

Cinque



Ports

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**HASTINGS**  
**TN34 3UY**

Your Ref:

17 March 2021

Dear Town Clerk/Member

You may be aware that there has been a proposal raised to give Rye another year at holding the office of 'Speaker' due to the circumstances of the global pandemic and the fact that none of the usual social and ceremonial events have been possible, during the last 12 months.

This would normally be a matter for decision by the Standing Joint Committee but, as things stand, the earliest such a meeting could be held is 21 June 2021, by which time the Speakership would have passed automatically to New Romney, on 21 May 2021. Whilst there is no legal basis currently to prevent the automatic rotation of the Speakership, it is clear that there is a lot of support for this proposal amongst members. If it is the general view of the member towns that Rye should hold the Speakership for a further year, until 21 May 2022, and in the current exceptional circumstances, perhaps this could be agreed informally at this stage and ratified at the next Standing Joint Committee. It would be on the basis that this is a decision based only in these unique circumstances. There is no intention to create a precedent.

If this course of action is to be adopted a decision to do so in principle needs to be taken before 21 May 2021. No doubt you will want to consult with others on this proposal but we would be grateful if you could email the Joint Solicitors with your agreement or otherwise as soon as you are able to. We would ask all members to respond please, by 30 April 2021 at the latest. Unless a clear majority of the member towns support the proposal then, in the absence of any strictly legal basis for such a decision at this stage, the automatic transfer of the Speakership will take place on 21 May 2021.

The Joint Solicitors will then take a report to the next Standing Joint Committee which will include all members comments to ratify the decision.

Yours faithfully

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