

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 4 April 2011**

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Peter Cosstick – Heritage Centre Manager; 2 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm

62 APOLOGIES

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

63 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Lorna Hall	<i>personal</i>	item 71(b)(ii)	Former Chairman of, and RTC representative on, the RMG until 1.4.11
Cllr Sonia Holmes	<i>personal</i>	item 67	Member of the authority inviting expressions of interest
Cllr Paul Osborne	<i>personal</i>	item 67	Member of the authority inviting expressions of interest
Cllr Sam Souster	<i>prejudicial</i>	item 71(b)(i), (iii) & (v)	Associated with the applicants
Cllr David Russell	<i>personal</i>	item 67	Member of the authority inviting expressions of interest

64 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2011 (PR04) as an accurate record of the proceedings.

65 MATTERS ARISING

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45 CCTV: The Mint The Committee Chairman advised that the Police/RDC had installed this within the last week.

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4 Matters Arising, Rye Cemetery, Resolution (asking Amber Rudd MP if she would

consider pursuing a suitable amendment to the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1997 to permit the re-use of grave space) Actioned – response awaited.

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5.6 Internal Controls (Members assisting with internal controls) Not yet introduced.

The Committee Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow John Izod to speak to item 71(b)(i).

Mr Izod explained that he needed to leave the meeting at 7pm and thanked the Committee for the opportunity to contribute additional information. The 'retiring' Dial-a Ride vehicle had chalked up c250,000 miles, undertaken 40,000 passenger journeys, and was available 7 days a week. RDCT's policy was to run vehicles into the ground. A replacement vehicle had been sourced in Cumbria which had a longer wheelbase and would accommodate two wheelchairs (rather than one). The application could be linked to Action 34 of the Rye LAP: 'Encourage further development and promotion of community transport schemes – so that 'difficult to access' facilities, services and attractions continue to be available to those with disabilities or mobility problems.' RDCT had a total of 4 vehicles – including two 16-seaters and one 12-seater.

6.37 Cllr Fiddimore arrived.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Souster, the Chairman acknowledged that the other applicants for grant funding had not been offered the opportunity to send representatives to speak to their applications.

66 FINANCE

66.1 Town Hall

a) Schedules of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income for January-February 2011 be received and adopted.

b) Budget Monitor

Responding to a question put by Cllr Russell, the Clerk confirmed that the £1,600 expenditure against Devolved Services represented 50% of

RDC's costs (breaking down the receipts and payments associated with RDC services provided/delivered within Rye).

Addressing a comment made by Cllr Palmer, the Clerk confirmed that a large number of *Ryennium*'s remained in stock.

RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 28 February 2011 against that budgeted, be received and noted.

66.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress report

The report of the Heritage Centre Manager, Peter Cosstick (PC) included reference to:

- Overall growth being up 13% on the previous year
- Another modest surplus being forecast (without grant funding or management 'buy in')

- Business rates for 2011-12 being £918 more than budgeted (due to the end of transitional relief)
- Retail sales being up 15% on the previous 12 months
- The 'roundel' to the right of the main entrance have being restored and re-hung
- The large Town Model sign being removed for restoration
- A further quote being sought to replace the 'blown' double glazed windows
- The external stairway (fire escape) needing to be repainted
- Only (an estimated one out of three) 'student' coach parties stopping in Rye visiting the HC (being addressed)
- The HCM's contract expiring in March 2012 and the HCM being open to discussions on a further contract.

Cllr Souster congratulated the HCM on his achievements.

b) Payments and income

RESOLVED To receive and adopt Income by Customer and Expenses by Supplier Summaries, 1 January 2011- 28 February 2011.

c) Budget Monitor

Cllr Russell observed that bank charges to the end of February were £376 over the annual budget.

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget – and previous year comparison – to 28 February 2011.

66.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 28 February 2011 be received and noted.

66.4 Earmarked Reserves

The Clerk flagged up the addition of a provision for the Rye Environment Bequest monies transferred from RDC.

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 28 February 2011 be received and noted.

Cllrs Holmes, Osborne and Russell restated their personal interest in the item following.

67 VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

Members noted that Rother District Council is inviting interest in a 3-year contact, at £65,000pa, to provide a Networked TIC 'hub', two satellite information points staffed by an existing business/attraction and a minimum of ten unstaffed Local Tourism Information Points – and to consider whether to express an interest in tendering for the contract. (*Deadline: 27.5.11*)

The HCM was invited to outline additional tender requirements/considerations

- There would need to be a dedicated phone line to the Hub at the satellite points and internet access for satellite staff
- 10 Local Information Points across Rother would need to be serviced

- The successful tenderer would be responsible for all set up costs
- (Rough) estimated salary costs: Hub - £69,916pa + management costs; satellites - £34,000pa
- Rye HC once received an annual grant from RDC of £52,000 to provide a networked TIC and RDC currently provides TSE with a grant of £35,000pa for Rye TIC
- Other likely costs included: postage, set up costs, travel, training, DMS, accountancy/bookkeeping, record keeping, managing complaints

He concluded that the potential costs were likely to be far higher than the grant/accommodation booking commission, observed that inflation was rising and that there might be TUPE (staff transfer) implications – and suggested that there was the potential for customer service to be unsatisfactory during the peak of the visitor season.

Cllr Russell was aware that 12 Expression of Interest Packs had been issued and acknowledged that the funding on offer was insufficient. Cllr Osborne observed that it was likely that both Rye and Battle would want to host the Hub (funding permitting) and that the Local Information Points could stretch from Camber (in the east) to Cooden (west) and Ticehurst (north).

It was agreed generally that the proposed contract was not viable and that interest would almost certainly be limited.

RESOLVED To defer further consideration until it is known whether RDC has received any expressions of interest.

68 TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY

RESOLVED To receive and note the Clerk's Activity Summaries for January 2011 and February 2011.

69 WORK PROGRAMME

The Clerk advised that most of the new entries were associated with the completion/production of annual reports/returns/accounts & audit – which tended to pre-occupy the office until the end of June.

RESOLVED To receive and note the Work Programme as at 29 March 2011.

70 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Members were invited to review the arrangements for the meeting held on Wednesday 9 March, 7pm at Rye College.

Comments included: the content was a rather bland with little 'animation'; attendance appeared to be down; there were few controversial matters; the meeting might have been livelier if more people had been present; the 'bland' suggestion was unfair; the venue was too large relative to the attendance and the Community Centre might have been more suitable; it was difficult to judge what people wanted from such meetings; the position articulated by the RDC officer present in relation to the allotments issue was unsurprising; if people are not sufficiently interested/do not have an 'issue' they won't attend; RDC's Vice Chairman presented too much information and it could not be viewed on the flip pad; the lack of microphones (due to system failure) had not made an appreciable difference; there could have been more publicity; the meeting had been published in *Fixtures* over two consecutive months and there had been reasonable space afforded to it in *The Observer* beforehand; the performance at the 2010 ATM had gone on too long.

It was concluded generally that the meeting had gone reasonably well and there was support for the suggestion of rotating the ATM between the town centre, Tilling Green Community Centre and The School.

RECOMMENDATION That the new Council considers setting up a working group to consider the arrangements for next year's meeting.

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

71 GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Members noted that, as at 29 March 2011 £12,150 grants had been paid/committed during 2010-11 (budget: £12,000). The grant pot for 2011-12 was £15,000.

(b) Members were asked to consider – and where appropriate Recommend – the applications following:

(i) Rye & District Community Transport - £4,000 towards a minibus capable of carrying wheelchairs.

RECOMMENDATION 1 To award the full £4,000 requested.
statutory power: Local Government & Ratings Act 1997, s27

(ii) Rye & District Chamber of Commerce (on behalf of the Rye Marketing Group) - £5,000 towards marketing the town.

Cllr Hall read out a statement (see **Appendix**) explaining the current status of the Rye Marketing Group (RMG).

It was noted that RTC had contributed £5,000pa to marketing in order to release £15,000 of RDC funding; however, the total contributed by RDC had been cut from £24,000pa to £9,000pa.

It was agreed generally that marketing the town was essential in order to support its economy.

RESOLVED 1 To defer further consideration until the new RMG had agreed its constitution and signed a Service Level Agreement with RDC.

7.41 Cllr Hall left the meeting

(iii) Tilling Green Residents' Association - £5,000 (to include the £1,500 within RTC's Earmarked Reserves for detached youth work) towards equipping the Tilling Green Community Centre.

It was noted that the services provided at Animate would be relocating to the Tilling Green Community Centre – including its IT equipment. It was unclear why the Residents' Association needed 10 desktops. Cllr Fiddimore suggested that Tilling Green had not received much in the way of funding from RTC in the past and suggested that Animate's IT equipment must be around 4 years old.

RECOMMENDATION 2 That a grant of £3,500 be awarded – to include the £1,500 earmarked for detached youth work.
statutory power: LGA 1972, s145

- (iv) The Music Well - £4,800 towards providing music therapy for those with special needs.

RESOLVED 2 That the applicant be invited to resubmit the application to Rye Relief in Need. Clerk

- (v) Rye & District Sea Cadets - £10,000 towards the construction of a firing range.

Members were well-disposed towards the application but considered that the Council should have sight of the breakdown of the project cost - and an explanation of why the range needed to be constructed to MOD specification - before considering it further

RESOLVED 3 To request further information. Clerk

- (vi) Rye Maritime Festival - £600 towards the cost of holding the 2011 Festival.

It was noted that the £200 bar and food sales appeared to be significantly under-stated; however, it was agreed generally that this popular festival should be supported – particularly because of its clear association with Rye’s seafaring and boat-building past.

7.59 Cllr Kirkham arrived.

**RECOMMENDATION That a grant of £500 be awarded.
statutory power: LGA 1972, s145**

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

Date Chairman

PROS APPENDIX

The RMG, for the four years that I have been RTC representative, has consisted of representatives of various organisations in Rye and has numbered 15 members. The organisations included Rye Town Council, Rother, 1066 Country Marketing, Hotel and Caterers, Chamber of Commerce, Rye Museum, Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Env Agency, The Partnership and other coopted members. The group was administered by Rye Partnership and funded by RDC, 1066 and RTC. It was tasked with marketing the town and surrounding area in many ways, and producing the Rye Town Guide. The town guide has been self funding.

There has been a reduction in the amount of funding from RDC in recent cuts from £24,000 to £9,000 per annum. The Rye Partnership have decided not to continue management and administration of the group and Rother are now liaising with the Chamber of Commerce to take over this task. The SLA has not yet been signed but is under discussion.

At a recent meeting called by a member, during my absence, a proposed new format for the group was suggested.

Present at this meeting were Chamber members, Hotel and Caterer members, 2 x coopted members (I think 7 all together out the 15 members who would normally attend).

It was proposed and agreed at this meeting, although not carved in stone, that a new Executive committee shall be set up to administer the RMG in a similar format to the way the Rye Partnership works. It is proposed that there would be 2 x Hotcat members, 2 Chamber members and 1 x Rye Town Councillor on the Exec committee. There may also be a couple of 'floating seats' for co-opted members and this Exec would meet monthly.

The constitution is yet to be written but it is foreseen that people from other groups connected with marketing the town ie. the TIC, the Heritage Centre, the various festivals and other organisations could make up the members of the group and could attend a quarterly meeting to make their contributions and be involved if they wished.

The Executive committee would be controlled by this new constitution and feedback to the various main groups including RTC would be allowed for.

I have spoken to the Regeneration Officer at Rother and she confirms that Rother accept this situation as being workable and would support it as long as the Chamber is able to deliver the Guide and the future marketing.

The minutes for this meeting are not yet available.