

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning & Townscape Committee
held at the Town Hall, Rye on Monday 27 June 2011**

PRESENT Councillors John Breeds (Mayor), Bernardine Fiddimore, Mike Eve, Heidi Foster, Nigel Jennings (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Jo Kirkham, Shaun Rogers (Deputy Mayor), Adam Smith (**Committee Chairman**)

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall – Town Clerk; Cllrs Granville Bantick, Ian Potter and Mary Smith; 7 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.39pm

15 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Gemma Blumire, Sonia Holmes and Sam Souster.

16 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Adam Smith *personal* **RR/2011/1024/P** Friend of applicant

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for public questions/comments. (See Appendix). The meeting reconvened.

17 MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Planning and Townscape meeting of 13 June 2011 (PT02) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 MATTERS ARISING

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143 Bus shelters (approaching the manufacturer to establish if they can be modified) See main agenda item – 20.

143 Bus shelters (approaching HBC to establish if it had received reports of problems in respect of similar shelters in the vicinity of The Azure (St Leonards sea front Outstanding.

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13 Town Centre Access See main agenda item – 21.

14 Cobbles Streets (in principle support for a resident being trained to effect minor repairs) The Clerk would communicate this decision to the Director of

19 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED That the comments following be submitted to the Planning Authority:

Cllr Adam Smith re-stated his personal interest in the application following.

RR/2011/1024/P 30 Cadborough Cliff, Rye
 (Del) Remove existing conservatory roof and construct new flat roof with balcony over.
Applicant: Brian Gibson, 30 Cadborough Cliff, Rye
SUPPORT APPROVAL

20 NEW BUS SHELTERS: CROWNFIELDS

*(See also the **Appendix**.)*

The Clerk advised that he had now spoken with the General Manager of the UK distributor of the shelters who, it transpired, was an engineer by profession. He had welcomed the feedback and had undertaken to explore a design solution to prevent water ingress. The Clerk had asked him to focus initially on the gaps between the top of the panes and the roof – and the roof ends.

The Clerk added that, although the Council had resolved previously to accept the transfer of the new shelters upon their installation, he had not yet formally accepted responsibility for them on RTC's behalf.

The subsequent debate included the comments following: RTC had chosen the model of the shelters, had asked RDC to order it, and was responsible for addressing any 'limitations' – there was nothing to be gained by delaying the transfer of ownership; RTC should accept that it made an error; it was not clear from the images of the shelter that it lacked roof ends or that there were so many 'gaps' in the structure; despite having more experience of shelters, RDC did not question RTC's choice – or offer guidance; it was reasonable to expect that a bus shelter would protect users from rain; the shelters are not completely installed because they are not (yet) 'fit for purpose'; if RTC deferred acceptance of the proposed transfer of ownership, it would have time to establish the cost of modifications and 'inform' negotiations with RDC.

RESOLVED To defer acceptance of ownership of the shelters because they are not currently fit for purpose.

21 TOWN CENTRE ACCESS

*(See also the **Appendix**.)*

Cllr Kirkham reported that, since the last meeting, she had emailed the Hastings & Rother Disability Forum concerning arranging some form of town access audit - but had not yet had a response. **Cllr Kirkham**

Cllr Kirkham observed that Rye Dial-a-Ride takes clients to the Library.

Contributions to this discussion included: Tenterden (which still has traffic wardens) does not appear to have a problem with unlawful parking; Verdant vehicles have been observed parking and driving on pavements on Sundays; the Police do not seem to factor in the substantial increase in Rye's population during the main visitor season; abuse of parking regulations would be less likely in a pedestrianised area; RTC has lobbied the Police for greater enforcement for years with limited success; decriminalization of street parking could, perhaps, transfer responsibility to RTC.

22 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTS 2007 AND 2010

Members were invited to consider whether to support Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council's resolution of 7 June 2011 calling on the Minister for the Department of Communities & Local Government to introduce new planning policy/guidance in respect of large planning applications within areas of a Parish/Town Council – essentially requiring applicants of major developments to:

- (a)** Attend a meeting of the Parish/Town Council (or Parish/Town Meeting) to answer questions on the application for development;
- (b)** Fund the Council (or Town/Parish Meeting) to commission an independent report on the application and critique of any reports that the applicant has submitted in support of the application for development.

The debate ensuing included the comments following: applicants already pay a fee to Planning Authorities to examine their application and supporting documents; Leiston's resolution appears to assume that all major applications are inherently 'detrimental'; **(b)** could be useful in situations in which the Parish/Town Council and Planning Authority disagree; **(b)** might be an additional burden on the applicant; what is the difference between a 'major' and 'large' application for development?; does one (? 'major') have a statutory definition?; an application could have a 'large' impact on a neighbour but not the remainder of a community; the Government is trying to speed up planning decisions – this proposal would slow it down and is therefore unlikely to get Ministerial backing; the proposal would effectively give Parish/Town Council's more influence.

A proposal to support Leiston's resolution in principle – subject to clarification on definitions – was lost.

The meeting ended at 7.24pm.

Date.....

Chairman.....

27 June 2011 (PT03)**Public Question Time**

John Howlett (JH) reported that he had attended RDC's Planning Committee meeting on 23 June where he had observed Members' discussion on Sainsbury's planning application. Members decided to defer further consideration because they had a number of concerns – including the safety of pedestrians accessing the proposed store via the level crossing. Sainsbury's would be negotiating with Network Rail in order to widen the footpath. Along with Cllr Ampthill, JH took the view that the ESCC Highways assessment of the crossing/store access was inadequate. Traffic congestion could be minimised if traffic lights were installed on the approach along Ferry Road from the west and just inside the site entrance – with the lights being synchronized with the level crossing and the Fire Station having the capability of overriding them. During the debate Cllr Ramus had stated that Rye TC had received presentations from Tesco and Sainsbury's but surrounding parishes had not been invited. JH suggested that RTC should seek to repair bridges with other parishes.

Cllr Fiddimore understood that Sainsbury's was negotiating with Network Rail to acquire the land necessary to widen the footpath and stated that she and the Clerk had quite a bit of contact with surrounding parishes and she was not aware of any antipathy towards RTC. Cllrs Kirkham and Fiddimore noted that Cllr Ramus had attended the last Sainsbury's presentation.

JH added that originally it had been suggested that the successful developer would be required to provide a footbridge over the rail line; however, it was now considered this would be too expensive. Cllr Kirkham advised that there had once been a satisfactory footbridge in the vicinity: a public hearing to stop its removal had been lost.

20 New Bus Shelters: Crownfields

JH advised that one of Sainsbury's planning conditions would be 'improvements to Station Approach/Crownfields'.

21 Town Centre Access

Keith Taylor (KT) suggested that other groups – not just those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc - were affected by the traffic in the town – such as the visually-impaired (of which there were 50,000 in East Sussex alone). The problem of rising levels of traffic had never been properly addressed; but the impending LDF Core Strategy public consultation could provide such an opportunity.

Pat Hughes observed that the textured paved areas intended to assist the visually-impaired (for example, by indicating a dropped kerb) can present a trip hazard, are hazardous when wet and can 'trap' ice. She suggested that there are more people with basic mobility difficulties than those with a visual impairment.

Frank Palmer suggested that the larger problem was that of pedestrians, wheelchair users and those with buggies being impeded by unlawful parking on pavements. If there is no enforcement vehicles will be parked in front of dropped kerbs.

JH stated that visitors from overseas could not understand why there were no pedestrian areas in Rye.