

RYE TOWN COUNCIL
WORK PROGRAMME as at 11 July 2017 **PR02 Item 16(a)**

PR02 16(a)

Task/Project	Outline	Target/review	Status	Notes
Access (TH)	Ascertaining feasibility of solid handrail to Chamber staircase.	June 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Awaiting response from Conservation Officer.	Needs to be chased
Acoustics	Improving speech audibility in Chamber	April 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Now likely to be August 2017	System was installed but speakers not adequate
Annual Accounts & Audit 2016-17	Drafting TH and HC Accounts for internal and external audit	30 June 2017	COMPLETED	
Antechamber window	Replacement of defective sashes	April 2017	COMPLETED	Needs top coat
Assets revaluations		Autumn 2017	ON SCHEDULE Residential and commercial property valuations obtained. Other valuations outstanding.	Estimates required
Assistant Town Steward	Recruiting for 2017 (seasonal – 8 months)	March 2017	COMPLETED	Hours reduced from July 17
CCTV	Exploring system to deter inconsiderate on street parking	Summer 2017	ON SCHEDULE Research delegated to Asst Town Clerk	
Cupola	Restoration	Autumn 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Two specification of works quotes received	To be delegated.
Discounted accommodation	Purchasing one dwelling to let at discounted rent and issuing tenancy	September 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Most repairs completed but legal advice on tenancy criteria awaited	
Ferry Road Nursery	Purchase of freehold	31 May 2017 (RDC request)	BEHIND SCHEDULE Now likely to be August 2017	RDC staff member away
Heritage Centre – Telephones & IT	Identifying a cheaper telephone provider and updating IT hardware & software	Autumn 2017	ON SCHEDULE	
Heritage Centre (structure)	Investigating alternative governance structures	September 2017	ON SCHEDULE	See agenda item 20

HC Options WG	Explore future options for building	September 2018	AMENDED SCHEDULE 9.4.17: Council decision to postpone further work undertaken by the WG until April 2018	
Internal financial checks	Members undertaking 'spot checks'	Summer 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE	
Landgate Tower	Restoration	TBD	RDC continuing to explore Historic England Funding before consulting on a Landgate Vision document with partners.	
Neighbourhood Plan	Attending SG meetings and monitoring progress	Estimated c4-year period (summer 2013-autumn 2017)	BEHIND SCHEDULE Another grant to be sought from Locality for pre-Reg 14 consultation preparation.	Delegated authority to enter into commitments on behalf of the Steering Group.
Priority Setting	Drawing up a matrix of the objectives identified at the Visioning	TBD	BEHIND SCHEDULE	
Terms and conditions of employment (TH)	Updating job descriptions following staffing review	April 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE	
TH office reorganisation and redecorating	Improve efficiency and appearance	Summer 2017	ON SCHEDULE Replacement telephone system (including cat 5 cabling) installed. IT equipment ordered.	
Web site (TH)	Replacement	February 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Some content written; .gov domain management problem rectified.	Current TH web site back on line. Revised target: Aut 17
Wish Ward – land adjacent	Transfer from RDC	Spring 2017	BEHIND SCHEDULE Exchange and completion imminent.	RDC staff member away

Update for Policy Committee – Monday 17th July 2017

Jessica Neame, General Assistant.

Rye Town Hall

- The installation of a new telephone system is now complete, along with the necessary cabling for a computer network. The initial outlay for this system was £1648. This has given us a fully working telephone system with four extensions, call transfer capability and two ISDN lines meaning two incoming calls can be received simultaneously. We also now have a wi-fi access point in the main chamber, providing wi-fi throughout the first floor of the building via a secure, as well as a publicly accessible, network. Ongoing call costs, line rental and broadband expenses will be approximately halved.
- I am now obtaining quotes for the purchase and installation of a PC for my use and a laptop for the Town Steward as we both currently use our own laptops.

Once these are installed, all computers will be networked. This will ensure greater sharing of printers, as well as file sharing capabilities to ensure greater efficiency and promote digital archiving.

- A new email structure is now being implemented. This will provide all applicable staff with a named email address, as well as greater access to the main 'townhall@' email address for the appropriate staff. The aim of this is to ensure a more efficient work-flow of emails, reducing the need to print digital correspondence. This in turn has led to a review of the systems in place for managing digital archives, as well as staff protocols for handling emails effectively. I aim to introduce a filing and archiving system for this type of correspondence that will enable us to fulfil our responsibilities for maintaining a public record and also to retain and search filed emails efficiently.
- The redesigned wedding brochure is now in use after obtaining photographs and the necessary permissions from a local wedding photographer. We have a brochure that is optimised for digital viewing. This has included a raise in wedding prices for 2019, in line with increases in Registrars fees. We have also removed discounted ceremonies costs after an analysis, and have implemented a flat fee for these types of let. We also have a printed version of this brochure for marketing activities.
- We now take a £100 non-refundable deposit for wedding bookings. This should enable us to reduce our cancellations, and in the case of inevitable cancellations it will ensure that our costs are covered.
- Wedding marketing activities – Rye Town Hall will be exhibiting at a Hastings wedding fair in September. Alongside this we will also receive social media exposure from the organisers. This has prompted us to establish a 'Rye Town Hall' Facebook page in the near future. This will provide us with a general social media presence that can be used for the marketing of weddings, or for the dissemination of council news. By having one general-purpose Facebook presence we can streamline the managing of our social media presence. I am also investigating the possibility of getting a short film of the Town Crier in action and a 360

degree tour of the interior of the Town Hall, for use as a marketing aid at wedding fairs, as well as via social media and the website.

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- In the short term I will be concentrating on the website and our social media presence, with an aim to have the new website up and running by the end of September.
- I continue to manage the Mayoral Diary.

Rye Heritage Centre

- We are undertaking a review of procedures and operations, particularly in relation to the financial management of the business. This includes:
 - Implementation of online banking. This will ensure a saving in bank charges, alongside a reduction in admin and postage costs. Having online access to the bank statement will give us more timely information from the bank account enabling more efficient management of the finances.
 - Conducting a review of credit/debit processing card charges. In the short term, I have now completed PCI-DSS compliance for the Heritage Centre, enabling a monthly saving of £10, along with cancelling an unnecessary admin charge of £5 per month. In the long term, I think it may be appropriate to move suppliers for this service as I am confident further savings can be made.
 - Conducting a review of utilities. I have identified a small saving on electricity by moving our contract in December. I am also examining the telephone provision as it is in a similar state to that of the Town Hall, ie not fulfilling its purpose, and being charged at a premium by BT.
 - I have identified some problems with the way that VAT has been charged historically. These have now been adjusted to ensure that we are charging VAT correctly, whilst maintaining the appropriate profit margin on certain lines.
 - I am conducting an ongoing streamlining of the financial data-entry to ensure the system is as efficient as possible by maximising our use of the current software. This means I am now able to provide management with a range of more accurate and timely financial reports.
- The two PCs in use in the back-office of the Centre are well-beyond their expected life and are now having problems with functionality. Alongside the quote for a PC at the Town Hall, I am also obtaining quotes for a single PC to replace the existing two. We will repurpose a spare monitor from the Town Hall to minimise costs.
This will also necessitate an upgrade of Quickbooks to an up-to-date version, along with migration of the data with the assistance of GMP.
- I continue to undertake the day-to-day financial administration including issuing invoices for group bookings, handling supplier invoices and payments etc. I also undertake other administrative tasks including, but not limited to, monitoring figures for accommodation bookings, and general statistics to enable us to get an overview of financial performance and SWOT analysis for the centre. I also assist with marketing endeavours, investigating an alcohol licence for the centre and establishing a database of info for group booking customers.