

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 1 April 2019

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

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Paul Goring – Town Sergeant; The Reverend Christopher Breeds; Louisa O’Shaughnessy – Heritage Centre Manager; Rother District Councillor – Lord Ampthill; East Sussex County Councillor – Keith Glazier; Colonel Anthony Kimber – RNPSG Vice-Chairman; 4 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

159 PRAYERS

In the absence of the Mayor’s Chaplain, Prayers were said by The Reverend Christopher Breeds.

160 APOLOGIES

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

It was noted that the Mayor’s Chaplain was unable to be present.

161 CODE OF CONDUCT

Cllr Rivett 166.4 Member of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Committee.

162 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor observed that this was the last scheduled Council meeting prior to the Elections and thanked Members who would not be standing for re-election for their considerable contributions. He hoped that, if their circumstances changed, they would consider re-joining the Council when the opportunity arose.

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

The meeting reconvened.

163 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2019 (C17).

164 COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Planning & Townscape Committee – including adopting any Recommendations - of the meetings held on: 10 December 2018 (PT11); 28 January 2019 (PT12); 18 February 2019 (PT13) and 4 March 2019 (PT14).

165 HERITAGE CENTRE

a) Progress Report

The Heritage Centre Manager, Louisa O'Shaughnessy (LO) spoke to her report (distributed previously) – highlighting:

- The HC has only just started to get busy again within the last 2 weeks – especially group bookings.
- (Including VAT) March takings total £7,918 (although some electronic payments need to be added). This is better than the (revised) budget forecast – but is cancelled out by the lower than expected February receipts.
- The main point to be derived from the report is that the average spend has gone up - £278 per day in March. The stock is appealing to a wider range of people.
- Stock from local suppliers is continuing to be added. Recent examples include tea from a supplier in Pett and aromatherapy toiletries.
- In accordance with the adopted HC Strategic Review, new signage has been designed and will be installed by Easter.
- One EPOS system has been assessed thus far – with a demo for another provider booked in for 3 April.
- Interviews for a seasonal member of staff will be held on 4 April.

Cllr Hughes reported that, following lengthy discussions with ESCC, the bus stop opposite the Centre will be flagged 'Rye Heritage Centre'.

Responding to a question put by Cllr Rivett, LO suggested that, because the purchase of an EPOS system is a complex and important decision (and introducing one during the main visitor season could be disruptive), it might not be possible to introduce a system until September.

It was considered generally that it would be desirable to source – and install – an EPOS system prior to this year's main season (ie by late May).

DTCD, HCM

Cllr Gilbert asked how expenses could be reduced in 2019-20. The Clerk observed that the adopted 2019-20 HC Budget incorporated savings and the adopted HC Strategic Review lead to further savings (opening hours reductions). There is not much scope remaining for cutting revenue costs.

Cllr Hughes added that she would be happy to display HC promotional material on the RDCT buses. LO to email this electronically to the DTCD to forward to Members.

HCM, DTCD

b) Payments and Income

RESOLVED To receive and adopt Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for November 2018-January 2019.

c) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget to 31 January 2019.

166 FINANCE (TOWN HALL AND GENERAL)

166.1 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 November 2018-January 2019.

b) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget to 31 January 2019.

166.2 Account Balances

RESOLVED To receive a Statement of Account Balances as at 31 January 2019.

166.3 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED To receive a Statement of Earmarked Reserves as 31 January 2019.

166.4 Grant Application

The Clerk advised that the forecast General Grant Earmarked Reserve balance as at 31.3.19 was £2,572. The General Grant provision for 2019-20 was £4,000 – making the total available for 2019-20 £6,572.

Members considered an application from the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) for an application for a contribution of £1,000 towards the construction of the Rye Harbour Discovery Centre.

The Mayor invited the local representative for the applicant, Alastair Fairley, Appeal Board Chairman, Rye Harbour Discovery Project, to speak to the application. Mr Fairley's comments/responses to questions included:

- A range of councils in the area have been approached for funding.
- RDC has committed to providing £50,000 towards the proposed wildlife garden.
- Ticehurst PC has awarded £1,000 and Udimore PC £400.
- Icklesham PC has been approached but its response is not yet known.
- The Centre will increase footfall to the area.
- Green/Conservation/Nature tourism is an expanding part of the sector – and it increasingly supports local economies.
- The Centre will be a major visitor attraction in SE England.
- SWT is not a wealth charity – it is responsible for 4,000 sites across East and West Sussex.
- The Charity Commission requires SWT to hold a minimum level of reserves.
- Currently Rye Harbour Nature Reserves costs £130,000pa to run. However, it is becoming harder to generate this sum. A new visitor centre would place the Reserve on a sounder financial footing.

Comments from Members included:

- RTC has limited funds with which to support many smaller voluntary organisations operating in the town.

- There have been considerable demands made on RTC's resources over the last two years.
- SWT has considerable reserves and fundraising expertise.
- Any contribution from RTC should be dependent on the Centre getting financial support from Icklesham PC.
- Rather than make a contribution into an undefined 'capital pot', if RTC was minded to support the project it should be for something specific and tangible/permanent.
- The proposed Centre will attract visitors, benefit residents and local businesses – and provide an educational resource for schools.
- In addition to the Nature Reserve, both the Mary Stanford Lifeboat building and the HC are in need of resources. It might be possible to help all three at the same time.

RESOLVED To reconsider the application in c8 months' time – with a view to determining whether RTC could fund something specific (such as an item of equipment).
Clerk

The Clerk advised that, although Members had been sent an application for funding from Strandliners, unfortunately, because it had been inadvertently omitted from the published agenda it could not be considered until the next meeting.
Clerk

166.5 Cost of Living Pay Increase 2019-20

RESOLVED To note that, because the October 2018 CPI and RPI figures were used to calculate the increase (instead of the November 2018 figures) – the cost of living salary increase for 2019-20 is 0.1% higher than it should be.

167 RYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN www.ryeneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/

Members were invited to receive a written update – summarised by the RNP Vice-Chairman, Colonel Kimber - and, if necessary, to agree a course of action.

RESOLVED 1 (Given the impending Town Council Election) To delegate authority to the Clerk to – in consultation with the RNP Vice-Chairman – agree any minor adjustments to the RNP arising from further questions raised by the Independent Examiner.

RESOLVED 2 To note that: the Ticehurst and Crowhurst NPs have reached the same stage as the RNP; all three share the same Examiner – and that it will now not be possible to hold the Rye Referendum on 2 May.

RESOLVED 3 To agree, in principle the draft flyer (to be distributed to all households) subject to: Members being given the opportunity to suggest amendments to improve clarity over the next few days – and the final draft being checked by RDC's Legal Department.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

Date Chairman

ADJOURNMENT**162 a) County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Glazier reported/advised that:

Funding He continues to press Government for an improved funding mechanism for local government.

ATM Following the meeting he had, as promised, sent a schedule of upcoming pavement repairs to the Clerk. A number had been undertaken already.

Local economy He continues also to work with developers and planners to improve the economic prosperity of Rye.

Cllr Gilbert *Had the Rye Area Business Forum's CPE petition been received by the relevant ESCC officer – and will it be taken into consideration?*

Cllr Glazier The petition had been given to the correct officer – and it is regrettable that the receipt of the petition has not been confirmed.

Cllr Gilbert *When will the next CPE consultation commence?*

Cllr Glazier There will be a statutory 12-week consultation - start date to be announced.

b) District Councillors' Reports

Adding to his report (**APPENDIX B**) Cllr Lord Ampthill suggested that CPE provides an opportunity for RDC, ESCC and RTC to work closely to deliver a suitable scheme for Rye.

The next CPE consultation is likely to take place over the summer. Following its introduction [*April 2020*] there will be a 12-month monitoring period.

Addressing Cllr Ampthill, Cllr Hughes reported that the residents of Tilling Court and Badger Gate do not have separate waste containers for glass. Cllr Ampthill advised that under the new waste collection contract (commencing in June) residents will be allowed to co-mingle kerbside recyclates. It was noted that, currently, Kier will collect glass bottles/jars if they are mixed with other recyclates.

Referring to RDC's review of landholdings in Cyprus Place (occupied by Rye Hire) and at Gibbet Marsh, Colonel Kimber reported that he had been assured that no decisions will be made without full consultation with RTC and Rother Planning.

c) Public Question Time

There was none.

162b) District Councillor's Report (Notes) (Amphill)

Waste & Recycling, Street & Beach Cleaning ... BIFFA familiarising themselves with the new contract which starts in June

Camber Western Car Park ... budget of £330,000 agreed for works on the unstable composition of the car park surface which breaks up and is in need of reinforcement

Community Grants Scheme ... RDC budget of £130,000 per annum (in two tranches). Successful applicants in recent years have included: Rye Art Gallery, 1st Rye Scout Group, ARRCC, St Mary's Church for the clock mechanism, Rye Museum, Rye Community Centre and our Cricket and Football Clubs. The most recent support went to Rye Harbour Sailing Club

Development of Council-owned sites ... on a list of 26 sites, two are in Rye: land adjacent to Gibbet Marsh car park and land at Cyprus Place. The purpose of the initiative is to understand the future of the assets. Clearly, Gibbet Marsh will require considerable thought, and Cyprus Place is the home of a long-established Rye business (which I have visited and sent a report to officers)

The Landgate ... further talks are imminent on future plans for the structure and use of the building; and estimates are being sought relating to the repair of the clock

Council tax for 2019/20 ... the Rye tax base is 1,942 (out of 38,054). We make up 5.1% of Rother District. A Band D tax bill for the new year will be £2,019. The County Council's share, including a social care precept, is 71%; East Sussex Fire & Rescue is 4.6%; Sussex Police is 9.4% (and they are increasing their precept by 14.5% year on year; Rye Town Council's share (including the special expense for our open spaces) is 6.1%; and Rother's share is 8.9 per cent i.e. £179.45 or £3.45 per week.

It has been a huge privilege to have served as one of Rye's two representatives at RDC during the past 12 years. I am so appalled by what has been going on in Parliament these past months that, for the time being, my heart is not in the usual forms of political campaigning. But I hope to keep busy in other ways.

DA 01/04/19