

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on
Monday 19 March 2018**

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Nicky Ledger – Rye Town Steward

The meeting commenced at 6.32pm.

120 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs John Breeds, Charlie Harkness and Shaun Rogers.

121 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures or interest nor requests for dispensation.

122 GRASS CUTTING

Members considered an email from ESCC Contracts Management advising that it is likely that ESCC will resolve to reduce the number of urban grass cuts it commissions from 6 per annum to 2, with effect from 1 April 2018.

It was noted that two options are being offered to RTC:

a) A financial contribution to RTC equivalent to two urban grass cuts based on current ESCC contract rates (in the region of £655pa). This could be provided to the community as a basis to commission and employ RTC's own grass cutting service using a local contractor.

b) For RTC to pay ESCC for additional urban grass cuts over the two cuts per season provided by ESCC. To maintain the current service of six cuts would cost RTC in the region of £1,311pa.

Members considered the assessment papers drafted by the Clerk and the Town Steward, Nicky Ledger (NL).

NL added/highlighted:

- Some of the urban verges highlighted on ESCC's Rye Grass Cutting plan are no longer cut by its contractor – and its contractor cuts verges that are not on the plan.
- Quite a few residents maintain the verge fronting their property.
- He already cuts most of ESCC's verges because County's contractor does not cut them often enough – nor when they need to be mown.
- The plan does not include verges that are the responsibility of Highways England – which he maintains also because they tend not to get done by its contractor unless the grass height is impeding drivers' sightlines.
- The Rye Town Steward team currently cuts ESCC's verges more than 6 times pa.
- The £655 offered could be put towards the purchase of a second, larger petrol mower – which would increase the number of verges that could be cut in a day.
- ESCC's contractor does not cut Rye's verges to the same standard as the Town Steward team.
- A number of verges are difficult to mow because they have become rutted as a result of being parked on. RTC has acquired a number of highway posts that

will be used to deter parking until verges can be repaired and allowed to recover.

Responding to a question, NL advised that the Town Steward team does not cut the open spaces (such as Mason's Field) – these are the responsibility of RDC's contractor.

Cllr Hughes advised that she receives regularly positive comments from bus passengers about the grass cutting undertaken by the Steward team – particularly in respect of the Tilling Green 'triangle'. The Mayor concurred.

The Clerk observed that, if RTC accepts the offer of £655 to take on cutting County's Rye urban verges during 2018-19, there is no guarantee that a similar contribution will be forthcoming in subsequent years.

RESOLVED (unanimous) To take over the cutting of ESCC's Rye urban verges and to accept the offer of £655 towards RTC's 2018-19 costs.
Clerk

123 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 item following on the grounds that it could, potentially, lead to legal action.

124 97 SOUTH UNDERCLIFF

Members considered the former tenants request that their deposit – currently being withheld by RTC to cover rent due to it under the terms of the tenancy agreement – should be returned to them because they had given sufficient notice of their (early) vacation of the property.

RESOLVED To await the outcome of the (free) independent adjudication – and then to consider the matter further. Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.32pm

Date Chairman