

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held via Zoom on
Monday 14 December 2020**

PRESENT Councillors David Amphill, David Bookless, Michael Boyd, John Breeds, Jonathan Breeds, Cheryl Creaser, Rebekah Gilbert (**Mayor** – Speaker of the Cinque Ports), Chris Hoggart, Pat Hughes, Jo Kirkham, Ian Potter, Andi Rivett (**Deputy Mayor**), Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart, Sam Wood

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk (Host); Jessica Neame – Deputy Town Clerk (Co-Host); Rother District Cllr Gennette Stevens; Rye County Councillor – Keith Glazier; Colonel Anthony Kimber – RNP Co-ordinator.

The meeting commenced at 6.31pm.

40 PRAYERS

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend Canon David Frost, the Mayor took the opportunity to thank him for the many years of service he had rendered and, on behalf of the Council, wished him well for his retirement at the end of the month.

41 APOLOGIES

a) Acceptance

There were no apologies for absence.

b) Minutes

Citing the Nolan Principles (guidance on ethical behaviour in public life) and the need to be transparent, the Mayor invited Members to consider whether to note in the Minutes of Council and Committee meetings, the names of any Members who were neither present nor had given their apologies for absence.

Comments included:

- The Principles do not require this.
- It is easy for the public to determine, from the Minutes (as they are currently constructed), who has not given their apologies.
- Sometimes Members are not in a position to tender apologies – for example, if something comes up at the last minute.
- A Member is disqualified from holding office if they do not attend relevant meetings for 6 months and apologies for absence have not been accepted at least one during this period.
- No Member is currently at risk of disqualification.
- Council had recently increased the membership of the P+T Committee by two to address the ongoing problem of inquorate meetings.
- A record of Member attendances is published annually.
- When they stood for election, Members would not have been aware of the possibility of meetings being held online. Those with a poor broadband connection struggle to 'attend' Zoom meetings.
- Members who realise they cannot attend a meeting at the last minute should be able to find the time to send the Clerk a brief email/text.

RESOLVED Not to record, within the Minutes of meetings, the names of Members who are either absent or have not presented their apologies for absence.

42 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures of interest – nor requests for dispensation.

43 MINUTES

RESOLVED To approve, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 November 2020 (C5).

*The Mayor adjourned the meeting for a Mayoral Update; the Reports of the County and District Councillors; Public Questions/Contributions and the appointment of the Mayor Elect 2021-22. (See **APPENDIX**).*

The meeting reconvened.

44 FORMER COUNCILLOR JOHN IZOD

Members were invited to consider purchasing – and installing – an appropriate hardwood bench outside Grammar School Records (which would bear a plaque in memory of former Councillor John Izod). (Estimated cost: £800.)

The Clerk advised that a parishioner had previously funded a memorial bench at this location but, because of a communication breakdown within RDC, the bench had been installed on the footpath between the hard standing at Gibbet Marsh and the pedestrian rail crossing. If agreed, the John Izod plaque from the Gibbet Marsh bench would be transferred to the new bench – and a new ‘Provided by Rye Town Council’ plaque would be installed on the Gibbet Marsh bench. RDC had undertaken to leave the current ‘bench space’ outside Grammar School Records vacant.

The current balance of the Street Furniture Earmarked Reserve is £1,580.

Comments included:

- If Members are going to be asked to consider waiting until the Draft 2021-22 Budget is available, before considering releasing the balance of the Music Well grant application, RTC should consider also postponing this agenda item.
- Outside facilities – such as public benches – have become more important during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A funding appeal could be initiated.
- Cllr Rivett had done an excellent job repairing the bench at the top of Cadborough Hill.
- The Town Steward had repaired the bench in memory of Joan Yates at the end of Watchbell Street.

RESOLVED To accept Cllr Hughes’s generous offer to fund the proposed bench.
Clerk, Cllr Hughes

45 FINANCE

a) Budget Monitor

RESOLVED To receive and note the monitor as at 30 November 2020.

b) Expenditure

RESOLVED To receive and note the Expenditure by Supplier Report 1 October 2020-30 November 2020.

c) Account Balances

RESOLVED To receive and note the Account Balances as at 30 November 2020.

d) Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED To receive and note the Earmarked Reserves as at 30 November 2020.

e) Grant Application: Music Well

Members were invited to consider a request from the Music Well CIC for a grant of £1,200 – being the balance (50%) of the grant it was awarded earlier in the year towards the provision of online music therapy and musical activities during the pandemic.

RESOLVED To release 25% (£600) of the original grant now – and to review the release of the 25% remaining when the Draft 2021-22 Budget is available for consideration. Clerk

46 REPRODUCTION CONSENT

Council was asked to consider a request from Ellie Seymour for permission to use an image of the Rye Gibbet Cage in *Secret Sussex*.

RESOLVED To grant consent on the terms suggested – ie RTC being credited and one copy of the publication being provided gratis. Clerk

47 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2), to exclude the press and public on the grounds that item 48 entails consideration of the Council's interest in a parcel of land.

48 TELEPHONE KIOSK O/S 104 UDIMORE ROAD

The Council was asked to consider a request from one of the owners of number 104 that the K6 red telephone kiosk be relocated.

It was noted that the freeholders of 104 consider that the verge fronting the property lies within their Title Plan.

The Clerk advised that this does not appear to be the case – and that ESCC and RDC take the same view. Because it is banked, ESCC does not consider the verge to form part of the public highway. The current status of the verge would seem to be 'unregistered – ownership unknown'.

The kiosk is known to have been in its current position for at least 60 years. It was noted that the verge accommodates also a retaining wall, public bench, bus stop and litter bin.

RESOLVED 1 To apply for a Caution Against First Registration (of the verge). Clerk

RESOLVED 2 Subject to the freeholders of 104 Udimore Road agreeing to share the cost, to appoint a chartered land surveyor to provide an opinion on the position of the front boundary of 104. Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.51pm.

Date Chairman

ADJOURNMENT

a) Mayoral Update

Cllr Gilbert had participated in a large number of Zoom meetings – including those concerned with: RMA, East Sussex Chambers of Commerce, DWP (Youth Hub and apprenticeship schemes); RRFC, SSALC, PCC; high speed train connectivity.

b) Reports of the Rye District Councillors

Cllr Gennette Stevens

Although she had received/sent a lot of emails, it is fairly quiet – and she had nothing to report.

Cllr Stuart *Could Cllr Stevens provide an update on the 1066 Walk signage and sculptures?*

Cllr Stevens There was likely to be a second stage.

The Clerk added that he believed the Community Rail Partnership was considering providing – at the Railway Station - a directional sign to the start of the Walk.

Cllr Creaser asked Cllr Stevens if she could obtain an update on the 1066 Walk project so that it could be circulated.

Cllr Stevens

Cllr Lord Ampthill wondered how much the Bexhill Town Council Election in May 2021 cost Rother taxpayers?

The Clerk advised that a locum Clerk had been appointed to ensure a basic structure was in place prior to the appointment of a permanent Clerk in June-July. The Clerk would, initially, be accommodated at the Town Hall in Bexhill – and it is likely that, in the summer, the new Town Council will ask parishioners for their views on what services they would like to see it provide.

Cllr Stevens advised that a number of Members would prefer the Bexhill Town Clerk to be accommodated elsewhere.

c) Report of the County Councillor

High Speed Rail link Cllr Glazier had attended two meetings recently – one of which considered how private sector monies might help to take the initiative forward.

COVID Over the last week rates of infection in Hastings (especially) and Rother had risen rapidly. Currently, there are still hospital beds available. On 17 December the Government will review the Tiers. Over Christmas, help will be provided to those who are struggling.

Cllr Wood left the meeting.

Colonel Kimber noted that the Health Secretary had, today, reported evidence of a new COVID strain in Kent and parts of East Sussex.

Cllr Glazier advised that scientists believe that the current COVID vaccines will be effective against this new strain.

Colonel Kimber *(In his capacity as Rye Partnership Chairman, could Cllr Glazier provide an update on the aspiration to provide affordable/social housing on the former Tilling Green School playing field?)*

Cllr Glazier It remains the case that his fellow RP Directors are continuing to discuss an extension to the Partnership's TG Community Centre lease with ESCC. RP needs to understand who it might work with in order to deliver housing on the playing field.

Cllr Creaser *Is there a way by which ESCC can help the 'hard hit' hospitality sector?*

Cllr Glazier Additional 'COVID' funding will be available shortly. This time, those residents who are eligible will receive vouchers (which they can use to support local businesses). Food banks are likely to receive additional funding - and RMA will be consulted.

Colonel Kimber reported that the organisational structure of RMA (formed in March) – which covers 21 zones in Rye and further afield – remains in place, ready to step up again, if required. Most of the information RMA receives is via RDC and RVA – there being few direct links with ESCC.

The Mayor reported that she is working with RMA on providing, via You Tube, basic cooking lessons.

Cllr Jonathan Breed advised that, although Members could see Cllr John Breeds, Cllr John Breeds was unable to hear what was being said – or to contribute.

d) Public Questions/Contributions

There was none.

e) Appointment of Mayor Elect 2021-22

The Clerk invited nominations.

Cllr Creaser proposed – and Cllr Lord Ampthill seconded – Cllr Gilbert.

There being no other nominations, the Clerk declared Cllr Gilbert to be appointed.