

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes  
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday  
2 April 2007**

**PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, Jonathan Breeds, Roger Breeds, Paul Carey, Peter Dyce, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (Mayor), Frank Palmer, David Russell (**Committee Chairman** – Deputy Mayor), Sam Souster

**IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs John Breeds, John Izod and Keith Taylor; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 4 members of the public;

*The meeting commenced at 6.53*

**73 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Ian Potter.

**74 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Sam Souster     *personal*     **item 77.2a)**     Partner a  
RTS Director

**75 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of 6 March 2007 (PR06) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**76 MATTERS ARISING**

**(a) Meeting held on 15 January 2007**

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*95a) Community Centre signage (contributing up to £125 towards a B&G 'finger') Outstanding.*

*45 Banners across High Street (renewing planning permission) Not yet actioned – need to identify secure/safe fixings and willing property owners. (May be possible to utilise new Christmas lighting brackets.)*

*60 Rye Cemetery (asking RDC to adopt Hastings BC memorial stones testing model) Not yet actioned.*

*20.2b) Heritage Centre: VAT (letter of understanding) Not yet actioned.*

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*59.4 Earmarked Reserves (adding £3,500 to Skate Park Reserve) Actioned.*

*59.5 Draft Budget 2007-08 (decreasing Mayoral Allowance by £100) Actioned.*

65 *Reproduction Permission (approving Ian Morgan's request to use an image of the Gibbet Cage)* Actioned.

**(b) Meeting held on 6 March 2007**

*Page 2 Fairtrade Fortnight, Resolution 2 (considering the Fairtrade Town process at a future meeting)* Ongoing.

**77 FINANCE**

**77.1 Town Hall**

**a) Schedules of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income**

**RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income for January-February 2007 be received and adopted.**

**b) Petty Cash**

**RESOLVED That the Petty Cash Account Statement for January-February 2007 be received and adopted.**

**c) Budget Monitor**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 28 February 2007 against that budgeted be received and noted.**

**77.2 Heritage Centre**

**a) RTS Trading Reports**

Members considered Rye Town Services's monthly trading figures for November 2006 (tabled).

The Clerk advised that RTS had apologised for the delay in submitting trading reports – it was concentrating on rectifying errors made by its former bookkeepers. It appeared that the 2005-06 Annual Accounts were inaccurate.

**RESOLVED To express disappointment that RTS has fallen so far behind with the submission of its monthly trading reports.**

TC

**77.3 Account Balances**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 28 February 2007 be received and noted.**

**77.4 Earmarked Reserves**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 28 February 2007 be amended accordingly and noted.**

TC

## 77.5 SALC/NALC

Members were advised that the cost of the Town Council's combined memberships of the National and Sussex/Surrey Associations of Local Councils had increased from £511.52 to £830.18 (62%) and were asked to agree a course of action.

The increase was ostensibly the consequence of the introduction of an 'equitable banding system'. Councils had been placed in one of 6 bands, depending on the size of their electorate. The formula was '21p per elector'. The details were notified in the Autumn 2006 SALC Circular (sent to Members on 23.10.06).

When the Circular was published the Clerk assumed the new system incorporated RTC's NALC subscription (as previous years). It appeared this was not the case.

Thus far, Battle, Sedlescombe, Salehurst, Northiam and Brede had reported subscription increases in the range 27-62%.

The Autumn Circular advised that 'where a council feels that its fee has increased by an unacceptable amount, this will be looked at by the Executive Committees [East or West] on a case by case basis.'

A discussion followed on the merits of SALC/NALC membership. It was acknowledged that it was necessary to be a member of SALC in order to access the more specialized services and facilities provided by NALC and, although in some years RTC makes few or no demands on SALC/NALC, it was important to be able to access easily relevant professional support when required.

**RESOLVED That Rye Town Council asks SALC:**  
**1 for its 2007-08 subscription rate to be reassessed**  
**2 for a breakdown of its 2006-07 subscription (NALC/SALC split)**  
**3 (assuming Counties-wide compliance) how much additional funding the new scheme will generate for SALC.**  
**4 how SALC/NALC subscription rates have been determined previously**  
**- and that the Council continues to liaise with other affected councils.**

TC

## 78 TOWN CLERK REPORTS

Responding to a question from Cllr Souster, the Clerk advised that RDC had not responded to the report on the joint RTC-SHS inspection of the public conveniences on 12 February.

**RESOLVED To receive and note the Town Clerks Reports for January 2007 and February 2007.**

## 79 STREET TRADING

The Committee Chairman advised that although a productive meeting held been held with Rother Officers on 23 March, despite a reminder, the police had not attended.

Rother's principal Enforcement Officer would be on duty Good Friday-Easter Monday and was intending to clamp down on illegal streets vendors in the town. He would require police support in the event of vendors refusing to provide their name and address or being suspected of providing false details.

The Clerk advised that he had been endeavouring to put Chief Inspector Brookman and RDC's Licensing & Litigation Officer in contact with each other in order for the Inspector to be briefed on the legislation applicable and the legitimate role of the police; however, the Clerk's messages were not being returned and Rye's new Inspector was on leave until 10 April. That said, it appeared local officers were keen to lend support and were aware of RDC's strategy for the coming weekend.

In relation to the ice cream van often present on Hilder's Cliff, Rother had advised that last year's successful prosecution had been delayed because the owner of the vehicle had provided a false name and address. With hindsight, RDC should have applied pressure by pursuing concurrent prosecutions rather than relying on the successful conclusion of one to deter further transgressions.

Cllr Dyce advised that at the last Local Action Team Meeting, those attending were advised that there is technically no such thing as a 'Citizen's Arrest' and that PCSOs do not have the power of arrest.

It was agreed that enforcement generally was inadequately resourced.

## **80 RYE LOCAL ACTION TEAM**

The Clerk advised that the work of the Rye Local Action Team was being hampered by a lack of a secretarial/admin support and, to a lesser degree, a budget. The LAT had no funds and the current Chairman, Cllr Izod takes notes and uses some of his own resources to finance basic administration. The Council has resolved previously that it should not provide secretarial support.

Cllr Dyce recalled that the police had intimated initially that it would resource the LAT.

The Clerk advised that although the then Chief Constable was encouraging the formation of LATs it was RTC which took the lead on establishing the Rye body. Furthermore, local authorities – including parishes – have a statutory duty to consider crime and disorder issues.

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Izod advised that the LAT had become something of a 'talking shop' with individuals sharing problems. The Clerk considered that, when it did meet, LAT meetings were productive and observed that, in its early days, an action plan (based on agreed priorities) existed which was reviewed regularly.

Cllr Izod advised that a CCTV scheme for the Station Approach area was close to implementation.

**RESOLVED To ask the police to resource the LAT and then consider its response.**  
TC

## **81 HOUSING STRATEGY**

Members were asked to consider whether to participate in the Regional Housing Board's *Housing Strategy Review* (deadline: 27 April).

**RESOLVED To accept Cllr Carey's offer to draft a response. Cllr Carey**

**82 PUBLIC CAR PARKS**

The Clerk reminded Members that the Campaign for a Democratic Rye had presented the Mayor with a petition bearing the names of 270 signatories calling for surplus Rye car park income to be placed at the disposal of Rye Town Council - but that Council had not yet decided how to respond to it.

The Mayor advised that the petition had been drawn to the attention of RDC's CEO and, at the last RTC-RDC liaison meeting, to the Leader of RDC.

It was agreed generally that the issue of devolved services had been given an adequate hearing at the last Council meeting and that little further progress could be made before the full elections in May.

Cllrs Dyce and Souster questioned whether 'surplus income' equated with 'net profit' and Cllr Souster listed a number of expenses associated with running car parks – including: maintenance of grounds and pay machines; employing a meter warden; collecting, counting and banking receipts; and insurance.

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Taylor observed that many tourist/coastal towns receive considerable revenue from parking fees and suggested that it was reasonable for those towns to use any surplus funds generated for their own benefit.

**83 TOWN HALL COTTAGE**

The Clerk asked Members if they wished to review the current tenancy, given the circumstances following:

On 25 July 2006 the Council let the Cottage to 3 employees of The George for a period of 6 months, with Alex and Katie Clarke acting as Guarantors and paying the rent on their behalf.

Enquiries in response to some observations that the Cottage was looking like it contained bed sits and appeared to contain more than 3 residents revealed that there were now five people resident in the Cottage and not one of them was an original (official) tenant. Although it is a 3-bedroom house, the Lounge was being used as a bedroom.

The Guarantors considered that having fewer than 5 George employees within the property would not be viable and had undertaken to advise RTC as and when there was a change of occupants.

Members were not minded to object to the arrangement reported in principle but considered that no more than 5 persons should be resident within the premises and that the Tenancy Agreement should be between RTC and The George.

**RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to negotiate a suitable Tenancy Agreement with The George.**  
**TC**

*The meeting ended at 7.55*

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