

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, 20th March, 2024, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. A. J. Oldham, Mses S. Cottam-Shea and L. L. Craine, Messrs. A. R. Beighton, G. S. Court (remotely); R. D. Cowell (remotely), Revd Canon N. D. Greenwood, J. McGuinness, F. B. R. Williams and W. G. Young.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. S. R. Kelly.

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

The Town Clerk in his capacity as Deputy Returning Officer presented Ms Cottam-Shea with her Certificate of Election.

(2023/24:335) Minutes:

Resolved: That, following a proposal by agreed without division, the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on be 21st February, 2024, confirmed and signed by the Chairman. Minor amendments had been notified in advance to members and corrected on the Official Set of Minutes.

(2023/24:336) Matters Arising:

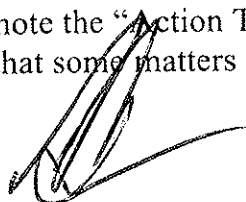
Mr. Beighton referred to the decision last month to hold the Christmas Lighting Switch-On, on a Saturday, and referred to communications with the Northern Chamber of Commerce as a result of which he wished the matter to be revisited and the Switch-on be held on a Friday evening. Mr. Beighton proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow consideration of this matter; this was seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed by 10 votes to 1, Ms Craine voting against.

Mr. Beighton proposed formally, that the matter be revisited to consider holding the Switch-on on a Friday evening; this was seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed by 10 votes to 1, Ms Craine voting against.

Matters for Information:

(2023/24:337) Action Tracker March, 2024:

Resolved: To note the "Action Tracker" to 13th March, 2024, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-



Mooragh Promenade Shelter Public Art – Mr. McGuinness queried progress from the schools about completing the shelter. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that he had no update. Mr. McGuinness explained his reasoning in including the school – to show the talent and maintain the involvement and interest of pupils in the Town. He asked that this be conveyed to the school and also his willingness to meet the Headteacher if it is thought this would be beneficial.

Ramsey South Promenade Changing Huts – Ms Craine queried whether the delay in progressing this matter is due to a decision about Lottery Funding. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was the case, but he had now been informed that Lottery Funding will not be made available for this scheme.

Adoption of Land Auldyn Walk – Ms Craine asked what “snagging works” were required. The Town Clerk advised that he has spoken with Dandara and the snagging included land encroachment and general tidying. He hoped to meet the company in the near future to move the matter forward.

Empty Pubs – the Deputy Town Clerk updated members with regard to the empty public house “The Royal George” in that they have an application to be heard at the April Sitting of the Licensing Court which could impact Sprintfest.

BMX Track – Ms Craine asked about the meeting referred to with the BMX Club. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the meeting on 14th March had not taken place but he was liaising with “Island BMX” and attempting to reach out to the former Ramsey BMX Club. The track will be tidied and some remedial safety works undertaken before Easter.

Bus Services – Ms Craine welcomed the decision of Bus Vannin to provide additional bus services during the 2024 TT and queried the definition of an “N6” service about which a decision to operate this service is pending. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that he understood this is a “Night Owl Service” but he has no further information at this stage.

(2023/24:338) Action Tracker Budget Approved and Proposed Projects:

Resolved: To note the Action Tracker of Budget Approved projects at 13th March, 2024, and that for proposals for 2023/24, subject to the following:-

Toilets Millennium Gardens - Ms Craine welcomed that Tesco have been in touch and expressed the hope that the company would use doors on their refrigerators when refurbishing their stores. Ms Craine also referred to the meeting with officers held on 13th March. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that he and the Housing and Property Manager had met with representatives from Tesco – who indicated by subsequent email their willingness to undertake work to the existing public conveniences and ask if the Commission would consider providing cleaning services as they did in the past. Members were also informed that the Director with whom the meeting was held would be willing to come and speak to and engage with the Commissioners. Ms Craine commented she would welcome the meeting.

Mr. McGuinness put a formal proposal that the email be circulated to members upon receipt of which the Commission discuss the way forward on this matter. The proposal was seconded by Ms Craine and carried nem-con.

Reference was made to the need, or otherwise to submit an updated planning application for the proposed public conveniences on the site of the Millennium Gardens.

North Promenade Changing Facility – Members queried if the extension planning application had been submitted, and were advised that it had been.

Finance and General Purposes:

2023/24:339) Town Clerk's Report – By-Election South Ward:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 8th March, 2024, concerning the By-Election held on 7th March, 2024, by which Ms Cottam-Shea was elected to serve on the Commission, in place of the late Mr. Singer, until 1st May, 2025. Thanks were conveyed to Mrs. Chrystal for her assistance with the by-election, which it was considered had been a well-run contest and congratulations were again conveyed to Ms Cottam-Shea on her election.

(2023/24:340) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 13th March, 2024, subject to the following:-

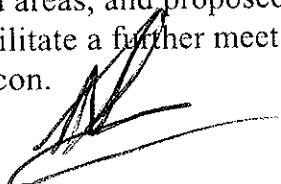
Mr. Beighton, as Deputy Lead Member for Finance, outlined the report advising members of receipt of Treasury approval to capital projects' funding; rate income; and explained some of the invoices paid. Mr. Beighton requested any members with questions on the accounts presented to ask the Finance Officer about them either in person or by email.

Works and Development:

(2023/24:341) Town Clerk's Report – Manx Telecom Fibre Broadband Status:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 5th March, 2024, advising of progress made by Manx Telecom in the provision of fibre broadband in Ramsey, in advance of submission of planning applications, [possibly in April, 2024].

Mr. McGuinness referred to a meeting some time ago with Manx Telecom and residents in the proposed areas, and proposed that the Commission take steps to reach out and to attempt to facilitate a further meeting. Mr. Beighton seconded the proposal which was carried nem-con.



(2023/24:342) Town Clerk’s Report – Vollan Fields Public Open Space Section 13 Agreement Hartford Homes:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 7th March, 2024, advising of four areas of Public Open Space, some of which will have play equipment, which might be conveyed to the Ramsey Town Commissioners’ under a Section 13 Agreement in respect of proposed development at Vollan Fields.

A proposal was put by Mr. Williams that the Commission accept the suggested areas. The proposal was seconded by Ms Craine.

Discussion continued with regard to potential costs for future care and maintenance of the areas and play equipment, any requirement for provision of additional lighting and safety and security.

An amendment was proposed by Mr. Parker that the Commission meet the developers and officers investigate what is needed. Mr. McGuinness seconded this amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried by 9 votes to 2, Messrs. Cowell and Young voting against.

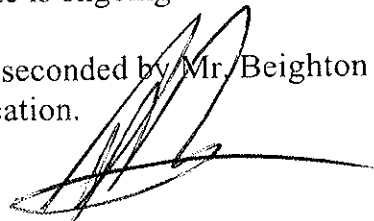
(2023/24:343) Technical Services Manager’s Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager’s Report dated 12th March, 2024, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, subject to the following:

REF NO: 4131
P.A. NO.: 24/00194/B
PROPOSED: Erection of a three storey extension on the north elevation (alteration to PA 19/00176/B), extensions to the lower ground floor & variation of condition 2 of PA 19/00176/B to allow a total of three bedrooms in the whole house to be used as tourist TT/MGP accommodation
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Beach House, Stanley Mount East, Ramsey.**

Reference was made to a complaint concerning the condition of the site. Members were informed that work on the site is ongoing.

It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed nem-con that no objection be made to the application.



REF NO: 4132
P.A. NO.: 24/00199/B
PROPOSED: Conversion of former ground floor restaurant and first floor function room into four apartments
NOTES: P.A. in Detail
SITE: **Shipdesine House, East Quay, Ramsey.**

In drawing attention to the application, Mr. Williams proposed that no objection be submitted. The proposal was seconded by Ms Craine. Mr. Young commented on the possible lack of parking provision. Members responded that there were probably more cars needing parking in the vicinity when the premises were used as a restaurant.

The proposal was put to the vote and carried by 10 votes to 1, Mr. Young voting against.

(2023/24:344) Notice of Motion – “Proposal to Tackle Dog Fouling in Ramsey”:

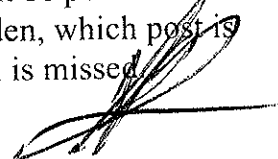
Ms Craine present the Notice of Motion dated 12th March, 2024, standing in her name which the Chairman, in terms of Standing Order 14, permitted be debated at this meeting.

Ms Craine presented the Notice of Motion concerning the proposal to install CCTV cameras in areas of the town to identify those guilty of permitting their dogs to foul and as a deterrent against dog fouling – the Commission need to name, shame and prosecute. Ms Craine anticipated the provision of 10 cameras and suggested the high-risk areas be trialled initially.

The Town Clerk advised that the Commission would need to ensure that all GDPR requirements are met.

Mr. Beighton recognised that something needs to be done but suggested that the Commission need to look at the wider picture to determine how best to deal with the problem, the provision of CCTV being only one suggestion as to how to remedy it which he felt would be insufficient.

Ms Craine proposed a budget of £1,000 prior to which a report on “high risk” areas be presented and then next month, based on that report, a purchase be made to enable a trial run to be undertaken before rolling out a fuller programme in the future.. Members queried who would review the CCTV footage. Ms Craine suggested the staff emptying bins could undertake viewing at the same time. The Town Clerk advised that refuse crews are fully employed but that it might be possible to include viewing CCTV footage within the duties for the Town Warden, which post is currently being advertised – the presence of a Town Warden is missed



(2023/24:344) Notice of Motion – “Proposal to Tackle Dog Fouling in Ramsey” Continued:

Mr. McGuinness, in order to move forward, seconded Ms Craine’s proposal confirming the need for further report including identifying areas which will be of assistance for GDPR requirements.

Mr. Williams proposed an amendment that no money be budgeted as yet but further report be made to include what actions other authorities are taking to resolve the problem. Ms Craine seconded this amendment, with reservations, that the Commission needed the will to progress the matter, which was put to the vote and carried by 10 votes to 1, Mr. Cowell voting against.

Any Other Business:

(2023/24:345) Matters Raised by the Public – Close Caarjys Footpath:

Members attention was drawn to the problem of water flooding on the footpath at Close Caarjys. The Housing and Property Manager informed members that the MUA have relayed a cable and that the Commission’s staff are going to go and try and clear a blocked gulley. No works have been undertaken to the footpath as yet as it is felt the blocked gulley is the source of the problem

Ms Craine queried the location of the gulley and provided further photographs which show a drop in the footpath towards the garden. The Housing and Property Manager thought it unlikely that the gulley was in the garden, but that can be checked, his understanding is that the gulley is on land owned by the Department of Infrastructure, but that it may be necessary to regrade the footpath.

(2023/24:346) Rates Reductions:

Mr. Young queried the status of rate reductions he understood had been applied within the town, namely at King’s Court and Queen’s Court; and at Court Row and queried if any reductions granted had been lifted.

The Town Clerk undertook to investigate the matter and advise members accordingly.

(2023/24:347) Civic Amenity Site:

Mr. Parker queried the closure of the Civic Amenity Site “recycle centre” at weekends? The Technical Services Manager informed members that it was closed for staffing and safety reasons in that because of broken machinery and the need to bring in an alternative, staff were needed to act as “banksmen” elsewhere on the site. It is not known how long the machine will take to repair but the parts have now arrived.

Ms Craine referred to frequency that the bin holding recycled plastic bottles is emptied, which she felt was insufficient and asked if the CA Site Committee would consider emptying the bin more often.

(2023/24:348) Footpath former Railway Line:

Ms Craine referred to the footpath from the former railway line, which exits via Auldryn Meadow onto “Lezayre Housing Estate”. Ms Craine felt the crossing point to be dangerous there is no dropped kerb; the exit point is on a dangerous corner which gets busy at school drop-off and pick-up times.

The Town Clerk indicated that he had brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure who have indicated that it will be included in their programme of works for minor traffic management interventions.

(2023/24:349) Sundry Matters – Town Clerk:

The Town Clerk drew attention to the following sundry matters:-

349a) Objections Public Open Space – the Town Clerk referred to letters of objection to proposals for acquisition of public open space which will be brought to the attention of the Board in April, 2024;

349b) Flood Defences Quayside – the Town Clerk informed members that he has received a holding reply from the Department of Infrastructure but hopes to meet their engineer in the near future, which should enable him to report further.

349c) Consultation Empty Properties – the Town Clerk reported receipt of this consultation which will be presented to the April, 2024, meeting of the Board.

349d) Shennaghys Jiu Festival – the Town Clerk reminded members of the 2024 Festival which will commence next week.

349e) Leaves – Artificial Tree Radio Masts – reference was made to Mr. Young’s recent radio comments, as a result of which he has received a quantity of detached leaves from the artificial tree style aerial masts at the Albert Tower. The Town Clerk undertook to pass them on to the authority responsible for the site.

The Chairman closed the public meeting at 8.28 p.m.

Mr. Cowell withdrew from the meeting at this stage.

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.

(2023/24:350) Minutes Recorded in Private:

Resolved: That the Minutes, recorded in private, of Board Meeting held on 21st February, 2024, be adopted and approved.

Matters for Information:

(2023/24:351) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 13th March, 2024, subject to the following:-

Land Exchange former Laundry/Boxing Club / Station Road Car Park – Ms Craine queried the status of this, once proposed, land exchange. The Town Clerk advised that Isle of Man Enterprises were in a state of flux no negotiations have taken place recently but he will raise the matter again with the company.

Suggested Land Exchange – Bus Station Site – Ms Craine queried the status of this suggested land exchange. The Town Clerk informed members that he had contacted Mr. Cranmer, Department of Infrastructure, but had heard nothing. Ms Craine suggested making contact with his superiors and asked that the matter be included on the “Action Tracker”.

Town Branding – Mr. McGuinness again queried progress about Town Branding. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that he understood the matter will be discussed by the Northern Chamber of Commerce at their meeting on 11th April.

Court Proceedings Rent Arrears – Mr. McGuinness queried progress on this matter and asked if a “target date” could be included in the “Action Tracker”. The Housing and Property Manager informed members it is understood that there are other debts which would take precedent but the matter would be checked with advocates.

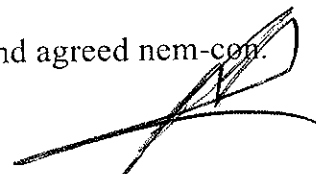
Finance and General Purposes:

(2023/24:352) Town Clerk’s Report – Britannia Commuted Sum in Lieu of Public Open Space:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 7th March, 2024, advising of the Commuted Sum offered by the developers of the former Britannia Hotel, in lieu of the provision of public open space.

A proposal was put by Mr. Parker that the sum offered be accepted. Ms Craine asked what other councils have done in similar circumstances. The Town Clerk advised that it was not possible to be specific. Ms Craine seconded the proposal but moved an amendment that it be extended to include publication of what is done with the commuted sum and explanation of its purpose, etc.

The amendment was seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed nem-con.



(2023/24:353) Town Clerk's Report – Leave of Absence – Mr. S. R. Kelly:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 5th March, 2024, advising of the request made by Mr. S. R. Kelly for leave of absence on health grounds.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed nem-con that indefinite leave of absence be granted and the Commission's best wishes be sent to Mr. Kelly.

(2023/24:354) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – GDPR Compliance:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 13th March, 2024, advising of the quotation received for the provision of a GDPR Compliance "Health Check" by Rowany Solutions Limited.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Ms. Craine and agreed nem-con that the quotation, for which budget inclusion has been made, be accepted. Members noted that the company will attend the Town Hall to undertake work required.

(2023/24:355) Finance Officer's Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's report dated 13th March, 2024, 2024, subject to the following:-

Rent Arrears – members were informed that a Notice to Quit has been issued in respect of the second listed tenant, the tenant did not attend at Court when required to do so and the Hearing has been rescheduled for 10th April.

Aged Debtors – Members were informed that the one of larger commercial debtors had paid their longer standing debt. The arbitration meeting for this debt did not take place and has been rescheduled. Further contact is being made with other debtors and an updated address has been identified for another debtor.

Potential Debt Write-Offs:

Proposed by Mr. Beighton, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed by 9 votes to 1, Canon Greenwood voting against, that the third listed Trade debt be written off.

Proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Ms Craine and agreed by 9 votes to 1, Canon Greenwood voting against, that the sixth listed Trade Debt be pursued through the Small Claims Court.

Proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Ms Craine that the Trade and Rent debts as recommended within the Finance Officer's report be written off. Carried by 9 votes to 1, Canon Greenwood voted against.

(2023/24:355) Finance Officer's Report Continued:

Audit and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2023:

Proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Ms Craine and agreed nem-con that the draft financial statements be approved for the year ended 31st March, 2023, and the Chairman and Finance Officer, in his capacity as Responsible Finance Officer, be authorised to sign them and the Letter of Representation on completion of the audit process.

Housing and Property:

(2023/24:356) Minutes Housing Committee:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing Committee held on 5th March, 2024, subject to the following:-

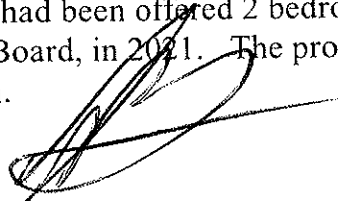
054a) Members were informed that it would not be possible to recover the debt referred to in the clause.

055d) Members were informed that the wording of the Clause will be adapted to reflect that the Committee had discussed the options available to the applicant for housing accommodation.

059b) Discussion took place with regard to the one-bedroomed waiting list for public sector housing. Varying views were expressed with regard to allocation of one bedroomed properties – Mr. Williams felt that applicants on this list should not be offered 2 bedroomed properties; Ms Craine stating that applicants on the two-bedroom waiting list could be offered one bedroomed properties. Mr. McGuinness indicated that it had been the policy to offer, subject to qualification at that time, applicants on the one bedroom waiting list, 2 bedroomed accommodation. Mr. Parker stated that this was still the case but the cost of 2 bedroomed accommodation was often prohibitively expensive for single applicants.

Mr. Williams proposed that applicants on the one-bedroom housing waiting list be written to, to see if they would be willing to accept 2 bedroomed accommodation.

A formal proposition was put by Ms Craine that the Housing and Property Manager provide an analysis of the number of applicants on the one-bedroom housing waiting list who had been offered 2 bedroomed accommodation since the formation of the current Board, in 2021. The proposal was seconded by Mr. McGuinness and carried nem-con.



(2023/24:357) Housing and Property Manager's Report – General Projects Update:

Resolved: To note and approve the Housing and Property Manager's report on General Capital Updates, dated 13th March, 2024, subject to the following:-

Close Woirrey – proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed nem-con that the necessary petition for borrowing powers be submitted for the demolition of Close Woirrey and associated costs.

Mr. McGuinness commented that the Commission should continue to push Government to enable progression of capital projects.

Millennium Garden Toilet Block – members queried if there was a time factor in submission of further information on the planning application – on being informed not it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 9 votes to 1, Canon Greenwood voting against to defer submission of further information for the time being.

Any Other Business:

(2023/24:358) Technical Services Manager Sundry Matters:-

The Technical Services Manager raised the following matters:-

10/11 West Quay – members were informed that discussion had been held with Highways and submission of a suspension of parking application had been made.

Street Lighting Contract – members were informed that MUA have sought advice about the procurement process and timescale involved. Onchan has now employed the services of an on-Island contractor other than MUA – the Technical Services Manager advised that it may be beneficial to monitor Onchan in this matter.

It was proposed by Mr. Oldham, seconded by Mr. McGuinness that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue, after 10.00 p.m., to its conclusion.

The meeting closed at 10.25 p.m. giving a time of 3 ½ hours for the payment of attendance allowances.


Chairman.