police.**

**Clerk**

**70 RYE SPORTS CENTRE**

Cllr Souster advised that the Sports Hall Management Committee had not met since the last Committee meeting. The next was scheduled for 23 April. The new clerk was Caroline Turner.

*The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.39.*

Date..... Chairman.....

### **PRESENTATION BY SIMON HICKMOTT**

Simon Hickmott (SH) thanked Members for the opportunity to discuss the Wildlife Weekend.

There was an opportunity for RTC – or a local organisation – to build on the event through InterReg funding and tapping into established Anglo-French working relationships.

The first Wildlife Weekend was in 2005. The main objective is to 'expose' families to the rich flora and fauna in the locality through participation in a range of activities – using Rye as the 'base'. Typically, the event attracts c4000 visitors. Last year it included a successful children's parade and arts organisations managed to source additional funding to stage complementary events.

To draw down the funding a similar 'festival is run in the Baie de Somme – an area which has benefited greatly from its promotion of 'birds and nature'.

This year's Wildlife Weekend would take place 22 May-1 June and would absorb the balance of the current InterReg funding programme.

ESCC was looking to identify a new lead organisation. He advised that the fundholders were keen to see new organisations involved in future programme – as well as bids emanating directly from the locality which would benefit. ESCC could help write bids.

Responding to a question from Cllr Souster, SH confirmed that Dr Barry Yates was involved in the event, being part of his team.

Cllr Palmer reported that he had provided displays in the FE Centre at previous Wildlife Weekends. He suggested it was difficult to formulate 'new angles' to make the event more appealing. SH responded that the programme of activities this year would be guided by the amount of funding and (often voluntary) effort contributed.

Replying to a question put by Cllr Russell, SH explained that to draw down InterReg funding (which needed to be match funded – volunteer time was accepted), the local community should compile a relevant wish list.

The Clerk expressed concern about the administration involved in preparing and monitoring InterReg bids. SH stated that ESCC would not be prepared to act as the accountable body. A short discussion followed on who could act as an accountable body and whether it would be appropriate to refer the matter to the Rye Partnership which had experience of InterReg.

SH advised that a pot of money was available until the end of March to fund a group of young people on a 'nature-related' visit to the Baie de Somme.