

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 3 August 2009

PRESENT Councillors John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Lorna Hall, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Frank Palmer, Ian Potter (**Committee Chairman**), David Russell, Shaun Rogers

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Mary Smith; Peter Cosstick – Heritage Centre Manager; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*, 3 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 7.09.

12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons (lodged with the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllrs Granville Bantick, Jonathan Breeds, Sam Souster (Mayor) and David Wright.

13 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr John Breeds	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 16.2d)	Wife involved in distribution of Guides for Domain Support
Cllr Lorna Hall	<i>personal</i>	item 16.2d)	Acquaintance of Domain Support management
Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 25a)	Rye LAT Chairman
Cllr Ian Potter	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 16.2d)	Unable to disclose (client confidentiality)

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2009 (PR01) as an accurate record of the proceedings.

15 MATTERS ARISING

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5.2d) Heritage Centre: PAYE 2008-09, Recommendation (paying RTS's outstanding tax and NIC) Actioned.

5.5 Internal Audit, Resolution (increasing the budget to £250pa and appointing Angela Alexander) Actioned.

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8 Devolved services, Resolution (asking the Devolved Services Working Group to review its recommended package) See main agenda item – 19.

16 FINANCE

16.1 Town Hall

a) Schedules of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income for May-June 2009 be received and adopted.

b) Petty Cash

RESOLVED 1 That the Petty Cash Account Statement as at 30 June 2009 be received and adopted.

RESOLVED 2 Given that the Town Hall no longer has a petty cash facility: to dispense with future statements. Clerk

c) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 30 June 2009 against that budgeted, be received and noted.

16.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress report

Referring to two income/sales graphs to the 31 July 2009 (tabled), the Heritage Centre Manager, Peter Cosstick (PC) reported that:

- The Heritage Centre would cease to accommodate Rye TIC with effect from 6 August
- The full name of the Centre would be Rye Heritage Information & Education Centre
- Two recent open evenings – incorporating a free viewing of the Town Model Show - had attracted 180 local residents and business people
- The Centre now opens at 9.45am. With the exception of Sunday, it would open daily throughout the summer until 5.30pm
- All 14 HotCats members contacted that day had expressed a desire to continue to receive accommodation bookings via the Centre. Taking bookings from 'walk in' visitors only could generate £1,500-£2,000pa. Telephone enquirers would be given TSE's telephone number (once known)

Responding to questions, PC advised that:

- Although the RDC TIC grant would be withdrawn shortly, the Centre would no longer have the expense of sending out *Rye Guides* – nor dealing with complex accommodation enquiries
- Staffing costs had been reduced and, after 6 August, would remain at the minimum level necessary
- Freed of the Service Level Agreement with RDC, in January-February the Centre's opening hours could be reduced (to match demand/visitor spend)
- Instead of providing a high quality TIC, the emphasis now would be on providing excellent customer service

b) Budget 2009-10

Members considered the Budget Monitor to 30 June 2009 – incorporating a revised budget. It was noted that a provision for accommodation booking commission needed to be added.

As at the end of July, annual budget target performance was as follows:

Retail sales	40%
Town Model	45%
Old Pier Amusements	46%
Audio Walking Tours	46%

c) Bookkeeping

RESOLVED To note that arrangements have been made for a member of the Heritage Centre staff to be trained in the use of QuickBooks accounting software – principally for the purpose of generating more timely and relevant financial and management accounting information.

Cllrs John Breeds and Ian Potter re-stated their prejudicial interests in the item following and left the Chamber.

Cllr Osborne took the Chair for this item only.

d) Town Guide distribution claim

Members were advised that it had come to light recently that Rye Town Services arranged for Domain Support to distribute *Rye Town Guides* via its Rye Tourism web site in return for reimbursement of postage. The Committee was asked to consider recommending that the company be reimbursed £230.86 for Guides sent out from 24 February 2009, until the stock had been exhausted.

RECOMMENDATION That the invoice from Doman Support for £230.86 be paid.

Cllrs John Breeds and Ian Potter returned to the Chamber.

16.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 30 June 2009 be received and noted.

16.4 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30 June 2009 be received and noted.

17 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY

RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Activity Summaries for May 2009 and June 2009.

18 WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Russell observed that RTC's desire to see the NCN completed between Tillingham Sluice and Monkbretton Bridge might not be possible if it felt unable to support encroachment onto the South Undercliff allotments site.

RESOLVED To receive and note the summary of key tasks/projects as at 27.7.09.

19 DEVOLVED SERVICES

RESOLVED To note that the Devolved Services Working Group would be reviewing its recommended package of services on 4.8.09.

20 LOCAL ACTION PLAN

The Clerk advised that the final meeting of the Steering Group to agree the Plan's content was held on 27 July. The intention was that the Final Draft Plan would be presented, for adoption, at the next full Council meeting. At this stage there would also be an update on the budget.

The Steering Group Members and Co-ordinator had put considerable effort into the action planning process – with the Steering Group meeting every 2 weeks.

Cllr Potter advised that, at the last Chamber of Commerce meeting, concern had been expressed that it had not been properly consulted. The Clerk observed that there had been many opportunities for its members to participate.

Cllr Osborne advised that a key requirement prior to publication was checking that the stakeholder organisations identified against each action were happy to be associated with it. With the exception of HotCats and (to a lesser degree) the Chamber, the vast majority of responses had been positive.

21 GENERAL ELECTION

The Clerk reported that a PPC had suggested that the Council might like to consider hosting a question and answer session for the candidates.

It was noted that Churches Together typically took on this role.

RESOLVED To establish Churches Together's intentions and, if necessary, to explore hosting jointly a Q&A session. Clerk

22 MAYOR MAKING (referred from Council)

The meeting was asked to consider the merits – or otherwise – of holding Mayor Making on a day other than a bank holiday.

It was accepted generally that a number of those attending Mayor Making have difficulty parking/accessing the Town Hall; however, it was considered that moving it back to a 'ordinary' weekday could result in even fewer children attending the Throwing of the Hot Pennies. Whilst acknowledging that the Mayor Making meeting is open to the public – and that there is limited space within the Chamber – Cllr John Breeds considered that the event could be better publicised to tourists.

RECOMMENDATION That Mayor Making remains on a Bank Holiday and the Council discusses a 'park and ride' service with Rye & District Community Transport. Clerk

23 PROCTOR FAMILY

Members were asked to consider a request from David T Proctor for the Council to suggest a suitable way in which the Proctor family's contribution to the history of Rye could be marked.

It was observed that the Proctor family was 'recognised' on the Chamber walls and on stones/slabs within St Marys.

RESOLVED To suggest to David Proctor that he might like to consider sponsoring a memorial bench within the children's play area on the Town Salts.
Clerk

24 GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Committee was invited to consider whether to appoint a Member to draft a response to the review of *Somewhere to Live: Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the South East*.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Smith's offer to review the document.
Clerk, Cllr Smith

25 GRANTS

a) Local Action Team

The Clerk advised that the Local Action Team received currently £100pa from the Town Council towards secretarial and administration costs but that the Team – which now met more frequently – was having difficulty identifying an individual to take on the roles; hence, its request that the annual grant be increased to £200. A number of Members suggested that they would expect one of the members of the Team to perform this function.

RESOLVED Not to increase the annual grant.

b) Rye Maritime Festival

Members noted that, despite two previous communications, publicity boards had again appeared displaying the Town Council's seal in isolation (ie not in conjunction with 'Rye Town Council').

RESOLVED To advise the Organiser of the Festival that if the omission occurred again the Council would reconsider its annual £250 grant.
Clerk

26 ABSENCE SUMMARY 2008-09

RESOLVED To receive the summary of Town Hall staff absences 2008-09.

27 KEY WORKER CONSULTATION

Members were invited to consider a response to RDC's Key Worker (Local) Definition Consultation (*deadline extended to 30 September*).

Cllr Osborne observed that the workers appearing on the National Key Workers Definition were public sector employees and that it could be argued that if the Government paid them a living wage they would be better placed to afford housing.

RESOLVED To respond as follows: RTC considers that all workers in Rye are key workers. Please tear up this illiberal bunkum and dismiss all Zone Agents immediately.
Clerk

The meeting ended at 8.16.

Date Chairman