

## ROTHERHAM DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

### Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 2.15 p.m. at Talbot Lane Methodist Church

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

1. Apologies: P.Nowill, D.Sykes.

2. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising:

- (i) The Secretary apologised for the fact that he had not yet written to Dennis McShane and RMBC re: the Magna steelmaking equipment.
- (ii) The Grammar School booklet has now been published (£3 from Civic Society, £4 from bookshops).
- (iii) Maxime Giboulot had visited Rotherham last week and been shown around the Town Centre by the Secretary. Apparently visited 38 Civic Societies and focussing on the future of 'High Streets'.

4. Organisational review: Nothing to report.

5. Social committee: 18 people on the Town Hall visit.

6. Listed buildings and conservation areas:

- (i) Change of use of cow shed to farm shop / alterations to external windows and doors at Lawns Farm, Morthen Hall Lane, Morthen.

7. Major applications:

A pre application consultation had been received from RMBC in respect of the proposed Tesco Extra superstore at Walker Place. A draft letter of response had previously been circulated by IH and was used as the basis for discussion. The content of the letter was agreed together with the need to issue a press release to the Rotherham Advertiser focussing on the principal issues. The possibility of requesting a meeting with Councillors was also discussed.

8. Correspondence:

- (i) Issues raised by Civic Voice:
  - 'The Bishop Review' – Communities should be at the heart of design.
  - Community Infrastructure Levy.
  - Long awaited guidance on 'shared space' published. SD related the issue of Bradford Alhambra which had been referred to at the YHACS Beverley meeting attended by the Secretary of State.
  - High Speed 2 railway announcements imminent.

- Government Housing Strategy backs local action to tackle empty homes and voices strong support for neighbourhood planning. RE commented that before building takes place at Bassingthorpe the issue of empty homes should be sorted out. This prompted a wide ranging discussion related to the Channel 4 programme broadcast the previous evening. The Secretary submitted a questionnaire regarding the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations which he had downloaded from the Government website.
  - Safeguards for bowling greens – by inclusion in the new neighbourhood plans.
  - Industrial Heritage at risk – refers to the booklet recently published by English Heritage. The Secretary referred again to the matter of the Guest and Chrimes building and its likely future in the context of the RUFC football stadium.
  - Conservation officers and archaeological experts in local government now below 1,000 following an 11% reduction in the last 12 months leading to growing demands on civic societies to take on important responsibilities.
- (ii) Rotherham Heritage Association minutes:
- Heritage Fair – positive feedback.
  - Chris Hanby invited to a meeting to discuss his plans for the High Street properties.
  - Proposed response to Robert Edwards concerning plans for the Belvedere.
  - Contact with Keith Southwood from Kiveton Park re: his proposed listing of the Lord Conyers Arms P.H. in Wales.
  - RMBC's new Riverside Offices to be open to the public on 23 April 2012.
  - RHA seeking TRC and VAR assistance to develop a website.

9. Treasurer's report:

Current a/c: £1,400.00  
 Deposit a/c: £ 700.00

£123 recently paid to Brailsford printers in relation to Mike Hoggard's booklet.

10. RMBC minutes:

Planning Board:

- (i) 44,000 sq m industrial floorspace, Advanced Manufacturing Park, Whittle Way.
- (ii) 112 dwellings, Milking Lane, Brampton Bierlow.
- (iii) Belvedere Hotel – partial demolition.
- (iv) Bentley's Farmhouse, East Dene – 4 apartments approved.
- (v) Canklow Ex Servicemen's Club site – doctors surgery, 12 apartments.
- (vi) Waverley New Community – 3,800 dwellings – details.
- (vii) Sandown, Broom Crescent – conversion to nursery / breakfast school.

11. Fund raising:

A profit is anticipated from the Grammar School Old Boys booklet. Printing cost £123-40 Selling price £3-00 each. 30 copies provided to the Old Boys Association, 20 to the Visitor Centre and the remainder to Philip Howard Books.

12. Items under review:

The Secretary referred to the need to make progress with regard to the trophies in the New Year, and the possibility of purchasing a new Environment Trophy to replace the one not recovered.

**13. Any other business:**

IH referred to the proposed relocation of the Rotherham Titans Rugby Club from Clifton Lane to Millmoor. This proposal was heavily publicised but nothing had been heard for months and he speculated that negotiations may have hit deadlock. If this proved to be the case the Society need to keep a close eye on the Herringthorpe Playing Field proposals to ensure that these are not a 'Trojan Horse' for the relocation of the Rugby Club. SD knows a member of the Rugby Club and will try to find out what is happening regarding the Millmoor proposal.

The meeting closed at 15.45.

**NEXT MEETING Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 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	

**Enclosed overleaf:**

- (i) Information note regarding the 'Mary Portas review'.**
- (ii) Information note regarding Herringthorpe Playing Fields.**

Rotherham District Civic Society

Executive Committee 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Information Note.

### **The Mary Portas 'Queen of Shops' Review**

This was submitted to HM Government in December 2011 and contained the following recommendations:

- \* Put in place a "Town Team": a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets. Empower successful Business Improvement Districts to take on more responsibilities and powers and become "Super-BIDs."
- \* Legislate to allow landlords to become high street investors by contributing to their Business Improvement District.
- \* Establish a new "National Market Day" where budding shopkeepers can try their hand at operating a low-cost retail business.
- \* Make it easier for people to become market traders by removing unnecessary regulations so that anyone can trade on the high street unless there is a valid reason why not.
- \* Government should consider whether business rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers.
- \* Local authorities should use their new discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses.
- \* Make business rates work for business by reviewing the use of the RPI with a view to changing the calculation to CPI.
- \* Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table.
- \* Town Teams should focus on making high streets accessible, attractive and safe.
- \* Government should include high street deregulation as part of their ongoing work on freeing up red tape.
- \* Address the restrictive aspects of the 'Use Class' system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street.
- \* Put betting shops into a separate 'Use Class' of their own.
- \* Make explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- \* Introduce Secretary of State "exceptional sign off "for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an "affordable shops" quota.
- \* Large retailers should support and mentor local businesses and independent retailers.
- \* Retailers should report on their support of local high streets in their annual report.
- \* Encourage a contract of care between landlords and their commercial tenants by promoting the leasing code and supporting the use of lease structures other than upward only rent reviews, especially for small businesses.
- \* Explore further disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant.
- \* Banks who own empty property on the high street should either administer these assets well or be required to sell them.
- \* Local authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street retail space.
- \* Empower local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent with new "Empty Shop Management Orders."
- \* Introduce a public register of high street landlords.
- \* Run a high profile campaign to get people involved in Neighbourhood Plans.
- \* Promote the inclusion of the High Street in Neighbourhood Plans.
- \* Developers should make a financial contribution to ensure that the local community has a strong voice in the planning system.
- \* Support imaginative community use of empty properties through Community Right to Buy,
- \* Meanwhile Use and a new "Community Right to Try."
- \* Run a number of High Street pilots to test proof of concept.

Rotherham District Civic Society

Executive Committee 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Information Note.

**Herringthorpe Playing Fields / Rotherham Rugby Club Ltd.**

I attended the 'drop in' session on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at Rotherham Titans clubhouse on Clifton Lane.

The session was staffed by three RMBC employees.

Three rugby pitches are to be provided, enclosed by a 2.4m high green coated open wire mesh type fencing. The fencing is to be set back 35m from the Badsley Moor Lane highway.

No on-site buildings are to be provided. The rugby players will use Rotherham Titans changing rooms.

There will be no car parking for parents attending competitive matches. Although there is some possibility of using the site of the former playing field pavilion, RMBC's intention is still to develop this and the former greenhouse nursery site for housing.

I referred to the recent announcement that Rotherham Titans had withdrawn from negotiations to relocate to Millmoor. I bluntly posed the question as to why three pitches were needed and suggested that this was an ideal 'footprint' for a new rugby stadium and that the proposal was no more than a 'Trojan Horse' for the eventual relocation of Rotherham Titans onto the playing fields.

This was emphatically denied and I was assured that Rotherham Rugby Club Ltd is an entirely separate legal entity from Rotherham Titans.

Although the 21 year lease has not yet been finalised protective provisions will be included to prevent commercialisation of the site. Planning permission will be required for the floodlighting and the perimeter fencing.

Ian Hawkrige.

**Extracts of the text included in RMBC's information note is enclosed overleaf.**

# Rugby and Sports Development at Herringthorpe Playing Fields.

## Update on Herringthorpe Leisure Site for the local community

Information about Rotherham Rugby Club's proposed development on Herringthorpe Leisure Site. We need your views!

Rotherham Rugby Club Limited has entered into discussions with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to lease an area of the playing fields in order to secure the future and encourage the expansion of amateur rugby within the Borough. The club's proposal, is to lease an area which will accommodate 3 rugby pitches to be used for training and competitive matches on part of the site. These pitches will also be made available for school and community development use. The Club intends to promote community access by making the facility available to other amateur clubs and local schools, and working with the Council's Sport Development Team aims to promote wider sports and physical activity opportunities. ....

To maximise the potential of the facility it is proposed to erect floodlighting and improve the quality of the playing surfaces. To protect against dog fouling, littering and vandalism it is planned to fence the area ..... In order to reduce any visual impact, the fence will be of the green coated open wire mesh type.

Floodlighting will be designed, angled and positioned to ensure targeted lighting and it is anticipated that the floodlighting columns will be approximately 15m in height, which is lower than the existing mature trees along Badsley Street South. Floodlight usage will be subject to a cut off time (to be agreed) which will prevent any associated late night nuisance to nearby residents. Importantly, 3 new additional sports pitches will also be provided outside the proposed fenced area so that existing users of the playing fields are not disadvantaged.

### **About Rotherham Rugby Club Limited**

Rotherham Rugby Club Limited (the Club) is a self financing organisation which aims to encourage and promote the playing of amateur and community rugby in the town. The ethos of the Club is to provide a safe and secure environment for all age groups that will enable the development of individuals within a disciplined, respectful and enjoyable framework. The Club is administered by a Board of Representatives from three sections: Mini-Juniors, Rotherham Phoenix and the Vice-Presidents.

**The Mini-Junior** section, has almost 300 boys and girls from across the Borough taking part in 10 different age groups from 7 year olds to under 17s. **Rotherham Phoenix** is the senior amateur rugby playing section for men over 18 years of age, with almost 100 registered players and officials. The **Vice-Presidents** section has over 60 members from a wide cross section of people who are generally the older members of the Club.

Since the formation of Rotherham Rugby Club Limited, the Club has been allowed to use the clubhouse facilities of Rotherham Titans at Clifton Lane. However, because the Club needs access to pitches and training facilities of its own, they are seeking to lease this area on Herringthorpe Playing Fields.

### **Further Information**

If you wish to comment on these proposals you can do this by emailing your views to [sports.pitches@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:sports.pitches@rotherham.gov.uk) or by writing for the attention of the Urban Green Spaces Manager, Bailey House, Rawmarsh Road, Rotherham S60 1TD or call him on 01709 822457.

To find out more please visit [www.rotherham.gov.uk/hls](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/hls) or write to The Secretary, Rotherham Rugby Club Ltd., c/o Clifton Lane Sports Ground, Badsley Moor Lane, Rotherham, S60 2SN

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