

Minutes of a Public Services Committee meeting held at the Town Hall, Rye on Monday 9 January 2012

- PRESENT** Councillors Granville Bantick, Bernardine Fiddimore, Mary Smith (**Committee Chairman**)
- John Holbrook (REACT); PCSO Neil Holden (Sussex Police); John Izod (Age Concern, Rye Community Centre); Col Anthony Kimber (Chairman – REACT); Daliea Redman (Chair – Tilling Green Residents' Association); Janet Sherwood (Tilling Green Residents' Association & Ferry Road PPG)
- IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Cllr Mike Eve; 3 members of the public; Andy Hemsley (Rye Observer)

The meeting commenced at 6.31pm

- 25 APOLOGIES**
 Apologies for absence – and the reason (lodged with the Clerk) – were accepted from Cllr Sonia Holmes.
- Apologies for absence were received also from Sonia Relf (Tillingham Valley & Neighbourhood Group) (**Vice Chairman**) and Tony Moore (Ferry Road Health Centre PPG).
- 26 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**
 There were no disclosures from the Elected Members present.
- 27 MINUTES**
- RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the meeting of 10 October 2011 (PS02) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- 28 MATTERS ARISING**
- (See also main agenda items.)*
- 18 Matters Arising, South Undercliffe – congestion* The Clerk reported that the Highways Agency was aiming to extend the Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm parking prohibition to include Sunday by April 2012.
- 29 CRIME & DISORDER**
- (a) Rye Priority Setting Panel
 - (b) Policing in Rye
- PCSO Holden spoke to the notes of the Priority Setting Panel held on 13 December (*Appendix A*).
- Colonel Kimber advised that he had had cause recently to report ASB and had been impressed with the way the Police had responded and provided feedback. PCSO

Holden advised that most of the ASB in Rye could be attributed to just 4 individuals – 2 of whom reside (for most of the year) in Rye Harbour.

Removal of vehicles obstructing the highway The Chairman advised that one of the issues raised at the last Panel meeting was the time it took for the 'HGV recovery' contractor based at Flimwell to travel to the town. PCSO Holden advised that local Police had been disappointed when Direct Recovery (Cripps Corner) had lost the contract; however, the two successful contractors (based in Flimwell and Bexhill) had a contractual obligation to respond to a reported problem in Rye within 30 minutes.

Parking restrictions PCSO Holden advised that he tried to do as much enforcement as possible, whilst maintaining goodwill. There are around a dozen drivers who regularly park longer than the one hour permitted on the highway. He was minded to suggest that, after 3-4 violations, they should receive a formal letter.

Rye Fawkes 2011 This had passed off relatively peacefully – although there had been a few incidents on the Salts.

Burglaries A window of the Golden Fleece had been broken and goods had been stolen. There had been a few 'distraction burglaries' recently – including one in Boots where an older resident was the victim.

Metal theft Andy Hemsley advised that c45m of lead had been stolen from the roof of The School Creative Centre.

Responding to a concern raised by John Holbrook about cars being parked on double yellow lines in Cinque Ports Street opposite William Hill, PCSO Holden advised that they tended to have blue badges displayed.

30 WASTE

The Clerk advised that both the relevant RDC and ESCC officers had agreed to attend a 'brainstorming' meeting to explore alternatives to the disposal of bulky waste locally.

RECOMMENDATION That the meeting be held at 6pm on a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday – and that a selection of provisional dates be put to those likely to attend (including REG). Clerk

31 TILLING GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Daliea Redman reported that the Centre was continuing to be well-used – making reference to: the REACT public meeting; the Fishermen's Heritage Project and Exhibition, cookery leaders' course; (upcoming) parents and children's cookery courses; the youth service having 28 members; a possible garden project; launch of a Community Café in April (the kitchen refit was complete – awaiting a licence from Environmental Health). She added that a second edition of the TIGRA newsletter had been published in December; another litter pick had been organised, TIGRA intended to raise funds towards a Diamond Jubilee Party; an Easter Bonnet Parade was being considered; and TIGRA would be applying for a grant to install more benches on Mason's Field. More Committee members were required (preferably under the age of 50!).

It was established that the Main Hall can seat 100 – but some of the former class rooms could be hired for smaller meetings.

Responding to a question put by the Committee Chairman in relation to the Annual

Town Meeting (7 March), Janet advised that most people driving to the Centre park in Mason Road; however, on the night it might be that the former playground could be accessed.

32 TRADING STANDARDS

The Clerk advised that Louise Baxter, ESCC Trading Standards Team Leader had offered to deliver 2 hours of training (in March or April) to those who might find themselves in a position to give informal advice/guidance on consumer protection issues – eg public sector employees, voluntary sector staff and volunteers. She had suggested combining it with a 'community education coffee morning' however, the Clerk was concerned that this could take up too much of his time.

Cllr Smith added that Louise Baxter was particularly knowledgeable in respect of spotting scams.

RECOMMENDATION That the training be arranged at TG Community Centre, at a time which permits the attendance of school/college workers (ie during term time and towards the end of the day). Clerk

33 EMERGENCY PLANNING

Colonel Kimber spoke to his tabled update (*Appendix B*).

The Clerk advised that the Highways Steward for Rye is Michael Sherwood – Paula Warne covers (amongst other areas) Rye Harbour.

34 MARSH LINK

Ore Tunnel repairs (line closure 9.1.12 for 3 months) The Committee Chairman reported that she had visited Rye Railway Station to assess the first day of the replacement bus service and was advised by a member of staff that there had been no complaints. Stuart Harland (MLAG Chairman) had visited the station at 7.30am to find that the buses were not of the type expected. However, there had been no real problems. Cllr Smith advised that MLAG had put considerable effort into securing service improvements during the track closure – including trying (albeit unsuccessfully) to persuade Southern Railway to contribute towards the parking costs of those who had resort to using a car.

Speaking from the Gallery, Keith Taylor reported that he too had visited the station that morning. There were few passengers in evidence – students had been 'ferried away' satisfactorily. He suspected that many of the regular train passengers had resorted to using a car. He mentioned that the resurfacing of Fishmarket Road-Strand Quay had caused considerable congestion on Saturday 7 January and suggested that the continuing repair of other stretches of the A259 would have more of an impact on the town's economy than the track closure.

The Clerk advised that the unexpected use of 3-way traffic lights in Landgate was believed to have caused the congestion on the 7th – when they had been deactivated the traffic cleared.

Cllr Fiddimore advised that she had attended one of the meetings to consider the Highways Agency's wish to resurface/repair sections of the A259 between Brookland and Winchelsea. Network Rail had failed to notify the Highways Agency about its intended track closure – by which time contracts were in place. She added that the A259 resurfacing was being carried out before the main visitor season commenced. The Clerk advised that the meetings had been attended by Town

Councillors, the Highways Agency's principal contractor, the Chamber of Commerce, the ESCC Highways Liaison Officer and RDCT – and HotCats had been invited.

Responding to a concern expressed by Colonel Kimber, the Clerk advised that ESCC had advised Southern Water not to commence works upgrading the sewerage system under Udimore Road until the track closure and A259 resurfacing had ended.

The Committee Chairman observed that, on a positive note, during the track closure there were 2 buses an hour serving Rye. The Clerk added that Network Rail had, apparently, brought forward planned maintenance work on the Rye-Ashford section.

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Eve suggested that the track closure and A259 resurfacing would have an impact (albeit mitigated) on local traders and observed that Government agencies were not prepared to pay for their contractors to work double-time on Sundays (which would shorten disruption to trading) – leaving local businesses to pick up the cost through lost sales/customers.

RECOMMENDATION That RTC asks MLAG to monitor the track closure again after its first week of operation. Clerk

35 BUS SERVICES

Cllr Smith reported that she had received just one complaint since the last meeting. Students disgorging in Rye had covered the upper deck and stairway of a bus with yoghurt and soft food. This meant that those boarding the vehicle before it *continued its journey to Camber were crammed into the lower deck. This created a poor impression of Rye and the clean-up had cost the bus operator £40.* PCSO Holden reported that Ann Cockerham had advised him about the incident – and so he had words with students who were likely to have been traveling that day. There had been no similar incidents since.

Cllr Fiddimore advised that she was still receiving complaints about services from Brede and Fairlight – and the 100 service from Hastings – an hourly service which didn't always arrive. The problem appears to be that, in the event of a breakdown, Stagecoach has insufficient replacement vehicles available.

Speaking from the Gallery, Ray Hayley-Barker advised that Pat Hughes was intending to contact Stagecoach suggesting that RDCT might be able to make a (16-seater) bus available to, for example, transport stranded students.

36 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

It was noted that the Council had written to RDC asking how often the Contract Compliance Officer monitored the public conveniences, what was checked – and what would trigger a repair. A response was awaited.

Cllr Fiddimore advised that when the Council last had a Leisure & Tourism Committee a number of Councillors – including her - had informally monitored Rye's public conveniences. She had recently checked the Crownfields Ladies 2-3 daily and, apart from the odour, had discovered no significant problems.

Cllr Smith reported that a former employee of the cleaning contractor had previously suggested that cleaning products were diluted. She observed that the building that had, until a few years ago, accommodated the Pump Street public conveniences *had still not been let by RDC. When operating as a public convenience it tended not to be vandalised – and had relieved pressure on the heavily-used Crownfields facility.*

PCSO Holden stated that, over the last 18 months, he had had cause to visit Rye's toilets on a daily basis. With the notable exception of Crownfields they were generally in good condition.

Speaking from the Gallery, Cllr Eve highlighted the recent incident during which an employee of the cleaning contractor inadvertently locked a bus driver in the Crownfields Ladies for 2 hours. The contractor's employees can live up to 40 miles away. If RTC was responsible for cleaning the public conveniences it was likely that local people would be employed – who would take more pride in their work. He considered that the Crownfields facility was in an appalling condition and had formed the view that Battle's facilities were maintained to a higher standard.

RECOMMENDATION That RTC requests – from RDC – the current cleaning specification (including task frequencies); suggests that RDC considers asking its contractor to display notices advising when facilities are next scheduled to be cleaned – and asks how the Crownfields conveniences can be cleaned properly when no hot water is available.
Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.51pm

Date.....

Chairman.....



Title: Rye Priority Setting Panel Meeting - Meeting Notes

Date: 13th December 2011 17:00 Hours

Venue: Rye Town Hall

Present

- Peter Hillier - Chair
- Cllr Mary Smith - Rye Town Council
- Cllr Sonia Holmes - Rye Town Council
- Richard Farhall - Rye Town Council
- David Nixon - Chamber of Commerce
- Kerry De Courcey
- Michel Douvosin
- Sara Nixon
- PC Paul Fielder - Sussex police Rye NPT

Apologies

- Sergeant Warren Downs - Sussex police Rye NPT
 - PCSO Neil Holden - Sussex police Rye NPT
 - Carol Studley - Safer Rother Partnership
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1. Introduction by PH.
2. Notes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.
3. PF provided an overview of the work that the local policing team had been doing to address the policing priorities agreed at the last meeting.

4a. Parking

PF updated that since the last meeting Rye NPT had issued 133 parking tickets in the town. (57 limited waits/overstays 20 causing an obstruction 56 waiting where prohibited)

Re: Decriminalisation of parking enforcement

PF updated that this was being discussed at a high level between Sussex police and Rother District Council.

Re: Parking review of Rye Town

PF updated that a parking review for Rye Town is expected in the next 2-3 years. In the meantime East Sussex Highways has an 'open file' on Rye and that the police and the Council can be in constant contact in the run up to the review with suggestions for improvements/highlighting problem areas.

4b. Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) along the 'red route'

PF updated that since the last meeting there had been six violent crimes recorded that were attributable to the late night economy. Of these six, five had seen an offender/s brought to justice (seven people charged, cautioned or issued with a fixed penalty notice) and the other was still under investigation.

Over the same period the red route had seen seven reports of criminal damage of which none had been solved.

Those present noted a lack/reduction of police presence on Friday and Saturday nights since the East Sussex re-structure. Action - PF to make Insp Scott aware. MD noted a good police presence in the day and was very positive about the 'golden hours' initiative whereby local officers are visible when the children are going to and from school.

4c. Parking at South Undercliff

PF updated that on the 5th October an officer from the Traffic Management Unit assessed South Undercliff and saw no cause to oppose a variation of the current restrictions. This has since been raised via Rye Town Council to the East Sussex Highways agency and it is hoped that the variation could be in place by April 2012.

4. Panel members decided on the following priorities for the next quarter.

5a. Parking

Those present agreed that parking in the town remains a concern especially in the following areas, the double yellow lines in the High Street opposite Market Road, The Mint, The Landgate and the 1hr limited waits around the town.

Those present agreed that there should be much more publicity about this issue and the possible penalties. Action - PF to arrange publicity.

It was also suggested that the police should adopt an approach whereby they write to and target habitual offenders. Action - PF to set up.

Concern was also raised about the current vehicle recovery process and the fact that the contract has now moved to Mick Gould's at Flimwell and the impact this may have on response times. Action - PF to make Insp Scott aware.

5b. Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage along the 'red route'

It was agreed that the ASB and criminal damage was not exclusive to The Mint and that the problem was experienced far more widely. The key area's of concern were defined as the 'red route' the route taken by people travelling from pub to pub on a Friday and Saturday night, including the Gun Gardens and Church Square.

Actions

PF to put the Chamber of Commerce and Safer Rother Partnership in contact to discuss replacement CCTV camera's for The Mint.

PF to request RDC Shaun Carter attend a Rye Town Council Meeting to discuss CCTV.

5c. Parking at South Undercliff

It was agreed that parking at South Undercliff should remain a priority until the conclusion of the aforementioned variation, which it is hoped could be completed by April 2012.

Action

RF to contact PF if consultation of South Undercliff residents is requested by ESH.

5. AOB

Community Payback

Suggestions for CP projects were

- Litter along the windmill footpath
- Graffiti in Needles Passage

Those present agreed it was a good idea to publicise the new PCSO powers. Action
- PF to arrange publicity.

SH raised the lack of publicity around the new non-emergency number 101 and that more should be done to publicise it. Action - PF to arrange publicity.

RF informed PF that he had been made aware of someone firing an air rifle at pigeons around the Heritage Centre. It is believed that the 'shooter' was from Strand Court.

6. Next meeting – 14th February 2011 at 17:00 hours at Rye Town Hall.

Meeting concluded at 18:30

REACT – JANUARY UPDATE

Risks: REACT is monitoring the present band of extreme weather, which is bringing high rainfall and winds. Recent events have included some surface flooding in Marley Road (two recorded incidents in last 6 months). Drains in Marley Road cannot handle the excess water running off Udimore Road in extreme rainfall conditions. REACT is contacting ESCC Highways and the new Community Highway Steward (See below) about the issue.

Planning Applications: REACT has commented on two recent applications: the proposal to store ammonium nitrate in the Rye Wharf complex (a matter for Icklesham Parish Council) and the application for parking/garages alongside the railway line behind the Wish ~~Barn~~ ^{ward} houses. Both developments are considered to increased local risks. The latter has now been rejected by Rother DC.

Public Meeting: There was good feedback from the public meeting in the Tilling Green Estate Community Centre on 26 October. REACT was responding to a public request for the event. As an exercise in communication, although turnout was quite low (around 45) it was considered valuable. Issues and Actions – some were reported in the Rye Observer - including the planned work on the Rye Harbour Western Wall, work to solve the issue of the Old Brickyard blocked drain, maintenance of drainage and sewerage infrastructure in places around Rye (includes the Monkbretton Bridge scour, the Valley Park development, Brede Sluice, Ashenden Ave) have been added to the REACT agenda for 2012.

Community Highway Stewards: East Sussex County Council has set up a dedicated Control Hub in Ringmer to manage the County highway network. This will co-ordinate all work carried out on the County highways, whether by ESCC or the utility companies, as well as responding to public enquiries. The County Council has appointed 12 Community Highway Stewards, each responsible for a dedicated area of the County's road network and be the "eyes and ears" of the Control Hub. Instead of simply reporting defects, they will get to know their areas and keep an eye on conditions, so that the Control Hub is aware of, and can deal with, issues before they become defects. All of the Stewards' vans have logos announcing them as the 'Community Highway Steward'. The Highway Steward for Winchelsea and Rye is Paula Warne, who can be contacted on 07712-841438.

SRM Exercise: Chair REACT attended, for Rye TC, the latest (once every three years) SRM (command and control) exercise on 22 November, which was held in various locations around Rye, including Police and Fire Stations, SRM (Rye Harbour Road) and the Harbourmaster's office. There were a large number of participants from SRM, the Emergency Responders, Local Authorities, Environment Agency, adjacent parishes, HSE and HPA. The exercise scenario involved an SRM on-site fire, some casualties (victims) and a release of gas blown to the SW over Rye Harbour and parts of Winchelsea. The gas was graded as an irritant. The incident was graded as a "major incident" involving the application of the multi-agency off-site plan. The exercise play involved a site evacuation, containment, warning and informing of agencies and the public and incident control moving into recovery. Later there will be a full exercise report, but Chair REACT commented formally as below.

- As a community we welcome the opportunity to be involved in this sort of multi-agency exercise, particularly as any incident at SRM would have some impact on Rye, even if only

on traffic congestion, the risk of public alarm and the provision of resources, such as locations for Rest Centres (such as the Rye Swimming Pool Complex and College) to which those affected might be evacuated).

- Rye TC needs to hold key extracts of the SRM "off-site" emergency plan.
- Emergency Responders and Local Authority Liaison Officers should be aware of our community plan (RTC Website below) and the contribution which the community, as coordinated by REACT for Rye TC can make, particularly to help with warning and informing, local information and advice, locating specialist resources.

<http://www.ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/informationemergencyplanning.aspx>

- Such major incidents will need early (certainly within first hour) warning and public information (to alert but not alarm), using all means, including through Rye Town Hall and the Community Help Point if during opening hours.
- Although there will be a strategic media plan coordinated by the lead agency (usually the Police) any incident can be expected to generate early media interest via standing local links, which will need some local handling by a suitable Rye "talking head" in touch with the lines set at strategic level.

Future Agenda: REACT is in contact with several agencies, including Rother DC, ESCC, Defend Our Coasts (DOC) and the Environment Agency about future issues, such as work to update the multi-agency Rye Bay flood plan and those planned events, which may affect the REACT work agenda.

Anthony Kimber PhD
Chair REACT
January 2012