

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in Town Hall, Parliament Square, Ramsey, on Wednesday, 18th September, 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, G. Monk, F. B. R. Williams and W. G. Young.

Apologies: Mr. A. J. Oldham has been granted leave of absence.

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

(2019/20:130) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 21st August, 2019, and the Special Board Meeting held on 9th September, 2019, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following:-

Clause 125 Wallaby Trail - the wording of the resolution was amended to record that after debate, without motion, it was agreed that there was no interest in acquiring a wallaby.

Special Board Meeting - Mr. Hankin advised that he had submitted apologies for absence. Canon Greenwood commented on the short notice given for the meeting, as a result of which had been unable to attend.

(2019/20:131) Matters Arising:

The Chairman advised that the item Town Clerk's Report "Matters Raised by the Public" would be considered under Any Other Business as provided for under Standing Orders.

(2019/20:132) Chairman's Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman's report dated 13th September, 2019, subject to the following:-

Commemoration of Loss - the Chairman reiterated his thanks to His Excellency for attending this occasion and to the Royal British Legion and Commissioners' staff for all they had done since the commencement of the commemorations in 2014.

Meet and Greet - Members were reminded of the Meet and Greet on 5th October, 2019, (the date having been changed from that originally scheduled). Mr. Hankin asked that the Meet and Greet be fully advertised and reminded the Deputy Town Clerk that additional tables would be needed as those at the Courthouse would be in use.

(2019/20:132) Chairman's Report: continued

Ramsey Horticultural Show - the Chairman reiterated his honour at being asked to present the awards and congratulated all those involved with Ramsey Horticultural Society.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2019/20:133) Town Clerk's Report - Public Meeting 5G Technology:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 5th September, 2019, advising of the meeting about 5G Technology, to which members have been invited, being held at the Manx Legion Club, Douglas, on 30th September, 2019, from 7.30 p.m.

(2019/20:134) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Ramsey Courthouse - THOR:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 11th September, 2019, in which an update was given following a meeting held with Mr. Tim Baker, Chairman of THOR, on 10th September.

(2019/20:135) Finance Officer General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's General Report dated 11th September, 2019.

Works and Development:

(2019/20:136) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Highway Defects:

Resolved: Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th September, 2019, in which attention is drawn to the facility whereby highway defects can be reported to the Department of Infrastructure via the Department's on-line service.

Mr. Williams reiterated the final paragraph of the report in that members of the public are encouraged to report problems directly to the Department. Mr. McGuinness concurred with Mr. Williams's remarks.

(2019/20:137) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: That the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 11th September, 2019, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, be noted and approved, subject to the following:-



**(2019/20:137) Technical Services Manager’s Report - Planning Applications:
continued**

REF NO: 3707
P.A. NO.: 19/00953/B
APPLICANT: Don Taylor
PROPOSED: Erection of detached dwelling with integral garage within garden
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **41, Fairway Drive, Ramsey.**

Mr. Cowie queried access to the proposal and was informed no concerns had been identified. It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed to make no objections to the application.

Appendix - In response to a query members were reminded that the planning application in respect of 10, Water Street, had been refused because of parking issues.

Housing and Property:

(2019/20:138) Town Clerk’s Report - Public Sector Rents 2020-21:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 6th September, 2019, to which was appended the Housing and Property Manager’s report to the Housing Committee dated 29th August, 2019, concerning the request made by the Department of Infrastructure for the views of local authorities on the level of increase of public sector rents for 2020-21. Members noted that the Housing Committee had considered the Housing and Property Manager’s report and as a result recommend inflationary increases for rent, administration and maintenance.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mrs. Wedgwood, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed without division, that the Department be informed that the Commission is agreeable to rises in rents, maintenance and administration for public sector housing in line with inflations based on CPI calculations. Members were informed that the rate of inflation based on CPI at August, 2019, was 2.5%.

(2019/20:139) Housing and Property Manager’s Report - Housing Performance and Statistics 201-20:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 12th September, 2019, to which was appended the Housing Performance and Statistics to 30th June, 2019, namely the first quarter for the year ending 31st March, 2020.

Mr. Cowie queried the “turn around” time for unoccupied properties and was informed that the 5 weeks was the standard set by the Department - the Commission’s work force tries to better this standard whenever possible - some properties being turned around within one week, with the exception of major refurbishments which experience a turnaround of nearer 12 weeks. Members asked if future Statistics could include an average of the turnaround time.

(2019/20:139) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Housing Performance and Statistics 201-20: continued

Mrs. Quayle queried the nature of repairs undertaken and was informed that these were multifarious - a frequent repair was noted as being associated with boilers and the boiler replacement programme boilers proposed should result in fewer repairs. The Housing and Property Manager advised that the repairs are monitored closely by the Housing Supervisors. Mrs. Quayle also queried if tenants had the option with regard to cookers in kitchen refurbishment where gas installation was being added. The Housing and Property Manager advised that no queries had been raised by tenants as to the options open to them.

Mr. Cowie made reference to the footpaths at Vernon Road and members were informed that these were estate footpaths and therefore the responsibility of the Commission.

(2019/20:140) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Update on Housing Projects:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 12th September, 2019, which lists capital, larger revenue and planned future projects being undertaken with regard to the Commission's housing stock and detailing progress thereon. Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 6th September, 2019, to which was appended the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 29th August, 2019,

Parks and Leisure:

(2019/20:141) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Creative Toilets:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th September, 2019, advising of the progress of the "Creative Toilets" installation for the Market Place being coordinated in conjunction with the Isle of Man Arts Council.

(2019/20:142) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Firework Display:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th September, 2019, advising of events that will take place in conjunction with the Commission's firework display on 5th November, 2019.

Members noted that entertainment, including a choir and 2 bands will commence from 6.00 p.m. It was also noted that additional catering will be provided and this will include a "hog-roast".



(2019/20:143) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Manx Radio Broadcast Ramey Courthouse:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th September, 2019, in which Manx Radio's thanks are conveyed to the Commissioners for facilitating a live broadcast from Ramsey Courthouse on 6th September, 2019.

Mr. Cowie commented that he found the event interesting. Mr. Hankin referred to the positive media coverage given by Manx Radio to Ramsey Courthouse in recent weeks especially concerning the Farmers' Markets and new stall holders.

Any Other Business:

(2019/20:144) Matters raised by Public:

The Town Clerk drew attention to 2 matters raised by the public for discussion; namely

- i. Local Authority Membership; and
- ii. Local Authority Working Together

It was proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the matters be discussed at this meeting in public. Information Reports previously circulated to members by the Town Clerk were tabled in respect of each matter.

144:i Local Authority Membership:

The matter was discussed with the overall feeling expressed being that having 12 members in Ramsey provided diversity, wider representation, increased engagement with the town, and ensured that sufficient members were available to undertake the various responsibilities vested in the Commission.

Following discussion no motion was placed to review the current membership structure.

144:ii Local Authority Working Together:

Members concurred with the comments submitted by the Town Clerk and agreed there was close liaison with local authorities with which the Commission is involved by way of joint boards or committees. Investigations are ongoing with regard to public sector housing.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the matter be raised at the next meeting of the Isle of Man Municipal Association, and that the northern Parish authorities be approached to determine if any advantages can be identified by working more closely together.



(2019/20:145) Former Ramsey Railway Line:

The Town Clerk drew attention to the “Old Railway Line, Ramsey (Public Path) Order 2019” being progressed by the Department of Infrastructure, under the Highways Act, 1986, whereby the old railway line from Poyll Dooey Road to Gardeners Lane and a link across land in the ownership of the Department of Enterprise to the Lezayre Estate Road by Dreeym Ollay would be classified as a Cycle Path. Members were informed that the Order would need to go to Tynwald for ultimate approval, that the Commission would still own the land but the Department of Infrastructure would maintain the cycle path as public highway. The land would remain accessible to pedestrians.

Mr. McGuinness queried lighting, which would require to be done swiftly - the Town Clerk replied that at this stage there was no information about lighting or the extent of the works merely the statutory provision to enable such works.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed that the Commission support and welcome the Order to create a cycle path.

(2019/20:146) Sundry Matters:

Mr. Hankin draw attention to blocked gullies around the town and was advised by the Technical Services Manager that these are being attended to; Mr Hankin queried whether anything further could be done to improve the appearance of the Britannia Hotel, the windows of which have been recently boarded-up (the matter would be discussed further in private Clause 150 refers).

(2019/20:147) Representative Report:

Resolved: To note verbal Representative report given by Mr. McGuinness in respect of his attendance at a meeting of the Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board - précised to reflect that user numbers have decreased because the NSC has re-opened and that the Board will of its own volition progress the installation of LED lighting in view of lack of response from the Department.

Mr. Cowie asked if the Board has approached the Department to seek grant or assistance for replacement lighting - Mr. McGuinness responded that he was disinclined to suggest this to the Board as the Board receiving grant or deficiency payment is much the same thing.

The Chairman thanked the media representative and public for attending and closed the public session at 8.02 p.m.

The following items were considered in private the detail of which, having regard to data protection, matters affecting persons who cannot be named, etc., is not as extensive as that contained in minutes of matters discussed in public.

(2019/20:148) Minutes:

Resolved: To note, for record purposes, that no minutes of the Board Meeting held on 21st August, or the Special Board Meeting held on 9th September, 2019, were recorded in private.

Matters for Information:

(2019/20:149) Housing Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 3rd September, 2019, subject to the following:-

Clause 41b - Members were informed that the tenancy is fixed term and a review of income will take place when the tenancy is due for renewal;

Clause 41c - Members were informed that the tenancy would now become a fixed term, rather than permanent, and a review of the income of the tenant and partner would take place when the fixed term tenancy next came up for renewal;

(2019/20:149) Housing Committee Continued:

Clause 45a - It was proposed by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed that subject to Government approval funds not expended on the scheme referred to within the clause be used to offset similar works at another housing scheme.

(2019/20:150) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 13th September, 2019, included within the agenda and the following comments made thereon, and accepting that some matters may be referred to in other sections of these minutes:-

- *Amenity Byelaws* - it was agreed that the Chairman sign the Amenity Byelaws;
- *Shoprite Group* - an updated report is to be presented on public conveniences;
- *Water Fountains Mooragh Park* - members were informed that the Rotary Club of Ramsey will sponsor the provision of and plumbing costs of the water fountains - the Commission will be required to maintain them thereafter - a cheque hand-over is to be arranged and agreement is to be reached on suitable plaques in recognition of the Club’s generosity.
- *Ramsey North Beach* - the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Department of Infrastructure has to yet confirm the location for raft and plans for the siting of changing huts are being progressed by the Housing and Property Manager;
- *Vollan / Balladoole Odours* - reports about odours are still being received about Balladoole and are being reported on site, the Vollan to be removed from list;
- *Town Branding* - a report about the meeting held on 16th September will be presented to the October Board Meeting.
- *Mart Site* - the Housing and Property Manager confirmed that an architect, who is aware of Government criteria for public housing, is working on options to present to the Commissioners. It was agreed that the agents acting for the owners be informed that the Commissioners would understand if any interest in the site resulted in a sale prior to them being able to reach a decision on whether or not to acquire the site.
- *Upper Queen’s Pier Road* - this item to be removed from the list;

(2019/20:150) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”: continued

- *Bunscoill Rhumsaa* - the Housing and Property Manager was asked to attempt to obtain further quotations;
- *Close y Chibbyr Ghlass* - this item to be removed from the list;
- *Shelter Public Art* - the Deputy Town Clerk reported some progress. It was noted that the Isle of Man Arts Council has changed its policy on funding applications and this matter will now be considered in January 2020. The Deputy Town Clerk will report further to the Commission;

The Register of Ruinous Property and Unsightly Buildings appended to the Action Tracker was noted, subject to the following:-

- *Bleak House* – Section 24 Notices have been served on the leaseholder to the property;
- *Ben My Chree Queen’s Promenade* – remedial works to the site are to be discussed with the Planners owing to its location within a conservation area;
- *Bleak House* - members were informed that Section 24 Notices had been served - Mr. Young advised that he was aware of water ingress where the roof had been repaired;
- *Sea View Villa* - the Technical Services Manager informed members of her understanding that the owners have indicated a willingness to do works necessary - the matter will be discussed with the Environmental Health Inspector in the near future;
- *Britannia Hotel* - the Town Clerk advised that the Commission’s immediate powers are limited to ensuring the building is safe - this matter will also be discussed with the Environmental Health Inspector.

Mrs. Quayle drew attention to the property Seymour, Ballure Road about which she has concerns and was informed that the Technical Services Manager is aware of the property and has written to the owners.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2019/20:151) Town Clerk’s Report - Rating Appeals:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 9th September, 2019, advising of a recommendation received from the Government Valuer that a 15% rate reduction be applied in respect of a specific property.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed without division, that the recommendation be supported.

(2019/20:152) Finance Officer’s General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer’s Report dated 11th September, 2019, subject to the following:-

Rent Arrears - concern was expressed about the level of rent arrears and how quickly such arrears accrued - the process and difficulties involved in recovering arrears was explained and members assured that every effort is taken to communicate with tenants in arrears.

(2019/20:152) Finance Officer's General Report: continued

Aged Debtors - details of an account outstanding was explained and members were also informed that debts over 90 days were chased regularly although it is recognised that some are proving difficult to recover.

Works and Development:

(2019/20:153) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Parking Study:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 11th September, 2019, concerning the parking study, insofar as the Town is concerned, prepared by the STEP student engaged by the Department of Infrastructure under the brief "What can the Isle of Man implement into its Car Parking strategy to support and develop the towns across the Isle of Man?" A copy of the study had been circulated to members.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Williams agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk submit a strategic report on the study. The Town Clerk advised members that some of the proposals within the study would require regulation and/or traffic orders should they be progressed.

Mr. Young queried if the Department of Infrastructure would now considered abolishing the herring-bone parking on the Quay and was informed that it is understood the Department will consider this when repairs to the quayside have been undertaken.

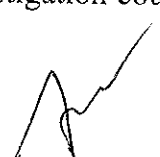
Members were informed that the Deputy Town Clerk and Technical Assistant had received warrants with regard to on-street parking control. Mr. Monk queried if on-street parking fines would be received by the Commission and was advised not.

Further discussion referred to the duties of the Town Wardens and it was agreed that this be included in a wider strategic report on parking and options open to the Commission.

Parks and Leisure:

(2019/20:154) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Play Area and Exercise Equipment:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 11th September, 2019, concerning the report prepared and circulated on the condition of play and exercise equipment under the Commission's control. Members were concerned at the estimated annual costs, in addition to which the Town Clerk advised that some of the equipment, whilst being serviceable might not meet current criteria for inclusive play equipment. The Housing and Property Manager advised that further investigation could be undertaken with regards to costs and suppliers.



(2019/20:154) Housing and Property Manager’s Report - Play Area and Exercise Equipment: continued

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed unanimously to act in accordance with the 3 recommendations within the report, namely:

- Developing the condition summary document into a future strategy document;
- The installation of inclusive play equipment within the current play areas;
- To investigate the possibility of consulting with disabled children, their families and support groups on the provision of inclusive equipment and the accessibility of the play areas.

Mr. Parker queried of the grassed area opposite “Costa in the Park” could be used to provide an exclusive play area for the disabled and was advise that all play areas are under equality legislation required to be inclusive and it would not be possible therefore to provide an exclusive area.

(2019/20:155) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report - Sprintfest:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 11th September, 2019, concerning proposals for the 2020 Sprintfest. Members noted that the timing of road closure will be extended and were informed that entertainment could be provided over the four evenings. Mrs. Wedgwood queried if the public houses would be able to cope and was advised that any additional requirements for public houses or extended trading hours for shop would be down to the respective proprietors.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Williams, and agreed by 10 votes to 1, that the proposed format, dates and budget for the 2020 Sprintfest be accepted. Mr. Hankin voted against.

Any Other Business:

(2019/20:155) Finance Officer’s Report - Insurance Renewal Quote:

Members considered the Finance Officer’s tabled report dated 18th September, 2019, advising of the quotations submitted by the Commission’s brokers Rossborough Insurance for cover and fees for 2019/20 - premiums commencing 1st October, 2019. Members were reminded that the Commission has entered into a 5 year brokership deal with Rossborough.

The four recommendations included within the report were presented individually with the following result:

- To accept the premium quotation - proposed by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mrs. Quayle - agreed without division;
- To accept the brokerage fee - proposed by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed without division;
- To reject the need for Directors’ Trustees and Officers’ cover;
- To reject the need for Cyber Insurance.

(2019/20:155) Finance Officer's Report - Insurance Renewal Quote: continued

The items rejected were not put to formal proposal but agreed by consensus.

It was proposed by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed by 10 votes to 1, to continue the meeting beyond 10.00 p.m. to its conclusion. Mrs. Wedgwood voted against.

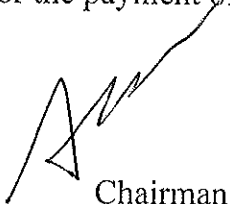
Matters of Establishment:

(2019/20:156) Minutes Establishment Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the meetings of the Establishment Committee held on 9th September, 2019, subject to the following:-

Page 43 - third bulleted point - Mr. Young suggested that the Commission give consideration to developing the site for public sector housing - no further comments were made on this matter and no vote was taken.

The meeting closed at 10.03 p.m. giving a time of 3 ½ hours for the payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.