

RAMSEY TOWN COMMISSIONERS
[PUBLIC]

The Monthly Board Meeting of the Ramsey Town Commissioners was held in the Boardroom of the Town Hall, Ramsey, on Wednesday, 16th November, 2022, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. F. B. R. Williams, Miss L. L. Craine, Messrs. A. R. Beighton, G. S. Court, R. D. Cowell, S. R. Kelly, J. McGuinness, A. J. Oldham, L. Parker, L. I. Singer and W. G. Young.

Apologies for absence were received from Revd Canon N. D. Greenwood.

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

(2022/23:220) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19th October, 2022, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2022/23:221) Matters Arising:


No matters were raised.

Matters for Information:

(2022/23:222) Action Tracker November, 2022:

Resolved: To note the "Action Tracker" to 9th November, 2022, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

- **Planning Enforcements...** – Mr. McGuinness queried the date of "13/9/21" appearing in the action column and was informed this was a typographical error and should read "13/9/22". In response to a further query the Town Clerk confirmed that nothing further had been received from Planning Enforcement about these matters.
- **Ramsey Swing Bridge** (Register as a Protected Building) – in response to a query from Mr. Williams, the Town Clerk advised that nothing has been progressed by the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture about the possible registration of the Swing Bridge. It was proposed by Mr. Williams and agreed by consensus that this item be removed from the "Action Tracker".
- **Bicycle Shelters** – Mr. Cowell queried progress on the installation of bicycle shelters – the Town Clerk advised that he had been assured that the target to install the shelters by the end of the year was feasible.



(2022/23:222) Action Tracker November, 2022 Continued:

- ***Ramsey Bags for Life*** – In response to a query from Mr. McGuinness it was noted that 87 of the Town Branded “Bags for Life” have been sold. It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Signer and agreed that 100 further bags be acquired. In response to a further query from Mr. Parker members were reminded that the bags are “self-funding”.
- ***Seagulls in the Mooragh Park*** – Mr. Beighton queried progress on this matter and was advised that following the advice of DEFA, costs to alleviate the problem are being sought and the matter will be considered as part of the budgetary process. Mr. Singer commented that the problem with seagulls was not restricted to just the park and that the problem was throughout the town. Mr. Kelly commented that all “seaside” towns had similar problems. Miss Craine reminded that gulls are a protected species but agreed that things should be able to be done to alleviate nuisances.

(2022/23:223) Action Tracker Budget Approved Projects:

Resolved: To note the Action Tracker of Budget Approved projects at 9th November, 2022.

(2022/23:224) Report Project Meeting Ramsey Quayside:

Resolved: To note the report of the meeting of the Ramsey Quayside Project held on 7th November, 2022.

Mr. McGuinness queried reference to agreement “on a united front”. The Town Clerk advised that it was intended that representatives at the meeting seek the respective views of the bodies they represent.

(2022/23:225) Chairman’s Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman’s Report dated 10th November, 2022, subject to the following: -

Mr. Singer advised that the “Isle of Man Music Society” was in fact Ramsey Music Society and took the opportunity to promote the Society’s next event on 21st November, 2022.



Finance and General Purposes:

(2022/23:226) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 9th November, 2022, subject to the following:-

Summary of Revenue Income and Expenditure - Mr. Singer queried the differences in various heads of expenditure and was reminded that the comparison was the year to date compared with the full estimate for the financial year and not the results of the previous financial year.

Works and Development:

(2022/23:227) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 9th November, 2022, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, be noted subject to the following: -

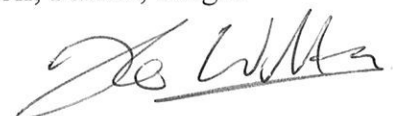
REF NO: 4025
P.A. NO.: 22/01154/B
PROPOSED: Erection of single storey garage to the rear and installation of replacement French doors to existing rear window
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **31, Waterloo Road, Ramsey.**

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed that the Commission make no comment on this application and leave any decisions fully to the Planning Committee and other agencies. Mr. Young referred to cellars at Waterloo Road known to have flooded having resolved the problem by having cellars tanked.

REF NO: 4026
P.A. NO.: 22/01212/A
PROPOSED: Approval in principle for proposed residential development, addressing means of access and number of plots
NOTES: Approval in Principle
SITE: **The Auburns, 19, Lezayre Road, Ramsey.**

Mr. Kelly proposed that the Commission object to the proposals, which are considered over-intensive, in addition to being contrary to sections of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan with regard to back land development. Miss Craine seconded the proposal. Reference was made to the loss of 19 trees on the site which contained only one protected species.

The proposal was carried by 6 votes to 4 – Messrs. Beighton, Cowell, Parker, Singer and Williams voting against.



(2022/23:227) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications Continued:

REF NO: 4029
P.A. NO.: 22/01325/B
PROPOSED: Refurbishment of existing dwelling
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **5, College Street, Ramsey.**

REF NO: 4031
P.A. NO.: 22/01346/CON
PROPOSED: Refurbishment of existing dwelling with a wall repair required to the external stone leaf of the gable wall from first floor up to ridge
NOTES: Conservation Area
SITE: **5, College Street, Ramsey.**

It was proposed by Mr. Kelly that the Commission do not object to the above applications but write to the Conservation Officer to express concerns about the adverse impacts of the Strategic Plan and the conservation area on redevelopment in the Town. Mr. McGuinness seconded the proposal with modifications that the concerns be extended, by way of a general letter, and include DEFA, and the Member of House of Keys for Ramsey. The proposal as modified was carried unanimously.

Appendix:

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

Housing and Property:

(2022/23:228) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Housing Performance and Statistics 2022/23:

Resolved: To note and approve the Housing and Property Manager's Report dated 27th August, 21022, to which was appended the Housing and Performance Statistics to 30th September, 2022.

Mr. Parker, as Lead Member, explained that staff are still behind with visitations (post Covid) but are catching up. Mr. Parker also took the opportunity, having regard to anticipated financial struggles, to remind any tenants struggling to make rental payments to make contact with the Town Hall staff; to see guidance on the Commission's and other websites and to communicate so that problems can be avoided as far as possible.

Mr. Oldham asked if a "flyer" could be distributed to tenants and was advised that one had already been sent during October.

Parks and Leisure:

(2022/23:229) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Event Support:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 8th November, 2022, advising of requests for support made by the organisers of Gran Fondo Isle of Man and the British Enduro for their respective 2023 events.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. Kelly and carried that both events be supported. Mr. Oldham queried the costs to the Commission and was advised that the Commission did not give any monetary grants but logistical support by way of the provision of barriers, etc.

Members asked that both organisations be asked to improve their communication of road closure arrangements.

(2022/23:230) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Events Update:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk's Report dated 8th November, 2022, advising of events taking place in the Town during the next few weeks, details of which are being advertised: viz

- Ramsey Festival of Christmas Trees – 26th November – 6th January
- Ellan Vannin Memorial Service – 3rd December
- Christmas at the Courthouse – 3rd and 4th December
- Christmas Tractor Run – 3rd December
- "Ramsey in Bling" – 10th and 11th December

Mr. Court particularly referred to "Ramsey in Bling" for which prizes will be given and stated that decorations would not be restricted to decorative lighting.

(2022/23:231) Public Correspondence / Meetings:

Resolved: To note the matters of correspondence brought to members' attention:-

Department of Infrastructure Transport Services – Review of Local Bus and Service Provision

Public Consultation Morecambe and Morgan Offshore Wind Farms

Highway Maintenance Charter Meeting



Any Other Business:

(2022/23:232) UNESCO Partner:

Mr. McGuinness asked if the Commission would consider signing up to become a UNESCO partner? Mr. Singer queried if this would be a local or international arrangement? Mr. McGuinness explained that Isle of Man is already a UNESCO Biosphere Partner and the Commission would, by becoming a partner, be committing to its values and its promotion. Mr. Kelly seconded the proposal.

Mr. Beighton, whilst in support of the matter, stated that the Board needed to be fully aware of what they were entering into and proposed an amendment that the matter be deferred pending receipt of further information. Mr. McGuinness stated that there was no fee involved, and the Commission would be required to consider working towards UNESCO goals. Mr. Oldham seconded the amendment, which was put to the votes and carried by 7 votes to 4. Miss Craine and Messrs. Court, McGuinness and Williams voted against.

(2022/23:233) Sundry Matters:

The Town Clerk drew attention to the following matters:-

- 242a) *Acquisition of former Albert Road School Site* – completed. Mr. Oldham queried if the site could be used for temporary parking over the Christmas period – the Town Clerk explained that this was contrary to the terms of our acquisition of the site but that enquiry would be made.
- 242b) *Peveril Court* – agreed funds towards the costs have been received matter now completed.
- 242c) *Tynwald Carol Service* – St. Mary's Church, Douglas, 15th December, 2022 – invitation to attend noted.
- 242d) *Christmas Advertising* – the Town Clerk advised that the Commission had been invited to advertise in a Christmas promotion at a cost of £99 for a small advertisement. It was proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed that the Commission do not advertise.

The Chairman thanked the public for attending and also those watching via the live-streaming service and closed the public session at 7.37 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.



(2022/23:234) Minutes:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19th October, 2022, and the Special Board Meeting held on 26th October, 2022, both recorded in private. Comments were recorded in private due to commercial sensitivity.

Matters for Information:

(2022/23:235) Policy Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 26th October, 2022, subject to the following:-

It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed that the Working from Home and Debt Recovery Policies be adopted.

Mr. Beighton queried Section 4 of the Working from Home policy concerning exemptions; and was advised that any decisions initially made by the Town Clerk are ratified by the Establishment Committee and ultimately verified by the full Board.

(2022/23:236) Housing Committee:

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 1st November, 2022.

(2022/23:237) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker” :

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 9th November, 2022, subject to the following:-

Kerbside Recycling- Miss Craine asked how the Commission propose to take this matter forward and was advised that the Board has yet to look into prices and other costs to enable a business case to be presented during budget processes. It is hoped that progress can be made towards a decision during the 2023/24 financial year.

It was noted that slides provided by Douglas Borough Council would be included within a further report to be presented by the Town Clerk on this subject.



(2022/23:238) On-Going Matters - Register of Ruinous Property, Unsightly Land and Buildings:

Resolved: To note the “Register of Ruinous Property ..” to 9th November, 2022, subject to the following and accepting that matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

10/11 West Quay – Mr. Beighton thanked the Technical Services Manager for the approaches made to the owners of this property.

Stanley Hotel – Miss Craine queried if the property had been sold – Members were informed that the comments are rumour only at this time.

Cannon Court – Mr. Cowell queried progress. Members were informed that the properties could not be demolished.

Coffee Pot – Mr. Singer asked if any response had been received and on being informed not, asked that further correspondence be sent to the owners.

Mr. Kelly queried the costs of road closures necessitated because of emergency works and was advised any costs incurred are recovered if possible.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2022/23:239) Town Clerk’s Report – Local Authority Elections Fees Order:

Discussion ensued with regard to the Town Clerk’s dated 8th November, 2022, concerning the request made by Cabinet Office in relation to election fees payable, and the 5 options considered available for reviewing the fees.

Mr. McGuinness proposed that the fees be increased having regard to CPI at September, 2022. Mr. Williams seconded the proposal. Mr. Singer proposed that no change in fees be applied. Discussion progress and members were concerned that they had insufficient details to enable them to make an informed decision.

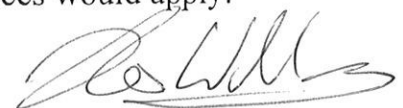
Mr. McGuinness indicated that he would be happy to defer the matter to the budget meetings and requested details of actual fees paid be provided. This course of action was agreed.

(2022/23:240) Town Clerk’s Report – RNLI Collection Box:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s dated 20th October, 2022, advising of the request made by Ramey Branch RNLI to site a charitable collection lifeboat in the atrium of the Town Hall.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Kelly and agreed by 7 votes to 4 that, with regret the request be denied as it would create a precedent. Messrs. Beighton, Court, Cowell and Young voted against.

Miss Craine suggested that a collection box be sited at the Courthouse. Mr. Oldham, on behalf of the Community Hub, stated that the same circumstances would apply.



(2022/23:241) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 9th November, 2022, subject to the following:-

Aged Debtors – Mr. Young queried the circumstances of a debt which were explained; and members were advised that other debts referred to had been paid. Members were reminded that a formal policy in place it should be easier to progress debt recovery.

2023/24 Budget Income Proposals – It was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed that the Finance Officer expand on the information submitted up to current CPI levels for further discussion at the budget meetings.

The suggested dates for budget meetings presented within the report were agreed. It was noted that not all members will be able to attend all the meetings.

(2022/23:242) Technical Assistant's Report – Fixed Penalty Notices - Appeals:

Members considered the Technical Assistant's report advising of appeals made to fixed penalty notices recently issued.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Miss Craine that the Penalty Notices be upheld.

Mr. Cowell suggested that the warden be fitted with a "body-cam". Members were informed that costs are being investigated but the matter has GDPR restrictions.

Housing and Property:

(2022/23:243) Housing and Property Manager's Report Cronk Elfin Refurbishment Date:

Resolved: To note and approve the Housing and Property Manager's Report dated 28th October, 2022, providing details of the current status of the refurbishment programme at Cronk Elfin. Members were informed that the contractor is experiencing some difficulties in sourcing materials.

(2022/23:244) Housing and Property Manager's Report Replacement Footpaths, Windows Gladstone Avenue and Vernon Road:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 1st November, 2022, advising of the current status of the borrowing requirements to facilitate work to footpaths and windows which will enable additional works to be undertaken.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that a Petition for borrowing powers, including the extra funding detailed within the report be submitted to the Department.

(2022/23:245) Review of General Needs Income Thresholds:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 28th October, 2022, advising of the request made by the Department of Infrastructure for views on the thresholds of income for acceptance onto housing waiting lists.

Discussion ensued and members noted various options presented by the Department.

It was proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Singer that the thresholds be increased by 14.5%. Mr. Singer also commended pushing the Members of the House of Keys with regard to the greater provision of affordable housing.

An amendment was put by Miss Craine, seconded by Mr. Court that the thresholds be based on minimum wage figures. The amendment was put to the vote and carried by 7 votes to 5. Messrs. Beighton, Oldham, Parker and Singer voted against.

Any Other Business:

(2022/23:246) Joint Authorities Press Release:

The Town Clerk drew attention to a suggested joint local authority press release instigated by Douglas Corporation with regard to envisaged financial difficulties that may occur during the forthcoming Winter months..

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the invitation from Douglas to be party to the press release be declined. Members felt that they would prefer to make a statement on their own behalf if necessary.

(2022/23:247) Sundry Matters:

The following matters were raised by Mr. Beighton:

256a) Barry Curran Site – the Town Clerk confirmed that he had been in touch with the owners of this site and that redevelopment thereof is still viable.

256b) Shoprite Car Park – the Technical Services Manager informed members of correspondence from the manufacturer of the surface products and also advised members that some works to the surface had been stopped because of inclement weather.

256c) Fireworks Display – query was made as to the benefits of seeking a sponsor for the Town's fireworks' display. Members were informed that it had been felt that a sponsor would detract from the nature of the event but there was no reason why the matter could not be considered again.

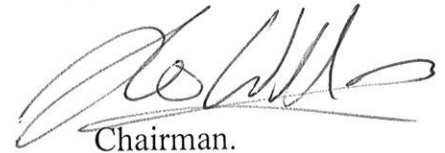
Matters of Establishment:

(2022/23:248) Minutes Establishment Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of a meeting of the Establishment Committee held on 17th October, 2022.

Mr. Kelly referred to a union agreed wage increase and was informed that it would be introduced for the Commission's staff. Mr. Kelly also queried overtime figures and was informed that overtime, apart from seasonal events is kept to a minimum.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m. giving a time of 2 ½ hours for the payment of attendance allowances.


Chairman.