

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS
[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held via telephone link the Boardroom of the Town Hall, Ramsey, on Wednesday, 17th March, 2021, at 7.00 p.m.

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

Apologies: Apologies for absence had been received from Mr. A. J. Oldham.

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

(2020/21:297) Minutes:

It was noted that any decisions made at virtual meetings would require ratification as a subsequent meeting pending the passing of the Elections and Meetings (Local Authorities) Bill.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 17th February, 2021, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2020/21:298) Matters Arising:

No matters were raised, but Mr. McGuinness queried whether this meeting properly constituted a Public Monthly Board Meeting as he felt uncomfortable at the level of pre-exposure it had been given. Mr. McGuinness was informed that the meeting had been advertised as usual via the Commissioners website and the Town Clerk asked members if they would like to defer the meeting to a later date. Members agreed not to defer the meeting.

(2020/21:299) Chairman's Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman's report dated 10th March, 2021. The Chairman also referred to the sadness in noting that a member of the refuse crew had tested positive for the Corona Virus and in so doing wished that staff member a full and speedy recovery. The Chairman also thanked members for their attempt in trialling albeit unsuccessfully, a "Teams Meeting".

The Chairman thanked officers and staff for the manner in which they had responded to the further lockdown period, and for their continued effort in providing essential services to the town during the ongoing restrictions.



Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:300) Town Clerk's Report – Local Authority General Elections 2021:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 11th March, 2021, advising of the postponement of the April 2021 Local Authority General Elections to 22nd July, 2021, or as soon as practicable thereafter, in view of current Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

The Town Clerk informed members that the Elections and Meetings (Local Authorities) Bill 2021, details of which had been circulated to members, will be processed through its various stages by Keys and Legislative Council on 18th March, 2021.

The Bill will, amend the Local Elections Act, 1986, and : -

- Provide that Local Authority General Elections be held in July, 2021 and thereafter in April of every successive fourth year.
- Allow the Department to make regulations to postpone such elections to a different date.
- Allow local authority members to go out of office on 1st August, 2021.
- Provide that attendance at meetings can be affected remotely, [as long as members can hear and be heard].
- Provide that casual vacancies can be filled as soon as reasonably practicable after they have arisen.
- Extend the existing provision of the Act which provides that the chairman continues in office until the successor has accepted office, to the chairman of a local authority where that authority has not held an annual general meeting at which such a person would be elected.

Amendments are also introduced to the Local Government Act 1985 and the Emergency Powers (Amendment) Act 2020, which are mainly "enabling". The Town Clerk reminded members that the date of the Local Authority General Election and, therefore, the schedule for election Notices was decided by the Department.

(2020/21:301) Town Clerk's Report – Manx Development Corporation:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 5th March, 2021, advising of the proposal of the Department for Enterprise to establish by 31st March, 2021, the Manx Development Corporation, at the directive of the Tynwald Select Committee on Unoccupied Urban Sites.

It was noted that the Commission will be able to meet with the Corporation in the future when it has formed a company.



(2020/21:302) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Street Trader's Licence Manx Whippy:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 10th March, 2021, advising of the application made by Manx Whippy Limited for a Street Trader's Licence to allow two vehicles to trade, during 2021. It was noted that the company do trade at specific events by invitation and do not trade within the town centre.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed that a One Year Licence be granted on the same terms and conditions as previous years.

(2020/21:303) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Street Trader's Licence Parish Pantry:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 10th March, 2021, advising of the application for a Street Trader's Licence to allow the Parish Pantry to trade on the footpath on the Mooragh Promenade, opposite the Rugby Pitch, up to 2 days per week. Members noted that the existing licence is for one day per week and a recent request to operate for up to 3 days had been refused.

Mr. Williams asked what progress had been made with regard to a Policy Document with regard to Street Traders and was advised that a report would be provided to the next policy committee meeting.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed by 7 votes to 2 that a One Year Only Licence be granted on the same terms and conditions as previous years. Mrs. Wedgwood and Mr. McGuinness voted against.

(2020/21:304) Finance Officer General Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer's general report dated 10th March, 2021, subject to the following: -

Summary of Revenue Income and Expenditure: Mr. Cowie asked if a receipt in respect of rates was anticipated and was informed that £268,000 had been received on 12th March, 2021, which members were also informed was greater than the amount received at the same time in 2020.

Works and Development:

(2020/21:305) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Members agreed that the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 11th March, 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:-

(2020/21:305) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications Continued:

REF NO: 3836 **AMENDED PLANS**
P.A. NO.: 20/01401/A
PROPOSED: Approval in Principle for the erection of 2 dwellings addressing matters of access and parking
NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **Land to rear of 6, Summerland, Seamount Road, Ramsey.**

Members were informed that the amendment addressed one of the objections made by the Commission, namely a preference to see a single dwelling.

Mr. Williams proposed that the Commission object to the amended plans on the grounds that the dwelling does not respect the site and surroundings in terms of General Policy 2(b) of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 and is contrary to Policy R/R/P 3 of the Ramsey Local Plan with regard to infill/back-land sites. Mrs. Wedgwood seconded the proposal. Members noted that there were other reasons on which the Commission objected to the original application and that should the Commission decide to object they would not be moving away from the original objections.

Mr. Young queried if the Highways Authority had commented on the amendments and was advised that it would appear not.

The proposal to submit an objection was put to the vote and carried by 6 votes to 3, Mrs. Quayle and Messrs' Cowie and Howard voting against.

REF NO: 3864
P.A. NO.: 20/01510/A
PROPOSED: Approval in principle for residential development
NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **Gladstone Industrial Park, Ramsey.**

Mr. Williams advised members of a conversation he had with the Architects who explained their reasoning in submitting the application, namely because of difficulties in renting larger units, wish to generate income to enable redevelopment of the larger units of the Industrial park and those affected by asbestos. It was noted that the Architects have spoken with the Planners who, whilst giving no decision on the proposals, have suggested they are sound.

A proposal put by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowie to object to the application was carried by 5 votes to 3. Mesdames Quayle and Wedgwood and Mr. Williams voting against. Mr. Howard temporarily left the meeting [at 7.52 p.m.] during discussion of the clause and was not available when the vote was taken.



(2020/21:305) Technical Services Manager’s Report - Planning Applications Continued:

REF NO: 3867
P.A. NO.: 21/00144/B
PROPOSED: Variation of condition 2 of PA 17/00870/B. Erection of two 6 storey apartment buildings containing 23 apartments in total and associated parking, to amend the car parking provision
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Land at corner of Mooragh Promenade and Premier Road, Ramsey**

In response to a query put by Mr. Cowie, the Town Clerk confirmed that this application, which addressed the loss of two parking spaces to the proposal as a result of garages having been constructed, had been withdrawn.

Housing and Property:

(2020/21:306) Housing and Property Manager’s Report – “Conrad’s” at the Boathouse:

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 5th March, 2021, advising of the intention of the tenant of the Boathouse Café to commence prior approved works during Spring/Summer 2021.

Any Other Business:

(2020/21:307) Matters Raised by Members of the Public “Covid-19”:

Members noted the content of correspondence received from a ratepayer concerning “Covid-19” and a request that the matter be debated.

Members agreed they did not have sufficient medical knowledge or expertise to comment on the correspondence. Members felt they had done their utmost in responding to the pandemic and they have and must continue to take the advice of Government’s health professionals.

(2020/21:308) Representative Report:

Resolved: To note the report of a meeting of the Isle of Man Municipal Association, held on 25th February, 2021, submitted by Mr. Cowie.

(2020/21:308) Deckchair Rental Concession:

Mr. Young queried whether the re-introduction of a deckchair rental concession was worthy of consideration and suggested Mr. Parker’s shop premises as a suitable rental point.

(2020/21:309) Public Question – Presentation of Accounts Paid:

Mr. McGuinness referred to the query put by a member of the public about the way accounts paid are presented within the Finance Officer's monthly report. He confirmed that the Finance Officer has made some suggested to him and assured Members that this matter has not been forgotten and will be brought to the Board when possible.

The Chairman closed the public session at 8.07 p.m. and, after thanking Mrs. Woolley for her "attendance", 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.

(2020/21:310) Minutes:

It was noted, for record purposes that no matters from the Board Meeting held on 17th February, 2021, were recorded in private.

Mr. Howard returned to the meeting at this stage.

Matters for Information:

(2020/21:311) Housing Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of a meeting of the Housing Committee held on 2nd March, 2021, subject to the following:-

Clause 52b) Cronk Elfin External Refurbishment – it was noted that tenders had been opened on 5th March, 2021, as it had been possible to do so allowing for social distancing and have been referred to the consultant for examination.

Clause 87 Allocated Properties and Clause 88 Vacant Properties – members were pleased to note the number of tenancies allocated in February and that work can be safely progressed in vacant properties.

Mr. Cowie queried the number of applicants now on the 1 bedroomed housing waiting list and was advised by the Housing and Property Manager that there were 48 who would qualify on the 1 or 2 bedroomed list (the list does not reflect just 1 bedroom).



(2020/21:312) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 10th March, 2021, and the following comments made thereon, accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

- **Shoprite Group** – the Town Clerk advised that a draft agreement is with Advocates and it is hoped that it can come into force from 1st April.
- **Shelter Public Art** – the Deputy Town Clerk indicated he would check to see if work, for which funding has been received, can start.
- **Water Play Area** – members were informed by the Housing and Property Manager that it had been identified that one local firm could undertake the works and that the UK manufacturers had provided technical specification. Members were informed that it was difficult to price the works and ensure the same level of guarantees but envisaged that the works could be undertaken within budget but would take a little longer. Mr. Parker proposed that the Commission proceed with a local contractor subject to costings.
- **Bowling Green** – the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed the Bowling Club is happy with the arrangements for future use of the Bowling Green and that the Commission will be submitting a planning application for a storage unit associated thereto.
- **Boundary Extension** – the Town Clerk was instructed to seek progress on this matter.
- **Rate Arrears** – the Town Clerk confirmed that the Government Valuer is looking into this matter and will be able to do more after lockdown but that no response has been from the Treasury’s Chief Financial Officer.
- **Ramsey Events** – the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that some events will probably be delayed, and it is hoped to proceed with events planned for June.
- **Insurance Renewal** – the Finance Officer advised that some verbal expressions of interest have been forthcoming despite the advertisement not yet having been placed.

Members also noted the Register of Ruinous Property and Unsightly Land and Buildings to 11th March, 2021, subject to the following:-

- **10/11 West Quay** – the Technical Services Manager reported that 11 West Quay has been acquired and the new owners have concerns about the neighbouring property.
- **67 Parliament Street** – the Town Clerk informed members that the owners have given an undertaking to carry out works, and will, therefore, be given 30 days to do so (after lockdown).

Finance and General Purposes:

(2020/21:313) Town Clerk’s Report – Equality Policy:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 5th March, 2021, to which was appended an Equality Policy having regard to a model produced by the UK Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service [ACAS].

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed unanimously that the Equality Policy be adopted.

(2020/21:314) Town Clerk's Report – Public Open Space:

Resolved: To note and approve the Town Clerk's report dated 11th March, 2021, advising of the progress of various petitions and applications for adoption of Public Open space in terms of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1985.

The Town Clerk verbally report receipt of draft proposals for Auldyn Walk and Auldyn Meadow on which he will report further when more detailed information is available.

(2020/21:315) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Commercial Rents:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 10th March, 2021, advising that since the introduction on 3rd March of the circuit-breaker lockdown a commercial tenant of the Commission's properties has now requested a "rental payment holiday".

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed, a rental holiday of one month be granted to the Commission's commercial tenants and the matter be reviewed thereafter.

(2020/21:316) Finance Officer's Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer's Report dated 10th March, 2021, subject to the following:-

Aged Debtors – Mr. McGuinness asked if any recent debtors had made contact about late payments and was advised not most of the debts being older and were being paid by instalment and the debtors are being chased to maintain payments. Mr. Cowie queried a specific debt the circumstances of which were explained, and members were assured that payment is being chased.

Works and Development:

(2020/21:317) Town Clerk's Report – Ramsey Quayside:

Members considered the Town Clerk's Report dated 22nd February, 2021, advising of discussions held at a meeting with Mr. Robinson. The Town Clerk reported receipt of an email from Mr. Robinson which regard to car parking.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness, and agreed by 8 votes to 1, Mr. Young voting against, that a further meeting be requested with the Minister.

It was further agreed that the Commission meet shortly before such meeting.



(2020/21:318) Technical Services Manager's Report – Christmas Lights:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 9th March, 2021, providing an update on options available for decorative lighting.

Resolved: To note the report and ask the Technical Services Manager to submit further report on the provision of a Christmas Tree including comparisons within the low/medium and higher price ranges and provision of traditional trees.

(2020/21:319) Technical Services Manager's Report – Fleet Sale:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 4th March, 2021, advising of the result of the sale at auction of items of vehicle and plant surplus to the Commission's requirements. It was noted that it is proposed to auction a further item of plant when Covid restrictions allow, Mr. Young indicated his willingness to purchase the item at the reserve price should it not reach such reserve at auction. The Finance Officer confirmed that sale receipts had not been projected within the budget due to uncertainty of values.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed, subject to the auction achieving the anticipated result, authorisation be given to the purchase of an addition van.

Canon Greenwood did not vote owing to his temporary absence from the meeting.

(2020/21:320) Technical Services Manager's Report – Ruinous Buildings:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 11th February, 2021, advising of problems with 4 particular properties in Ramsey and recommending action to remedy such problems, when Covid restrictions allow.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams seconded by Mrs. Wedgwood and agreed that the action recommended be progressed, subject to enquiry being made to determine the address at which the owner of the property listed first on the list is residing and advice being sought from Environment Health in respect of the premises listed third on the list.

Mr. Cowie declared an interest in respect of one of the properties due to residential proximity.



Any Other Business:

(2020/21:321) Technical Services Manager's – Dandara Lower Milntown Development:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's tabled report dated 15th March, 2021, advising of the submission of amended plans by Dandara Homes Ltd., for their proposed development at Lower Milntown. It was noted that details of the submission were published on 12th March and submissions are required by 9th April.

Members were informed that the amendment reflected improved access onto Lezayre Road but no other matters about which the Commission had object in the original application had been addressed. Members were reminded that the original application had also been on public display at the Town Hall.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cowie and agreed that the Commission seek an extension and in the absence thereof repeat their objections to the proposals except for the entrance location, which had addressed that concern.

Mrs. Wedgwood withdrew from the meeting at 9.30 p.m., during discussion of the clause and did not vote.

(2020/21:322) Technical Services Manager's Report – Street Lighting Contract 2021/22:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's tabled report dated 17th March, 2021, concerning the contract for the maintenance of streetlights for 2021/22.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Williams seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed that the Commission enter a contract with Manx Utilities for a further year. It was noted that the prices have been retained as those for 2020/21.

Members queried if any alternative quotations had been sought and were informed not as health and safety requirements of MUA involving their equipment would make it extremely difficult for others to undertake the contract.

(2020/21:323) April Board Meeting:

The Chairman drew attention to the cancellation of local authority general elections scheduled to have taken place on 22nd April.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Cowie, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the date of the April Board Meeting revert its original date, namely 21st April – members having agreed to hold the meeting earlier because of the now cancelled elections.



(2020/21:324) Fibre Poles:

The Chairman drew attention to the increasing number of “fibre poles” being erected around town, which he considered unsightly.

It was agreed that, in view of some concerns raised by members, the Town Clerk seek further information on this matter.

(2020/21:325) Covid-19:

Mr. Parker referred to the confirmation that a member of the refuse-crew had tested positive for Covid-19 and queried if the additional refuse collection would proceed.

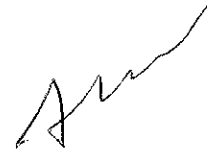
The Town Clerk confirmed that it would and referred members to the media release which had been copied to them. Mr. Parker asked if further publicity could be given to this matter.

Matters of Establishment

(2020/21:326) Establishment Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of the meeting of the Establishment Committee held on 16th February, 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.55 p.m. giving a time of 3 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.