

Minutes of a Public Services Committee meeting held at the Town Hall, Rye on Monday 1 February 2010

PRESENT Councillors John Breeds (Deputy Mayor), Brian Elliott, Sonia Holmes, Mary Smith (**Committee Chairman**), Sam Souster (Mayor)

PS Warren Downs (Sussex Police), PC Paul Fielder (Sussex Police), John Holbrook (REACT), PCSO Neil Holden (Sussex Police), John Howlett (Tillingham Valley & Neighbourhood Group), Anthony Kimber, Tony Moore (Ferry Road Health Centre PPG)

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllrs Jo Kirkham and Shaun Rogers; Andy Hemsley – *Rye Observer*; 16 members of the public; Sue Middlehurst (Principal, Sussex Coast College – Hastings) and Graham Razey (Deputy Principal, Sussex Coast College – Hastings)

The meeting commenced at 6.52pm.

26 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Granville Bantick (MLAG), E Sussex Community Rail Partnership), Cllr Keith Glazier (ESCC), Paul Osborne, Sonia Relf (Tillingham Valley & Neighbourhood Group), Gina Sanderson (RVA), David Wright (Landgate Association)

It was noted that Rosalind Collier had resigned as a Rye Primary School Governor.

RESOLVED To ask Rye Primary to consider nominating another representative. Clerk

27 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Mary Smith *personal* item 30(e) Friends of Rye Library member

28 MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2009 (PS02) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 MATTERS ARISING

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16 Matters Arising - 7 Wider involvement, Resolution (to invite a representative from the Rye Medical Centre PPG) Request to be considered at the next PPG meeting (10.2.10).

19 Voluntary Sector Issues, Recommendation 3 (obtaining information on Hastings & Rother Counseling Service and charges) At the initial assessment clients are asked to consider contributing an amount they can realistically afford to give – this could be £1-£10 per session. Clients are not asked to prove their income. Clients are told at the outset that the organisation is a charity.

23 Bus Strategy (submitting comments) Actioned.

30 CRIME & DISORDER

(a) Crime & Anti Social Behaviour Forum

RECOMMENDATION That Cllr Elliott's offer to attend the next meeting at Brede Village Hall, 4 March, 7pm be accepted.

Cllr Elliott

(b) Rye Local Action Team

Cllr Holmes (LAT Chairman) advised that at the last meeting those attending had agreed to replace the LAT with a Police Priority Setting Panel. It would be supported by the Police but chaired by a member of the community. The purpose of panels is to identify the community's main crime and disorder concerns. Appropriate officers from stakeholder organisations would attend by invitation.

Speaking from the Gallery, David Nixon (Chamber of Commerce LAT rep) stated that he did not remember a formal vote. The Clerk recalled a discussion around the idea being introduced at the proposed LAT open meeting at the Community Centre (which did not take place). He suggested that it would be useful to have a debate about the pros and cons of the proposed panel – if the meetings were poorly attended (like some of the rural Rother wards) a small number of members of the public could have disproportionate influence over Police priorities.

PC Fielder advised that there was no funding available to support the proposed panel and that the frequency of meetings could be flexible. He added that the LAT currently based its deliberations on the Fear of Crime Survey; however, if a priority setting panel was formed those attending would guide Police priorities. There was no reason why the LAT could not run alongside a panel.

Cllr Holmes had wanted to run the Priority Setting Panel idea passed the Public Services Committee before putting it to a wider audience.

The Mayor mentioned his meeting with CI Keating in which she expressed support for Rye being 'informally warded' (not supported by the Policy, Resources & GP Committee). It was agreed to examine this at the next meeting.

Clerk

Cllr Smith advised that the Rother Sussex Neighbourhood Watch representative, Charles McIlwrick was willing to attend Council/Parish meetings to help re-establish schemes.

RECOMMENDATION That Charles McIlwrick be invited to the next meeting.

Clerk

(c) Policing in Rye

PC Fielder's Rye update included reference to:

- 20 fewer criminal damage and ASB crimes in July 09-Dec 09 - compared with the previous year
- A reduction in burglaries since Aug 09 (compared with the same period in 2008)
- There being only 4 incidents of public place violent crime since November 2009
- The arrest – and conviction - of a prolific car burglar
- 10 Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators had been identified for the area – who should be receiving one email a week

Responding to a question from Cllr Smith on the status of ShopWatch, PCSO Holden advised that he was in contact with Frank May to discuss overhauling the scheme.

(d) Local custody facilities

The Committee Chairman reminded members that in 2001-02 Sussex Police entered into a 30-year contract with Reliance, worth c£90m. Reliance provides the custody suites to the national standard and Sussex Police provides custody sergeants. However, there was concern locally that it was a poor use of Police time to transport those arrested in the Rye area to the custody suite in Hastings – or sometimes further afield.

CI Keating had suggested contacting Superintendent Tony Blaker with the concern. Superintendent Blaker had emailed the Clerk on 18 January advising that he was seeking the views of the Force's Community & Justice Department at Lewes.

Colonel Kimber observed that it was reasonable to assume that some kind of cost benefit analysis had been undertaken prior to awarding the contract. PC Fielder repeated that there were interview facilities within the Rye station and advised that there were ways of dealing with situations other than arrest. PCSO Holden considered that the costs of introducing holding facilities in Rye would be prohibitive.

**RESOLVED To chase a response from Superintendent Baker.
Clerk**

(e) Library relocation

Colonel Kimber invited the committee to consider any likely parking control issues in the area surrounding the former Woolworth store, following the proposed relocation of the Library and Community Help Point.

During the discussion following it was concluded there was unlikely to be a significant increase in pedestrian and vehicular movements within the vicinity (over and above that which was generated when Woolworth had been trading) and that the main problem was those using ATMs parking on the pavement at/around the High Street-West Street junction.

Colonel Kimber enquired whether the disabled library users would be able to access one of the four bays outside LloydsTSB. Speaking from the Gallery, David Nixon observed that there was currently a 1 hour waiting restriction.

PCSO Holden advised that he issues a fair number of parking tickets and that if the community wanted a 'zero tolerance' approach in West Street the Police would oblige.

RECOMMENDATION To ask ESCC if had considered the access needs of disabled library users. Clerk

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for a presentation on adult education in the Rye area by Sue Middlehurst, Principal of Sussex Coast College Hastings and the Deputy Principal, Graham Razey.

Graham Razey (GR) advised that:

- SCC(H) had been able to attract students for the Advanced Painting and Drawing course only
- Rye College offers a range of adult education courses – attracting c66 students
- At 7-9% the participation rate of Rye people in adult education is higher than Hastings and the national average
- A number of Rye adult learners access courses in Hastings – such as business and teacher training
- There have been significant cuts in adult education funding – with two consecutive 5% cuts and a 16% reduction forecast in 2010-11

Sue Middlehurst (SM) advised that:

- The Lion Street site was very expensive to maintain – costly roof repairs were required
- In 2004 Hastings College obtained planning permission for residential development on the site but consent was dependent on the library relocating.
- SCC(H) was exploring disposing of the site and reinvesting the proceeds into a new purpose-built centre for vocational training for younger people at Rye College, combined with adult education. Dungeness (a business partner) would also use the new centre for its own training needs.

John Howlett suggested that SCC(H) was intending to asset strip the town. SM responded that SCC(H) held the freehold and suggested that reinvesting the funds released from the sale/development of the site in the proposed centre was sympathetic to the wishes of the original benefactor. No developer had been 'lined up'.

The Rye WEA Secretary advised that it was difficult to devise course programmes when there was uncertainty around how much longer the site would be available – adding that it was difficult to find suitable premises with disabled access. SM replied that the proposed new centre – which would have a dedicated entrance and could be used during the day-time without impacting on Rye College - could be utilised and SCC(H) would be happy to work with the WEA. Cllr Kirkham advised that that there was a separate entrance currently for the adult education courses run at the College.

It was observed that there were computer training facilities on the Lion Street site. SM and GR advised that there had been very limited take up of IT courses to make the holding of them viable.

It was noted that adult education courses advertised in the *Rye Observer* were for courses at Rye College.

Cllr Smith observed that the facilities available at the FE Centre had been very popular with local clubs and societies but most had been forced to use village halls

outside Rye when the FE Centre's hire rates had become unaffordable. SM/GR agreed to look into this and emphasised that the site had been run at a deficit for the last 4 years.

SM stated that there was no longer any funding available for 'leisure learning' – ie non-vocational learning. She added that it would be some time before another planning application would be submitted in respect of the Lion Street site and that it was likely SCC(H) would retain the freehold of the proposed purpose-built centre.

The meeting reconvened.

31 ADULT EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION That a public meeting be organised to consider the implications of SCC(H)'s plans.

32 EMERGENCY PLANNING

Colonel Kimber reported that Part 1 of the Rye Emergency Plan had been endorsed by RTC and could be found currently within the News section of the Town Council's web site. REACT was working on Part 2 which would contain more detail and would take a further 2-3 months to complete. Because it would contain personal data the distribution would be restricted. It may be that a table top exercise would be desirable at some stage – in liaison with adjoining parishes.

33 MARSH LINK

RESOLVED To note that the Council had expressed its support for the Marsh Link Action Group's response to the East Coastway December 2010 Train Timetable consultation.

34 BULKY WASTE

RESOLVED To note the response (drafted by Cllr Smith & Rosalind Collier) submitted to the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Core Strategy: Consultation on Preferred Strategy.

35 MEMORIAL CARE CENTRE

The Committee Chairman advised that Care Centre patients had been transferred to Bexhill temporarily to facilitate maintenance work at the Centre. However, visiting them by public transport was problematic. As at 29 January work had still not commenced and it appeared the patients – and nursing staff – had been relocated prematurely.

Mr Moore reported that he had had difficulty identifying the responsible officer within the PCT. There was a suggestion that it was Alice Webster but no-one had managed to make direct contact with her. It appeared Rye's GP surgeries had not been advised of the intention to move patients so close to Christmas.

The Deputy Mayor had visited the transferred patients just before Christmas. Only three were Rye residents – the majority being from Hastings or Bexhill. My Moore advised that the Care Centre is sometimes used as a 'step down' facility for those being discharged from the Conquest.

RECOMMENDATION That the Committee's concerns be put directly to Alice Webster – and any response be circulated amongst Members.

36 VOLUNTARY SECTOR ISSUES

Members considered a (tabled) report prepared by Gina Sanderson.

It was noted that Rye CVS had concerns about Rye CHP joining the library at the former Woolworth site – preferring to have a ‘complimentary’ range of services under one roof.

The Clerk confirmed that the scouts were intending to allow other groups access to their new scout hut – indeed, this was essential to be eligible for certain income streams, necessary to finance its construction.

The meeting ended at 8.28pm

Date.....

Chairman.....