

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes
Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday
15 January 2007**

- PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, Roger Breeds, Paul Carey, Peter Dyce, Sonia Holmes, Jo Kirkham, Paul Osborne (Mayor), Frank Palmer, David Russell (**Committee Chairman – Deputy Mayor**), Sam Souster
- IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllr Keith Taylor; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 3 members of the public; Directors of Rye Town Services – Geraldine & Robert Bromley, Rita Cox, Alison Simmons; Laura Simmons - Rye Heritage Centre Manager; Andrea Hefford – Snappy Titles

The meeting commenced at 7.38

55 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

56 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Sam Souster *prejudicial* **adjournment & item 59.2a)** Partner a
RTS Director

Cllr Souster left the Chamber.

7.39 *The Committee Chairman adjourned the meeting for a presentation by Andrea Hefford (Snappytitle) and discussion with Directors and staff of Rye Town Services. See Appendices A and B (Overview and Brief).*

8.25 *The meeting reconvened.*

It was agreed to bring forward the item following:

59.2 Heritage Centre
a) RTS Trading Reports

Members considered Rye Town Services presentation, a letter from its Chairman & Chief Executive and its trading reports for September and October 2006.

RESOLVED 1 That the request from RTS for a financial contribution towards the proposed rebranding of the Heritage Centre be considered by Council on 5 February, subject to the Council being provided with a detailed breakdown of the costs of all phases/elements of the scheme (deadline: 29 January).

RESOLVED 2 To receive and note the Trading Reports for September 2006 and October 2006.

8.30 Cllr Souster returned to the Chamber.

57 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2006 (PR04) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58 MATTERS ARISING

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95a) *Community Centre signage (contributing up to £125 towards a B&G 'finger')* Outstanding.

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.

48.2a) *HC RTS Trading Reports (inviting RTS to next meeting)* Actioned – see main agenda

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51 *Dog Control, Resolutions (submitting comments on draft Order)* Actioned – see main agenda item – **62**.

52 *Waste Management, Resolution (inviting Envirocomms to a meeting)* Pursued – see main agenda item – **63**.

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53 *Overseas Pensions (charging for certification)* Implemented.

54 *Fire Authority Management Plan (Cllr Potter drafting comments)* Actioned and submitted.

59 FINANCE

59.1 Town Hall

a) Schedules of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statements of Income for November to December 2006 be received and adopted.

b) Petty Cash

RESOLVED That the Petty Cash Account Statement for November to December 2006 be received and adopted.

c) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED That the Statement of actual income and expenditure to 31 December 2006 against that budgeted be received and noted.

59.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED That the Statement of Account Balances as at 31 December 2006 be received and noted.

59.4 Earmarked Reserves

The Clerk advised that there was a Skate Park donation of £3,500 from RDCVS in the General Reserve which should appear in the Skate Park Earmarked Reserve as an addition under the 'Provided' and 'at 21.12.06' columns.

RESOLVED That the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 31 December 2006 be amended accordingly and noted. TC

59.5 Draft Budget 2007-08

RESOLVED 1 To decrease the Mayoral Allowance proposed for 2007-08 by £100. TC

RESOLVED 2 That the amended Draft Budget 2007-08 be recommended to Council for adoption. TC

60 TOWN CLERK REPORTS

RESOLVED To receive and note the Town Clerks Reports for November and December 2006.

61 STREET TRADING

RESOLVED To note that, for procedural reasons, the new District-wide Street Trading Control Order (incorporating further Consent Streets in Rye) is now not likely to come into force until 5 March – and that the Council will be arranging a meeting with Inspector Franklin and Rother District Council with a view to facilitating the introduction of an effective joint enforcement strategy between the police and Rother District Council, to be agreed prior to Easter 2007.

62 DRAFT ROTHER DOG CONTROL ORDER

Cllrs Bantick and Souster reported on that afternoon's Cabinet discussion on this item.

RDC had accepted RTC's request that dogs should be permitted on a lead within St Mary's Churchyard and that dogs walked on a highway should be on lead of a maximum length of 1m. There was no consensus regarding RTC's request for dogs to be permitted off the lead at Gibbet Marsh, Mason's Field, the Fair Salts and the Kings Avenue Open Space. It may be that RTC will have to compromise and accept one area to the east and another to the west of the town. Inevitably, the issue of enforcement had been discussed.

The draft Order would be going out to public consultation in March.

RESOLVED To await the public consultation before considering the matter further.

63 NEW WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Members were advised that no presentation from Envirocomms had been arranged because the company would charge the Council £250 (discounted). Furthermore, there had been no response to a request to Rother District Council for an officer presentation instead. The Clerk added that Envirocomms would be arranging a seminar specifically for parish councils and that the topic would be one of the two plenary sessions at the Annual Parish Conference (20 March).

Cllr Souster was concerned that it appeared requests from parish councils for information were not being accommodated. The Mayor suggested that, thus far, there was little evidence to indicate that the population of Rother was prepared for a major change in domestic waste collection.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Souster's offer to make known RTC's concerns.
Cllr Souster

64 HONORARY FREEMAN

The Mayor advised that, for the last 8 years or so, the Confederation of the Cinque Ports had been trying to identify ways of empowering those Member towns which, since local government re-organisation in 1972-74, had not been able to appoint honorary freeman. The Confederation of the Cinque Ports was seeking an amendment to the Local Government White Paper which would remedy this situation; however, both the Mayor (and Cllr Carey) could not recall RTC having discussed formally the Confederation's aspiration.

RECOMMENDATION 1 That RTC seeks to restore the position prior to the Local Government Act 1972 when it was empowered to appoint honorary freemen.

RECOMMENDATION 2 That, following the restitution of this power, honorary freemen be appointed by the unanimous decision of a full Council meeting.

65 REPRODUCTION PERMISSION

The Committee was asked to consider a request from Ian Morgan for permission to use an image of the Rye Gibbet Cage within a local (Derbyshire) history publication.

RESOLVED To grant permission subject to the Council being credited and provided with a copy of the published work.
TC

66 SUSSEX DAY

Members considered a letter from Ian Steedman highlighting the establishment of Sussex Day (16 June).

The Clerk advised that the Town Manager would be placing 'marking Sussex Day' before the Marketing Group. Last year RTC and RDC marked the Day by flying the Union Flag.

RESOLVED To support commemoration of Sussex Day.
TC

The Clerk advised that the Rother Association of Local Councils had been without a Clerk for 18 months and renewed efforts to recruit one had been unsuccessful.

Subject to RTC agreement, the Clerk had offered to take on the role as a last resort. Members noted that there was an honorarium associated with the post and the bulk of the duties would be undertaken at home.

RESOLVED To permit the Clerk to act as Clerk to the Rother Association of Local Councils – the arrangement to be reviewed should the Clerk cease to be one of the Council’s two representatives. TC

The meeting ended at 9.15

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

ADJOURNMENT: RYE TOWN SERVICES PRESENTATION

Robert Bromley (RB) explained that the current financial year had proved to be a difficult one at the Heritage Centre. In line with national trends, Visitors were down significantly. The Directors and staff had concluded that the Centre was in urgent need of an upgrade in order to make it more noticeable and inviting. Given that increasing numbers of people are booking accommodation and researching attractions on-line, it was considered that a new web site was required with online sales, children's interactive page and a virtual tour.

There was scope to develop further the Town Model and Audio Tours revenue streams. The latter had suffered from equipment breakdowns; however, the Rye Partnership had provided a grant of £12,000 to allow RTS to purchase 50 'wands' (more could be leased).

Andrea Hefford (Snappy Title) reported that RTS had approached her last year for advice on rejuvenating the Centre and increasing revenue. She suggested that the exterior of the Centre needed to act as a 'focal beacon' – to 'capture' passers by.

The proposal was that the Centre should act as the gateway to 'Royal/Majestic' Rye. This would be achieved by installing long banners, flags, 'A' frames and new window displays – incorporating medieval and nautical images. The merchandise within the building would complement the theme.

Both Phase 1 (exterior) and Phase II (interior) took into account fully the recommendations contained within a recent inspection undertaken by Tourism SE.

Internal lighting levels had been found not to meet current regulations.

The RTS Directors emphasised the need to complete Phase I by Easter 2007 and (preferably) Phase II by Easter 2008. RTS was looking to the Council for funding towards Phase 1 (estimated at £10,000 – not including the web site).

The Clerk observed that the Agreement with RTS required the Council to undertake/fund repairs to the fabric of the Centre (earmarked reserve c£5,000). The Council did not have a marketing budget and there was no provision within the Council's draft 2007-08 budget.

Rita Cox (RC) stressed that the scheme proposed would make the Centre more competitive and benefit the whole town – including those who rely on the tourist industry for economic benefit.

Geraldine Bromley (GB) stated that RTS wished to increase the proportion of Rye pottery and locally-produced items sold in the Centre – whilst recognising that the spend of foreign students contributed greatly to turnover.