

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in Town Hall, Parliament Square, Ramsey, on Wednesday, 18th March, 2020, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. A. G. Cowie, Mrs. J. Wedgwood, Messrs' W. L. Hankin, N. Howard, J. McGuinness, A. J. Oldham, L. Parker, F. B. R. Williams and W. G. Young.

Apologies: Mrs. M. B. Quayle and Messrs Rev Canon N. D. Greenwood and N. Howard.

Resignation The Chairman announced that Mr. G. Monk had that afternoon tendered his resignation from the Commission. *Under the provisions of Section 17(3) of the Local Elections Act 1986 an election to fill the casual vacancy will not take place as the resignation falls within 6 months of the date upon which the Member would otherwise have come out of office.*

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

(2019/20:324) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meetings held on 12th and 19th February, 2020, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2019/20:325) Matters Arising:

There were no matters raised.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2019/20:326) Town Clerk's Report - Consultation Civil Legal Aid:

Member considered the Town Clerk's report dated 4th March, 2020, concerning the consultation being undertaken by the Isle of Man Government with regard to changes to civil legal aid. It was noted that the consultation is part of the wider "Legal Aid Review project."

Resolved; That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed, that any individual member wishing to personally respond do so, rather than a consensus response on behalf of the Commission.

(2019/20:327) Town Clerk's Report - Coronavirus:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's tabled report dated 18th March, 2020, advising of the steps being taken with regard to the "Coronavirus - COVID-19" including that for "business continuity" and members, staff, tenants and contractors well-being and safety and about which further updates will be given as and when appropriate.

In response to questions members were assured that cases of non-payment of accounts due or rents would be considered sympathetically and circumstances taken in to consideration, particularly in cases of tenants who may have to self-isolate or businesses who may have to temporarily cease or reduce trading. Any business or tenant affected will be encouraged to make telephone or email contact with the Finance Department.

Mr. McGuinness queried whether any further delegated powers should be conveyed to officers should the Board be unable/ unwilling to meet. The Town Clerk advised that legally the board is only required to meet 4 times a year (one of which meetings is the annual meeting). There is no reason why members cannot be contacted by email or telephone and any decisions made by majority decisions in such circumstances and the decision then conveyed to members. It was agreed to take such action and further delegation should it be necessary.

Members queried the situation with regard to the postponement of local authority General Elections. The Town Clerk advised that there will be no need to call a bye-election because of Mr. Monk's resignation and Government has yet to advise how local authorities will continue. Any member who had intended not to seek re-election may stand down but not so many as to leave the Commission in-quorate - but there are two options

- the extension of terms of office
- the appointment by Government of such number of persons that would comprise a quorate Commission, namely 6. The Town Clerk was asked to clarify whether this would be three from each ward.

(2019/20:328) Deputy Town Clerk's Reports - Street Trader's Licences:

Members agreed to consider the two reports dated 11th March, 2020, submitted by the Deputy Town Clerk concerning applications for Street Traders Licences in respect of Manx Whippy Limited and "The Parish Pantry" for ice cream, and pizzeria and deli sales respectively.

It was proposed by Mr. Oldham, seconded by Mr. Parker that the application of Manx Whippy be approved.

Mr. Parker indicated he was not in favour of the application for the pizzeria as many premises, paying rates in Ramsey, already provided this catering option. Mr. Cowie agreed and suggested that the Parish Pantry might wish to consider trading at the Farmers' Market.

(2019/20:328) Deputy Town Clerk's Reports - Street Trader's Licences Cont:

Mr. Oldham proposed an amendment that the Commission approve the Manx Whippy application and defer consideration of the Parish Pantry. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Hankin.

After discussion a further amendment was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 5 votes to 3 that both applications be approved for a 12 month license. Messrs' Cowie, Parker and Hankin voting against.

(2019/20:329) Finance Officer General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's General Report dated 11th March, 2020, subject to the following:-

Mr. McGuinness requested that a split in the costs of Street / Decorative Lighting be shown in future details. In response to a query members were informed that income derived from rate income reflected the timing of its receipt.

(2019/20:330) Technical Assistant's Report - Byelaw Offences:

Resolved: To note and approve the Technical Assistant's Report dated 10th March, 2020, advising of recent action taken in terms of Byelaw offences.

Mr. Hankin referred to and welcomed the increase in advisory signs with regard to dog fouling and thanked the public for keeping us advised of problem areas.

Works and Development:

(2019/20:331) Town Clerk's Report - Consultation Permitted Development:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 4th March, 2020, which advised of the consultation being undertaken by the Isle of Man Government with regard to proposed changes to permitted development. The Report advised of questions put within the consultation and included recommended responses.

A proposal was put by Mr. Williams seconded by Mr. Oldham that the Town Clerk's recommended responses be submitted as the Commission's response.

Mr. Cowie queried the Market Square regeneration area and was advised that public highway was not usually included. Mr. Cowie proposed an extension of the original proposal, seconded by Mr. McGuinness to include the Market Place.

The amendment was acceptable to Mr. Williams and Mr. Oldham and carried without division.



(2019/20:332) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: That the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 11th March, 2020, 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:-

REF NO: 3748
P.A. NO.: 20/00144/B
APPLICANT: Mr. C. H. Wedgewood & Mrs. F. Wedgewood
PROPOSED: Erection of a replacement dwelling
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Beulah, Windsor Grove, Ramsey**

Members discussed the application, particularly with regard to the increased number of windows, and queried if obscured glass would be used where required or that the application might be considered as obtrusively overlooking neighbouring properties.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Oldham and agreed, no objection be made to the application.

REF NO: 3754
P.A. NO.: 20/00229/B & 20/00230/CON
APPLICANT: Heron & Brearley Limited
PROPOSED: Demolition of building and removal of site's status as a Public House
NOTES: Demolition in conservation area – building not presently registered.
SITE: **Britannia Hotel, Waterloo Road, Ramsey.**

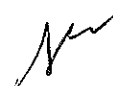
The Town Clerk advised members that an amended application has been received which refers only to the demolition of the building.

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Oldham that members express their disappointment that existing planning regulations had, they believed, left demolition as the only option open to the Company and submit an observation that the site be finished in other than that proposed (i.e. Type 1 finish hard-core / stones).

An amendment put by Mr. Williams that the Commission comment that the finish should be grass - low maintenance natural space with planters. The amendment did not receive a seconder.

The original proposal was put and carried by 7 votes to 1, Mr. Williams voting against.

No comments were made on the Appendix to the Technical Services Manager's report.



Housing and Property:

(2019/20:333) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Queen's Pier Road Refurbishment Update:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 11th March, 2020, providing a progress summary of refurbishment works to properties at Upper Queen's Pier Road.

Parks and Leisure:

(2019/20:334) Town Clerk's Report - Tynwald Select Committee -Firework Act:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 3rd March, 2020, concerning the request of a Select Committee of Tynwald on view on the Fireworks Act 2004, following receipt of a Petition with regard to the sale of fireworks and use of silent fireworks in rural areas.

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Cowie that no changes to the existing Act be made.

for Mr. Williams proposed an amendment that the Commission support ~~a proposal to ban the sale of fireworks to the public and use of silent fireworks~~ - this did not receive a seconder.

The original proposal was put and carried by 7 votes to 1, Mr. Williams voting against.

Any Other Business:

(2019/20:335) Matter raised by Public:

Resolved: To note, for record purposes, that no matters were raised by members of the public for consideration.

(2019/20:336) Representative Report(s):

Resolved: To note the report presented by Mr. Cowie with regard to a recent meeting of the Isle of Man Municipal Association.

The members noted the proposed increase to annual membership of the association and also queried the effectiveness of the Association.

[Signature]

(2019/20:337) Technical Services Manager's Report - Refuse Collections:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's tabled report dated 12th March, 2020, concerning the Commission's refuse policy and particularly with regard to "closed lids" in view of previous damage caused to bin-weigh sensors.

Resolved: to note the report and ensure continued publicity of this policy relating to the disposal of domestic waste in cases of self-isolating during the "Covid-19" pandemic.

Members queried if refuse generated by way of disposal of waste from persons self isolating should be treated as "clinical" and were advised that the Commission will be operating in accordance with current advice in that waste should be "double bagged and left in the open air for 72 hours prior to normal collection".

The Chairman thanked the media representatives for attending and closed the public session at 8.22 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.

(2019/20:338) Minutes:

Resolved: To note, for record purposes, that no minutes of the Board or Special Board Meetings held in February, 2020, were recorded in private.


Matters for Information:

(2019/20:339) Minutes Meetings Housing Committee:

Resolved: To note the Minutes of meeting of the Housing Committee held on 3rd March, 2020, subject to the following:-

Clause 99a) - the reasons for the deduction in points from the applicant on the Housing Waiting List were explained.

Members queried if an "exit poll" is taken when tenancies are terminated. The Housing and Property Manager advised that it was, on a limited scale and such information is included in the quarterly Housing Statistics.



(2019/20:340) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 12th March, 2020, 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:-

- **Vollan / Balladoole Odours** - members noted the updated information provided;
- **Town Branding** - the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Commission’s views had been conveyed. Mr. Hankin commented that coach operators and tour operators needed to be encouraged to visit Ramsey;
- **Ramsey Courthouse** - resolved, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie that THOR be approached with regard to the possible use of the Courthouse by the Commission during the Coronavirus pandemic.
- **Shelter Public Art** - whilst members were disappointed that the Commission’s application had not been initially successful, they were pleased to learn that the matter had been deferred rather than having been fully refused;
- **Water Feature / Play Area** - members were informed that the application for grant from the Lottery Trust had been successful and wished their thanks to be recorded to the Finance Officer for his work in submitting the application.
- **Former Farmers Combine Warehouse** - Members were advised that the hearing has been postponed because of the Coronavirus restrictions on travelling - a key witness requiring to attend from the United Kingdom.
- **Local Authority Elections** - the elections have been postponed in view of the Coronavirus restrictions;
- **Refuse Collection Vehicle** - it was noted that funding approval has been received;
- **Rate Debt** - the Town Clerk advised that he would seek a meeting with officers from the Treasury Rating Department with regard to debt recovery.
- **Boathouse Concession** - members agreed to make a decision with regard to any relief once further detail was available.

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

- **Bleak House** - the Town Clerk verbally reported on his understanding of the current state of progress on this matter and advised that he would make contact with the person whom it is understood to have received Court approval to the purchase of a leasehold, formerly held by Mr. Carruthers.

Finance and General Purposes Committee:

(2019/20:341) Town Clerk’s Report - Pre-Election Media Enquiry:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 26th February, 2020, with appended responses submitted with regard to a pre-election media enquiry made by Mr. Ewan Gawne from Manx Radio. The enquiry has 5 questions and, because numerous varying views were presented, the finally agreed preferences were agreed:-

1. What would your board consider to be the three most important achievements of the authority since the last election in 2016?	a) Courthouse acquisition b) Joint / Collaborative Working c) Progressing Air sourced heat pumps
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(2019/20:341) Town Clerk's Report - Pre-Election Media Enquiry Continued:

2. What concerns are most often expressed by parishioners?	a) Marina b) 5G c) Street Cleanliness including weeds and overgrown hedges
3. What do you consider to be the most controversial decision taken by the board in the last four years?	Rate increases
4. What would you consider to be the most important public event held in the parish?	Annual Fireworks Display (Mr. Young voted against.)
5. Has the board sought to work in collaboration with other authorities, and if so how, and to what benefit?	Formation of the Northern Civic Amenity Site Committee - seen as being open and proactive and extending an olive branch to parish authorities that may be sceptical about working with other parish authorities and a larger Town authority in particular.

Resolved: That Mr. Gawne be informed accordingly.

(2019/20:342) Finance Officer's Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's Report dated 11th March, 2020, subject to the following:-

Estimates and Revenue Expenditure: - a query from Mr. Parker with regard to the NCAS was explained to members' satisfaction.

Aged Debtors - members queried payment of debts during the time of the Coronavirus and were advised by the Finance Officer he and his staff are always willing to work with anyone who makes contact if they have any problems or queries.

Works and Development:

(2019/20:343) Town Clerk's Report - Proposed Ramsey Marina:

Members discussed the Town Clerk's report dated 26th February, 2020, concerning the approach made by Ramsey Marina Limited, that a senior officer be appointed as the Commission's representative on a proposed project co-ordinating committee. The Town Clerk advised that such role would be non-decision making.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 7 votes to 1, Mr. Hankin voting against, that the Town Clerk and/or Deputy Town Clerk be nominated to attend.

Mr. Parker expressed reservations about the time involved in attending meetings - the Town Clerk responded that he did not feel that would be problematic.

Housing and Property:

(2019/20:344) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Agreement for the Management of Twelve of the Department's Public Sector Housing Stock:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 11th March, 2020, advising of the approach made by the Department of Infrastructure with regard to a proposal that the Commission take on, as a pilot scheme, management of 12 properties in the Department's ownership.

A proposal was put by Mrs. Wedgwood, seconded by Mr. Oldham that the Commission continue to liaise with the Department and further report to the Board. Discussion ensued as to whether the Commission's staff could cope with additional work and whether any financial contributions would be made to the Commission. Concerns were expressed that the workforce would be over-extended to the detriment of Ramsey's tenants, particularly as the state of the suggested properties was not known

It was recognised that this was a first step in the formation of a Northern Housing Authority and the option would still be available not to progress the matter if a property survey (which would be requested) was not satisfactory.

The proposal was expanded to include requesting financial compensation / capital recovery and carried by 7 votes to 1 - Mr. McGuinness voting against.

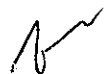
(2019/20:345) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Close Caarjys - Air Sourced Heat Pumps:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that a petition be submitted, in terms of Section 51 of the Local Government Act, 1985, to the Department of Infrastructure for borrowing powers in a sum not exceeding £147,237 to defray the cost of the installation of 16 air sourced heat pumps at Close Caarjys.

(2019/20:346) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Mart Site:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 11th March, 2020, with regard to the offer made by Athol Street Auctions Limited to sell the former Mart Site to the Commissioners for the provision of public sector housing. In response to a query members noted that a "Sold" notice was in place on the estate agent's "For Sale" sign.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed that the Commission defer further consideration on this matter. It was further resolved that should the sale fall-through the matter be further considered.



Parks and Leisure:

(2019 /20:347) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Gran Fondo World Series 2021:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie, and agreed, that Gran Fondo Isle of Man be afforded the initial support of the Commission with regard to their proposals to stage a round of the UCI World Gran Fondo series in August, 2021.

It was noted that officers will meet with the organisers and report further to the Commission in due course.

Any Other Business:

(2019 /20:348) Courthouse Grounds:

Mr. Young advised that he had received complaints about the quantity of stones in the soil-beds of the Courthouse Grounds. Mr. Young was asked to inform the complainants that the matter will be investigated.

(2019 /20:349) Former Farmers Combine Warehouse:

The Town Clerk informed members that the appeal hearing with regard to the deregistration of the Former Farmers Combine Warehouse on West Quay has been deferred.

Matters of Establishment:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of meetings of the Establishment Committee held on 12th February and 11th March, 2020, subject to the following:-

Coronavirus - members discussed contingency plans particularly insofar as staffing was concerned - it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood that authority be given to hire 2 additional employees with HGV driving ability if necessary for up to six months. Members were informed that any staff self-isolating or "signed-off" on grounds of ill health are subject to existing contractual sick-pay agreements. The need for some flexibility in staffing matters was recognised.

The meeting closed at 9.58 p.m. giving a time of 3 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.