

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 4 September 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, Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart

**IN ATTENDANCE** Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Paul Goring – Town Sergeant; The Reverend Canon David Frost - Mayor’s Chaplain; Rother District Councillors Lord Ampthill and Gennette Stevens; Gerard Reilly – *Rye News*; 5 members of the public

*The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.*

**53 PRAYERS**

Prayers were said by the Mayor’s Chaplain, the Reverend Canon David Frost.

**54 APOLOGIES**

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

**55 CODE OF CONDUCT**

There were no disclosures of interest nor dispensation requests.

**56 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that there had been few Mayoral engagements during August and welcomed Town Sergeant, Paul Goring to his first meeting in this capacity.

*The Mayor adjourned the meeting for the reports of the County and District Councillors – and Public Question Time (See **APPENDIX A**).*

**57 COUNCIL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2017 (C5).

**58 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(a) **Planning & Townscape**

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Townscape Committee held on 3 July 2017 (PT05), 17 July 2017 (PT06) and 31 July 2017 (PT07).

(b) **Policy, Resources & GP**

**RESOLVED** To adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy, Resources & GP Committee held on 17 July 2017 (PR02).

**59 20MPH SPEED LIMITS/ZONES**

The meeting was invited to consider the Highway Forum’s briefing paper and recommendations (**APPENDIX B**).

The Forum Chairman, Cllr Boyd invited Cllr Hughes (who had researched the paper) to speak to the recommendations.

Cllr Hughes suggested that: Recommendation **(i)** would provide a proven and cost-effective means of reducing traffic speed on the approaches to Rye; **(ii)** was cheap and could be easily varied; and **(iii)** might be eligible for grant funding.

Comments included: Despite high sums cited by ESCC, following 'local action', the introduction of a 20mph limit in Deadman's Lane proved to be relatively inexpensive; Love Lane would require more in the way of physical barriers to suppress speed – the narrowness of Deadman's Lane encourages low speeds (85% of drivers surveyed did not exceed 20mph); speed between the level crossing and college entrance is kept in check by the parked cars on the western side; the provision of traffic calming measures in Love Lane would reduce on street parking; Highways England is still checking vehicle speeds on New Road (A259).

In relation to **(iii)** (Portable Indicator Device), the Clerk suggested that relocating it every 5 days would be impracticable due to its weight and the fact that it may need to be hard wired into a street column (requiring an electrician).

**RESOLVED To accept the Forum's Recommendations in principle and to ask the Clerk to obtain estimated costs.** Clerk

**60 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2), to exclude the public and press from the items following on the grounds that they relate to a property interest, tenancies or to a member of staff's terms and conditions of employment.**

*The meeting was adjourned briefly for disrobing.*

**61 STRAND HOUSE**

Members agreed a course of action.

**Clerk**

**62 RESIDENTIAL LETS**

In relation to 97 South Undercliff it was noted that interim tenants had been found and would occupy the premises for a year whilst the Council continued to seek advice on its proposed discounted accommodation eligibility criteria and allocation policy.

Members agreed a course of action in relation to the Town Hall Cottage.

**63 ANNUAL LEAVE**

**RESOLVED To allow the Clerk to take whatever leave is appropriate, as and when required, during the prevailing circumstances.**

*The meeting ended at 7.45pm*

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

**Adjournment****a) County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Glazier reported as follows:

*Landgate* Proposed road repairs had been postponed (to an unknown date) because a machine had broken down. Cllr Glazier had emphasised to Highways that Thursday is the worst day of the week to schedule road works in Rye.

*Muck spreading* Environmental Health has advised that the farmers concerned appeared to be conforming with the voluntary code.

Cllr Creaser had received a complaint that a member of the public who had raised the odour with one of the farmers concerned had received an unpleasant response.

It was noted that, via a FaceBook post, one of the farmers had said that he would raise the matter of engaging with the public with the contractor.

**b) Reports of the Rother District Councillors****Cllr Stevens**

Cllr Stevens reported that RDC has formed a CPE Task and Finish Group - and that she is a member of it. The Group's aim was to achieve the best deal for everyone. She advised that it should report around Christmas and undertook to feed back.

**Cllr Stuart** *How would this 'best deal' come about and who would be party to it?*

**Cllr Stevens** Negotiations would take place with, for example, the Police and parish/town councils. Some areas will need more enforcement than others.

**Cllr Fiddimore** *Would the opinion of traders be sought?*

**Cllr Stevens** Everyone will be consulted. She attended recently a Rye Area Business Forum meeting.

**Cllr Amphill**

This morning's Cabinet looked at the constitution of the **Joint Waste and Recycling Committee**. Members will know that the earlier Committee procured a single contract which was awarded to Kier Services Limited, starting in April 2013. This contract will end on 28th June 2019, a little early, which will give the opportunity to work up a new scheme with a new contractor: but this time there will be three waste collection partners, Hastings Borough, Wealden District and Rother District, working with the waste disposal partner, the County Council. For the time being, Eastbourne and Lewes will go their own way - but have asked the new partnership to keep the door open for potential future access to the contract. The current waste collection arrangements have not been perfect: but the percentage of missed bins, out of collections from 46,000 dwellings in Rother, has been extremely small despite hiccups. I delivered two such to the Council this morning - being missed bins in Tillingham Avenue and the High Street.

There seems to be a number of interesting strategic **planning applications** under consideration at present - and taking quite a long time to make progress. I do not expect a scheme discussed here recently to get the go-ahead; but I am seeing what can be done to move others forward.

**Rother's budget**, updated each quarter, indicates a net cost of services for the current year of £12.5 million. Half of this cost is met by our council taxes. Some people think that the Council should dispose of its off-street car parks - which make a

profit which is set against all those services which operate at a loss. If we got rid of the car parks, we would have to raise council tax quite considerably - which Government would not allow us to do - so there is the bind.

I mention taxes because the matter of the **Bexhill Governance Review** will soon reach a climax. The second, and most important, part of the consultation is under way and runs until 13th October. Despite what some folks think, the only people who seem to have made up their minds on the various choices are two members of the Review Steering Group who have been advising a local pressure group. Personally, I believe in parish councils - despite the fact that only a small minority of the 9,000 parish councils in England hold elections. Members of the so-called "ruling group" have not made up their collective mind on what should happen. They do not have one. The easiest course for the Council in December will be to say "O.K., go ahead!". But is that a responsible action when so many residents, despite all the information put out, do not understand the structure of local government; who does what; and what it all costs? For sure, some services could be transferred to a new Bexhill Town Council (depending on existing contracts): but a current belief that control of highways and planning, for instance, is coming the way of a new Authority, will only lead to disappointment. I recall that RTC exercised some tact, if that is the right word, during the six-year march of the Campaign for a Democratic Rye to set up an Area Committee. In the end, nobody knew what it would do and who would support it.

Finally, **Camber Sands**. Members may have seen a recent Open Letter from the Chairman of Camber Parish Council to Rother District Council and partner Agencies. I will just read two or three sentences. The Chairman says: " We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those that were involved in dealing with the tragedies as part of their employment. Many of us may refer to stressful jobs but we would like to recognise how difficult those days must have been and indeed the year that followed, particularly for the front line staff. From my point of view as Chairman...it has been helpful to be involved in the meetings that have been held to review policies and procedures, develop education and information and employ the services of the RNLI to ensure that we do as much as we can to safeguard visitors to Camber." Hear, hear. That letter was greatly appreciated.

Members will know that the Coroner concluded that the deaths were due to misadventure, meaning the deceased men had taken a deliberate action that had resulted in their deaths. In contrast, a Rye resident concluded, within hours of the incidents, that RDC was guilty of dozy incompetence and culpable neglect. In reporting the ethnicity of the deceased (which they were asked to do), Rother was resorting to grubby and lazy xenophobia to detract from its shortcomings. Rother had let down the young men and considered their lives to be less valuable for not being ethnically British.

Those were disgraceful remarks.

**Cllr Stuart** *Has there been any progress in respect of options for the Landgate Tower?*

**Cllr Amphill** Unknown. He would continue to apply pressure – however, officers are engaged with other pressing matters.

**c) Public Question Time**

**Heidi Foster to Cllr Glazier** *Is there an update on the future of the TG Community Centre?*

**Cllr Glazier** ESCC has recently undertaken a condition survey to assess the state of the building and its refurbishment requirements. He had not yet seen any subsequent report.