

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 9 June 2008

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Jonathan Breeds, Bernardine Fiddimore, Lorna Hall, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Ian Potter (**Committee Chairman**), Shaun Rogers, Sam Souster (Mayor), David Wright

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Brian Elliott, Frank Palmer and Mary Smith; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 1 member of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.56.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr Russell.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sam Souster *prejudicial* **item 5.2** Partner a RTS Director

Cllr Granville Bantick *personal* **item 13** Member of Skate Park Management Committee

Cllr Paul Osborne *personal* **item 13** Chair of Skate Park Management Committee

Cllr Ian Potter *personal* **item 13** Member of Skate Park Management Committee

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 April 2008 (PR06) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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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.

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

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88.2b) *Heritage Centre Annual Accounts 2006-7 (Actioned) See main agenda item – 5.2b)*

91 *Devolved Services (arranging another RTC-RDC liaison meeting) Dates being considered.*

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93 *Annual Town Meeting 2008, Resolved 1 (thanking Sweet Williams) Actioned*

94 *Training Needs (passing suggestions for training to RALC) Actioned.*

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95a) *Grants – Rye Chamber of Commerce, Resolved 1 (producing a form for future grant funding applications) Examples had been sourced.*

95a) *Grants – Rye Chamber of Commerce, Resolved 2 (£250 for jute bags) Actioned.*

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 2008 and April 2008 be received and adopted.

b) Petty Cash

RESOLVED That the Petty Cash Account Statement to 31 March 2008 and to 30 April 2008 be received and adopted.

c) Budget Monitor

The Clerk added the Expense explanations following:
Cottage Other comprises the tenancy deposit lodged with a custodial scheme and a fee charged by Phillips & Stubbs for drawing up a new Tenancy Agreement.

Cottage R/R includes £800 to replace the lounge ceiling.

Grants Paid includes a £200 grant to the Sussex Playing Fields Association which needed to be re-allocated to 'Grants Fund'.

Light & Heat British Gas had issued no invoices for 2007-08.

RESOLVED 1 That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 31 March 2008 against that budgeted, be received and noted.

RESOLVED 2 To place the balance of the Local Action Plan revenue budget within a new earmarked reserve. Clerk

It was noted that the Partnership Board would shortly (18.6.08) be considering the Rye Marketing Group's recommendation for the future marketing of Rye and that it, in turn, would be making a recommendation to the principal funder, RDC.

RESOLVED 3 To re-state (to RDC) RTC's preference for the use of the Rye town management funding (available until 31.3.09). Clerk

Cllr Hall highlighted the poor condition of a number of the Council's ceremonial hats.

RESOLVED 4 To consider this matter at the next meeting. Clerk

Cllr Souster restated his prejudicial interest in the item following and left the Chamber.

5.2 Heritage Centre

- a) **RTS Trading Reports**
- b) **Annual Accounts 2006-07**

Members considered the documents following – which had been received that morning: letter from Phipps & Co (9.6.08); letter from Kerry de Courcy (6.9.08); and the re-cast Heritage Centre Profit and Loss Account for 22.2.05-31.3.06 and 1.4.06-31.3.07.

The Clerk observed that it was difficult to interpret the Profit & Loss Account without explanatory notes and a Balance Sheet.

It was noted that RTS was late filing Annual Accounts and an Annual Return with Companies House.

A number of Members expressed concern that, by continuing to accept RTS's reasons for not having complied fully with the RTC-RTS Management Agreement, the Council could be seen to be complicit in RTS's management failings.

RESOLVED 1 To note that Monthly Trading Reports had been received up to – and including – April 2008.

RESOLVED 2 To note that the Clerk would be seeking further financial information. Clerk

Cllr Souster returned to the Chamber.

5.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 30 April 2008 be received and noted.

5.4 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30 April 2008 be received and noted.

5.5 Banking

Members were advised that that Nat West would be withdrawing free banking from the Council with effect from 2 June. The matter was non-negotiable and would affect other town/parish councils similarly.

The only 'high street' bank offering (largely) free banking was the Co-operative Bank via its Community DirectPlus. The only charge was for cheque encashment (at a Post Office) - £1.50 per cheque. The Bank was seeking to expand its parish/town council customer base.

RESOLVED To transfer the Council's day-to-day banking from Nat West to the Co-operative Bank. Clerk

5.6 Internal Auditor

RESOLVED To re-appoint Paula Fisher for a further 12-month term, subject to completion of Section 4 of the Annual Return 2007-08 and agreement on charges for 2008-09 (previous charge: £95; budget: £125). Clerk

5.7 Financial Regulations

RECOMMENDATION That the Draft Amended Financial Regulations, as presented, be adopted (Appendix). Clerk

6 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY

RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Activity Summaries for March 2008 and April 2008.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

The Clerk to chase Charles Sharrod, who had offered to draft a Rye Local Action Plan. Clerk

Cllr Wright expressed frustration that RDC was taking so long to complete the devolved services analysis. The election of a CDR candidate at the recent by-election provided evidence that the electorate was keen to see greater local responsibility for service provision/delivery.

Cllr Osborne confirmed that Rother's Cabinet had agreed to extend the current grounds maintenance contract by c3.5 years and that RDC was not inclined to offer the Rye element of the contract (£70k-80k pa) to RTC – mainly because it considered this would render the District-wide contract unviable.

Cllr Osborne added that Cabinet had resolved to enter into negotiations with RTC concerning the possible transfer of Rye's allotments.

RESOLVED That the summary of key tasks/projects as at 2 June 2008 be received and noted.

8 DEVOLVED SERVICES

(Considered under item 7.)

9 STREET TRADING

The Clerk advised that the situation in relation to illegal street trading was not as bad as previous years. There had been a couple of incidences of people selling ice cream from tricycles briefly on Consent Streets, but mostly they were trading adjacent to the Methodist Church, in Market Road or at Crownfields.

It was understood that RDC's Enforcement Officer was obtaining photographic evidence of Consent Street breaches to support an application for an injunction against the owner of the tricycles.

10 STRAY DOGS

Cllr Fiddimore reported on Rother's new stray/lost dog collection service, operated by Animal Wardens (AW) since 1.4.08. It dealt with the collection and kenneling (albeit not locally) of stray animals and dangerous dogs. AW had experienced problems with its electronic record keeping and there had been a high profile case in Hastings of an owner and lost dog not being reunited and the animal being 'sold on'. A similar incident followed 2 weeks later.

Dogs are kenneled at Sevenoaks for 7-10 days. If not claimed they are moved to the north of England for re-homing.

RESOLVED To seek assurances that are safeguards are in place to prevent a repeat of the 'Hastings incident' and to press for the provision of local kenneling facilities.
Clerk

11 RISK ASSESSMENTS

RESOLVED To receive the annual risk assessments (March 2008).

12 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Members were invited to consider submitting comments on Rother District Council's proposed Parish and Town Grant Support Scheme.

It was noted that RDC was intending to prioritise supporting schemes appearing in Local Action Plans and that it would be expected that parish/town councils would provide match funding.

RESOLVED To ascertain the expected sources of match funding for applications for funding from Bexhill community organisations.
Clerk

Cllrs Bantick, Osborne and Potter restated their personal interests in the item following:

13 SKATE PARK

The Clerk advised that RDC's new Director of Resources, Malcolm Johnston had emailed him guaranteeing that the two Community Project Grants of £5,000 would be released upon completion of the Skate Park. Members noted that this would leave a shortfall of just £150 to complete the scheme.

The Clerk reported that the contractor's quotation to resurface the main (original) item of equipment was £490 above the sum budgeted for 2008-09. Furthermore, he advised that the Council should proceed on the basis that RVA might not be able to identify the £452 raised by Rye Wheelers within its accounts.

RECOMMENDATION That the Council contributes up to £1100 from the General Reserve to complete the Skate Park project and resurface the original (2005) equipment.
Clerk
Statutory power: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19

14 EVENTS

- (a) **Second Rother Local Strategic Partnership Consultation event, Pett Village Hall, Tuesday 24 June 2008, 9am-1pm**

It was noted that Cllr Holmes had attended the first event.

RESOLVED To ask Cllr Holmes to attend the second Rother LSP Consultation event. Clerk

- (b) **Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Partnership Annual Conference, Adastra Hall, Hassocks, Thursday 25 September, 9.30-1pm**

The Clerk advised that he was considering attending.

15 CEREMONIES (1)

Note *Item linked with item 17.*

Members were advised that it was becoming increasingly common for weddings/civil partnerships to be requested for Sundays and Public Holidays. The Registry Office charged an additional fee for officiating on these days as follows (Mon-Fri standard charge - £355):

Sat	standard charge +£20
Sun/Bank Hol	standard charge + £55

The Council's standard charge had been fixed at £250 since 1.4.07.

RESOLVED 1 That the Council increases its charges as follows:

Mon-Fri	standard charge – no change
Sat	standard charge + £25
Sun/Bank Hol	standard charge + £50

RESOLVED 2 That the increased charges shall not apply to those who have booked ceremonies already. Clerk

16 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There was no need to exclude members of the public and press - in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2) – because none remained in the Chamber at this stage.

17 CEREMONIES (2)

Confidential – see Appendix.

18 PA/PERSONAL SECRETARY TO THE TOWN CLERK

The Clerk requested that this item be withdrawn to allow him and the post holder to consider the post holder's workload in more depth. Agreed. Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.54

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