

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[PUBLIC]

A Special Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in Town Hall, Parliament Square, Ramsey, on Wednesday, 10th April, 2019, at 7.00 p.m.

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

Apologies: Mr. G. Monk.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk were in attendance.

(2018/19:479) Town Branding:

The meeting was joined by Mr. Tim Cowsill, Business Agency Development Manager who gave a brief presentation on the proposals for a Town Branding exercise being undertaken by the Business Agency.

The proposals outlined the establishment of unique selling points for each of the Island's towns so that a co-ordinated branding exercise could be managed to increase visitor footfall and improve vacancy rates within town centre properties. It was hoped to develop partnerships which might further extend to consider regeneration proposals and take over from the former regeneration committees, and to create long term town visions and plans as a means of attracting and encouraging development and business opportunities.

In tandem with the individual proposals it was intended to develop a strategic group for event planning to ensure that significant individual town events did not clash and to maximise the promotion of events around the Island through the Visit IOM Website and social media pages. Support would be provided in regard to establishing individual business pages and training for social media usage with the intention of transferring day to day control for input and content control to individual town bodies. The Visit IOM Website would host a Ramsey page together with social media feeds and individual business pages.

Mr. Cowsill explained that input would be appreciated in terms of data collection, guidance for data sets and the manner of recording would be provided, and the management of social media content, much of which was already being undertaken by some authorities.

The meeting continued to discuss with Mr. Cowsill the proposal to engage in a town parking survey in order to establish a parking plan for Ramsey. Mr. Cowsill explained that the Department was willing to assist with such and that a similar task had been commenced in relation to Onchan and Douglas. The Department would be happy to provide a template for scoping of a brief and could facilitate the provision of a STEP student during the summer months to assist with data collection.



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Members were broadly in support of the proposals and agreed to facilitate meetings with local businesses with a view to engaging all local business interests in the proposals.

Mr. Cowsill was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting at 8 p.m.

(2018/19:480) Ramsey Courthouse Charging:

Members noted a paper from the Deputy Town Clerk in relation for charging proposals for the use of the Courthouse prior to any longer term tenancy agreements being implemented.

Members discussed the proposal to introduce a charge for use of the premises. Mrs. Quayle expressed the view that continuing free access was unfair on other town businesses who had to meet costs such as rent and rates, and that she had received comments to this effect from a number of shopkeepers. She felt the location provided significant footfall and commented that users, including the farmers market, would be happy to pay to use the facilities.

Mr. McGuinness stated that he would not wish to see charges introduced for public exhibitions and displays as these contributed to the community and added an attraction to the town.

Mrs. Wedgwood felt that the Farmers Market similarly was an attraction and questioned whether charges should be levied for such.

Mr. Hankin drew attention to the various smaller rooms; he felt that the opportunity to let those on a regular basis could provide important regular income to offset the running costs of the premises. He advised that it was quite normal for the Farmers Market to be charged at £10 per pitch, and felt that the traders would be quite happy to pay this sum. Mrs. Quayle supported this view. Members noted that organisers of the regular sales in the hall at St Paul's Church charged £10 per table. Mr. Young stated that there were costs associated with running the Courthouse and users should contribute by paying a rental.

Mr. Oldham proposed that the charge for the use of either of the large rooms should be set at £30 per session or £80 for the full day, free for exhibitions and charitable events, this proposal was seconded by Mr Hankin. Mr. McGuinness proposed an amendment that the rooms should be provided free of charge to those providing exhibitions e.g. not charging for entry, goods or services, Mr. Williams seconded the amendment.

The Chairman put the amended motion to the Board and it was approved unanimously.

It was further proposed by Mrs Quayle, seconded by Mr Cowie, and agreed unanimously that the letting arrangements be reviewed after 3 months.



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Mr. Parker proposed that the small rooms be offered for storage only at a rent of £30 per week, the proposal was seconded by Mr. Williams. Mr. Oldham proposed an amendment that the charge be £20 per week which was seconded by Mr. Hankin.

Mr. McGuinness highlighted the need to be fair and transparent in ensuring that the availability of these rooms was brought into the public domain. Members also expressed the view that controls should be put in place to prevent the storage of dangerous or hazardous materials.

The amendment was put to the Board and agreed by 8 votes to 3 Messrs Cowie, McGuinness and Parker voting against.

Members agreed unanimously that the charges be introduced with effect from 1st May, 2019, and that a review paper be provided 3 months thereafter.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m. giving a time of 2 ½ hours for payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.