

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes  
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye,  
on Monday 4 June 2007**

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

*The meeting commenced at 6.30.*

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Jonathan Breeds and John Breeds.

**2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Osborne	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 5.9</b>	Prospective recipient of Past Mayor's Badge
Cllr Ian Potter	<i>prejudicial</i>	<b>item 5.9</b>	Recent recipient of Past Mayor's Badge
Cllr Ian Potter	<i>personal</i>	<b>item 8</b>	Has prosecuted matters of this nature
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>prejudicial</i>	<b>item 5.2</b>	Partner a RTS Director

**RESOLVED To bring forward item 5.2**

*6.36 Cllr Fiddimore arrived*

*The Committee Chairman adjourned the meeting to permit Kerry de Courcy, CEO/Chairman of Rye Town Services to address the meeting. (See Appendix.)*

**5.2 Heritage Centre**

- a) **RTS Trading Reports**
- b) **Update**

**RESOLVED To note that the Clerk will arrange to meet with Mr de Courcy in order to discuss a number of operational issues. Clerk**

**3 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of 2 April 2007 (PR07) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 4 MATTERS ARISING

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

77.2a) Heritage Centre: RTS Trading Reports (pursuing outstanding monthly reports) Actioned - see main agenda items 5.2a) and 5.2b).

77.4 Earmarked Reserves (amendment) Actioned.

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77.5 SALC/NALC (contesting subscription increase) Actioned – see main agenda item 5.5.

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80 Rye Local Action Team (asking the Police to provide LAT with resources) Actioned – see main agenda item 14.

81 Housing Strategy (consultation response) Not actioned.

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

## 5 FINANCE

### 5.1 Town Hall

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

**RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income for March 2007 and April 2007 be received and adopted.**

#### b) Petty Cash

**RESOLVED That the Petty Cash Account Statement for March 2007 and April 2007 be received and adopted.**

Cllr Potter advised that he had received 45 complaints about Budgen's/Jempson's new parking enforcement policy and gave notice that, at the next meeting, he would

be asking the Council to consider not purchasing items from the store. Cllr Fiddimore advised that she too had received many similar complaints.

**c) Budget Monitor  
(i) to 31 March 2007**

The Clerk added the notes following:

- The Budget Monitor reports transactions through the current account only
- Including the interest generated by the Council's fixed rate bonds, in 2006-07 the total interest received was £5447 (budgeted: £4,000)
- The figure for wedding/ceremonies receipts during 2006-07 did not reflect the actual number hosted: some couples pay for their wedding in the preceding financial year.
- The budgeted figure for the burglar alarm includes c£900 towards upgrading the Town Hall to a 'confirmed' system.
- £800 for the internal audit appearing under the expense account 'Professional Fees – Accounting' should have been posted to 'Audit – Internal'. Unscheduled accounting expenditure for the year (£440) was spent on VAT advice, assistance with the Annual Return and advice on the proposed 5-year Agreement with Rye Town Services.
- The overspend on the Town Hall Repairs and Renewals budget would be covered by £1,200 in the capital provision for 2006-07 plus the appropriate earmarked reserve. During the year the Mayor's toilet roof light and cupola had been repaired – and the Buttermarket and all front elevation woodwork had been painted.
- Street lighting. £4,748.47 had been spent replacing the lighting columns on the Udimore Road-Marley Road footpath. Provision had been made within the Earmarked Reserves.

Responding to a question from Cllr Potter, the Clerk advised that the Town Field (Fred Gardham Field) income consisted of £500 rent from Rye Rugby FC and reimbursement of a proportion of planning application/control fees, paid by the Town Council, in relation to the 'new' clubhouse.

Cllr Potter observed that the £5,731.29 spent on bye-elections during the year could have been spent instead on providing services.

**RESOLVED That the Statements of actual income and expenditure to 31 March 2007 and April-May 2007, against that budgeted, be received and noted.**

**5.3 Account Balances**

**RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 30 April 2007 be received and noted.**

**5.4 Earmarked Reserves**

**RESOLVED 1 To make the virements following:**

- £2,000 from Rye TIC Contract Bid to General Reserve
  - £137.28 Lord Warden Installation to General Reserve
- Clerk**

**RESOLVED 2 To establish if the £1,500 provided for detached youth work is still required. Clerk**

**RESOLVED 3 That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30 April 2007 – as amended – be received and noted.**

#### **5.5 SALC/NALC**

Members considered an offer made by the Sussex Association of Local Councils to reduce the Town Council's SALC/NALC 2007-08 subscription renewal increase from 62% (£318.48) to 27% (£138.48).

A similar offer had been made to Battle Town Council. It was noted that around a dozen parishes in Rother also faced increases.

At the last Rother Association of Local Council's Executive Meeting, the Chairman had advised that SALC had got into difficulties because it had not increase subscriptions in line with inflation over the past 3 years and its reserves had become depleted.

Cllr Potter expressed doubts that membership of the National Association of Local Councils was of value and questioned the benefits of SALC membership relative to its cost.

The Clerk considered that NALC was influential at a governmental level and suggested that perceptions of the value of SALC membership were affected by a council's recent experience of receiving practical assistance.

A number of Members considered that membership of RALC was worthwhile as it enabled local towns/parishes to discuss common concerns with Rother. The Clerk advised that SALC membership was a prerequisite for RALC membership and that Fairlight PC had submitted a proposal for the next RALC AGM which sought to permit parishes to join RALC regardless of SALC membership.

**RESOLVED To second Fairlight's proposal for the RALC AGM and, subject to the proposal being successful, to allow the Council's membership of NALC and SALC to lapse. Clerk**

#### **5.6 BANK MANDATE**

**RESOLVED To re-confirm the Council's policy that any two of the following may authorise payment: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of Policy, Chairman of Planning, Chairman of Leisure & Tourism.**

#### **5.7 INTERNAL AUDITOR**

**RESOLVED To re-appoint Paula Fisher for a further 12-month term, subject to completion of section 4 of the Annual Return 2006-07 and agreement on charges for 2007-08.**

#### **5.8 RISK ASSESSMENTS**

**RESOLVED To receive the Council's risk assessments for 2007.**

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

## 5.9 PAST MAYOR BADGES

The Clerk advised that the stock of Past Mayor Badges was exhausted and that he considered that purchasing such badges for presentation, gratis, to outgoing Mayors was unlawful.

No specific power appeared to exist, which left Section 137 of the Local Government Act This allows a local council to spend (currently) up to £5.64 x the total number of electors on something for which there is no specific power – provided that it will benefit the area, or its inhabitants (including part/some of them) and that the area/inhabitants will benefit in a manner commensurate with that expenditure.

Section 137 was known to have been used by councils to purchase a Mayoral Chain. However, this is an item which will be seen/admired by many residents (helping to instill a sense of place/civic pride), is owned by the Council and is passed from one Mayor to another. A Past Mayor Badge is essentially a gift which benefits just one individual. He suggested that Mayors should fund the badges themselves from their Mayoral Allowance or own monies.

It was noted that estimates for supplying 5 Badges ranged from £1400 to £2400.

Cllr Kirkham advised that she had introduced the Past Mayor's Badge during her Mayoralty and had designed and funded her own.

Cllr Palmer reported that Past Mayor's Badges were worn commonly at Sussex Mayors lunches and parades and considered that they showed Rye in a positive light. If supplied locally, their cost equated to a weekly expenditure of less than £3 a week. He suggested that alternative quotes could be obtained.

**RECOMMENDATION That the Council continues with the existing policy of providing retiring Mayors with a Past Mayor's Badge.**

*Cllr Potter returned to the Chamber.*

## 6 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY

**RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Summaries for March and April 2007.**

## 7 WORK PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED To receive and note the status of key tasks/projects as at 30 May 2007.**

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

## 8 STREET TRADING

The Clerk reported that Rother District Council had prepared prosecutions for six street trading offences.

It was agreed generally that threat of prosecution was not deterring illegal traders and that certain businesses selling similar products (ice cream) – including the Fat Controller, Old Borough Arms and Shades – were clearly being targeted.

**RESOLVED To request another meeting with Rother DC. Clerk**

## **9 DEVOLUTION**

Members considered a Council Recommendation that the Committee should establish a working group to consider the devolvement of services/functions – including transfer of assets – to the Town Council from principal authorities.

**RESOLVED 1 To accept the Council's Recommendation.**

**RESOLVED 2 That the membership of the Working Group should be Cllrs Elliott, Fiddimore, Holmes, Osborne (as Mayor), Souster and Wright – and the Clerk.**

**RESOLVED 3 That the Working Group be asked to draft its own simple terms of reference.**

Members were advised that the Campaign for an Independent Rye was intending to hold a public meeting in the last 2 weeks of July.

## **10 SPEED MANAGEMENT**

The Committee was asked to consider whether to comment on East Sussex County Council's proposed revised Local Speed Limits Policy. (Deadline: 20.6.07) The Clerk advised that the Mayor had submitted comments, on behalf of the Council, during the formal consultation in late 2006.

It was agreed generally that such policies are of limited value without enforcement.

**RESOLVED To note the policy and convey the Council's thoughts on enforcement.** Clerk

## **11 CINQUE PORTS PROMOTION**

Members were invited to consider recommending to Council that £300 be contributed towards a 100,000 copy reprint of the popular Cinque Ports leaflet.

Cllr Palmer reported that members attending the recent Cinque Ports Mayors Association AGM had commented favourably on the publication.

**RECOMMENDATION To contribute £300 towards the proposed re-print.**  
*Statutory power: LGA 1972, s144.*

Cllr Potter was not in favour of this Recommendation.

## **12 TOWN CRIER**

The meeting was asked to a request from Jane Conlin of the Bay Tree for the Town Crier to be permitted to escort her daughter's wedding party from St Mary's Church to The George for a reception.

The Clerk explained that the Town Crier was involved significantly in ceremonies held at the Town Hall – including escorting parties to reception venues – and he was considered to be a unique selling point, featuring prominently in the Council's promotional material.

A discussion followed on the pros and cons of acceding to the request.

**RESOLVED To permit the Town Crier to accept the request, in this instance.**

**13 EVENTS**

Members were asked to consider whether to authorise interested Members to attend the events following:

- (a) *Making Community Business Your Business* 18 June, 10am-4pm, Heathfield Community Centre.

It was noted that this event could provide useful information for the preparation of the proposed Rye Local Action Plan.

**RESOLVED To authorise Cllr Wright to attend.**

**Clerk, Cllr Wright**

- (b) *Rural Rother Youth Forum (substance misuse and housing)* Battle Memorial Hall, 6 June, 6.30-8.30pm.

**RESOLVED To authorise the Council's Rural Rother Youth Forum representative, Cllr Fiddimore to attend.**

**Clerk, Cllr Fiddimore**

**14 LOCAL ACTION TEAM**

Members noted that Chief Inspector Steve Brookman had written to advise the Council that the Police did not have the resources to provide administrative support to the Rye Local Action Team.

**RESOLVED To consider the matter further after the Council's representative, Cllr Holmes had attended her first meeting.**

**15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (EXEMPT INFORMATION)**

**RESOLVED Not to exclude the public and press prior to consideration of the two items following.**

The Clerk cautioned that Members needed to be careful not to name particular members of staff.

**16 STAFF ABSENCE SUMMARY 2006-07**

**RESOLVED To receive and note a summary of staff absences 2006-07.**

**17 ANNUAL LEAVE**

Members noted that minimum statutory holiday entitlement will increase from 20 to 24 days per annum from 1 October 2007

**RESOLVED To amend the Council's Annual Leave Policy to reflect this amendment, with effect from 1 October 2007. (See Appendix.) Clerk**

*The meeting ended at 8.29.*

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

**5.2 Heritage Centre**

**a) RTS Trading Reports**

Mr de Courcy advised that RTS was still waiting for planning permission to enable it to commence Phase I of the proposed redesign to attract more customers. Rother District Council had concerns about the number/size of flags.

Visitor numbers were down slightly on the previous year.

Responding to a question from Cllr Russell, Mr de Courcy advised that although RTS had not changed the general nature of the merchandise at the Centre, some new lines had been introduced. Although it was noticeable that people preferred to use the internet for accommodation bookings he envisaged that a need for a personal service would remain for the foreseeable future. There was scope for introducing online merchandise sales.

Although the *Rye Guide* was available on the visitRye web site, the number of requests for hard copies had not diminished.

**17 ANNUAL LEAVE**

**Amended Annual Leave policy, effective 1 October 2007**

RESOLVED 1 That, from 1.4.03, the annual leave entitlement applicable to all RTC posts be:

- The statutory annual minimum, plus
- an additional 2 days (or 40% of a working week) after 3 years' continuous employment, plus
- an additional 3 days (or 60% of a working week) after 5 years' continuous employment

RESOLVED 2 That the new policy be applied to the posts of Heritage Centre Manager and Town Hall Keeper only after the current post holders have left the Council's employment.