

## RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[ PUBLIC ]

A Special Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in Town Hall, Parliament Square, Ramsey, on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019, at 7.00 p.m.

**Present:** Mr. A. G. Cowie, Mesdames. M. B. Quayle and J. Wedgwood, Messrs' G. Monk, W. L. Hankin, N. P. Howard, J. McGuinness, A. J. Oldham, L. Parker, F. B. R. Williams and W. G. Young.

**Apologies:** Canon Greenwood has been granted leave of absence.

The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Housing and Property Manager, and Technical Services Manager were in attendance.

### **(2018/19:404) TT Event:**

Mr. McGuinness introduced a paper prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk outlining options for an event to be staged in Ramsey during TT Week to provide entertainment and interest for visitors and local people and to encourage more activity within the town. The report analysed options for the event to be based either at the Mooragh or in the town centre.

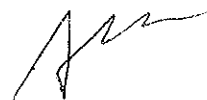
Members discussed the merits of the event and the locations noting the success of similar ventures in Peel and Port Erin, and felt that the town had rested on its laurels in respect of the sprint event.

In answer to an enquiry the Town Centre Manager indicated that the event would run between the two sprint days from Sunday to Tuesday. The event would combine groups, family entertainment and traditional music at Market Place and the Courthouse, the later would also host a TT exhibition.

**Resolved:** Proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed unanimously to hold a new TT event between Sunday and Tuesday of TT week 2019 to be located within the town centre at Market Place and the Courthouse, at an estimated cost of £10,000.

It was further proposed by Mr. Hankin, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed unanimously that officers should liaise with the Lead Members for Finance and General Purposes and Parks and Leisure on a day to day basis in progressing the event.

It was noted that financial support may be available and that this would be investigated at an early juncture.



**(2018/19:405) Finance - Rate Setting:**

Members continued consideration of the project estimates following tabling of a report from the Finance Officer detailing the rate impact of projects and summarising those projects which, in prior discussion at the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019, the Commission had agreed should be further considered.

The Technical Services Manager advised that in the light of the budgetary pressures evident, and with the intention of undertaking a review of litter bin collection and street cleaning operations, she would recommend deferring funding for the small compactor vehicle, litter bins and surrounds, and the park tipper. Members agreed unanimously to remove those items on the proviso that they could be reintroduced to the budget process for 2020/21.

Members continued to consider proposed projects previously retained for further consideration as follows:-

**Lakeside Toilet Floors**

Proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Oldham and agreed unanimously to retain provision of £2,450.00 to resurface the floors at the Lakeside Toilets.

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**Drinking Water Fountains**

Members felt that the proposal would add value to the park. A proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams to install two fountains, at either end of Mooragh Park at a cost of £5,000, was approved by ten votes to one, Mr Hankin voting against.

**Replacement Panel Van**

A proposal by Mr. Hankin not to proceed with the acquisition of a vehicle at a cost of £15,500, seconded by Mr. Parker, was defeated by eight votes to three, Mrs. Wedgwood, and Messrs Hankin and Young having voted in favour. It was agreed therefore to make provision for such subject to a report on current vehicle provision being presented for approval prior to any acquisition, and the option of lease purchase or hire being investigated.

**Station Road Car Park**

A proposal by Mr. Cowie to retain provision of £20,000 for repairs to the Station Road Car Park, or towards a wider scheme to refurbish, seconded by Mr. Williams, was approved by seven votes to four, Mrs. Wedgwood, Messrs Hankin, Oldham and Young voting against.

**Wheelie Bins**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to retain provision of £5,000 towards replacement and additional refuse bins, seconded by Mrs. Quayle, was approved unanimously.

**Gum Cleaner**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to defer provision of £4,000 towards a gum remover, seconded by Mr. Oldham, was approved by ten votes to one, Mr. Parker voting against.

**(2018/19:405) Finance - Rate Setting continued**

**Mulching Mower**

A proposal by Mr. Williams to defer provision of £7,500 towards a second mulching mower, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood, was approved by eight votes to three, Messrs Cowie, McGuinness and Parker voting against. It was agreed to seek a report evidencing the efficiencies to be gained by the proposal for future consideration.

**Christmas Lights**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to retain provision of £26,500 towards improvements to the town's Christmas Lighting, seconded by Mr. Williams, was approved by nine votes to two, Mrs. Wedgwood and Mr. Young voting against.

**Street Light Heads**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to retain provision of £6,000 towards replacement of mercury lighting heads, seconded by Mr. Williams, was approved by ten votes to one, Mr. Young voting against.

**Seasonal Staff**

A proposal by Mr. Cowie, to retain provision of £8,500 towards a seasonal worker to be employed between Parks and Works, seconded by Mr. Williams, was approved unanimously.

**Parks Staff Training**

A proposal by Mr. Williams, to retain provision of £4,500 towards specialist arboriculture and other training for Parks' staff, seconded by Mrs. Quayle was approved by ten votes to one, Mr. Young voting against. It was noted that some elements may qualify for grant assistance to be investigated before commencing any training.

**2019 Fireworks**

A proposal by Mr. Parker, to retain provision of £2,000 towards improving the November fireworks event, seconded by Mrs. Quayle was approved unanimously.

**Beach Amenities**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to retain provision of £6,000 towards improving the amenity of the town's beaches, seconded by Mrs. Quayle, was approved unanimously.

**IT Server**

A proposal by Mr. McGuinness to retain provision of £9,400 towards the replacement of the Commission's Computer Server, seconded by Mr. Williams, was approved by nine votes to two, Messrs Cowie and Young voting against. Comparative costs and lease options to be investigated prior to acquisition.



**(2018/19:405) Finance - Rate Setting continued**

Mr. McGuinness outlined the result of the discussion, and noted that the impact of the proposals agreed was equivalent to a rate of 17.25p in the £. This sum was additional to an increase in expenditure of £127,070.00 (18.14p in the £) resulting from increases outside the Commission's control being:-

- the IOM Government scrapping of the contracted out NI arrangements at a cost of £53,913.00 (7.7p rate);
- the 2019-20 PSC Pay Award costing £35,530.00 (5.07p rate);
- increases in Local Government Superannuation Scheme contributions costing £13,590.00 (1.94p rate);
- an increase contribution to the Northern Civic Amenity Site Costs of £12,940.00 (1.85p rate); and
- increased Energy from Waste domestic refuse disposal charges of £11,087.00 (1.58p rate)

Mr. McGuinness reiterated his past view that items not taken forward remained able to be reconsidered at a future date, their removal being as a result of financial priority at this time, and not indicating that they had been rejected completely.

Mr. McGuinness explained that he was averse to budgeting for a deficit, requiring reserves to be drawn down, but noted that a substantial increase was outside the control of the Commission resulting from decisions of Government or other parties. In addition the Commission had for a number of past years avoided making any increase in rates, and had managed to contain expenditure despite the rateable value of properties being largely static. Considering these factors Mr. McGuinness felt that the Commission should focus on the impact of increases on the ratepayer and aim to re-balance the budget over say 3-4 years in order to achieve a breakeven budget whilst retaining a suitable level of reserve to meet the authorities cash flow requirements and to enable the Commission to respond to any unforeseen eventuality, commencing with a rate of around 390p in the £ for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman concurred and expressed his view that a rate in the order of 393-399p in the £ might be considered.

The Chairman, Mr. Cowie, proposed that the town rate for 2019-20 rate year be set at 394p in the £, an increase of 8% (30p in the £), the motion was seconded by Mr. McGuinness.

Mr. Oldham proposed an amendment that the rate be set at 399p in the £, an increase of 10% (35p in the £), this proposal was seconded by Mr Williams. There being no further amendments the Chairman put the amendment to members vote.

**Resolved:** by eight votes to three, that the Ramsey Town Rate for the forthcoming rate year 2019-20 be set at 399p in the £, Messrs Cowie, McGuinness and Parker voting against.

**(2018/19:405) Finance - Rate Setting continued**

Members noted that the rate had been set in accordance with statute, and that the matter remained private until a formal announcement is made. Members requested that the announcement highlight the difficult position in relation to imposed costs, the desire to improve the town and its environment for the benefit of the community and visitors, and the impact of the increase upon householders.

Mr. McGuinness asked that his thanks be recorded for the work undertaken by officers and for the input of Members in reviewing the estimates papers in order to achieve a rate supported by the majority of Members.

**(2018/19:406) Political Surgery / Drop-In Session**

Members noted that the Drop-In session hosted at the Courthouse on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> January had been very well attended. Members were pleased that so many people had taken the opportunity to attend and engage with elected representatives.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk and officers for the manner in which they had promoted the session. Members expressed the view that similar events should be held on a regular basis and agreed to provide the Deputy Town Clerk with any notes they had made of matters raised so that a composite report could be prepared to be included on the Agenda for the February meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:50 p.m. giving a time of 3.00 hours for payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.