

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held via Zoom on
Monday 22 March 2021**

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 Reverend Fiona Gill – Rye Baptist Church; co-option candidates: Jonathan Dellar, William Everett, Bernardine Fiddimore, Sue Learoyd Smith, Neil Sadler; 5 members of the public.

The meeting commenced at 6.31pm.

77 PRAYERS
Prayers were said by the Reverend Fiona Gill.

78 APOLOGIES
There was none.

79 CODE OF CONDUCT
There were no disclosures of interest – nor requests for dispensation.

80 MINUTES

RESOLVED 1 To agree the amendments to the Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2021 (C11) as follows:

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*75 Rother Draft Corporate Plan (2020-27), para 2, line 1 **Delete** devolving grounds maintenance to RDC **insert** devolving grounds maintenance to RTC*

*76 CPE: Impact on RDC's Car Parks, para 3, line 3 **Delete** respond meaningfully **Insert** provide an informed response*

RESOLVED 2 To approve, as an accurate record, the amended Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2021 (C11).

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

The meeting reconvened.

81 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (ASB)

The Clerk advised that the Rother PSPO (ASB) expires on 28 November 2021 and that Rother District Council is minded to make another. Members were invited to consider whether the current provisions applicable to Rye should be renewed.

Comments included: Rye has had problems with 1-2 people in the past and the ability to continue to draw on the PSPO could be useful in the future; the PSPO provides for officers to direct people towards services that might benefit their situation/circumstances; RDC does not have the resources to enforce the current Order; the ability to 'move on' or fine a rough sleeper does not help that person.

RESOLVED (In respect of Rye) To support the renewal of the current PSPO (ASB) 'as is'. Clerk

82 JOHN RYAN MEMORIAL GARDEN

The Clerk reported that the Sussex Community Rail Partnership has now secured all funding necessary to install a fingerpost in the Garden and has invited the Council to suggest places to point towards and/or text. There will be 4 fingers of two lines each. One line will point towards the 1066 Country Walk.

Comments included: It appears that the Partnership is determined to proceed with its initiative – regardless of the views expressed by RTC previously; the finger post would constitute unnecessary street furniture; the proposed position of the post would be ineffective; one finger should point towards the public conveniences; another could (usefully) point towards the RIP.

The Clerk added that, given the post did not have RTC support and exceeded 0.3sqm, it was likely that advertising consent would be needed.

RESOLVED Not to respond. Clerk

83 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY 2021-22

The Clerk advised that, currently, the last day that councils may hold remote meetings is 6 May 2021. NALC is recommending that councils bring forward as much 'important' business as possible.

RESOLVED To:

- a) **Move the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor from 11am on Monday 3 May 2021 (Bank Holiday) to 6.30pm Tuesday 4 May 2021; and**
- b) **Bring forward Committee Formation from 10 May 2021 to 4 May 2021 (in order to hold a combined meeting). Clerk**

84 CASUAL VACANCY

Council was asked to seek to fill the vacancy by co-option.

The applicants were Jonathan Dellar (JD)
William Everett (WE)
Bernardine Fiddimore (BF)
Sue Learoyd Smith (SLS)
Neil Sadler (NS)

In support of their written applications (**APPENDIX B**) candidates were invited to speak for up to 3 minutes. The main points/comments were:

JD

- Will attend meetings wherever possible (some Council/Committee meetings have been inquorate poorly attended).
- The Chamber will be approaching RTC, RDC and ESCC for funding for additional CCTV cameras to help people – especially women – feel safe when walking at night.
- Parking charges should be lowered for residents and visitors.
- There are insufficient litter bins and they should be emptied more frequently. The Bring To facility at the Sports Centre is a disgrace.
- Rye needs to be in charge of its own marketing.
- Rye needs a 'Town Influencer' – match funded by RTC and the business community.

WE

- Little to add to written application.
- Good selection of candidates.
- Works as a lawyer and land agent (may – or may not – be useful).
- Previous council experience.

BF

- Been associated with Rye for a very long time.
- Always cared deeply about what happens in terms of development, the economy etc.
- Rye is unique.
- Visitors are central to the economy.
- UK visitors are likely to make up for the overseas visitor shortfall this year – and this should provide employment opportunities.
- Would support any initiative to provide education, training and apprenticeships to local people.
- Residents have a right to enjoy where they live and have a say in how it is managed and developed.
- Given rising house prices – and the need for more affordable homes - the RNP must be adhered to robustly.
- Need to be careful about the impact of RDC's devolvement intentions on the precept.
- People tend to be unsure which local authority provides what.
- Would like to see RDC resurrect the New Events Fund to enable more [COVID-] safe events in the open to be held.

SLS

- Rye has a unique historical character, is a working port and contains AONBs.
- Important to improve people's quality of life and their living environment by improving services.
- Making a difference to communities has been an integral part of her career.
- Would work with all colleagues.
- The community's fears around employment, problems with UC, running a business under pandemic conditions, the threat of homelessness and environmental concerns need to be acknowledged.
- Involved with Rye Harbour Discovery Centre.
- Skills include integrity (when representing others).
- Member of the East Sussex Housing & Homelessness Forum and Youth Partnership Forum.
- Approachable, open, honest and professional.

- Experienced in partnership and collaborative working.
- Set up a carer support network in Rye.
- Have run own business.
- People are struggling in isolation and need support with mental health, domestic abuse and caring responsibilities.
- Most formal work has involved helping people back into work.
- Well placed to encourage training opportunities to assist with this.
- Working closely with SWT to encourage green tourism and leisure.

NS

- Experience of catering and hospitality sector – and food poverty.
- Would like to see a working group established, before the summer, to identify how RTC can support ‘re-opening’ businesses.
- Staffing will be an issue for these business – and links with the Rye Hospitality Guild, Sussex Guild Solutions and colleges will be crucial.
- Main area of focus: education – particularly adult.
- Rye used to be an adult education hub but this seemed to disappear with the sale of the old Library and FE Centre site. The courses offered then need to return.
- Employment opportunities for 16-19-year-olds are needed.
- Access to mental health support services is also important.

The questions following were then put to each candidate:

1 If you had one wish for the town what would it be?

JD RTC, RDC and ESCC working together better for residents and visitors so that they can enjoy an experience in the town which would lead them to recommend a visit to the ‘Jewel of Sussex’ to others.

WE RTC having as much freedom as possible to ensure that all the things mentioned can be actioned.

BF The High Street returned to its former ‘glamour’. With the ‘flagship’ George restored and the scaffolding removed visitors are more likely to appreciate the High Street and recommend visiting to others. Everything else is in place already.

SLS All that has been mentioned – plus the resources to ensure it can be done. The focus should be on providing services and attracting funding.

NS A thriving adult education hub.

2 In the light of the number of tourists and new ‘incomers’, how would you go about ensuring the maintenance of Rye’s renowned community spirit?

JD Try to ensure a high percentage of new housing is reserved for local people so that they can stay in the community. (This may have the effect of increasing house prices though.)

WE Via RTC, parishioners need to ensure they have control over what happens in the town and are not interfered with.

BF Encourage involvement with the organisation of Rye's festivals. This would engender community spirit.

SLS (In addition to the previous comments) Consult with the community – like the RNP. A benefit of encouraging people to volunteer to help with events is that it might help some of them into work.

NS Bring the community into RTC's decision making and work more closely with local businesses. Create a more cohesive structure.

3 What's your vision for the town to flourish as we move into the summer months?

NS 'Staycationing' will be an enormous challenge but one which businesses need to take full advantage of. Sufficient staff, training and access to council resources will be crucial to helping this happen.

SLS The Chamber's excellent 're-opening' video could be marketed more widely. There is an opportunity for volunteers to get involved in welcoming visitors. Rye needs to be kept clean and tidy.

BF Marketing the town is essential. More space is needed to enable visitors to park close to the town. Camber is likely to have fewer parking spaces in the future. Rye has not yet seen the impact of CPE on a 'normal' summer. Traffic and parking will be key considerations for all visitor destinations.

WE Stopping RDC from destroying local businesses and replacing them with housing (like Rye Hire).

JD Testing a 'Park & Ride' scheme. There are likely to be few parking spaces available on Thursdays and Sundays. Incentivise 'pop up shops' and ban planning applications seeking change of use from commercial to residential. Protect Rye's small, independent traders. These are one of the reasons people visit the town.

Voting

The Clerk explained that the successful candidate would be the one attracting an absolute majority – ie more votes than the combined number of votes received by the other candidates.

The candidate/s with the least number of votes after each round of voting would be eliminated – until a single candidate obtained an absolute majority.

When instructed, members should send the Clerk a message, via the Zoom chat facility, stating the name of their preferred candidate.

Results

Round 1

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of votes received</i>
JD	2
WE	1
BF	7

SLS	5
NS	0

NW was eliminated.

Round 2

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of votes received</i>
JD	1
WE	1
BF	7
SLS	6

JD and WE were eliminated

Round 3

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of votes received</i>
BF	8
SLS	7

BF was declared to have been elected.

The Clerk advised that he would make arrangements to witness BF's signing of her Declaration of Acceptance of Office. **Clerk**

The meeting ended at 7.58pm.

Date Chairman

ADJOURNMENT

a) Mayoral Update

Since the last meeting Cllr Gilbert had participated in a meeting with Cinque Ports Mayors concerning the Confederation's HMS Kent affiliation; filmed a contribution for the Primary School's Book Day; met with East Sussex Mayor's to discuss post-COVID recovery – and arranged to help the Job Centre again to help get younger people into work.

b) Appointment of Deputy Mayor Elect 2021-22

The Mayor invited nominations.

Cllr Rogers proposed – and Cllr Boyd seconded – Cllr Rivett.

There being no other nominations, the Mayor declared Cllr Rivett to be appointed.

c) Report of the County Councillor

Cllr Glazier reported that tomorrow would be the last full Council meeting prior to the Elections on 6.5.21. Members would be considering an update on Ashdown Forest and the third quarter Monitoring Update.

ESCC remains on track to deliver its 2020-21 forecast outcomes (though some needed to be adjusted during the year because of the pandemic). If the meeting is still in progress at noon, Members will be invited to observe a minute's silence in memory of those who have lost their lives during the pandemic.

Potholes As the weather improves, it will become easier to undertake repairs.

d) Reports of the Rye District Councillors

Cllr Gennette Stevens

'Bring to Site' – *Sports Centre* She had again reported its condition (overfull containers, fly tipping etc).

Litter With 're-opening' on the horizon, she was pressing for pop-up litter bins and/or the existing bins being emptied more frequently.

Re-opening Rother RDC is starting a Rother-wide campaign – which will include posters for each town.

Gibbet Marsh Car Park She is endeavouring to get the cost for residents and those working in the town down to £2 a day.

Restoration of The George She was trying to establish why its planning applications had yet to be determined.

e) Public Questions/Contributions

There was none.

CASUAL VACANCY - CANDIDATES**JONATHAN DELLAR**

I moved to the Rye area (Peasmarsh) in 1992. I have now lived in Rye with my partner Kathy for some 10 years and have run my Company, Concepts of Rye, since 2006, selling Furniture, Home Accessories, Lighting and Gifts.

I feel that I am approachable and enjoy meeting and helping people. I enjoy socialising with Town Residents and have many friends and acquaintances in Rye through my enjoyment of Sports (Football, Cricket, Pool and Dinghy/Cruiser Sailing), Local Rye Hostelrys and Restaurants, plus the ever-increasing selection of Local Festivals.

I feel that my own strong points to offer for this role of Councillor are:-

I have a sound business experience within the Town and surrounding Area and aim to help Businesses and Residents wherever possible through Networking via the Local Chamber of Commerce, RTC-lead Business Forum and the Rye Bay Marketing Group, which is a Group run for the Town's Marketing between the Chamber of Commerce and Hotel's and Caterer's Association ("HotCats").

I believe that there is still a strong requirement for the Town to be in charge of its own Marketing, working alongside Hastings and Rother District Council's Funding (including 1066 Marketing), yet forming an Independent Plan for the Town's Marketing Vision.

I believe that the "visitrye.co.uk" website domain name should NOT have been handed over to Rother District Council and should be passed back to the Town. I believe that RTC should reinstate the working group (formerly Rye Bay Marketing Group) to manage the Town's website, literature and Marketing. I will be happy, whether selected as a Councillor at this point or not, to help this effort, whether it be a separate Committee, Discussion Group with RDC, HBC and 1066, or whatever Organisation is required to benefit Rye.

As you can see, where I feel passionate about subjects and where I feel that I can help the Town of Rye develop positively, I am prepared to work with the Council to achieve those objectives. Such projects I see as, for example –

1 - a requirement for better, cost effective ways for visitors to Rye (Tourism is the main local Employment Industry) to Park in the area and access the Town centre. I believe that a "Park and Ride" facility serving Rye and possibly also Camber is required as Rye's hilly access and saturated demand on weekend and Market days parking is an opportunity to help Visitor's access to the Town and subsequently under-pin and enable the success of the Businesses in the main shopping areas in the Town.

2 - an ability for the Town and District Councils to work creatively and successfully with local Investors, who are currently looking to invest in Rye's Housing and Infrastructure. It is important for such developments NOT to detract from the quaint character of the Town and its' Beautiful Architecture, whilst still being able to embrace progress for the Town's Facilities, Future Planning and Local Public Services.

Once upon a time I am sure there would have been uproar at a development such as the Tilling Green, New Road or Valley Park developments appearing, but I believe they have all contributed to the Town's overall progress. That said, I do feel that probably THE most

important factor of these Developments is to be able to create an affordable and plentiful supply of new housing for young local people, who have an opportunity to live and work locally and not be pushed into the “supply and demand” trap of second home and Air B&B Investors taking over the Town.

3 – “Twinning” or working closely with other Foreign Towns, probably French, to be able to forge links with other Cultures for the benefit of local Towns’ Folk. I did experience work with Rye Partnership and links with the Baie-de-Somme area of France in the past. I would be very supportive of re-kindling those efforts with our French counterparts. I do love travel, studied French and German at school and worked in France for a year as part of my Business Studies (International) Degree - I would welcome the chance to use my (Fluent) French language to develop this kind of Partnership with a French (or other European / Continent) Partner.

I do feel that I offer well-thought-through Ideas, reinforced with a good local understanding of the Rye area and a desire for the Town to emerge successfully from the COVID experience to become an even more successful Tourist and Cultural destination on the British and European “map”.

WILLIAM EVERETT

My wife and I bought this house in Watchbell Street on the 22nd May, 2020 but my small family Property Company, which I manage, bought number 20 Ferry Road in 2015. It is rented out under an assured shorthold tenancy. Before moving here we had a small farm in Wittersham where I was on the P.C.C. for some time. Before that the family farm was near Ticehurst and I served on Ticehurst Parish Council for some ten years but that would be some thirty years ago.

I work from home and I am an experienced land agent, specialising in property management and in wayleaves and easements. I am still working so my only slight worry might be being able to get to meetings but I am self-employed so I can usually manage things round such a commitment.

We have only recently moved in to Rye but Rye has always been part of my life. We are very much enjoying living here and we are keen to help in any way we can. If I could be any use to the Town Council, I would be honoured.

BERNARDINE FIDDIMORE

Business Owner and former Assistant with Cinque Ports Vets

I wish to apply for co-option to Rye Town Council for the following reasons:

General

To assist in the rebuilding of Rye’s economy in the post pandemic period.

To help the Council and the higher authorities of Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council support individuals, community groups, businesses, start-up ventures, training and re-training programmes and youth opportunity initiatives.

To be part of the process that ensures that development proposals are properly examined and to protect Rye from potentially damaging schemes.

To maintain a mutually agreeable relationship with RDC and ESCC and ensure liaison and good communication over issues that affect Rye and to protest against those that are disadvantageous.

To help to promote transparency of RTC's work and boost the confidence of the electorate in the Council's projects, undertakings and spending and encourage groups or individuals to approach the Council with concerns.

To be involved in the protection of properties owned by the Council and ensure that whatever uses they are put to offers the most appropriate value to the electorate.

To press RDC Councillors to keep RTC fully updated and advised of issues discussed or planned by RDC that will directly affect Rye

To support fellow councillors, the Mayor and Deputy and to promote healthy and productive discussion and debate!

Note

It is clear that many even pressing infrastructure projects being considered prior to the Pandemic may now need to be 'set aside' for a period. The maintaining and rebuilding of economy, living standards, employment and overall community support must take priority. My personal aspirations for the immediate future are listed below

Specifics:

To support the work of Rye Mutual Aid, React, Rye Food Bank, Rye Community Transport and all other groups involved in initiatives to help individuals, groups or businesses through the Pandemic and beyond.

To explore ways for home based tourism to be managed in the Town and its environs given that there will be enormously increased pressures on infrastructure in the coming year or two.

To address problems being stored up by the purchase of 'Lockdown Puppies' and the growing issue of 'dog theft' to which I bring specific, professional experience.

To support the Trustees of The Heritage Centre encouraging economic growth in our small shops, hospitality and accommodation providers through home based tourism in the post pandemic period.

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS - (Identified after consultation with a sample of Rye residents).

Seek private investment for the repair and future care of the Landgate.

Encourage the establishment of open air entertainment facilities and re-establishment of festivals.

Press for further car parking solutions.

Protection and new provision of open spaces and rights of way.

Encourage specific planning for an International disaster such as the current Pandemic.

History & Experience

I served with RTC for twelve years and as Deputy Mayor and Mayor for two years each. My father's ill health eventually meant I had to devote all my time to caring for him and running our Kennel Business and I was unable to stand for re-election in 2019.

My Father sadly passed away last year and restructuring of the business has freed up my time considerably.

Previously I served on the following.
All RTC committees over twelve years.
The Rye Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
RDC Liaison Committee,
Human Resources Working Group,
Highways Working Group.
Rye Heritage-Centre Working Group.

Strong involvement in the development of:

The provision and positioning of the High Street Loading Bay (George Hotel).

Employment of the Town Steward and identification of duties and areas of most need.

The adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement (after extensive exploration of alternative schemes)

The re-establishment of the Rye Christmas Festival in 2015 and formation of a committee of volunteers from the Parish and elsewhere to manage the event.

Rye's Neighbourhood Plan; originated with former Councillors Nigel Jennings and Adam Smith.

The Severe Weather Working Group (The first liaison group to include public volunteers and council members to be mobilised in severe weather situations)

This concludes my application to join Rye Town Council

Thank you for your consideration

SUE LEAROYD SMITH

Wishing to join the Council

I think Rye is a fantastic town and I would consider it a privilege to work for our community in a positive and proactive way. Making a difference has been an integral part of my career. Whether that's working with young people, vulnerable adults and small business owners acknowledging fears around employment, running businesses during a pandemic, to the problems with Universal Credit and living under the constant threat of homelessness to concerns about the environment.

To make a difference, I have the energy, enthusiasm and authenticity required to represent people of Rye, particularly around employment issues and partnership working.

Any experience of council/community work

I have a passion and commitment to the local natural environment and was invited to become an Appeal Board Member for the Rye Harbour Discovery Centre (RHDC) Project for Sussex Wildlife Trust. Hopefully, the Centre will open in the autumn of this year and offer education programmes to all, so important during these extraordinary times and inform visitors of all ages about the reserve's fantastic wildlife. This has been a politically sensitive project for the residents of Rye Harbour, particularly the potential of it negatively affecting local businesses, traffic and car parking. We held several open Q&A sessions and presentations about the Discovery Centre. It has been essential to consult and build productive networks and relationships with the local community and key stakeholders. For example, this project will be the first of the Regional Tourism Initiative supported by Rother District Council; Kent Wildlife Trust; The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit and Romney Marsh Partnership.

Skills/knowledge I can bring to the Council

Working for The Prince's Trust I provided leadership in my high-profile role as Chair of Pulse, their LGBT+ national network. I was accountable at all times to the Executive Management Team when representing the needs of vulnerable young people throughout the UK and supporting Volunteer Mentors.

I always act with integrity when representing the needs of others. That can include supporting staff members dealing with complex situations, to face-to-face meetings with vulnerable young people, through to Zoom meetings. Whether that's being invited to participate in statutory sector forums, such as the East Sussex Housing & Homeless Forum or establishing the Youth Partnership Forum in the wider community.

I am approachable and my natural communication style is open and honest where I represent the organisations I work for in a positive and professional manner. Recently, I facilitated a visit from the local MP, Sally-Ann Hart to Xtrax Young People's Centre. She wanted to meet young people and increase her understanding of the issues they face. This has resulted in making monthly visits to the Centre.

I excel and enjoy working in partnership to increase the range of agencies I work with to provide creative services to support the complex of needs vulnerable people. This has included establishing contact with statutory bodies (DWP, ESCC, HBC) and other community organisations.

Interests and any work history (paid/unpaid)

I'm aware of issues affecting small businesses as I ran my own business enabling people to find and get back into work. I managed a range of projects and contracts, liaised with suppliers ensuring robust reporting and financial processes were in place and ensured teams achieved testing financial targets, delivered on time and to budget.

In my recent role as Service Manager at Xtrax Young People's Centre in Hastings, I lead and managed a small team of staff who supported vulnerable young people with information, support and guidance on a one-to-one appointments' basis and through detached outreach work in Hastings.

Latterly, I set up the Hastings Outreach Group to develop partnership working practices within the wider community to expand the geographical areas offering support services.

Recently, working in the third sector, I have seen at first-hand many vulnerable people who are struggling in social isolation and need support with their mental health, housing and domestic abuse issues and caring responsibilities. The pandemic has impacted on everybody, but particularly those who are most vulnerable and I had to find creative solutions to continue to provide services.

Our economy in Rye with its emphasis on tourism and hospitality is always seasonal but particularly vulnerable in the current climate. We need to support the needs of our local businesses and those residents looking for work.

I would like to utilise my skills and experience as a Rye Town Councillor to represent and engage with the community in a positive way and make a difference.

NEIL SADLER

I would like to introduce myself as an applicant for the position of Town Councillor. I have read the *Good Councillor's Guide* and will proceed to set out my reasons for applying.

Over the past thirty years, I have lived and worked in Rye. I am originally from Whitby, a historic fishing town, similar to Rye in some respects. I am married with a son in his final year of A levels and a daughter in her final year at university. Currently, I am a Senior Catering Lecturer at East Sussex College in Hastings and this has been my main source of employment for the past ten years.

During my time at the college, I have gained the following qualifications:

- Level 3 PTTLs – Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector
- Level 5 CertEd – Certificate of Education from Brighton University
- Level 3 TAQA – Award in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- Level 3 RoSPA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Personal License)
- Level 2 APLH - Personal Licence Holder Level 2 Award
- Level 3 – First aid at work

I teach students that are predominantly aged between 16 and 19 years, many of whom have not yet decided which career to take. However, vocational qualifications seem to be attractive at this stage. The young people I teach often have additional needs and I am impressed that they remain ambitious despite education being a challenge for them. Around half of all students have not yet achieved a pass grade in English and Maths and continue these subjects as part of their study programme. Consequently, I incorporate these subjects into my lessons enabling them to hopefully pass before they leave college. I understand the council are supporting the creation of apprenticeships in the hospitality sector. Part of my job role used to be managing the apprenticeship programme in the department, gaining valuable experience of the apprenticeship levy when it was introduced into the sector in 2018.

The catering and hospitality industry are deep-rooted passions of mine. I have worked in the local area both as a chef and head chef for, to name a few, The Mermaid Inn, The George Hotel and The Flackley Ash Hotel. As well as having extensive knowledge and experience, I have also been a Consultant in new start-ups.

Previously, I have worked as a project manager for a fruit and vegetable charitable project, aiming to improve access to healthy and affordable foods to vulnerable groups of the community such as the elderly, children and people living in food deserts. I worked with Eric Samuels MBE in Newham, one of the biggest food access projects in the UK, linking up with projects in Scotland and France. I successfully attracted a large award of £500,000 from the Big Lottery Fund as well as funding from the NHS, The Tudor Trust and small food poverty charities. This gave me experience of dealing with multiple stakeholders and committees.

My main intention for applying for this role is to provide a strong voice for the hospitality industry in Rye and surrounding areas, especially after the negative effects of the pandemic. Hospitality is a vital part of the town, visitors and locals alike come to town for its wealth of restaurants, pubs and historic hotels, in turn spending money in the local shops and supporting jobs. Without these fundamentally important businesses, Rye would not be thriving as it was over a year ago and we would lose the sense of community that once was.

In my working life, mental health is a subject that is prevalent and the impact of the pandemic in the coming months will become increasingly apparent. Most people have been affected with members of their families being unable to mix and socialise. Encouraging vulnerable people back into society will become a challenging yet vital part of the post pandemic recovery and healing process for the community and town.

In the *Good Councillor's Guide*, I was inspired by the paragraph which states that diversity is a local council's strength. With this in mind, I believe my life experience and passion for the hospitality industry will enable me to become a valued member of the council team. I would embrace the opportunity and the knowledge from other members about procedure and protocol.

I would very much appreciate your consideration of my suitability for the role.