

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 25 June 2018

PRESENT Councillors Sam Barnes, Mike Boyd (**Mayor**), John Breeds, Cheryl Creaser, Justin Erswell, Bernardine Fiddimore, Rebekah Gilbert (**Deputy Mayor**), Charlie Harkness, Pat Hughes, Jo Kirkham, Ray Prewer, Andi Rivett, Shaun Rogers

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Paul Goring – Town Sergeant; East Sussex County Cllr Keith Glazier; Rother District Councillor Lord Amphill; 2 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

31 PRAYERS

In the absence of the Mayor’s Chaplain, prayers were said by the Mayor.

32 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Jonathan Breeds, Ian Potter and Andy Stuart.

The Clerk advised that Cllr Stevens was unable to be present.

33 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures of interest nor requests for dispensation.

The Mayor highlighted two recent Mayoral engagements:

a) The Presentation, in Hastings, of a Little Ships’ Association flag to *The Ghost of Dunkirk* and naming of the vessel.

b) Little Gate Farm Open Day in Beckley. The Farm provides for support for younger people to get them into work or FT education.

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

35 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED 1 To approve the draft Minutes of the meetings held on 12 February 2018 (C12), 19 February 2018 (C13), 19 March 2018 (C14) and 9 April 2018 (C15).

RESOLVED 2 To note that the Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2018 (C2) would be presented to the next meeting [*but could be viewed currently on the web site*].
Clerk

36 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED To receive the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Townscape Committee held on 14 May 2018 (PT01), 29 May 2018 (PT02) and 11 June 2018 (PT03).

37 HERITAGE CENTRE

a) Progress Report

The Heritage Centre Manager, Louisa O'Shaughnessy spoke to her written report – highlighting:

- The HC feels busier but this is not translating into commensurately higher revenue.
- In line with national trends, gifts sales have fallen. Visitors are increasingly seeking 'experiences' – which might account for the larger number of Model visits, maps sales and requests for visitor information.
- The overall revenue target for April-May has been reached.
- It would be useful to reinstate some form of visitor counter.
- Following the introduction of a deposit system, Group Model cancellations had declined.
- The range of local products has been extended and this is the biggest growth area; however, there remains a place for general gifts – especially during the peak months for overseas student visits (April-May).
- Instead of 'traditional' advertising, the HC is spending £200 on sponsoring the Rother Youth Football League.
- At the invitation of 1066 Country the HC is entering the Beautiful South Tourism Awards - 'International/Inbound Visitor Experience of the Year' (the HC appears to meet the entry requirements). The entry form needs to be completed by the end of the week.

RESOLVED To thank the HCM for her report.

b) Payments and Income

RESOLVED To receive and adopt Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for February to March 2018 – and April 2018.

c) Budget Monitor

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

38 FINANCE

38.1 Town Hall

a) Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Schedule of Authorised Payments and Statement of Income for February to March 2018 – and April 2018.

b) Budget Monitor

The Clerk advised that the 'VAT Income' of £408.32 needs to be removed – as does the same sum from the 'Heritage Centre – Other' expense account.

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget to 30 April 2018.

38.2 Account Balances

RESOLVED To receive a Statement of Account Balances as at 30 April 2018.

38.3 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED To receive a Statement of Earmarked Reserves as 30 April 2018.

38.4 Grant Application

Members were invited to consider an application from The Music Well CIC for a grant of £2,400 towards music therapy provision – *enabling children and young people in Rye to access sessions with a state registered clinical music therapist.*

It was noted that the 2018-19 Grants Fund balance is £6,075.

The applicant, Liz Butt explained that the CIC needs to replace the funding that the Rye Academy Trust is no longer in a position to contribute. The Music Well is a form of psychotherapeutic intervention and, unlike the conventional mental health services, it is able to respond quickly to help address mental health issues amongst younger people, which is a growing problem.

Members expressed their strong support for the work of the CIC but considered that they had to be mindful of the limited grant funding available for distribution in the financial year.

RESOLVED To contribute £1,200 immediately and to review, in 6 months' time, whether the Council was in a position to make an additional contribution.

Clerk

Cllr Rogers arrived.

38.5 Town Steward – additional storage requirement

RESOLVED To note that RTC has obtained a licence to occupy the shed adjacent to the Council's for £50pcm – and that the cost will be funded from existing budgets.

38.6 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2017-18 and Annual Accounts 2017-18

RESOLVED 1 To receive and note the annual Risk Assessments (2018).

RESOLVED 2 To receive and note the reports of the Internal Auditor, Angela Alexander (report dated 18.6.18) and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2017-18 (within the AGAR).

RESOLVED 3 To receive and adopt the Review of Internal Controls 2018.

RESOLVED 4 To receive and note the updated Summary of Main Day-to Day Financial Controls (as at 18.6.18).

RESOLVED 5 To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2017-18 (Section 1 of the AGAR).

RESOLVED 6 To approve the (Consolidated) Town Council Accounts for 2017-18.

Gilbert observed that three of the organisations that had received a grant from RTC over the last 2 years no longer exist – and suggested that the Council should considering following up successful applications.

RESOLVED 7 To approve the Annual Accounting Statements 2017-18 (Section 2 of the AGAR).

RESOLVED 8 To re-appoint Angela Alexander as the Council’s Internal Auditor (budget provision 2018-19: £325).

RESOLVED 9 To approve the Internal Auditor’s Terms of Reference for 2018-19.

RESOLVED To approve the draft Audit Plan 2018-19.

39 WORK PROGRAMMES/UPDATES

(a) Clerk

RESOLVED To receive and note a summary of the status of key tasks/projects as at 18.6.18.

(b) General Assistant

RESOLVED To receive and note an update on the post holder’s work programme.

40 TOWN BANKING FACILITIES

RESOLVED To write to the CEO of Barclays along the lines following:

Within the last 18 months we have witnessed the closure of three of Rye Town’s four banks and are concerned about the future of Barclays in Rye, East Sussex.

Rye is a mediaeval market town, unique in many ways.

- 1) There are poor public transport links within our rural community and larger towns are at least 15 (Hastings) to 20 (Ashford) miles away, making it very hard to travel elsewhere for banking.*
- 2) Over 95% of our shops are individually run with only three chain stores. There are strong business needs for a bank in town (the only alternative, Nationwide, will not offer business banking) as family-owned businesses do not have the time to close their stores to get change, pay in daily cash takings etc, especially given the rural environment around us and journey times of c45mins each way. In addition, we have a number of individually run public houses and tourist destinations that largely take cash and need somewhere to deposit this daily.*
- 3) We have an elderly population, many of whom would struggle with online only banking.*
- 4) Barclays in Rye is always busy, invariably with customers queuing to be seen, hence it is a busy branch.*
- 5) We have lost an independent post office, with just a counter facility in a supermarket, which is already stretched throughout the day, so putting more onus upon it would mean longer waiting times and more difficulty accessing banking.*

Before considering your next round of town bank closures we would urge you to take into account the above points – a thriving and popular tourist Cinque Port town with no banking facilities would be incredibly damaging to the community as a whole.

Clerk, Cllr Gilbert

41 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 is likely to affect the terms and conditions of employment of one – or more – members of staff.

42 DEPUTY TOWN CLERK DESIGNATE

RESOLVED To proceed with the appointment of a Deputy Town Clerk Designate, attempting, in the first instance, to fill the vacancy internally.

Clerk, HRWG

The meeting ended at 7.37pm

Date Chairman

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

Cllr Glazier's report included:

Grass cutting RTC should be congratulated for taking this on from ESCC.

Adult Social Care Tomorrow the Cabinet will consider making a further £10m cuts to ASC. If agreed, two day centres would close, the delivery of day services would be revised, an intermediate care centre would be closed – and 54 care assessment staff would be lost. This would be a difficult decision but there is now little scope for achieving savings elsewhere.

Household Waste Recycling sites ESCC is looking at closing two in the north of the county.

CPE RDC has asked formally ESCC to introduce this.

Cllr Gilbert *Some of the pot hole patching carried out in the Parish recently (notably in Harbour Road) appears not to have lasted long.*

Cllr Glazier Unfortunately the pot holes in Harbour Road rarely meet the 40mm depth repairs threshold because the top surface is 30mm of tarmac on a concrete base. The Highways Steward has been asked to monitor the situation. Tarmac is rammed into (qualifying) potholes, pending a more lasting repair.

Cllr Erswell *What will be the likely impact of the possible ASC cuts on Rye?*

Cllr Glazier There may be a few clients from Rye & District who will be affected; however, if they are assessed as having a continuing need for appropriate services will be commissioned from the private sector.

Cllr Fiddimore arrived.

b) Reports of the Rother District Councillors

Cllr Amptill delivered his report (**APPENDIX B**).

Cllr John Breeds *Does the Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan address the reinstatement of the Robertsbridge to Bodiam section of the Rother Valley Railway?*

Cllr Amptill This would need to be checked.

Cllr Glazier advised that the RVR is currently attempting to secure an Order necessary to take forward its planning consent. It may be necessary to compulsorily purchase some of the land required. The Mayor advised that, as a member of the RVR, he is kept updated on developments.

Heidi Foster *Unless it is stronger and well secured, replacement bird netting on the Landgate on the Landgate is likely to have a short lifespan – the addition of an appropriate roof would resolve this recurring problem.*

Cllr Amptill Replacement netting will protect the structure in the short-term (after it is cleaned) whilst a longer-term solution is considered.

Cllr Fiddimore added that it is not unusual for pigeons to get caught up in the netting and members of the public find this upsetting.

c) Public Question Time

There was none.

Cllr Glazier left the meeting.

34b) Report of Rye Ward member, Cllr Lord Amphill

A report for next Monday's Cabinet advises that the **Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan** 2016-28 is ready to be "made". The Plan incorporates the Examiner's modifications, as presented to local referendum, and is extremely likely to receive Cabinet and Council approval. It will then, with immediate effect, form part of the overall Development Plan. The referendum turnout was 41 per cent of whom 90 per cent voted "yes" to the question which was: "Do you want RDC to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?"

On the subject of **Planning**, several interesting proposals have been considered recently. The Petrol Station application did not need to go to Committee before again being refused. Since Local Members are able and welcome to address the Committee, I spoke against the Sheffield application for (up to) 24 new houses on our northern boundary - which was narrowly refused; and in favour of the application to create a 60-bed Care Home at the Rye Hill Healthcare Complex. I also spoke in favour of the application to develop a new covered structure to provide 3 new indoor tennis courts - just within Playden parish. The Committee's decision was to grant outline permission which would be delegated to officers for clarification of highway, drainage and ecology matters - most of which are nearing settlement at already considerable expense to the promoters.

Some disappointing objections related to doubts over the integrity of the community involvement statement. Here is a scheme to make the Club much more accessible - in particular to young people - and folks wished to turn it down because there will be a large building which the Club will make every effort to camouflage and/or hide. The field in question has no better use: and I took the view that the Club should be given the chance to build an enhanced facility for community benefit - of which, who knows, we could end up being proud.

Last Tuesday's meeting, at the invitation of the Mayor, took in an inspection of the **Landgate**. Nothing prepares the visitor for the shock of the experience - the filth, the toxic fumes, the dilapidation - but it was possible to understand why this problem is taking so long to resolve. The structure could, and should, have been made secure many decades ago (long before Rother came on the scene) with an unobtrusive lead roof. Instead, useless netting flaps in the breeze and there is a mountain to climb - both in terms of work and fund-raising.

Mr Bailey of Thomas Ford & Partners, Chartered Architects & Surveyors, has been retained and is currently costing the essential works, for which funding is in place, which can be completed before the onset of winter. These will not require scaffolding or road closures. It is intended that steeplejacks and others will: remove the timber flagpole and check the condition of the modern flagpole; clear the bird detritus from the towers and clock housing; secure the clock housing and the electric housing; disconnect the uplighters; remove vegetation from the parapets where accessible; replace the netting and secure the area from further infestation; replace the timber ladders; and fix safety access points for future maintenance. A forthcoming meeting of the Action Group partners will consider this programme and the costs involved, adapt it if necessary and give instructions to proceed through Rother's Economic Development Manager. Then comes the strategic thinking and long-term planning. Do we wish to see a managed ruin; or will we work to afford a living building which can be used and explored by all?