

Minutes of an Additional Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 31 July 2017

PRESENT Councillors Sam Barnes, Mike Boyd (**Deputy Mayor**), John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds (**Mayor**), Cheryl Creaser, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore, Rebekah Gilbert, Pat Hughes, Jo Kirkham, Andi Rivett, Andy Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Rother District Councillor Lord Amphill; Gerard Reilly – *Rye News*; 1 member of the public

The meeting commenced at 7.22.

The Mayor congratulated Cllrs Gilbert and Rivett and the rest of their team for organising the highly successful Rye Festival of the Sea. On behalf of the Festival committee, Cllr Gilbert thanked RTC and RDC for providing the main sponsorship.

48 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Charlie Harkness, Ian Potter and Ray Prewer.

49 CODE OF CONDUCT

Item 51 It was noted that:

- (a) Cllr Stuart provides accommodation to those involved with the Festival at no charge;
- (b) Cllrs Jonathan Breeds, Gilbert and Rivett would be performing at a Festival event without remuneration.

50 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2017 (C4).

51 RYE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL 2017

Members considered a request from the organiser that he be permitted to hire the Buttermarket gratis, 26-28 August – on the grounds that the music performed will be provided at no charge to members of the public.

The Clerk advised that the estimated charges for the hire period were: commercial rate - £392; non-commercial rate - £196. He added that there was also an ‘opportunity cost’ in the form of foregone weddings revenue.

Comments included: the Buttermarket is an asset and should be used to maximise revenue; the Festival benefits the local economy; the company that organises the Festival is not a charitable/non-commercial organisation; last year RTC received complaints about traffic/visitor management and noise; a fair compromise would be to charge the organiser the non-commercial hire rate; RTC should be careful not to set a precedent; the Mayor is able to give up to 12 free lets a year; RTC gives Christmas Festival grants to the Chamber of Commerce but it is a private organisation; the Buttermarket is let rarely; the Festival has not requested public funding for a number of years; the Festival generates considerable publicity for the town - events held elsewhere by the organiser are branded Rye International Jazz Festival; a free or discounted hire charge should be supported by an undertaking from the organiser to obtain a road closure and provide adequate traffic management; lets of the Buttermarket prevent weddings from taking place; the Chamber of Commerce

allowed Christmas in Rye to use its banking facilities in its first year only; Christmas in Rye is non-profit making – and surpluses are put towards the following year’s attractions/events; Mayoral free lets are given for charitable purposes only; RTC could, potentially, accept 6 wedding bookings over the duration of the Festival; the organiser has not yet applied for a road closure.

A proposal for resolution that the Festival organiser should pay the non-commercial rate to hire the Buttermarket was lost.

RESOLVED To require the Festival organiser to pay the commercial rate to hire the Buttermarket. Clerk

52 DISCOUNTED ACCOMMODATION SCHEME

Members considered advice received from the Council’s solicitor and the Clerk’s briefing paper which attempted to explore the concern that the scheme might be discriminatory (on the grounds of age).

Comments included: RTC needs to ensure that, prior to seeking qualifying prospective tenants, the scheme is not open to legal challenge; the scheme is likely to be unique; obtaining legal advice is commonly a slow process and, in the meantime, the unoccupied dwelling is not earning rent that could be put towards the property purchase loan repayments; in the interim, both the letting agent and Cllr Potter had suggested independently that RTC should let the property at market rent for a period of up to 1 year – thereby generating a contribution towards both the loan repayments and the cost of the legal opinion sought; how is it that certain housing providers are able to specify that their tenants must be over a certain age?; this is often governed by a covenant attached to the property (worth investigating).

RESOLVED To instruct RTC’s agent to let 97 South Undercliff for a period of 1 year (with a 6-month break clause) at market rent. Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.55pm

Date Chairman