

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS
[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was via telephone conference call on Wednesday, 20th January, 2021, at 7.00 p.m.

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

Apologies: Apologies for absence had been received from 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.

Members had been reminded of the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, and that any resolutions framed would require ratification as soon as the Commission was able to physically meet.

(2020/21:245) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 16th December, 2020, and the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 13th January, 2021, were confirmed and would be ratified and signed by the Chairman at the first physical meeting of the Commission. [The minutes of the Special Meeting, were presented in private and will be brought into public at the conclusion of the rate setting process.]

(2020/21:246) Matters Arising:

No matters were raised.

(2020/21:247) Chairman's Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman's report dated 14th January, 2021, subject to the following:

Coronavirus – the Chairman reiterated the thanks conveyed within his report to the NHS and all key workers and his appreciation that the vaccination programme on the Island has ~~been~~ commenced.

New Year's Day Chilly Dip – the Chairman reiterated his congratulations to all involved in organisation this event and raising such a magnificent amount for the causes involved.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:248) Town Clerk's Report – Annual Canvass for Electoral Registration:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 12th January, 2021, advising of the commencement of the 2021 canvass for electoral registration.

(2020/21:249) Finance Officer General Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer's general report dated 13th January, 2021, subject to the following:-

Accounts – a query about goods supplied by a particular supplier was answered.

Works and Development:

(2020/21:250) Town Clerk's Report – Ramsey Bathing Water Designation:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 12th January, 2021, advising of current status of the designation of Ramsey's foreshores with regard to bathing water quality. It was noted that only the south beach has been designated, being one of four such beaches on the Island, at the time of the report.

(2020/21:251) Town Clerk's Report – Ramsey Quayside:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 7th January, 2021, concerning further information provided by the Department of Infrastructure concerning their proposals to redevelop Ramsey Quayside.

Mr. Williams commented that the Commission had appreciated meeting the Department of Infrastructure's Minister and the further information provided, but he still had concerns about the department's wish to include granite slabs. Mr. Young informed members of his understanding that no contact had been made with the Fishermen's Association, the contact for whom is a Mr. David Beard and reiterated his contention that a 2 ft wall was ample flood defence. Mr. Cowie asked if any update has been received about parking and was advised not. Mr. McGuinness commented that he still had reservations about the glass-sheets and asked that confirmation be sought with regard to the Department being responsible for the future maintenance and monitoring thereof.

Mr. Cowie proposed that further information be sought from the Department of Infrastructure with regard to parking, road surfacing, maintenance and monitoring of the glass-sheets, and confirmation of communication with the Fishermen's Association. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Williams and carried by 8 votes to 1, Mr. Young voting against.



(2020/21:252) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Members agreed that the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 13th January, 2021, 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: 3840
P.A. NO.: 20/01379/A
PROPOSED: Approval in Principle for the erection of a new dwelling addressing matters of means of access

NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **Plot 7, Riverbank Road, Ramsey**

REF NO: 3841
P.A. NO.: 20/01384/A
PROPOSED: Approval in Principle for the erection of a new dwelling addressing matters of means of access

NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **Plot 9, Riverbank Road, Ramsey**

REF NO: 3843
P.A. NO.: 20/01387/A
PROPOSED: Approval in Principle for the erection of a new dwelling addressing matters of means of access

NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **Plot 10, West of 10, Westlands Close, Ramsey**

Members were informed that the above three applications referred only to access to the sites.

REF NO: 3852
P.A. NO.: 20/01546/B
PROPOSED: Installation of extractor and heat recovery vent fan outlets to front and rear elevations

NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Ye Old Royal Oak, 14 – 16, Market Place East, Ramsey.**

Attention was drawn to this application as it is in a conservation area although no comments were made thereon.



(2020/21:252) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications Continued:

REF NO: 3853
P.A. NO.: 20/01549/B
PROPOSED: Conversion of building to residential accommodation with associated first floor terrace (in association with P.A. 20/01550)
NOTES: Registered Building
SITE: **Baker's Cottage, Rear of 31, Parliament Street, Ramsey.**

REF NO: 3853
P.A. NO.: 20/01550/CON
PROPOSED: Registered Building consent for the demolition elements relating to application P.A. 20/01549/B
NOTES: Registered Building
SITE: **Baker's Cottage, Rear of 31, Parliament Street, Ramsey**

It was proposed by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed that the Commission submit an observation that consideration should be given to the site of the above applications being in a flood-risk area.

Appendices: - no comments were made on the appendices.

Any other Business:

(2020/21:253) Matters Raised by Member of the Public – Presentation of Financial Information:

Members considered details of the request made by a member of the public that the information presented about accounts paid be presented in a more details manner to indicate the payees and the amount paid to each. Members confirmed they were happy to discuss the matter.

Mr. McGuinness referred to the history of the current presentation of financial information, initiated some years ago at the behest of himself and Mr. Cowie. Whilst he understood the request, he expressed the view that the current presentation is adequate and has regard to commercial confidentiality. He confirmed the Commission's policy to utilise local suppliers having regard to getting the best deals available.

A proposal by Mr. Young that the Commission revert to presenting a full list of payees and the amounts paid to each did not receive a seconder.

Mr. Williams asked if the accounts could be viewed. The Town Clerk advised that the Commission's audited accounts could but providing the detailed information would be subject to Data Protection or Freedom of Information restrictions. The Finance Officer advised that he would be pleased to answer any questions put on the accounts.



(2020/21:253) Matters Raised by Member of the Public – Presentation of Financial Information continued:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed, the matter be looked at afresh post-lockdown.

The Chairman closed the public session at 7.45 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.

(2020/21:254) Minutes:

It was noted, for record purposes that no matters from the Board Meeting held on 16th December, 2020, were considered in private.

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 13th January, 2021, presented in private were approved during the public session, subject to ratification when the Board can next physically meet.

Matters for Information:

(2020/21:255) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 14th January, 2021, and the following comments made thereon, accepting that some matters may be referred to in other sections of these minutes:-

- **Toilet Art** - the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Chairman and Mrs. Quayle, Lead Member for Parks and Leisure, have been sent details from 4 designers and it is hoped to arrange a “Zoom meeting” in the near future.
- **Rate Debt** – the Town Clerk advised that no response had been received from his correspondence with Treasury’s Chief Financial Officer.
- **“Planning Enforcements”** – nothing has been heard from the Planning Enforcement Officer in respect of 2 issues raised by the Commission.
- **Air Sourced Heat Pumps** – can now be removed from the “Tracker”.
- **Town Warden** – training to be commenced after lockdown and a vacancy will be advertised.
- **Bowling Green** – the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Bowling Club is in general agreement with the Commission’s proposals but has made further suggestions about which he will report as soon as possible.
- **Boundary Application** – formal application has been submitted receipt of which has been acknowledged.
- **Rate Arrears** – this is a duplication of “Rate Debt” and this heading should be removed.



(2020/21:255) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker” continued:

- **Ramsey Events** - the Deputy Town Clerk advised that an “Expo” style event has been rescheduled and will take place on 10th / 11th April.

Members also noted the Register of Ruinous Property and Unsightly Buildings to 14th January, 2021, subject to the following:-

- **5, College Street** – Mr. McGuinness referred to action proposed to be taken by the Commission with regard to this property and was advised by the Town Clerk that in view of the “lockdown” restrictions the matter would be presented when Board is able to meet physically and any decision made in accordance with statutory powers.

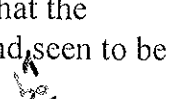
Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:256) Town Clerk’s Report – Mooragh Hall Lease:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 12th January, 2021, advising of wish of the current tenant of the Mooragh Hall to commence negotiations with regard to the extension of their lease which expires on 31st March, 2022.

(2020/21:256) Town Clerk’s Report – Ramsey Marina Limited:


Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 12th January, 2021, on the principle of a community committee to facilitate consultation and communication in the development of proposals for any future marina development.

A proposal was put by Mr. McGuinness and seconded by Mr. Young that the Commission is not comfortable about such as they feel they must be and seen to be remaining totally neutral in this matter. 

An amendment was put by Mrs. Quayle, seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood that the Commission should remain neutral but invite the company currently progressing proposals to make presentation(s) to the Board on their progress at a convenient time.

The amendment was carried by 7 votes to 2, Messrs’ McGuinness and Young voting against.

(2020/21:257) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Commercial Rents:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 14th January, 2021, asking if the Commission would afford commercial tenants similar rental payment concessions as applied during the 2021 “lockdown” period. 

(2020/21:257) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Commercial Rents continued:

A proposal was put by Mr. McGuinness that the matter be deferred until February. This was seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood. An amendment put by Mr. Oldham that the matter be deferred pending further Government announcement on 21st January did not receive a seconder. A further amendment was put by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Young that a rolling programme of rent-free payments be applied with immediate effect.

Mr. William's amendment was put to the vote and failed by 7 votes to 2, Mr. Williams and Mr. Young voting in favour.

Mr. McGuinness's proposal to defer was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

(2020/21:258) Finance Officer's Report:

Members noted and approved the Finance Officer's Report dated 13th January, 2021, subject to the following:-

Estimates and Revenue Expenditure – queries with regard to timing of expenditure and staffing changes were answered to members' satisfaction.

Rent Arrears – members queried the increase in rent arrears and were informed that this was a seasonal problem and "lockdown" had not helped. Rent debt recovery procedures are being enforced and explained to tenants in arrears with whom contact is being made wherever possible. Members were informed of the amount of arrears recovered since the report's appendix was prepared. Members were also reminded that arrears being included with rental payments via DHSS are reducing albeit it very slowly.

Works and Development:

(2020/21:259) Technical Services Manager's Report – Railway Lighting:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 8th January, 2021, concerning the provision of lighting for the former railway line, converted to a cycle-track. Members noted the Department's preference for bollard lighting. Mr. Young queried if any residents in the area had submitted objections to the proposal, Mr. McGuinness advised that he was aware that one objection had been submitted to full street lighting but not bollards.

It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness that the Commission agree to adopt the bollard lighting and take on the maintenance and electrical costs, subject to the Department paying for materials and installation costs.



(2020/21:259) Technical Services Manager's Report – Railway Lighting Cont:

Mr. Cowie asked if a caveat could be included that the Commission investigate alternative maintenance agreements. Mr. Oldham expressed concern about possible vandalism and his preference for street lighting for which shields could be included to prevent light pollution to nearby houses.

The resolution was put and carried by 8 votes to 1, Mr. Oldham voting against.

Housing and Property:

(2020/21:260) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Agreement for the Management of Property...:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 13th January, 2021, with appended Draft Agreement for the management of local authority housing outside the town. Members expressed concern at errors in the draft, prepared by the Department of Infrastructure and queried the financial implications to the Commission, having regard to maintenance and administrative costs. Members noted that comments have been sought from other local authorities who have entered into similar agreements with the Department.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Oldham and agreed the Housing and Property Manager report further and include cost implications.

(2020/21:261) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Old River Road Yard:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 12th January, 2021, concerning options for the future of the Commission's yard at Old River Road and were reminded of the existing agreement with the Ramsey Rowing Club.

A proposal was put by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. Oldham that the Commission seek expressions of interest.

A proposal put by Mr. Young that the Commission develop the site did not receive a seconder.

Mr. Cowie's proposal was put and carried by 8 votes to 1, Mr. Young voting against.

Any Other Business:

(2020/21:262) Town Clerk's Report – Station Road Car Park:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 20th January, 2021, reporting on on-going discussions with Isle of Man Enterprises regarding Station Road Car Park.



(2020/21:262) Town Clerk's Report – Station Road Car Park Continued:

Mr. McGuinness suggested the report be considered in the stages presented and proposed that the Commission enter into a 7-year agreement with regard to a licence to occupy the site of the bin and fuel store. Mr. Williams seconded the proposal. The Town Clerk explained the detail included within his report concerning the rental proposed and the CPI incremental increases.

The proposal was put to the vote and carried.

Discussion ensued with regard to the public conveniences and the car park surface and agreed it was more prudent to discuss the public conveniences. Mr. Cowie suggested that they be subject to a separate report in February. Mr. McGuinness agreed, to a point, but reminded members that consideration was important as part of the budget process. The Town Clerk explained the history of the toilets and the agreement that whilst not owning them the Commission would provide cleaning and maintenance services. Members felt that the toilets were not fit for purpose, Mr. Oldham commented that he had received numerous complaints and felt that the drains were also problematic.

A proposal was put by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams that the toilets be closed to the public forthwith. Further discussion ensued after which an amendment was put by Mr. Oldham to allow the Commission to also look into the provision of new toilet facilities in the town to a cost not exceeding £75,000. The amendment was seconded by Mrs. Quayle.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried by 5 votes to 4, Messrs' Cowie, Greenwood, McGuinness and Parker voting against.

(2020/21:263) Budget 2021/22:

Members had been presented with updated information prepared by the Finance Officer, following the private meeting held on 13th January.

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie that consideration of the information be deferred to a special meeting. The proposal was carried. Canon Greenwood did not vote as he had "dropped-out" of the link during this clause.

The Finance Officer reminded members that he is willing to discuss any budget queries they may have.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m. giving a time of 3 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.