

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, 4th January, 2023, at 7.00 p.m. having been postponed from 21st December, 2022.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Miss L. L. Craine and Messrs. Revd Canon N. D. Greenwood and L. Parker.

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

(2022/23:250) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 16th November, 2022, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2022/23:251) Matters Arising:

Mr. Kelly took the opportunity to thank all staff for all the work undertaken over the Christmas period. He particularly commented on the canopy lights at the Courthouse.

Matters for Information:

(2022/23:252) Action Tracker December, 2022:

Resolved: To note the "Action Tracker" to 14th December, 2022, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

Ramsey South Promenade Changing Huts – Mr. Court sought an update on the aim to provide a changing hut. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that contact has been made with a haulage company and costs are being obtained for a more traditional type shelter.

Mooragh Park Shelter Public Art – the Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the Arts Council had asked to meet with him. Mr. McGuinness will also attend such meeting.

Seagulls in Mooragh Park – Mr. Singer sought an update on this matter and was informed that it would be considered at the budget meeting(s).

Control of Dogs on the Foreshore – Mr. McGuinness asked for an update on this matter. The Town Clerk informed members that the additional information requested had not been forthcoming. It is hoped that the matter can be brought to the next meeting.

(2022/23:253) Action Tracker Budget Approved Projects:

Resolved: To note the Action Tracker of Budget Approved projects at 14th December, 2022.

(2022/23:254) Chairman's Report:

Resolved: To note the Chairman's tabled report dated 21st December, 2022, subject to the following:-

The Chairman congratulated all those who took part in the New Year's Day Chilly Dip.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2022/23:255) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 14th December, 2022, subject to the following:-

Mr. Young referred to problems with rain water ponding at Station Road Car Park and was advised that the matter would need to be brought up in private if the Commission wished to discuss it further.

Works and Development:

(2022/23:256) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 13th December, 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:	4023	<u>AMENDED PLANS/ADDITIONAL INFO</u>
P.A. NO.:	<u>22/01211/B</u>	
PROPOSED:	Conversion and extension of existing outbuildings to provide living accommodation	
NOTES:	P.A. in Detail	
SITE:	Lower Milntown Farm, Lezayre Road, Ramsey	

Members were informed that this application has already been considered by the Planning Committee.



(2022/23:256) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications Continued:

REF NO: 4032
P.A. NO.: 22/01340/B
PROPOSED: The development of eight townhouses and associated car parking and landscaping
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Land at corner of Premier Road and Mooragh Promenade, Ramsey.**

Mr. Cowell reminded members that the development company had sought the views and support of the Commission, on a previous application for which there had been a general consensus in support of an application. Mr. Young raised concerns about access during the Sprint and was reminded that any purchasers would be aware of such events (as is the case of properties abutting the T.T. Course). Mr. Oldham expressed a contrary recollection that the Board had been opposed to a previous application.

Mr. Beighton commented that he felt these plans, contrary to the previous application, are in-keeping with the facade, will be of benefit to the area and therefore encouraged support of the application.

Mr. Cowell proposed that the Commission support the application. This was seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed by 6 votes to 3, Messrs. McGuinness, Oldham and Young voting against.

REF NO: 4033
P.A. NO.: 22/01393/B
PROPOSED: First Floor extension over the existing kitchen and dining room to provide an additional bedroom and en-suite bathroom
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **2, Auldyn Meadow Way, Ramsey**

Members were informed that this application has already been considered and approved by the Planning Committee.

Appendix:

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Williams', written over a horizontal line.

(2022/23:257) Technical Services Manager's Report – "Fill-a-Fish" Location:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 7th December, 2022, advising of the desirability to relocate the "Fill-a-Fish" waste receptacle during the stormy winter months.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed, the Lead Member be granted delegated authority to decide on a winter location for the "Fill-a-Fish". It was agreed that members email Mr. Kelly with any ideas they may have.

Parks and Leisure:

The Lead Member took the opportunity to thank everyone involved in the organisation and running of the Christmas events held throughout the Town, not least the inaugural "Ramsey in Bling" competitions.

(2022/23:258) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Sprintfest 2023:-

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 10th December, 2022, updating members on progress for the organisation of Sprintfest 2023.

Resolved: To note the report and appended schedule and, following a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed application be made to the Licensing Court for the required occasional music licensing.

Members raised some concerns with regard to the schedule – Mr. Beighton seeking reassurance with regard to road closure proposals. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that events would be held during the evenings and road closures would be timed to commence ½ hour before and after the duration of the events, and also timed so as not to overlap with TT Road Closures. Adequate signage will be in place including access notices for businesses.

Mr. Cowell expressed concern at the cumulative loss of car parking spaces and informed members that he had spoken to the owners of St. Paul's Square who are very willing to assist with parking for events but have asked if the Commissioners could consider the provision of finger-post directional signs to their shopping precinct. Members agreed to discuss this further in private. Mr. Cowell also informed members that he would email the Deputy Town Clerk with other queries he had and also expressed concern at the lack of involvement by members generally.

Members expressed their concern with regard to the Sprint itself which they felt had been poor last year and needs to be looked at. Members asked if they could meet the organisers. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that he and the Town Clerk have spoken with the Sprint organisers who are willing to meet and who are looking to improve the Sprint. Mr. Beighton asked that the matter be pushed.



(2022/23:259) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's Report dated 10th December, 2022, providing further information about UNESCO Biosphere partnerships.

A proposal was put by Mr. Court that the Commission apply to be a Biosphere partner.

Mr. Beighton commented that he had thought that the pros' and cons' of being a partner were to be provided together with any implications for ratepayers. Mr. Cowell stated that he could not see how a local authority would fit in and queried whether we would be bound by the rules of another party. Mr. McGuinness stated that Climate Change legislation was more onerous than Biosphere partnership.

Mr. Williams informed members that his understanding is that we pledge to consider matters in terms of the partnership not to guarantee to be able to do things, and in so doing seconded Mr. Court's proposal which was put to the vote and carried.

Mr. Young expressed concern that use of fleet electric vehicles is being encouraged but there are no facilities to scrap such vehicles nor is there any resale value.

(2022/23:260) Public Correspondence / Meetings:

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

Department of Infrastructure – Local Authority Meetings:-

It was agreed that the Minister be invited to attend a special meeting in February, 2023. Mr. Williams advised that he would not attend that meeting.

(2022/23:261) Representative Report(s)

Resolved: To note the representative reports submitted as hereunder:-

Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool – Mr. McGuinness informed members that his report has been superseded by the Council of Ministers taking over the concept of moving all swimming pools under the control of the Department of Education and thereby removing the statutory boards. Mr. McGuinness commended writing to the town's Members of the House of Keys and those of the Ayre and Garff to raise concerns. It is a move away from local authority control but funding will still be by way of rates and this action could be seen as the "thin end of rate reform". Members were also reminded that the Commission had given the land at nominal consideration. Mr. Cowell asked that the comment about "back-door" rate reform be included in any correspondence.



(2022/23:261) Representative Report(s)

Mr. McGuinness commented also on the urgency with which the matter is being progressed and advised that the Commission had 13 days in which to act. Mr. Cowell congratulated Mr. McGuinness, as Chairman of the Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board, for the “glowing report” about Ramsey Pool within the report presented to Government.

A proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Beighton that the Commission ask for the matter to be deferred and seek a meeting was carried without division.

Manx Wildlife Trust – the report of the Open meeting submitted by Mr. McGuinness was noted.

Any Other Business:

(2022/23:262) Closure Ramsey Branch HSBC:

Mr. Singer referred to the imminent closure of Ramsey Branch of HSBC and asked that the following motion be considered:-

“That the Ramsey Town Commissioners express extreme concern at the proposed closure of the Ramsey Branch of HSBC and the detrimental effect it will have on the people and businesses in the Town and the North of the Island. Ramsey Town Commissioners call on the management of HSBC to reverse the decision.”

Mr. Singer asked that the matter be addressed to the Chief Executive of HSBC, copied to the Chief Minister, Members of the House of Keys for Ramsey, and all other local authorities. The parties to be asked to also write to the Bank in opposition to the closure. Mr. Cowell supported the motion which was put to the vote and carried by 7 votes to 2 Messrs. Court and Young voting against.

(2022/23:263) Sundry Matters:

263a) Manx Care: Mr. Kelly drew attention to recently publicised staffing difficulties at Noble’s Hospital and suggested that the Minister be asked to consider extending the opening hours of Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital to 10.00 p.m. Members agreed to discuss this matter at the imminent meeting with the members of the House of Keys for Ramsey (Mr. Hooper being the appropriate Minister for Health Services).

263b) Sponsorship for Fireworks: Mr. Beighton asked if a report on the pros’ and cons’ for having a sponsor for the Town’s 5th November fireworks display could be presented to the meeting on 18th January, 2023. At Mr. McGuinness’s suggestion it was agreed to extend the date to the February 2023 meeting.



(2022/23:263) Sundry Matters continued:

The Town Clerk drew attention to the following matters:-

263c) Suspected Breach of Planning –members were informed that the Department has confirmed that there is no breach of planning in respect of the use of property in Parliament Street as a “Drum Shop”.

263d) Draft Highways Maintenance Charter – it was confirmed that this document had been sent to all members for consideration in the near future.

263e) Consultation “Vaping” – members were advised that this Consultation had been sent to enable them to respond in their personal capacities if they so wish.

263f) Proposed Town Boundary Extension – members had been supplied with the response from Garff District Commissioners and upon receipt the response from Lezayre will be circulated. [Lezayre’s response was received and circulated on 6th January, 2023.]

263g) Forthcoming Meetings – 11th January Budget Meeting; 18th January Full Board Meeting; 25th January Budget and Meeting with the Members of the House of Keys for Ramsey.

263h) Traffic Liaison Group – Mr. McGuinness referred to a recent meeting he attended, organised by the Police, with regard to traffic and referred to the lack of recent meetings of the Traffic Liaison Group at which the Ramsey Town Commissioners have representation and proposed that the Commission write to the Department of Infrastructure to see if the meetings have stopped and if so seek a re-start.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that in other areas of the Island the Traffic Liaison Groups have merged with the Police Level 1 meetings which may be a way forward for Ramsey.

The proposal to write was seconded by Mr. Williams and carried.

The Chairman thanked the public for attending and also those watching via the live-streaming service and closed the public session at 7.52 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.

(2022/23:264) Minutes:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 16th November, 2022, and the Special Meeting held on 7th December, 2022, both recorded in private due to commercial sensitivity

Matters for Information:

(2022/23:265) Presentation Recycling:

Resolved: To note the report of the presentation made on 8th November, 2022, by representatives from Douglas Borough Council with regard to refuse recycling. Mr. Singer asked the Commission to think carefully about this matter in view of numerous complaints being made about the service.

(2022/23:266) Housing Committee:

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 6th December, 2022, subject to the following:-

Clause 58d) – Mr. Singer asked why the offer of tenancy had been refused – members were informed that the property is extremely small and investigations are being made to determine if it is viable to knock-through into the adjacent property.

(2022/23:267) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker” :

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 14th December, 2022, subject to the following:-

Abated Sums S 13 Agreement – in response to a query from Mr. Singer members were reminded that the agreement refers to the lack of green space provided in recent development.

(2022/23:268) On-Going Matters - Register of Ruinous Property, Unsightly Land and Buildings:

Resolved: To note the “Register of Ruinous Property ..” to 14th December, 2022, subject to the following and accepting that matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

Holly Grove Mount – members were informed that it would appear that works have commenced at this property.

Sun and Beauty – an offer by Mr. Cowell to speak with the owners was accepted.

Mr. Oldham drew attention to the provision of street furniture outside 10 Parliament Street and queried if approval had been sought; and to defective guttering at the Chinese Restaurant, also in Parliament Street.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2022/23:269) Town Clerk's Report – Local Authority Elections Fees Order:

Resolved: To note that, having regard to the time-factors for which a response was required, a "round-robin" vote was taken to determine the Commission's view on proposed election fees as presented by the Cabinet Office. The majority decision was to endorse the recommendation of the Cabinet Office to apply an increase having regard to CPI at September, 2022.

A formal proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams to ratify the decision was carried by 8 votes to 1, Mr. Singer voting against.

(2022/23:270) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Conrods ATBH:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 10th December, 2022, concerning the tenancy of the former Boathouse Café in the Mooragh Park, t/a Conrods ATBH. A fuller minute is recorded in private due to commercial sensitivity.

(2022/23:271) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report subject to the following:-

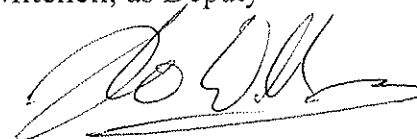
Rent Arrears - Mr. Kelly queried the list of rent arrears and was informed that there had been some change since preparation of the list including receipt of further rental payments via DSC not yet allocated.

Aged Debtors – Mr. Cowell queried activity on some of the older debts – the Finance Officer advised that some of the debts have been paid, others are being paid by instalment. The Town Clerk advised that he has been advised that the Attorney General's Department are understood to be in a position to now pay the long-standing debt. A particular debtor queried by Mr. Singer is known to procrastinate.

Potential Aged Debt – Write-Off – it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed to write off the two debts listed in Appendix 4 of the Finance Officer's report and reclaim the associated V.A.T. elements on both.

Mr. Beighton queried the actions and was advised that this was an accounting formality.

Bank Account Signatories -it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed that the bank signatories be amended with immediate effect to change permitted signatories to bank accounts held by the Commission to reflect the retirement of Mr. P. M. Bradford and the appointment of Mrs. M. Mitchell, as Deputy Finance Officer.



(2022/23:272) Technical Assistant's Report – Fixed Penalty Notices - Appeals:

Members considered the Technical Assistant's report dated 13th December, 2022, advising of the lack of response to a request for payment of a fixed penalty notices, following an unsuccessful appeal.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed that the matter be referred for prosecution.

Works and Development:

(2022/23:273) Town Clerk's Report – Bathing Quality North Beach:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 7th December, 2022, confirming that the North Beach has received "Good" designation of bathing water quality, following 2 seasons' testing.

It was further resolved the Town Clerk be authorised to apply for the official designation and obtain the appropriate signage.

(2022/23:274) Technical Services Manager's Report – Nuisance Notice...

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 7th December, 2022, advising of an ongoing nuisance at a property for which the owner has made no effort to rectify, despite having been spoken to.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed that a Nuisance Notice be served.

Housing and Property:

(2022/23:275) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Close Woirrey / former Albert Road Site:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed, consideration of the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 14th December, 2022, be deferred. Members asked for the full report to be included again in the next agenda pack.

(2022/23:276) Housing and Property Manager's Report Cronk Elfin Refurbishment Date:

Resolved: To note and approve the Housing and Property Manager's Report dated 13th December, 2022, providing details of the current status of the refurbishment programme at Cronk Elfin.



(2022/23:277) Private Correspondence:

Resolved: To note the items of correspondence / meetings brought to members' attention at 14th December, 2022, subject to the following:-

Manx Care – Pharmacy Licence Applications: - the response from Manx Care was noted. The Commission felt that there was nothing further than they could do in the matter.

Department for Enterprise – Corporate Services – it was agreed to inform the Department of Enterprise that the Commission is not inclined to install an ATM at the Town Hall at the present time.

Any Other Business:

(2022/23:278) St. Paul's Square Parking:

Mr. Cowell drew attention to the willingness of the owners of St. Paul's Square to permit free parking for events, subject to consideration of the provision of a "finger-post" directional sign indicating the Shopping Precinct and suggested the inclusion of a suitable sign in the vicinity of the Courthouse. Mr. Williams advised that the matter should be referred to the Department of Infrastructure.

Mr. McGuinness proposed the matter be referred to the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Beighton felt there needed to be a balance between direction to the St. Paul's Square Precinct and the rest of the Town's shopping centre.

Mr. Court seconded Mr. McGuinness's proposal which was put to the vote and carried by 7 votes to 2 Messrs. Cowell and Kelly voting against.

(2022/23:279) Quayside Redevelopment Proposals:

Mr. Beighton referred to the current proposals presented to the Commission with regard to Ramsey Quayside redevelopment and in particular his understanding that the concrete defence wall will not be "faced"; which he considered unacceptable and so queried if the Commission is able to object. The Town Clerk informed members that the Department's business case presenting options has yet to be presented to Treasury and suggested that the Commission could lobby to have the wall faced. Mr. Cowell informed members of the anticipated costs of such action.

Mr. Young commented that a painted finish would suffice.



(2022/23:280) Housing Maintenance Allowance:

Mr. Cowell referred to an increase in housing maintenance allowance and queried the affect that would have on the Commission. Members were informed that the increased would enable a greater sum to be spent on housing maintenance in relation to the rental income received and the increase would also affect the housing deficiency payment received from Government for public sector housing.

(2022/23:281) Manx Care – Missed G.P. Appointments:

Mr. Cowell referred to charges being imposed for missed doctors' appointments. He felt that a contributory factor was difficulties in contacting the Group Practice Centre and suggested a dedicated "appointment cancellation line" be established. Members agreed to bring the matter to the attention of the Members of the House of Keys for Ramsey when they meet with them in the near future.

Matters of Establishment:

(2022/23:282) Minutes Establishment Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of a meeting of the Establishment Committee held on 14th November, 2022, and 7th December, 2022.

Mr. Kelly queried if staff were permitted to carry leave forward and was informed that whilst it was not encouraged 9 days are permitted.

The meeting closed at 8.58 p.m. giving a time of 2 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.

Chairman.

