

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy, Resources & General Purposes Committee, held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 26 March 2018

PRESENT Councillors Mike Boyd (**Committee Chairman** - Deputy Mayor), Cheryl Creaser, Rebekah Gilbert, Jo Kirkham, Andi Rivett (**Committee Vice-Chairman**)

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall – Town Clerk; Cllr Charlie Harkness *[part]*

The meeting commenced at 6.52pm.

43 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Sam Barnes, Jonathan Breeds (Mayor) and Ray Prewer.

It was noted that the HCM, Louisa O’Shaughnessy was unable to be present.

44 CODE OF CONDUCT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2017 (PR04) as a correct record.

46 MATTERS ARISING

Page 1

52 Supporting Local Businesses, Recommendation (Holding an annual reception for all Rye businesses – to coincide with Small Business Saturday) Outstanding.

21.1b) Town Hall Budget Monitor, para 2 (briefing on the TH and HC financial reports) To be arranged.

34.1a) Drafting appropriate procedures to facilitate online banking Actioned.

34.5 Millennium Wall: insurance (all risks) Ascertaining the additional premium Outstanding.

38 Business Planning (Drafting a matrix of the Visioning priorities) Outstanding.

6.1a) Ceremonies – providing the number held so far this year – as well as the previous period. Outstanding.

23.2a) Heritage Centre: progress report, Resolved 3 (Asking the Rye Ward Members to chase up the lack of progress in relation to brown ‘I’ signage) Outstanding.

44 Town Hall Access (Asking the Conservation & Design Officer to discuss the installation of a handrail on the main staircase) Outstanding.

Page 2

26.5 £50 donation to St Mary’s Flower Festival – Actioned.

29 Ferry Road Nursery (freehold transfer) – Completed.

Page 4

39 Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (Supporting RDC's proposed restrictions) Actioned.

40 New Events Fund (Requesting that distributions reverts to RTC) Declined (but RTC has continued to publicise the Fund).

42 Annual Town Meeting 2018 It was noted that this had been postponed to 4 April.

RESOLVED To bring forward consideration of item 47.5.

47.5 Grant Application

Members were invited to consider an application from Rye Community Centre for a grant of £2,100 towards the replacement of five Dance Hall windows.

The Clerk advised that he had had sight of the estimates/quotes received by the Centre.

It was noted that the 2017-18 Grants Fund balance is £75 – and that £5,000 had been provided for grants in 2018-19.

Speaking from the Public Gallery, Geoff Boudreau advised that:

- The timber sash windows are in poor condition.
- A pane of glass fell recently from one of the Dance Hall windows.
- Recently, another pane had to be removed.
- No other potential grant funders had been approached.
- An application form for the Police Property Act Fund had been obtained but had not yet been completed.
- The Centre had just received £2,000 from the Little Cheyne Court Wind Farm Fund towards improved disabled access from the car park.
- It is easier to secure grant funding if you are able to demonstrate that you are seeking to improve access for those mobility/sensory impairment considerations.
- At first sight it appears that the Rye Fund would not consider funding replacement windows.
- The estimates/quotes received varied widely.

Comments included: the Community Centre is a valuable asset; RTC has a long history of helping the Centre; the General Reserve balance will be clearer once the financial year end had been reached and the Clerk had actioned the virements agreed by Council when approving the 2018-19 Budgets; RDC's Community Grant Fund might be worth considering; the Rye Fund had given a grant for a similar purpose.

Members were generally in support of making a grant but considered that they needed a clearer picture of RTC's finances at the financial year end.

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to provide a Statement of Reserves as at 31 March 2018 and to consider the grant application further at the next Council meeting.

Clerk

47 FINANCE

47.1 Town Hall

a) **Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income**

Responding to a question from Cllr Gilbert, the Clerk advised that the monies paid to Action in Rural Sussex were in respect of preparation for the RNP Reg 14 consultation – and that a grant had been obtained from Locality to cover the costs.

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income for October 2017 – January 2018.

b) **Budget Monitor**

Responding to a question from Cllr Gilbert, the Clerk advised that provision had been made in the 2018-19 TH Budget to resurface the Skate park equipment. Thereafter, he would liaise with Cllr Rivett regarding an ongoing minor repairs strategy.

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure to 31 January 2018 against budget.

47.2 Heritage Centre

a) **Progress report**

Members considered the HCM's Report. Comments included:

- Some new faces had been seen at the recent HC VIP evening.
- Staff have cleaned and freshened up the Model.
- The HC is benefitting from the HCM's ideas and the introduction of new ideas and systems.

RESOLVED to thank the HCM for her report.

b) **Payments and Income**

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for September 2017-January 2018.

c) **Budget Monitor**

Responding to a question put by Cllr Gilbert, the Clerk advised that the Telephone/Internet budget was overspent because a new phone system had been installed which would immediately reduce telephone bills.

RESOLVED to receive and note the actual income and expenditure against the (revised) budget as at 31.1.18.

47.3 Account Balances

RESOLVED To receive the Statement of Account Balances as at 31 January 2018.

47.4 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED To receive the Statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 31 January 2018.

47.6 Nat West Bank

RESOLVED That the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2*, be changed in accordance with section 5** and the current mandate will continue as amended.

**HC accounts*

*** Removal of unauthorised signatories: John A Breeds [duplicated], Michael Eve, Adam Smith, Mary Smith, Samuel Souster*

48 WORK PROGRAMMES

(a) Clerk

Cllr Gilbert suggested that it would be appropriate for RTC to review its priorities after the May 2019 Parish/Town Council Elections – and that the opportunity could be taken to agree timescales.

Cllr Creaser observed that a number of action items had been – or were close to being – completed in this financial year.

The Committee Chairman observed that some target date slippages were outside of RTC's control.

Cllr Gilbert advised that she remained willing to assist with updating terms and conditions of employment.

RESOLVED To receive and note the summary of the status of key tasks/projects as at 19.3.18.

(b) General Assistant

Cllr Creaser considered that RTC is fortunate to have such a capable and committed team of staff (at both the TH and HC).

RESOLVED To thank the General Assistant for her update.

49 STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Committee was asked whether it wished to respond to the Government's review of local government ethical standards (*deadline: 18.5.18*).

It was agreed generally that Members should be reminded periodically of the content of RTC's Code of Conduct – and that re-elected Members should automatically be given another copy.

RESOLVED Not to respond to the consultation.

50 LANDGATE RESTORATION

RESOLVED 1 To note that RDC's Cabinet has approved urgent repairs of £74,000.

RESOLVED 2 To thank the Rye Fund for agreeing to contribute £3,000 towards the requested £7,000 RTC/community contribution to the urgent repairs.

RESOLVED 3 To thank Brenda Mason and Cllr Lord Ampthill for their work on the repair proposal and obtaining Cabinet approval.

51 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 on the grounds that item 52 involves consideration of a member of staff's remuneration.

Cllr Harkness left the Chamber.

52 2018-19 ADOPTED BUDGET (TOWN HALL)

Members were advised that the hours allocated to the General Assistant post during 2018-19 were 104 higher than had been intended.

Members noted that:

- There is considerable work still to be done to ensure RTC is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations by 25.5.18.
- All public authorities are required to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO).
- Public authorities may appoint an internal DPO so long as they have sufficient knowledge/expertise, are not a senior member of staff, are adequately resourced – and are allowed to carry out the role freely.
- The cost of ‘buying in’ a DPO service appears to range from £500-£1,500pa.
- Training for the DPO role ranges in price from £400-£2,500.
- Providers of both service do not necessarily have an understanding of the parish/town council sector.

RECOMMENDATION 1 To draw on the 104 hours provision in order to commission the General Assistant to undertake particular pieces of work, as and when required – particularly data protection compliance.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (Following further investigation) That the Council be invited to consider appointing the General Assistant as its DPO.

The meeting ended at 8pm.

Date Chairman