

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 13 June 2011**

PRESENT Councillors Granville Bantick, John Breeds (Mayor), Jonathan Breeds, Bernardine Fiddimore, Mike Eve (**Committee Vice-Chairman**), Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Nigel Jennings, Ian Potter (**Committee Chairman**), Shaun Rogers (Deputy Mayor), Mary Smith

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllr Adam Smith; Peter Cosstick – Heritage Centre Manager; 7 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 7.19pm

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons (lodged with the Clerk) - were accepted from Cllrs Lord Ampthill and Sam Souster.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Jo Kirkham *prejudicial* **item 12** Chairman of Rye Museum

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2011 (PR05) as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Page 1

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.

Page 2

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

Page 3

67 Visitor Information Services Rye's District Councillors had offered to ascertain whether RDC had received any expressions of interest in a District-wide contract.

Page 5

71(b)(iii) Grant application (Chamber of Commerce - £5,000 for the Rye Bay Marketing Group towards marketing) See main agenda item – 9.

Page 6

71(b)(iv) Grant application (Music Well – 're-submission' to Rye Relief in Need) The application was considered by RRIN on 18 April but was not successful.

71(b)(v) Rye & District Sea Cadets (further information to support application) Further information had been received; however, the Cadets were seeking a lower construction estimate.

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-April 2011 be received and adopted.

b) Budget Monitor

Cllrs Jennings and Eve suggested comparing actual income and expenditure against monthly or quarterly budgets (rather than the annual budget provisions).

RESOLVED 1 To ask the Clerk to investigate how the format/content of the Budget Monitor could be improved.
Clerk

RESOLVED 2 That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 30 April 2011, against that budgeted, be received and noted.

5.2 Heritage Centre

a) Progress report

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

- In the last financial year (2010-11) the HC generated a surplus of c£17,000
- Main revenue streams were exceeding targets. Overall growth for April-May was up 32%. Retail sales had increased by 48%.
- Town Model revenue had dipped slightly – possibly due to the warm weather in April
- The Centre was working on ways of encouraging more students into the premises
- ('Walk in') Accommodation bookings receipts were down but this was to be expected as more people book online

Responding to an enquiry from Cllr Kirkham, the HCM advised that there were a few local accommodation providers prepared to accept one night bookings for Friday or Saturday nights.

The HCM advised that he was considering reducing the days the HC opened during a 3-week period in January – perhaps just opening Fri Sat. This would save on power costs and allow staff to take leave.

RESOLVED To congratulate the HCM on his achievements.

b) Payments and income c) Budget Monitor

The HCM advised that due to his moving house last week and a hard drive failure, production of these reports had been delayed.

d) Contract

It was noted that the HCM's contract with RTC expires on 31.3.12.

RESOLVED To establish a working group to explore the options open to the Council – comprising the Clerk and Cllrs Eve, Kirkham, Potter and Smith.
Clerk

5.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 30 April 2011 be received and noted.

5.4 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30 April 2011 be received and noted.

5.5 Annual Accounts 2010-11

RESOLVED To note that these – and other documentation relating to ‘end of year’ accounts and audit - will be presented to the Council meeting scheduled for 20 June 2011.

5.6 Bank Mandates

Members were asked to review/confirm the authorised signatories to the Council's bank and investment accounts – normally (any two to sign): The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of PRGP, Chairman of P&T – and one other (previously Chairman of the Leisure & Tourism Committee).

The Clerk advised that there was an ongoing problem with the NatWest (HC) mandate because the bank was requiring the Council to adopt a model mandate resolution which authorised account signatories to conduct banking electronic banking. The prevailing view held by the Council's professional advisers was that, until there was a change in the law (believed to be imminent) parish/town councils cannot make (variable) electronic payments.

Although Nat West is inflexible in relation to the model mandate resolution, RTC has a long standing – and good – working relationship with the local branch. The Clerk proposed that the Council adopts the model mandate resolution at the next meeting (in order to update the authorised signatories in the short term) but also passes a resolution stating that the Council acknowledges that Members do not have the legal authority to be party to electronic transactions. Once the law had been changed, the Council could then, if it wished, explore an alternative day-to-day banking provider – perhaps one able to offer dual/triple electronic authorisation of payments.

RESOLVED That the fifth authorised signatory be the Chairman of the Public Services Committee [provided that the individual is an Elected Town Councillor].
Clerk

5.7 Internal Controls

The meeting was asked to review/confirm those Members who have offered to assist with internal financial checks inbetween meetings.

RESOLVED To note that the Members following have offered their services: John Breeds, Eve, Fiddimore, Kirkham, Jennings and Potter.

6 **TOWN CLERK ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

RESOLVED 1 To receive and note the Clerk's Activity Summaries for March 2011 and April 2011.

RESOLVED 2 To dispense with the provision of Summaries. Clerk

7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED To receive and note the Work Programme as at 6 June 2011.

8 **COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

RESOLVED To note that the future workload of the committee is likely to be guided by the outcome of the Priority Setting process – and that any proposals requiring significant allocation of resources will need to feed into that process.

9 **TOWN MARKETING**

RESOLVED To note that a Service Level Agreement (value: £9,000 to Rye) has now been signed between RDC and Rye & District Chamber of Commerce but that a Draft Constitution for the proposed Rye Bay Marketing Group remains outstanding.

10 **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Members were asked to consider – and where necessary Recommend – the applications following:

- (i) **Rye & District Chamber of Commerce** (on behalf of Rye in Bloom) - £250 towards the provision and maintenance of hanging baskets in the town. It was agreed generally that the provision of hanging baskets in Station Approach does enhance the area.

RESOLVED That RTC in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the LGA 1972 should incur the expenditure following which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: £250 towards the provision and maintenance of hanging baskets in Station Approach. Clerk

- (ii) **Pett Level Rescue Boat Association** – a contribution towards the cost of extending the boathouse. It was agreed generally that the Association provides a much-valued service; however, Members were conscious that an increasing number of charities/voluntary organisations based principally within the parish were seeking financial assistance from the Council.

RESOLVED Not to make a grant on this occasion.

Clerk

11 **RYE SKATE PARK**

Members noted that the Council's 5-year licence with RDC (to occupy land on the Cricket Salts) expired on 6 December 2010 and were asked to confirm that the Council wished to renew the Licence at a fee of £20pa.

It was agreed generally that the skate park facility was an important resource for the town's younger residents.

RESOLVED To renew the Licence on the same terms. Clerk

12 MEMORIBILIA

Members of the public (and any Members with a prejudicial interest) were given the opportunity to address the meeting.

Before leaving the Chamber, Cllr Kirkham re-stated her prejudicial interest and made the statement following: Rye Museum had an Acquisition & Disposals policy and was an accredited museum. This meant that the items under consideration would be well cared for and a number of safeguards would be in place to prevent them being disposed of without reference to the Council.

The Committee was advised that one of the Executors of the estate of Rusty Ellis, who had gifted the deceased's scrap book and photo album to the Council had now written to advise that she was happy for them to be accommodated at Rye Museum. It was agreed generally that if the items remained at the Town Hall there was a risk of them being stored out of sight.

RESOLVED To make the items available to Rye Museum. Clerk

13 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Committee was asked to consider whether to establish a working group to consider the arrangements for next year's meeting (7 March).

Cllr Rogers suggested that this would not be necessary because the a satisfactory format had been established; however, other Members recalled considerable time being taken up at Council/Committee meetings discussing detail.

RESOLVED To set up a working group comprising Cllrs Bantick, Fiddimore, Mary Smith and the Clerk. Clerk

14 FLYING OF THE UNION FLAG

Members were advised that Council Members received several complaints that the Union flag was not (going to be) flown on the day of the last Royal Wedding because the Council's normal practice is to follow the advice issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for Government buildings. The Committee was asked if this policy should be reviewed.

Cllr Jonathan Breeds advised that he had received a complaint on the morning of the wedding, which resulted in him and the Mayor visiting the Town Hall in order to fly the flag. Cllr Bantick had received a similar complaint (possibly the same complainant). The Mayor observed that the (lead-covered) trap door to the Town Hall was heavy; however, he had managed to attach the flag without stepping on to the roof. It was agreed generally that it would be helpful to have more flexibility regarding flying the Union Flag but was acknowledged that any revised policy would need to be consistently applied.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Roger's offer to draft a revised policy. Cllr Rogers

15 ADVERSE WEATHER RESPONSE

The Clerk advised that Cllr Souster had withdrawn from the working group (which had yet to meet).

RESOLVED That the membership of the group shall be the Clerk and Cllrs Bantick, Fiddimore, Holmes, Rogers and Mary Smith. Clerk

16 ABSENCE SUMMARIES 2010-11

RESOLVED To receive and note the summaries for the Town Hall and Heritage Centre.

The meeting ended at 8.11pm.

Date Chairman