

## ROTHERHAM DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

### Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 at 2.15 p.m. at Talbot Lane Methodist Church

**Present:** B. King (Chairman), S. Crowther (Honorary President), P. Hawkrige (Secretary), B. Fletcher (Treasurer), G. Boothman, S. Davies, R. Eddington, D. Sykes, I. Hawkrige.

1. Apologies: P. Nowill.

2. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising:

The Secretary commented that the recent meal at the Wharncliffe Restaurant was excellent.

4. Organisational review: Nothing to report.

5. Social committee:

Lunch date 25<sup>th</sup> April, 12.00 for 12.15, Wharncliffe Restaurant. Chris Hanby is to attend and talk about the High Street project. It was agreed that the Society would pay for his meal.

R.E. suggested that future trips be organised in respect of Riverside House (Martin Kimber) and Boston Castle (Phil Gill).

6. Listed buildings and conservation areas:

(i) The application for the demolition of the three rear wings at Guest & Chrimes had now been formally submitted by RU Estates Ltd.

7. Major applications:

(i) Dalton Allotments, Dalton Lane – outline application granted for 200 dwellings by RMBC (Neighbourhood Investment). Section 106 Agreement providing £80,000 for open space provision and £28,000 for highway capacity improvements.

(ii) Herringthorpe Playing Fields – RMBC refusal of Rugby Club plans due to intensification of use leading to noise disturbance, on street parking, an unacceptable level of illumination of nearby properties from the floodlights, and a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the area.

Jane Morgan had sent an e-mail to RMBC requesting that it re-visit the lease arrangements negotiated with the Rugby Club. It was agreed that she be invited to the next meeting.

8. Correspondence:

(i) Chris Hanby re: 17/19/21 High Street. Photographed every stage of the works. Totally behind the 'Blue Plaque' proposal. The Secretary suggested that the

site visit agreed at the 6/3/2012 meeting take place after the lunch on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

- (ii) Civic Voice –
  - (a) Mary Portas Review and the Government's response (See Appendix 1).
  - (b) Heritage Counts – Winchester (3<sup>rd</sup> April), Birmingham (18<sup>th</sup> April).
  - (c) National Planning Policy Framework update.
  - (d) Budget 2012 imposition of 20% VAT on listed building alterations.
  - (e) Fair Planning Campaign – against Govt changes to the planning system.
  - (f) English Heritage survey – 70,000 listed buildings in 2011 'physically harmed by crime'. For 30,000 buildings the damage was substantial.
- (iii) Rotherham Heritage Association – requested the Society's support in pressurising RMBC to complete legal formalities for the extension of the Conservation Area to include the former Doncaster Gate Hospital. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to Martin Kimber, Chief Executive, with a copy to Eileen Hyland.
- (iv) Heritage Association minutes – Masbrough Chapel fire. The owners had requested permission to demolish the building but Matthew Peck (RMBC) had responded that a robust justification including a structural report would be required.
- (v) Belvedere Hotel – Paul Thompson had e-mailed requesting the Society to take up on the residents behalf and suggesting an approach to the Local Government Ombudsman. Karl Battersby had confirmed the matter had already been referred to the Ombudsman and re-stated the fact that no permission for a change of use from public house (A4) to retail (A1) was required. The Conservation Area status of the site would not affect this. The Secretary commented to the Committee that Moorgate was suffering from benign neglect and highlighted a number of instances of this.

#### 9. Treasurer's report:

Current a/c £1,477 - 00.

Deposit a/c £ 700 - 00.

The Treasurer reported:

- (i) a surplus of £258 -00 mainly due to booklet sales profit. He also indicated that two recently received cheques from the Rotherham Family History Society and Phillip Howard Books, totalling £231 – 00, would be credited to the 2012/2013 account.
- (ii) that the room hire invoice had now been paid.
- (iii) difficulty in navigating through the Civic Voice admin in order to finally join the organisation. Importantly, however, the Public Liability Insurance cover had been confirmed with a commencement of 1<sup>st</sup> April.

#### 10. RMBC minutes:

- (i) £300m of Decent Homes funding spent in recent years but there are still issues with the housing stock. For the last decade HRA subsidy based upon assumed rental income, offset by the assumed cost of running the service (incl debt charges), with any 'surplus' over income paid to the Government. Rotherham was in such a position i.e. of negative housing subsidy. Now, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 a self financing system is operational allowing Rotherham to retain all the rental income in exchange for a share of the national housing debt.

- (ii) Action needed to improve the Eastwood Trading Estate and a category of 'mixed use' is to be introduced.
- (iii) Simon Bird QC had advised that the Council needed to undertake a 'Green Belt Review' to avoid potential challenges to the 'soundness' of the Core Strategy preparation. In this regard IH also referred to the National Planning Policy Framework, a 49 page document approved the previous week by the Government. This provides a 12 month timeframe for Local Plan adoption before *the presumption in favour of sustainable development* takes precedence.
- (iv) Reference was also made to the three public notices appearing in the Advertiser relating to Local Development Orders on three sites at Templeborough and Waverley. It was presumed that these related to the new Enterprise Zone. It was considered that the notices should have been accompanied by a press release to clarify the Council's intentions. A letter would be sent to RMBC in this regard.

11. Fund raising:

- (i) The Honorary President suggested that the Society needed to produce more booklets. The Secretary asked for volunteers.

12. Items under review:

- (i) In relation to priorities the Secretary suggested that work was also needed on the next newsletter and on researching the historical background for the blue plaques that were to be introduced. He proposed that a photo of SC and Chris Hanby unveiling a blue plaque on High Street be a feature for a future newsletter. K. Battersby had referred the enquiry re: RMBC assistance with the blue plaque programme to Jon Bell. The Treasurer volunteered to serve on a sub committee if one was set up to oversee the blue plaque programme, and to contact Civic Voice regarding any issues of public liability insurance.
- (ii) Environment Trophy - & the need to buy a replacement.
- (iii) The Sheila Cameron Trophy.
- (iv) The Quiz Trophy.

13. Any other business:

- (i) The Secretary reminded the Committee, in relation to Item 9 (above), that it had been previously agreed that K. Cronk and P. Quail would be offered free membership of the Society in return for donating the income from the Clifton Local History Group booklets. This would be actioned by D.Sykes.
- (ii) IH reported that the applicants for the proposed nursery at Sandown, Broom Crescent (12/2011 minutes) had appealed RMBC's decision, and he had written a letter of objection to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. It was noted that a 16 F2 nursery unit was proposed at Sitwell Primary School.
- (iii) AGM – agreed for 3<sup>rd</sup> July followed by Executive Committee meeting.
- (iv) June meeting – on the second Tuesday.

The meeting closed at 3.50 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING Tuesday 1st May 2012 at 2.15 pm at Talbot Lane.**

## AGENDA

1	Apologies	25 minutes
2	Minutes of previous meeting	
3	Matters arising	
4	Organisational review	10 minutes
5	Social committee	
6	Listed buildings and conservation areas	5 minutes
7	Major planning applications	5 minutes
8	Correspondence	20 minutes
9	Treasurer's report	5 minutes
10	RMBC minutes	15 minutes
11	Fund raising	
12	Items under review	15 minutes
13	Any other business	

### Appendix 1: Item 8 (ii) (a):

#### The Civic Voice summary of the Government's response to the Portas Review

"A summary of the measures that will interest civic groups include:

- The Government want to see high streets become the **"beating heart of the community"**, offering more than just retail with entertainment venues and leisure facilities, as well as housing and local public services.
- **100 areas have benefits from a new High Street Innovation Fund** valued at £10m) focusing on bringing empty shops back into use.
- **A new National Markets Day** to celebrate the role markets can play, help aspiring entrepreneurs try out their business ideas, and encourage more visitors to town centres; - interestingly this falls on the **same date as National Civic Day (June 23rd!)**.
- **Allowing the conversion of space above shops to two flats, without the need for planning permission**, rather than the current limit of one.
- Recognition that free car parking can have a big impact on a town centre so giving local areas free to implement controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and in particular **"local authorities should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres"**.
- The Government would like to see hundreds of **Town Teams** - made up of key players in the local area including the council, local landlords, business owners, and local MPs (although no direct mention of communities). Civic groups should campaign to join these teams.

- The Government have said Town Teams should actively **promote good design in improving the high street**, the evening and night time economy, and the quality of life in general.
- The Government will run a **high profile campaign to get people involved in the development of High Street Neighbourhood Plans**.
- **In a success for our Street Pride campaign**, the Government say *"towns should remove street clutter to make them more pleasant for visitors"*.
- The Government will launch a **further round of Portas Pilot for towns to bid for £1 million**. There will be a second round of bidding in 2012/13, with a closing date of 30 June.
- The Government **rejected the recommendation for a clampdown on shopping centres outside towns** in what many felt was the most far-reaching proposal in the Portas Review. The Government believe the changes in the NPPF will manage this through local plans.

Ian Harvey, Civic Voice said *"Many civic groups across the country are involved in campaigns to revitalise their local high street. The Government's response to the Portas Review lays down a challenge for local partners, including communities to re-imagine their town centres and high streets, ensuring they offer something new and different that neither out-of-town shopping centres nor the internet can match. We all have a role to play in making our high streets destinations in the future."*

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