

Cinque Port Town of Rye

Rye Town Council

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Kerry de Courcy
CEO/Chairman
Rye Town Services
Rye Lodge Hotel
Rye TN31 7LD

23 May 2007

Dear Kerry

Policy, Resources & GP Committee

I thought I should advise you that the first 'post election' meeting of this Committee will take place on Monday 4 June at 6.30pm. Given that its membership includes three newly-elected Members you might like to consider attending the meeting. I leave this for you to decide. Whether or not you attend (and I would appreciate knowing by 29th), I should imagine Members would appreciate:

- an update on Phase 1 of the upgrade/revamp
- a progress report on reinstating the monthly reports (the last was October 2006)
- an assessment of trading generally.

New Councillors

At my meeting with Geraldine and Laura we formed the view that the newly-elected Councillors – and perhaps a number of the longer serving ones! – would benefit from a tour of the Centre and viewing of the Model. I believe Laura will be letting me have some provisional dates for this.

Annual Accounts 2005-06

I understand that there remains a problem with formally 'signing these off' and that there is a difficulty accounting for a sum in the region of £5,000. I should appreciate a brief explanatory note.

Meeting with Centre staff

This went very well and my conclusion is that the Council's staff appear to be generally happy and in good spirits. However, as you might expect, there are a few matters it would be appropriate for me to raise with you:

Stock It was suggested that the Centre would have more of a competitive edge if some 'unique' (ie not available elsewhere in the town) items of merchandise could

be introduced. Staff do, however, appreciate that more customers need to be tempted across the threshold. They have suggested also that the slower selling stock should be discounted more often in order to free up storage space.

Audio Tours The existing (dilapidated) cassette equipment has become a source of considerable embarrassment. What is holding up the replacement wands? Is it something the Council could assist with?

Equipment repairs I am advised that these may take some time to be addressed and that 'limited finances' is cited usually as the reason for this. The staff have, consequently, formed the impression that the Centre is struggling financially. Although it is accepted that visitor numbers continue to be down generally, it is difficult for me to form an opinion having not had sight of receipts and expenditure summaries for 6 months.

I think I would like to finish this letter by saying that, if there are any operational difficulties, the Council would like these to be drawn to its attention sooner rather than later. It may be that the Council is able to help with their resolution.

Yours sincerely

Richard Farhall

ACCOUNT BALANCES AS AT 30 APRIL 2007

	Balance	Notes
TOWN HALL		
Current/Business Reserve a/c (2% gr)	43,081.60	<i>Proportion to be transferred back to Nat Savings a/c</i>
Capital Reserve (.10% gross)	187.49	
Petty cash	120.92	
National Savings (4.45% gross)(no notice)	67,280.49	
Fixed Rate Bond (5.75% gross)	34,653.79	22.1.07-22.1.08
Fixed Rate Bond (5.75% gross)	22,924.62	31.1.07-31.1.08
Total TH	168,248.91	(June 06: £154,555.84)
HERITAGE CENTRE		
Current/Business Reserve account (2% gr)	3,365.17	
TOTAL TH & HC	171,614.08	(June 06: £157,861.84)
OTHER ACCOUNTS		
Rye Relief in Need		
Nationwide	41.44	<i>To be transferred</i>
CafCash (3.94% gr)	8,030.45	
Fixed Bond (5.25% gr)	60,000.00	12.1.07-14.1.08
Total Rye Relief	68,071.89	(June 06: £66,500.09)
TOTAL FUNDS	239,685.97	(June 06: £224,361.93)

RYE TOWN COUNCIL EARMARKED RESERVES

() = date of Council decision to make provision/earmark or date of receipt of payment (eg grant)

	at 1.4.07	Provided	Used	at 30.4.07	NOTE
EARMARKED RESERVES (2007-08)					
ASSET RENEWAL RESERVES					
Capital Fund Heritage Centre	5,186.00	500.00	-	5,686.00	
Capital Fund Attractions	20,000.00	-	-	20,000.00	
Heritage Centre Office Equipment	1,000.00	-	-	1,000.00	
Capital Fund Town Hall	16,735.00	2,250.00	-	18,985	
Capital Fund Cottage	10,092.00	-	-	10,092.00	1
Town Hall Office Equipment	77.00	-	-	72.00	
Robes & Regalia	593.19	25.08	-	618.27	2
Black & Gold Finger Posts (3.2.03)	595.00	150.00	-	745.00	2
Skate Park	4,035.46	500.00	-	4,535.46	
	58,313.65	3,425.08	-	61,733.73	
OTHER EARMARKED RESERVES					
Ryennium (23.11.98) (RDC £300 18.9.00)	-	-	-	-	11
Computer Software & Training (24.1.00)	1,191.00	-	-	1,191.00	
Landgate Illuminations (24.1.00)	500.00	-	-	500.00	
Rye TIC Contract Bid (28.1.02)	1,000.00	-	-	1,000.00	
Heritage Centre Business Plan (28.1.02)	-	-	-	-	4
Assets Valuations (28.1.02)	870.00	-	-	870.00	
New Lord Warden Installation (3.2.03)	137.28	-	-	137.28	5
Web site (7.2.05)	-	-	-	-	
New Scout Hut (9.2.04)	3,000.00	-	-	3,000.00	6
Tilling Green St Lighting (9.2.04/4.4.05)	-	-	-	-	
Detached youth work (7.2.05)	1,500.00	-	-	1,500.00	7
Rye Town Initiative Review	-	-	-	-	
Elections	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	66,511.93	3,425.08	-	69,932.01	

Earmarked Reserve Notes

- 1 No provision in 2007-08 Budget
- 2 Balance of revenue budget at year end to be placed in Earmarked Reserve
- 3 PRGP 11.9.06 - vire to Gen Reserve
- 4 PRGP 22.5.06 - vire to Gen Reserve
- 5 £500 less cost of lunch during Lord Warden's post-Installation visit
- 6 2 x £1500 provisions. Total: £3,000
- 7 If required

TOWN CLERK BRIEFING NOTE**5.5 SALC/NALC**

At the last meeting I reported that the Sussex Associations of Local Councils had issued SALC and National Association of Local Councils subscription renewal invoices for 2007-08 – in the case of Rye broken down as follows:

SALC	£677.04	NALC	£153.14	Total	£830.18
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This was £318.66 higher than 2006-07 (£511.52) – a rise of 62%.

The increase is ostensibly the consequence of the introduction of an 'equitable banding system'. Councils have been placed in one of 6 bands, depending on the size of their electorate. The formula is '21p per elector'. The details were notified in the Autumn 2006 SALC Circular (sent to Members on 23.10.06).

When the Circular was published I assumed the new system incorporated our NALC subscription (as previous years). It appears this is not the case.

The results of my survey of how this has affected other Rother parishes will be tabled at the meeting.

At the last meeting, Members agreed to ask SALC:

- 1 for RTC's 2007-08 subscription rate to be reassessed
- 2 for a breakdown of its 2006-07 subscription (NALC/SALC split)
- 3 (assuming Counties-wide compliance) how much additional funding the new system will generate for SALC.
- 4 how SALC/NALC subscription rates have been determined previously

The response was an email offering a 'stepping stone' reduction in the SALC element of the subscription from £677.04 to £496.66 – making a total (SALC and NALC) sum payable of £649.80 – a rise of £138.28 (up 27%).

A similar offer has been made to Battle. Although the questions put have not been addressed, I have ascertained that the new fees – if paid! - do allow SALC to top up its depleted reserves.

I have agendered this matter for the next Rother Association of Local Councils Executive Committee meeting (4pm, 4 June) and will report the outcome in the evening.

30.5.07