

RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **TOWN IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE** duly convened and held in the Council Chamber, Albion House, Albion Place, Ramsgate on 19th October 2009.

Present: Councillors O'Donnell (Chairman), Byne, Dark, Landi, Ward, Green and Rogers

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Fenner. Cllr Green attended as substitute.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2009 were proposed by Cllr Ward and seconded by Cllr Rogers. The Chairman signed them as a true record.

The Chairman asked Cllr Landi to take the minutes of this meeting in the absence of any secretarial assistance. No apology for absence had been received.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed Mr Paul Verrall and Mr Mark Seed both officers of Thanet District Council to the meeting. The Chairman said that the Town Council needed to set budgets for the coming year very soon. The Officers attending this meeting were here to answer questions to assist the Members of the Town Improvement Committee to do this. The Chairman then introduced Mr Paul Verrall to answer questions relating to Allotments.

ALLOTMENTS


The following information was given in response to questions by various Councillors.

Some money from the sale of the Manston Road allotments was spent on other sites in accordance with the wishes of plot holders. These were capital projects NOT maintenance. There are some problems with water supply to allotments because of pipe size or low pressure. An alternative supply source is being considered. Water is metered. At Stirling Way access is difficult but an order to remedy this has been placed but work will not begin until the gas supply work has been finished in about a month's time, The Heras fencing will also be moved by the Gas Company.

The costs can vary each year. A breakdown at the year end can be prepared. £23,900.00 covers basic administration plus day to day repairs such as clearing broken glass. TDC has banned the use of glass on allotments. The £23,900.00 admin charge includes £19,000.00 levied by TDC as a charge by the Central Support Unit. The Allotment Section has no control over the amount demanded by the Central Support Unit. If the cemetery sites were taken over by the Town Council it would be difficult to calculate how much RTC could pay.

It was generally felt that money could be saved if the Town Council took over the allotments and particularly if they were self administered. There is a list of approximately 200 waiting for allotments. Chilton is the most popular site.

When the Manston allotments were sold one third were retained but so far have not been allocated because there is a right of way through the area leaving the site open to vandalism. Roughly £800,000.00 from the sale of the Manston Road allotments has been spent on capital improvements. Mark Seed said that RTC must give 12 month's notice to take over. Cllrs Landi and Byne will visit Herne Bay Allotments which are self administered to see how their system works and report to the Chairman.

Chairman's Initials


TOILETS

The toilets next to the Granville Theatre have been demolished. Those at Boundary Road and St Lawrence have been closed. It was mentioned that we have an ageing population. There are only three left - the Pier Yard, Cavendish Street and Westcliff (Screaming Alley).

A way forward was urgently needed. The closure of the Cavendish Street toilet is conditional on the scheme to pay £600.00 per annum to private businesses to open their toilets to the public. Concerns were raised about disabled access to private toilets. Mark Seed said most closures were due to vandalism. TDC spend £687,000.00 per annum on toilets. Ramsgate contributes 30% of the funding for toilets but receives only 17% to be spent on toilets. Ramsgate has more toilets than Edinburgh. TDC is looking for a contribution from the Town Council if they wish the Bathing Station toilets to remain open longer.

Members noted that some Broadstairs Pubs have a notice saying there is a charge of £1.50 for non-customers to use the toilets.

It would be possible to pass the TDC budget for toilets to the Town Council but discussion and investigation is required.

CONSULTING THE ELECTORATE

The "LOVE, HATE & HOPE" survey was a splendid survey to reflect public opinion. The Royal Harbour, Beaches and Architecture were notable in the LOVE Section.

Members discussed how to consult the people of Ramsgate and whether they should use the same team. They agreed that Resident's Associations and Civic Societies could be consulted. TDC has done its own survey and Councillor Green has agreed to supply a copy. The Town Council could produce a list of perhaps twelve options and ask the public to grade them in order of importance. Any survey must be fully representative of the whole Town. There is currently no money in the Budget for a survey.

It was noted that the Town Council has a statutory duty to hold a Town Forum each year. The Eastcliff Residents' Association had offered to help with this project. The Chairman suggested the committee could look into more effective marketing of the Town and that a Marketing Manager may be employed for this task. He said that improved visitor numbers could have a dramatic effect on the town's fortunes. Chris Welch of the Eastcliff Residents' Association also addressed the committee on these matters.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

How was the Royal Victoria pavilion allowed to fall into such disrepair?

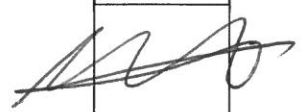
This is a TDC problem as the owner.

ERA asked for a response from the Town Council to the points raised by them in their paper dated 10th September.

The Chairman said that this agenda was unable to accommodate a proper discussion of that paper but we welcome the points raised in it and will respond after consideration at the next meeting.

Is the fence around the Royal Sands development legal and how long will it be there?

Chairman's
Initials



The developer has to apply every six months. KCC have given permission for Health & Safety reasons.

Mrs Ruth Cousens presented a petition to "Save Albion House" to the Chairman to be passed to TDC.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

The next meeting will take place on 16th November 2009.


Chairman – 30 November 2009