

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 8 June 2009

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Jonathan Breeds, Lorna Hall, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (**Committee Vice Chairman**), Frank Palmer, Ian Potter (**Committee Chairman**), David Russell, Sam Souster (Mayor), David Wright

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Brian Elliott, Bernardine Fiddimore and David Russell; Peter Cosstick – Heritage Centre Manager; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*

The meeting commenced at 6.52

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reason (lodged with the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllr Rogers.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Granville Bantick	<i>personal</i>	item 8	CDR member
Cllr Brian Elliott	<i>personal</i>	item 8	CDR member
Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 8	CDR member
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 8	Partner a RTS Director

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2009 (PR04) as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Most of the matters arising appeared on the main agenda.

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61c) Consultations: Cycling Strategy Concern about the document's emphasis on utility cycling had been submitted.

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 January 2009-February 2009 and March 2009 to April 2009 be received and adopted.

b) Petty Cash

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

c) Budget Monitor

The Clerk advised the Cottage rent figure was overstated because it included rent owed from the previous financial year.

It was noted the 'Non-domestic rate' expense figure was inaccurate (it included repayment of Ticehurst PC's precept) and that the amount should be c£4,600. Clerk

RESOLVED That, subject to the amendment described above, the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 30 April 2009 against that budgeted, be received and noted.

5.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress report

Referring to two income/sales graphs, the Heritage Centre Manager, Peter Cosstick reported that sales were on track. Two new members had been recruited. Teresa Gasson and Jack Ash had started, or would be starting shortly. Customer feedback was positive and Old Pier Amusements revenue had outperformed the previous 5 years. There was an assumption that, although the interim TIC contract had been extended by up to 3 months (to 30 September), TSE might be ready to launch its TIC operation on 1 August.

b) 2008-09

Members received the profit & loss account for the period 1 November 2008-31 March 2009. The Clerk advised that a electricity bill relating to the period had been paid in the current financial year – and so the deficit should be increased to £8,000 (as originally forecast); however, no allowance had been made for the unexpected cost to be considered at item **5.2d**).

The profit and loss statement would be consolidated with the Town Hall accounts, to be considered at the Council meeting on 22 June.

RESOLVED To receive the profit & loss account for the period 1 November 2008-31 March 2009.

c) 2009-10

RESOLVED To note that

- (i) there are no financial reports available currently because the Council's bookkeepers/accountants have been asked to prioritise producing the combined (Town Hall and Heritage Centre) Annual Accounts for 2008-09;**
- (ii) it may be necessary to train a member of staff at the Centre to post data within Quick Books in order to ensure the regular production of financial and management accounting reports.**

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

d) PAYE 2008-09

The Clerk advised that it had been discovered recently that it appeared the previous operator of the Centre, Rye Town Services underpaid tax and NICs by £2,303.70; and that HM Revenue &

Customs had advised that because the core members of staff concerned were employed contractually by the Council (as evidenced within the RTC-RTS Management Agreements) it was the Council's responsibility to ensure that a payment was made.

The Clerk believed that c£300 related to a RTS member of staff; however, the precise amounts owed on behalf of each member of staff was unknown. Although it was recognised that HMRC would not be especially interested in the 'finer detail' of who owed the £2303.70, there was some reluctance to make a payment in respect RTS members of staff.

RECOMMENDATION 1 To pay, to HMRC, the sum of £2,303.70, being tax and NICs underpaid by RTS in 2008-09.

RECOMMENDATION 2 To invoice RTS for this sum.

Cllr Souster returned to the Chamber.

5.3 Account Balances.

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

5.4 Earmarked Reserves

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

5.5 Internal Audit

RESOLVED To note that:

- (a) Paula Fisher is about to step down as Internal Auditor**
- (b) with the return of responsibility for the Heritage Centre to the Town Council the role has become more onerous - and to:**
- (c) increase the 2009-10 budget provision from £125 to £250pa**
- (d) appoint the former Clerk of Camber, Angela Alexander for a trial period of one year.**

Clerk

6 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY

RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Activity Summaries for January 2009-April 2009.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Clerk's updated Work Programme to 31 May 2009.

a) Strand Quay Car Park Pedestrianisation project

The Mayor observed that implementation had been 'not a priority' for a number of years.

The ensuing discussion included the comments following: the feasibility study – which had recommended part pedestrianisation during the summer months – had been expensive; the *Rye Town Initiative* had proposed a much more grandiose scheme covering the entire Strand Quay area; piecemeal improvements have limited

impact; funding availability often determines which projects can be taken on; the car park is well used – including by those who live in rented accommodation in the immediate vicinity; a mini plaza would provide a more pleasant visitor experience for the customers of the businesses surrounding the car park; considerable Council time had been spent on the matter; a significant number of local residents and Councillors had been opposed to the recommended option; there were now a greater number of residential properties in the area and the car park is used by guests of accommodation providers; the ‘newer’ Councillors were not familiar with the report.

A proposal that the project be referred to the Leisure of Tourism Committee to be re-assessed was lost.

b) Emergency Plan

The Clerk to arrange a meeting so that John Holbrook could take over the administration.

Clerk

RESOLVED To receive and note the summary of key tasks/projects as at 31.5.09.

Cllrs Bantick, Elliott and Holmes re-stated their personal interest in the item following.

8 DEVOLVED SERVICES

The Clerk advised that, following the Council’s decision on 26 January 2009 to discuss the devolvement of ‘Package B’ (allotments, public conveniences, tourism and car parks) with Rother District Council, there had been no further progress. He suggested that, given RTC’s view is that the remaining Rye allotments are owned by RTC and the function is devolved to RDC, it would not be appropriate to include allotments within a devolved services package.

RESOLVED To ask the Devolved Services Working Group to review its recommended package.

Clerk

9 RISK ASSESSMENTS 2009

RESOLVED 1 To add ‘Reception’ (no risks identified) and ‘Mayor’s Parlour’ (no risks identified) to the Assessments.

RESOLVED 2 To receive the annual risk assessments – as modified.

10 LOCAL ACTION PLAN

The Clerk advised Members that the draft Rye Action Plan was close to completion and that, following consultation with key stakeholders, it would be presented to the Town Council for adoption, prior to publication.

11 RYE SKATEPARK

RESOLVED To note that Rother District Council had confirmed that the two outstanding Community Project Grants of £5,000 each would be released imminently.

The meeting ended at 8.19.

Date Chairman