

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes  
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye,  
on Tuesday 28 August 2007**

- PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, Brian Elliott (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Bernardine Fiddimore, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (Mayor), Frank Palmer, David Russell, Sam Souster (Deputy Mayor), David Wright
- IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Lorna Hall and Shaun Rogers; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 2 members of the public;
- 

*The meeting commenced at 8.21 and was chaired by Cllr Elliott.*

**18 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds and Sonia Holmes (**Committee Chairman**).

**19 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Sam Souster *prejudicial* **item 22.2** Partner a  
RTS Director

**20 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of 4 June 2007 (PR07) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**21 MATTERS ARISING**

*Page 1*

*5.2(a-b), Resolution (Clerk meeting with Kerry de Courcy) Outstanding*

*Page 2*

*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.*

*81 Housing Strategy (consultation response) Actioned.*

*83 Town Hall Cottage (negotiating suitable tenancy agreement with The George) Agreed – Phillips & Stubbs to be asked to draft new Agreement.*

Page 3

5.4 Earmarked Reserves, Resolved 1 (virements) Actioned.

Page 4

5.4 Earmarked Reserves, Resolved 2 (confirming requirement for detached youth work reserve) Outstanding.

5.5 SALC/NALC, Resolution (seconding Fairlight's special proposal to RALC AGM) Actioned – see main agenda item – 28.

Page 5

5.9 Past Mayor Badges – Clerk to agenda additional information at a future meeting.

8 Street trading (further meeting with RDC) Actioned – RDC has asked that the meeting be arranged once a number of the prosecutions have been dealt with by the courts. See also main agenda item – 27.

Page 6

9 Devolution (establishing a working group) Actioned – see main agenda item – 26.

10 Speed management (conveying the Council's view on enforcement) Actioned.

11 Cinque Ports promotion (contributing £300 towards (amended) leaflet re-print) Actioned.

Page 7

12 Town Crier (request for Town Crier presence after church wedding) Actioned but no longer required.

14 Local Action Team (re-assessing funding support after next LAT meeting) Outstanding – LAT to meet 18.9.07.

## 22 FINANCE

### 22.1 Town Hall

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

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

#### b) Petty Cash

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

#### c) Budget Monitor

**RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 31 July 2007 against that budgeted, be received and noted.**

*Cllr Souster re-stated his prejudicial interest in the item following and left the Chamber.*

## **22.2 Heritage Centre**

- a) RTS Trading Reports**
  - (i) Correspondence**
  - (ii) Trading Reports**

Members considered email correspondence between Kerry de Courcy, RTS Chairman and Chief Executive and the Clerk. Members were concerned to note that although Trading Reports had been received for April-June 2007, there remained a gap for the period October 2006-March 2007 – and the 2006-07 Annual Accounts appeared not to have been published. The Clerk advised that under the terms of the 5-year Agreement with RTS the Occupancy Fee (minimum of £5,000) would be paid to the Council within the 3 months' following the financial year end.

**RESOLVED 1 To note that, as at 30 June 2007, the running surplus (c£9k) was similar to that as at 30 June 2005.**

**RESOLVED 2 To write to RTS expressing the Committee's disappointment that that last year's Annual Accounts – as well as a number of Trading Reports - are not yet available, with the request that (at the very least) draft Annual Accounts be made available for Members to consider at their next meeting (29 October), so that they might decide what further action would be appropriate.**

**Clerk**

*8.34 Cllr Potter arrived.*

*8.36 Cllr Souster returned to the Chamber.*

## **22.3 Account Balances**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 31 July 2007 be received and noted.**

## **22.4 Earmarked Reserves**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 31 July 2007 be received and noted.**

## **22.5 Internal Audit**

Cllr Osborne observed that the Internal Auditor's Report dated 25 July was exceptionally positive.

**RESOLVED To congratulate the Town Hall office staff.**

## **23 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

**RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Summaries for May-July 2007.**

## **24 WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED To receive and note the status of key tasks/projects as at 21 August 2007.**

*Before leaving the Chamber, Cllr Potter declared a prejudicial interest in the item following by virtue of the fact that agents of Jempsons Ltd were considering three legal actions against him in the Crown Court.*

## **25 JEMPSONS' CAR PARK**

The meeting was invited to consider the earlier presentation by Jempsons on its new parking scheme at its Crownfields store (including its expansion plans).

The Clerk reminded Members that, at the last meeting, Cllr Potter had given notice that he wished to agenda asking the Council to resolve not to purchase items from the store.

It was noted that a number of parking fines received by visitors to the town had been waived. It was agreed generally that the new scheme had settled down and that the amended scheme would calm further the situation. Jempsons had demonstrated considerable goodwill by attending the Council meeting and explaining its rationale.

The Mayor advised that he had met with Stephen and Andrew Jempson prior to the Council meeting and had advised them that Councillors would not be able to comment specifically on its expansion plans in order to avoid pre-determination.

Cllr Bantick suggested that the (effective) 2 hours free parking available at Jempsons/Budgens was generous.

**RESOLVED To take no action.**

*8.50 Cllr Potter returned to the Chamber.*

## **26 DEVOLVED SERVICES**

The Committee received the notes of the meeting of the Devolved Services Working Group held on 2 August and the additional background information provided subsequently by Cllr Kirkham.

Cllr Wright, who had chaired the meeting, suggested that, although providing useful background information, there was little to be gained from continuing to re-visit the past.

**RESOLVED To approve the Group's proposed course of action.**

## **27 STREET TRADING**

Members were advised that Rother District Council was continuing to pursue a number of prosecutions for street trading offences in Rye; that the subject would be discussed at the next Town-District Councils Liaison meeting (18 October); and that the Clerk had written to the owner of the ice cream tricycles requesting that no further trading was undertaken on land owned by the Town Council (periphery of Rye Heritage Centre).

There was general frustration that the prosecution process was so protracted and that, once again, the main visitor season was nearly over with illegal street trading continuing at a similar level of activity.

**RESOLVED To note that Rother DC is pursuing six prosecutions and that another meeting with Rother will be arranged once the outcome of a number of them is known.**

## 28 COUNTY ASSOCIATION

The meeting noted that:

- (a) the special proposal at the Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC) AGM to remove the requirement that RALC members must be members also of the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC) failed;
- (b) the Clerk had been appointed as one of RALC's representatives on the SALC East Sussex Executive Committee; and
- (c) a SALC memo dated 10 August explaining SALC's budget had been distributed to Members.

Members were asked to consider supporting Sedlescombe Parish Council's proposal that SALC gives Quality Councils a subscription fee discount on the grounds that such councils are less likely to make demands upon SALC's resources.

The Clerk advised that Sedlescombe Parish Council wished to ensure that any discount given to Quality Councils would not be at the expense of non-Quality Councils.

**RESOLVED To support Sedlescombe's proposal.**

**Clerk**

## 29 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### (a) Generally

Cllr Fiddimore invited colleagues to consider further ways in which the Council could communicate/engage with the community – especially younger people. She suggested also that the Town Council would benefit from more positive publicity within the town – as well as at the Thomas Peacocke Community College. There was a need to convince the public that the Council was not just about gown-wearing and penny-throwing.

The Mayor advised that he had just submitted a column for the *Rye Observer* and that both he and the previous Mayor, Cllr Potter, had attended many engagements at the TPCC. Both invited routinely the Head Boy and Girl to their civic events and one of Cllr Osborne's St Georges Day receptions had been attended almost exclusively by younger people.

Cllr Souster advised that when he had engaged with young people to discuss issues he received generally a positive response. However, he acknowledged that the majority of people did not really understand the different levels of political governance. Cllr Kirkham observed that three young people she taught at the TPCC had become Town Councillors at a young age.

The Clerk advised that some local authorities/councils had 'youth councils/committees'. A few years ago a Rother District Councillor had written to parishes urging them to engage more with younger people by co-opting them on to advisory committees or giving them 'slots' on agendas. At the time, Town Councillors had been concerned that, to be consistent, it would need to offer the same opportunity to other identifiable groups of people.

Cllr Wright suggested incorporating the issue of Town Council-community engagement within the Local Action Plan. He considered the Council should have a regular independent slot in the *Observer*.

**RESOLVED To discuss having a regular Council column in the Observer with its Editor and to explore greater Council involvement with the TPCC with its Principal. Clerk**

**(b) New residents**

The Clerk reported that Cllr Hall had suggested giving new residents a 'letter of welcome' to introduce them to the Town Council.

The Clerk advised that Rother DC issued its own welcome packs on request. He had emailed the Head of Democratic Services asking if there was a mechanism by which a letter from the Town Council could be incorporated within a Rother mailing.

**RESOLVED To pursue a welcome letter being issued to new residents and explore placing copies within, for example, estate agents. Clerk**

**(c) Annual Town Meeting**

Cllr Wright observed that it does not appear to be unusual for Councillors to outnumber members of the public at the Annual Town Meeting. Furthermore, those Members not presenting a report sat at floor level facing the public, and could feel somewhat uncomfortable. He suggested that a more informal approach with more 'mixing – possibly with refreshments - would be more enticing and productive.

**RESOLVED That Members be encouraged to forward their ideas for making the Annual Town Meeting more engaging to Cllr Wright for consideration at a future meeting. all**

**30 CINQUE PORTS DAY**

Members considered a proposal by a former Speaker of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports, Cllr Carole Waters that a Cinque Ports Day be established, possibly on the second Saturday in June.

The Clerk advised that when this was raised at the last Confederation Standing Committee meeting, the Mayors present had given the suggestion a lukewarm response.

Cllr Palmer was in favour of promoting the Cinque Ports and suggested linking, in some way, with the Maritime Festival and Raft Race.

**RESOLVED To refer the item to the Leisure & Tourism Committee.**

**31 QUEEN'S AWARD**

The Committee considered whether to nominate a local charity for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Organisations 2008.

The Clerk explained that nominated groups needed to be run mainly by volunteers and that those which just fund raised were ineligible. The Mayor recalled that last year the Council had considered nominating Rye Sea Cadets or Rye St John Ambulance – but there had been insufficient time.

**RESOLVED To nominate Rye & District Bonfire Society. Clerk**

**32 EVENTS**

The meeting considered whether to authorise interested Members to attend the National Association of Local Councils Annual Conference & Exhibition, 5-7 October 2007, Bournemouth International Centre.

**RESOLVED Not to authorise the attendance of Members on the grounds of cost.**

**33 GRANT APPLICATIONS:  
RYE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members considered a request for a grant of £2777 to cover the full cost of supplying an appropriately-designed safety railing alongside the Community Centre’s emergency exit escape route.

Cllr Souster observed that the structure would require planning permission.

9.24 *The Committee Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow John Izod to contribute.*

*Mr Izod reminded Members that the area in question was adjacent to access for Rye Lodge and The Monastery. It would therefore be reasonable to expect contributions from them.*

*The meeting reconvened.*

**RECOMMENDATION That the Council contributes £1,388.50 towards the cost of proposed safety rail.**  
**Clerk**  
*statutory power: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19*

**34 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Members were invited to resolve to exclude the public and press (in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2)) on the grounds that item 35 contained personal financial information.

**RESOLVED Not to exclude the public and press.**

**35 TOWN CRIER**

*Confidential – see Appendix.*

*The meeting ended at 9.32.*

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