

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS

[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in the Boardroom of the Town Hall on Wednesday, 16th September, 2020, at 7.00 p.m.

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

Apologies: Mrs. M. D. Quayle, Mr. W. L. Hankin and Mr. N. P. Howard.

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

(2020/21:116) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meetings held on 19th August, 2020, and the Special Board Meetings held on 24th August and 7th September, 2020, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2020/21:117) Matters Arising:

No matters were raised.

(2020/21:118) Chairman's Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman's report dated 10th September, 2020. Members were pleased to note the positive nature of the meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and were informed that the Flu Clinic would run all week.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:119) Town Clerk's Report - Civil Contingencies Bill:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 7th September, 2020, with regard to the consultation on new legislation to replace the Emergency Powers Act, 1936, which had been used in response to Covid-19.

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded Mr. Williams that the recommendation concluding the report be accepted that "subject to any individual comments, and clarification as to the position in regard to Council of Ministers and Cabinet Office, the Bill be supported".



(2020/21:119) Town Clerk's Report - Civil Contingencies Bill Continued:

Mr. Cowie referred to concerns with regard to roles of the Council of Ministers: Cabinet Office and queried whether or not the Bill was needed, and moved an amendment that such concerns be included within a response. The amendment was seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood.

The amendment was put and carried without division.

(2020/21:120) Town Clerk's Report - Consultation Capacity Policy:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 7th September, 2020, advising of the consultation launched by the Department of Health and Social Care with regard to a Capabilities Policy.

It was agreed that any member wishing to do so make individual (personal) response to the consultation.

(2020/21:121) Town Clerk's Report - Consultation IOM Census:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 7th September, 2020, advising of the consultation seeking questions to be included in the next Isle of Man Census.

It was agreed that any member wishing to do so make individual (personal) response to the consultation.

(2020/21:122) Town Clerk's Report - Diocesan Strategy Church Buildings 2020:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 7th September, 2020, drawing attention to the proposed changes in structure of the Anglican Church on the Island as detailed in a consultation / strategy document available on the website of the Diocese of Sodor and Man.

(2020/21:123) Town Clerk's Report - Local Authority General Election:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 4th September, 2020, drawing attention to the date upon which any poll necessary for the Local Authority General Elections will be held; this would normally be the day immediately following the Boards monthly meeting.

It was further resolved, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Cowie and agreed that the monthly Board Meeting in April, 2021, be held on the second Wednesday of the month, 14th April, 2021.



(2020/21:124) Finance Officer General Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer's general report dated 9th September, 2020, subject to the following:-

Accounts: Mr. Cowie queried the cost of debit card charges and asked about using "Apple Pay" which he understood is provided free of charge. Mr. Parker informed members that "Apple Pay" charging rates are higher. The Finance Officer was requested to investigate this matter.

Works and Development:

(2020/21:125) Town Clerk's Report – Ramsey Quayside:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 7th September, 2020, to which was appended the letter dated 9th September, 2020, from the Director of Highway Services, Department of Infrastructure, concerning the Department's proposals for West Quay.

Members were pleased to note the offer to use part of Albert Road Car Park but felt no regard had been made to their queries and concerns previously raised. Mr. McGuinness expressed his disappointment of the content of the letter and of its "attitude", which could be interpreted as threatening; he expressed concern that the Commission had not been shown plans of the latest changes. It was noted, from the letter that the Department reports a positive response to the proposals, but members felt that the timing and duration of the attendance during exhibition of the plans, from which the responses were obtained, namely for 4 hours only on a working day of the week, was insufficient.

Mr. Young indicated his opposition to the whole proposal, contending all that was needed was a 2ft high wall. He felt that roadworks to improve the Quay could be undertaken if half of the quay was closed at one time. He also felt that the arrangements for fishing boat owners to unload were not suitable.

It was proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness that the Minister and the Director of Highway Services be invited to meet with the Commission on this proposal. Members recognised the need to remain proactive.

Mr. Young again indicated his opposition and referred to the height of electrical boxes [2 ft.] on the Swing Bridge and that this was the height required of any flood barriers. Mr. Young also informed the Board that he would instigate a petition against the proposals.

An amendment was put by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Oldham that in addition an open letter of response be made enquiring why the Commission's wishes had been ignored. The amendment was carried.



2020/21:126) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Traffic Regulation Notice - Parliament Street:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 9th September, 2020, concerning the practicality of the Commission attempting to obtain a Traffic Regulations Notice, similar to that obtained during the Covid-19 to allow closure of Parliament Street and some associated road.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed that a suitable application be made to the Department of Infrastructure.

(2020/21:127) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Members agreed that the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 9th September, 2020, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, be noted and no objections be made to such applications, subject to the following:-

REF NO: 3771 **AMENDED PLANS**
P.A. NO.: 20/00433/B
PROPOSED: Demolition of existing buildings within yard and creation of residential development of 10 dwellings with associated roads, landscaping and parking
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Caines' Yard, Shipyard Road, Ramsey.**

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 6 votes to 2, Mrs. Wedgwood and Mr. Cowie voting against, that Standing Orders be suspended to allow consideration of this matter. After general discussion concerning vehicular access, possible strain on utilities and noting the Department of Infrastructure's maintained opposition to development of the site, it was proposed by Mr. Williams and agreed that no objection be made to the application.

REF NO: 3799
P.A. NO.: 20/00949/B
PROPOSED: Installation of replacement windows, front door, roof and installation of rooflights
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **1, Cannell's Lane, Ramsey**

It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness that no observations be submitted on this application.

An amendment was put by Mr. Oldham, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood that a condition be requested that the replacement windows replicate the wooden sash windows in appearance. The amendment was defeated by 5 votes to 3, Canon Greenwood voting with Mrs. Wedgwood and Mr. Oldham.

The original proposal was then voted on and was carried by 5 votes to 3, Mrs. Wedgwood and Messrs' Canon Greenwood and Oldham voting against.



(2020/21:127) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications continued:

REF NO: 3802
P.A. NO.: 20/00974/B
PROPOSED: Alterations and erection of an extension
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: 17, Rheast Mooar Close, Ramsey

It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed that an observation be made with regard to the proximity of the oil tank to the neighbouring property to ensure it meets current standards.

No comments were made with regard to the Appendix to this report.

Housing and Property:

(2020/21:128) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Housing Performance and Statistics 2020/21:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 12th August, 2020, to which was appended the Housing Performance and Statistics for the first quarter for the year ended 31st March, 2021.

Any other Business

(2020/21:129) Representative Reports:

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

(2020/21:130) Tree Planting:

Mr. Oldham sought permission, on behalf of the Ramsey Branch of the Royal British Legion to plant a commemorative tree in the Mooragh Park.

Resolved: That, subject to liaison with the Head Gardener as to the type of tree and location, permission be granted.

(2020/21:131) Conservation Areas:

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed, a meeting be arranged with the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer to discuss conservations areas and how the planners and local authority can work together to ensure that properties in such areas can be kept in a good state of repair.



(2020/21:132) White Line Painting:

Mr. Parker again referred to the white roadline painting required to be undertaken in Parliament Street. Mr. Cowie informed members that the works were within the Department's programme, but were not a priority.

(2020/21:133) "Gas Light Pole Tops":

Mr. Young referred to two gas-light columns and queried the tops thereto. The Technical Services Manager was requested to investigate this matter.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that a donation had also recently been received towards funding the painting of the columns.

The Chairman closed the public session at 7.52 p.m. and moved directly to private business.

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.

(2020/21:134) Minutes:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19th August, 2020, recorded in private.

Matters for Information:

(2020.21:135) Minutes Meeting of the Housing Committee:

Resolved: To note the Minutes of meeting of the Housing Committee held on 1st September, 2020, subject to the following:-

In response to a query made by Mr. McGuinness, the Housing and Property Manager explained circumstances with regard to breaches of tenancies and matters affecting tenants having served time in prison.

Clause 28 - the Housing and Property Manager informed members that the number of properties voided for maintenance purposes had been reduced from 10 to 2.



(2020/21:136) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 10th September, 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:-

- **Shoprite Group** - the Town Clerk advised members of on-going discussions with representatives from Shoprite and on meetings to take place within the next couple of weeks. A further report would be provided to the next meeting.
- **Ramsey Courthouse** - Mr. McGuinness expressed concern that no statement in this matter had yet been made and therefore the Commission may have lost momentum.
- **Upper Queen’s Pier Road** - this item to be removed.
- **Bunscoill Rhumsaa Mosaic** - Mr. Oldham advised members that a Royal British Legion have on-going fund raising to provide to provide a suitable casing.
- **Cycle Path Former Railway Line** - the Technical Services Manager was requested to submit a report with regard to lighting provision.
- **Former Farmers Combine Warehouse** - it was noted that the result of the appeal hearing and decision is awaited.
- **Electric Vehicle Charge Points** - it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed that a Licence to Occupy between the Commission and Manx Utilities with regard to two spaces at Station Road Car Park be entered into and be sealed and signed on behalf of the Commission.
- **Planning Enforcement** - Mr. McGuinness expressed concern that the delay in progressing the investigation may establish a precedent for use - the Technical Services Manager was asked to follow up this matter with the Planning Enforcement Officer.

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

- **Bleak House** - the Town Clerk informed members that he had met with the environmental health inspector to discuss further possible action.

Members noted that the Board had previously resolved to serve notice under S24 of the Building Control Act 1991, and had subsequently withdrawn such notice without prejudice to the further service of notice in the event that there was any undue delay in the process of sale.

Members noted that the leasehold interest in the former bar had now been acquired by a third party who was also seeking to acquire the interest owned by Mrs Morris. The leasehold interests of Mr Morris had been arrested by the Coroner for Ayre and Garff against outstanding private debts of Mr Morris. Mr Morris’s estate had not been settled to date, the Coroners arrests requiring to be addressed before such could be achieved, and Mr Morris’s Executor appeared not to be proceeding in any meaningful way towards settling the estate. Following the withdrawn S24 Notice there appeared to be no progress with any works to address the condition of the property.

It was proposed by Mr. Parker seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the Town Clerk seek to engage with interested parties and in tandem progress towards the recommencement of formal legal proceedings.

(2020/21:136) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”: continued

- *19 West Quay* - to be removed from list;

Mr. Parker queried including the former Ramsey Methodist Church on Waterloo Road - it was agreed to raise this matter at the meeting with the Conservation Officer.

Reference was made to the Stanley Hotel - the Technical Services Manager advised that a response was awaited from the Brewery - it was noted that this hotel was in the conservation area.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:137) Finance Officer’s Report:

Members noted and approved the Finance Officer’s Report dated 9th September, 2020, subject to the following:-

Estimates and Revenue Expenditure - in response to a query, the Finance Officer again advised that maintenance and labour costs incurred during the Covid period would require budget review / reallocation within the next few months.

Members were informed that costs relating to Ramsey and Northern Districts Housing Committee differed because of staffing arrangements.

Aged Debtors - it was noted that some of the debtors listed have made payments since the list was compiled.

(2020/21:138) Finance Officer’s Report - Insurance Renewal Quote:

Members considered the Finance Officer’s tabled report dated 16th September, 2020, concerning the quotation received from insurance brokers for various insurances effective for 2020/21. It was noted that there was an overall increase in insurances of 3.17% from that of last year, and Members were reminded that this was the last year of a long-term brokerage agreement entered into with current brokers.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie and carried the insurances be renewed at the fees quoted and the brokerage fee be paid. It was noted that insurance against loss of rental income could only be claimed if properties were uninhabitable as opposed to uninhabited and that our IT providers did not consider Cyber insurance necessary.



Works and Development:

(2020/21:139) Technical Services Manager's Report - Lighting in the Lanes:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 18th August, 2020, concerning the lighting in lanes between Parliament Street and the Quay. Mr. Williams proposed that the Commission decide on a preferred option and consider the matter as part of the budget process.

Members expressed concerns that wall mounted or bollard lighting could be prone to damage and water ingress.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed to investigate the replacement of lighting with either new recessed lights, or similar alternative, and possible suppliers, as detailed in option 2 included within the report.

(2020/21:140) Technical Services Manager's Report - Road Surface around Boathouse:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 9th September, 2020, concerning the condition of the "roadway" surface in the vicinity of the Boathouse in the Mooragh Park.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed, the Commission agree in principle to the works with the Technical Services Manager to obtain 3 quotations therefore and submit a timeframe.

The Town Clerk reminded members that it might be possible to fund the works from the Commission's unapplied capital receipts account.

Housing and Property:

(2020/21:141) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Close Woirrey:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 9th September, 2020, advising that he was to meet the Project Management Team of the Department of Infrastructure on 17th September to discuss proposals for the replacement of Close Woirrey. A further report will be provided on the outcome of the meeting.



(2020/21:142) Housing and Property Manager's Report - Cronk Elfin Refurbishment:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 9th September, 2020, concerning progress with regard to proposed refurbishment works at Cronk Elfin.

Resolved: Following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed to approve the Stage I2 Report and authority be given to progress to Stage I3.

Parks and Leisure:

(2020/21:143) Town Clerk's Report - North Ramsey Bowling Club:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 9th September, 2020, advising of a meeting that had taken place with representatives from North Ramsey Bowling Green regarding to the future maintenance of the green. Members also considered a communication from the Head Gardener.

Resolved: Following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 7 votes to 1, Mrs. Wedgwood voting against, that the Club be informed that, although the Commission is unable to agree to all the conditions suggested, they are willing to enter into discussions with the Club.

(2020/21:144) Deputy Town Clerk's Report - Firework Display 5th November, 2020:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 9th September, 2020, concerning the proposal suggested by Mr. S. Hamer, Galaxy Fireworks, for the Commission's display on 5th November.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed by 7 votes to 1, Canon Greenwood voting against (insofar as he felt a firework display without music in itself was sufficient), that the themed display based on NHS and Key workers take place.

Members felt that the attendance of a dignitary, whilst recognising work undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic, was not necessary.



(2020/21:145) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Town Trail:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's Report dated 9th September, 2020, concerning a request with regard to Ramsey having a trail around the town. Members were shown an illustrated example of the proposal and noted there would be no cost to the Commission. The installation would be undertaken only on Commissioners property and other property where the owner's consent had been obtained.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed by 6 votes to 1, that the Commission support the concept. Canon Greenwood voted against and Mr. McGuinness having declared a non-pecuniary interest, did not vote.

Any Other Business:

(2020/21:146) Proposed Attraction:

Resolved: That the Chairman be permitted to enter into negotiation concerning a potential seasonal attraction for the Town.

(2020/21:147) Ramsey Courthouse:

Resolved: That the Farmers' Market organisers be informed regretfully that the Commission is not prepared to reduce fees applied for use of the Courthouse.

It was further resolved, following a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Oldham and agreed, that permission be granted for use of the Courthouse on either 2nd or 3rd October beyond the 10.00 p.m. usual deadline, to facilitate a private party.

(2020/21:148) Tractor Parade:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that an application be made for a road closure to facilitate parking of tractors during the Tractor Parade to be held on Saturday, 12th December, 2020.

Matters of Establishment:

(2020/21:149) Minutes Establishment Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Establishment Committee held on 17th August, 2020, subject to the following:-

Green Flag Award - in response to a query by Mr. Parker members were informed that the Green Flag Award had an annual application fee of £320.

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



Chairman.