

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held in the Buttermarket, Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 23 March 2020

PRESENT Councillors David Amphill, Michael Boyd (**Mayor**), Jonathan Breeds, Rebekah Gilbert (**Deputy Mayor**), Chris Hoggart, Pat Hughes, Ian Potter, Andi Rivett, Andy Stuart, Sam Wood

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; Colonel Anthony Kimber – REACT Leader; Caroline Drummond – Rye Mutual Aid Group Founder

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

149 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs David Bookless, John Breeds, Cheryl Creaser, Jo Kirkham, Shaun Rogers and Sam Souster.

150 CODE OF CONDUCT

Cllr Hoggart *item 152* Trustee of the HC CIO

151 MINUTES

RESOLVED To approve, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 January 2020 (C17).

152 RYE HERITAGE CENTRE CHARITY

- a) Lease
- b) Town Model Bill of Sale

Colonel Kimber (HC CIO trustee with responsibility for liaison with RTC) advised that communications between the CIO and Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had been very amicable.

RESOLVED 1 (Subject to a number of typographical amendments) To approve, for execution, the draft 5-year lease between the Council and the Rye Heritage Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
Clerk

RESOLVED 2 To approve, for execution, the draft Town Model sale agreement between the Council and the Rye Heritage Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
Clerk

c) Progress Report

Colonel Kimber reported that, because of the developing Covid-19 situation, the re-opening of the HC was likely to be delayed until the autumn. It was hoped that the charity would be able to obtain, from the Government, 80% of the cost of continuing to pay the HC Manager.

RESOLVED To thank the CIO for managing to achieve registration with the Charity Commission – and make preparations to (re)open – so quickly.

(d) HC ‘COLOURISED’ SEAL

RESOLVED To allow the Rye Heritage Centre CIO to use the ‘colourised Town Seal’ – as displayed on the exterior of the Centre – for marketing purposes.

153 FINANCE

153.1 Heritage Centre

a) Income and Expenditure

RESOLVED To receive and adopt the Income by Customer Summaries and Expenses by Supplier Summaries for December 2019-February 2020.

b) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget to 29 February 2020.

153.2 Town Hall

a) Expenditure

RESOLVED To receive and adopt an Expenses by Supplier Summary for December 2019-February 2020.

b) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED To receive and note the actual income and expenditure against budget to 29 February 2020.

153.3 Unity Trust account

RESOLVED To add Councillors David Amphill, Cheryl Creaser, Rebekah Gilbert, Andi Rivett and Andy Stuart to the mandate as authorised payment signatories. Clerk

154 COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Members were invited to consider the Clerk’s Briefing Notes, receive an update from the Leader of REACT – and the Founder of the Rye Mutual Aid Group - and to agree a course of action.

Colonel Kimber advised that Covid droplets can remain in still air for up to 3 hours – and on hard surfaces (eg plastic and metal) for 3 days. Those in their late 70s and older are at greatest risk – particularly if they have underlying health issues.

The virus is spreading quickly in London and it is known that there were visitors from London in Rye over the weekend.

Following his appeal at the ATM on 4 March, a number of parishioners expressed interest in volunteering to help any community response. Some time after – and separately via Facebook – the Rye Mutual Aid Group was formed. To avoid duplication, REACT’s volunteers ‘transferred’ to the RMAG and Colonel Kimber provides guidance and advice – and liaises with statutory bodies. Caroline Drummond is focusing on organising the volunteers. SGN has indicated that it is amenable to allowing RMAG volunteers through its roadworks (now commenced) during Stage 2 (Rye Hill).

Education providers and many businesses have closed – and events for the foreseeable future have been cancelled/postponed. Discussions have begun with Jempsons (creating a home delivery system from scratch) and Boots.

The needs of the self-employed and those working in the gig economy have yet to be addressed by the Government.

Volunteers will be vulnerable and will need to be supplied with facemasks and, preferably, googles (the eyes are a vulnerable entry point for the virus).

Cllr Rivett reported that some overseas visitors are now stuck in Rye because they cannot gain entry to their home countries.

Caroline Drummond (CD) advised that RMAG was formed to act as a safety net – to help those who have no-one else to collect shopping and medicines and who might, otherwise, become socially isolated.

There are currently 800 Facebook supporters and nearly 500 trained volunteers – who are allocated to a zone and required to sign a disclaimer. RDC and the Police have commended RMAG as an example of ‘best practice’. RMAG covers many of the surrounding parishes – but not Iden nor Wittersham.

All RMAG’s policies and method statements may be found on its web site - <https://www.ryemutualaid.org/>

Requests for assistance are coded and tracked. It is important that the safety and well-being of volunteers is safeguarded.

An introductory letter will be distributed within Rye and the surrounding villages this week.

Colonel Kimber expressed concern about the potential for duplication – both RVA and ESCC have recently announced initiatives.

CD concluded by highlighting RMAG’s need for help with costs – including equipment and using Survey Monkey.

RESOLVED 1 To thank CD and RMAG for their valuable work.

RESOLVED 2 To allocate a budget of £10,000 for Covid-19-related community support (with RTC’s preference being to purchase items directly – and then to donate them). Clerk

RESOLVED 3 To adopt the Clerk’s recommendations.

RESOLVED 4 (Given that the Covid-19 situation changes daily – and that Government policy announcements might need to be implemented immediately) That the Clerk be given delegated authority to make any pressing decisions – subject to reference being made to prevailing Government advice and (if time permits) informal consultation with Members and relevant parties. Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.10pm

Date Chairman