

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, 19th April, 2023, 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, Revd Canon N. D. Greenwood, [remotely], S. R. Kelly, J. McGuinness, A. J. Oldham, L. Parker and W. G. Young.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. L. I. Singer.

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

Mr. F. B. R. Williams was not in attendance at the commencement of the meeting and Mr. Court, as Deputy Chairman, took the Chair.

(2022/23:399) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 15th March, 2023, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2022/23:400) Matters Arising:

No matters were raised.

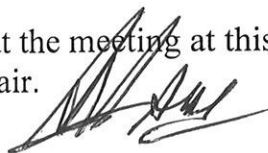
Matters for Information:

(2022/23:401) Action Tracker April, 2023:

Resolved: To note the "Action Tracker" to 13th April, 2023, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

Bicycle Shelters – Mr. Cowell queried the selection of the Tram Station as the site for the third bicycle shelter and was informed that this had been agreed with the Department as part of refurbishment of the tram station including reinstating the tram-line so that journeys commenced at the station building. No costs would be incurred by the Commission. The Town Clerk informed members of his understanding that the tram station will be fully operational this summer.

Mr. Williams arrived at the meeting at this stage (7.10 p.m.) apologised for his late arrival and took the chair.



(2022/23:401) Action Tracker April, 2023 Continued:

South Promenade Changing Huts – Mr. Court informed members of his understanding that plans had been supplied for proposed changing huts and queried the schedule. Mr. Kelly informed members that the plans, using reclaimed timbers from the Queen’s Pier had been received and that enquiry has been made with the Planning Committee about the design and the requirement for planning permission because of the temporary nature of the huts. Members were informed that the design submitted would need some tweaking.

(2022/23:402) Action Tracker Budget Approved and Proposed Projects:

Resolved: To note the Action Tracker of Budget Approved projects at 13th April, 2023 and that for proposals for 2023/24.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2022/23:403) Town Clerk’s Report – Input Isle of Man Electoral Commission:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 4th April 2023, advising of receipt of a questionnaire provided by the Electoral Commission with regard to their remit to consider the review of the number and boundaries of constituencies and other electoral matters. The questionnaire and suggested responses were appended to the report.

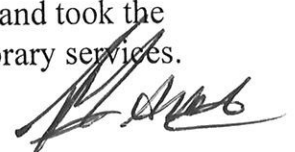
A proposal was put by Mr. McGuinness that comment be made that the questionnaire has little regard for modern technology and lacks forward thinking. Mr. Williams proposed an amendment that the responses to the questionnaire be accepted and include the comments proposed by Mr. McGuinness. Mr. McGuinness was happy to second the amendment and his original proposal was technically withdrawn.

The proposal by Mr. Williams was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

(2022/23:404) Town Clerk’s Report – Library Report Quarter 1 2023:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 11th April, 2023, reporting on activity within the Town Library during the first quarter of 2023.

Mr. Court commented on the positivity in seeing new library members and took the opportunity to thank the hard-working library staff for providing the library services.



(2022/23:405) Town Clerk's Report – MUA Wayleaves:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 22nd March, 2023, concerning the request made by Manx Utilities Authority to lay cables across land in the ownership of the Commission at Bircham Avenue and Station Road Car Park.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed, subject to the Departmental approval in terms of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1985, the two wayleaves be granted each for a nominal consideration of 25p.

(2022/23:406) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 12th April, 2023, subject to the following:-

Summary of Revenue Income and Expenditure – Mr. Beighton queried the figures shown for Workshops expenditure. The Finance Officer explained that it was for work carried out late in the previous financial year and exacerbated by increased heating and lighting costs. The Finance Officer undertook to provide Mr. Beighton with more detailed information.

Works and Development:

(2022/23:407) Town Clerk's Report – Consultation...Building Control Refusal...Fossil Fuel:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 4th April, 2023, advising of the consultation being progressed by the Climate Change Transformation Team on proposals to refuse, with effect from 1st August, 2023, building control approval on applications for new buildings containing fossil fuel heating systems, as a way of effectively bringing forward ban effective from 1st January, 2025. The questions comprising the consultation were appended to the report.

General discussion ensued during which members expressed their views that the proposals were unnecessary and were being introduced with too much haste; they were detrimental to smaller companies and individual developers and could lead to serious cost implications, reduce the availability of affordable housing and deter first time buyers .

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed, by 10 votes to 1, Miss Craine voting against, that the Commission's concerns be conveyed.

(2022/23:408) Town Clerk's Report – Hair Pin Car Park:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 4th April, 2023, advising of the proposals of DEFA to create a public car park in the old quarry adjacent to Ramsey Hairpin Coroner and about which the Commission's views have been sought. Members expressed concern at possible traffic problems accessing and exiting the car parking area but were reminded that this would be addressed by the Highways Division as part of the planning process.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Oldham, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed the Department be informed of the Commission's support to the proposal.

(2022/23:409) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 11th April, 2023, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures.

Appendix: No comments were made on the appendix.

(2022/23:410) Technical Services Manager's Report – Street Lighting – Lanes:

Members considered the Technical Services Manager's report dated 28th March, 2023, concerning the condition of street lighting in the lanes between Parliament Street and the Quay, initially refurbished in 2010. Members welcomed the decision to bring this matter into the public domain as it explained the problems encountered by the Commission. Members felt that the problems with the lighting had been exacerbated because the original cabling had been buried and not ducted and referred also to other problems in the "Regeneration Area".

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the problems be brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure and they be invited to inspect the areas and progress repairs, which should not be borne by the ratepayers.

Parks and Leisure:

(2022/23:411) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – 2023 Events / Coronation:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th April, 2023, and his tabled report, specifically on proposed Coronation Events, dated 19th April, 2023.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed to support a Coronation Event in the Mooragh Park during the Bank Holiday weekend 27th – 29th May, 2023. Members commended the work of the Lead Member and Deputy Town Clerk in responding quickly to the announcement that a Cabinet Office grant could be made available for Coronation themed events.

(2022/23:412) Notice of Motion – Airport Parking:

With the Chairman's permission the Notice of Motion dated 11th April, 2023, standing in the name of Mr. J. McGuinness concerning proposed amendments to Airport Parking fees. Members noted that it is proposed to reduce the free parking time permitted at the airport from 60 minutes to only 15.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed that the Commissioners object to the proposal which if imposed will place residents in Ramsey and the North of the Island at a distinct disadvantage particularly if flights are delayed.

An amendment was put by Mr. Williams that the letter be copied to and support sought from the other local authorities in the North of the Island but attention was drawn to the tight time factors, the deadline for responses being 21st April.

Mr. Cowell thanked Mr. McGuinness for bringing this matter to the Commissioners' attention.

Any Other Business:

(2022/23:413) Representative Report Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board:

Resolved: To note the report submitted by Mr. McGuinness with regard to a meeting of the Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board held on 27th March, 2023.

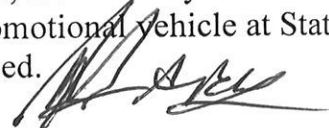
Mr. McGuinness reiterated the lack of support from Government for local authorities with regard to solar panels and energy saving measures. Members were concerned to note that only 3 of the participating authorities had increased the rate contribution for operation of the pool. Mr. McGuinness pointed out that the respective members of the House of Keys had pointed out that the increase was optional and could not be enforced.

The Town Clerk informed members that he written on more than one occasion about local authority access to funding towards meeting "green" targets without response and advised members that he would do so again.

2023/24:414) Sundry Matters:

414a) South Beach: Mr. Young drew attention to the condition of South Beach which he contended needs cleaning and clearing. It was agreed that officers discuss the matter with the Director of Harbours.

414b) Alzheimer's Society: A proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. Oldham that the Alzheimer's Society be permitted to place a promotional vehicle at Station Road Car Park as part of "Alzheimer's Week" was agreed.



414c) Ramsey AFC Training Facilities: Mr. Court informed members that he had been approached by Mr. Leece on behalf of Ramsey Association Football Club asking if the Commission had any land that might be available to provide additional training facilities for the football club. Members recognised the importance of the sporting and social clubs in Ramsey for young people and although they could not identify land in the Commission's ownership, agreed, following a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. Parker that officers discuss the possibility of making the Lheighany Field, in the ownership of the Department of Education Sport and Culture available to the Club.

414d) Coronation Events: Mr. Oldham took the opportunity to inform members that Coronation Events, organised by The Hub, would be taking place at the Courthouse on 6th and 7th May, 2023.

414e) Bathing Water Quality North Beach: The Town Clerk informed members that the signs prepared, with a "QR" code, by the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, are now available. Members agreed to thank the Department for these signs.

414f) Motorhome Parking: The Town Clerk informed members of some of the topics raised during discussion with Mr. Keith Pringle on behalf of motorhome owners, which included a wish for a longer season, grey water drainage and off-season storage. Mr. Kelly referred to fewer motorhomes using the amenity area during the Easter weekend and was informed that this was a seasonal variation and that T.T. was usually the busier time.

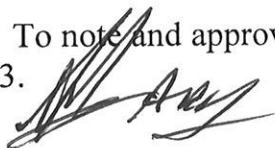
414g) Leisure Footpath: The Town Clerk advised members of preliminary discussions held with the Department of Infrastructure concerning a leisure footpath network about which he will meet with the Department and report further.

The Chairman thanked the media for attending and also those watching via the live-streaming service and closed the public session at 8.05 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.

(2022/23:415) Minutes:

Resolved: To note and approve the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 5th April, 2023.



Matters for Information:

(2022/23:416) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 13th April, 2023, subject to the following:-

Rate Arrears – Mr. McGuinness queried progress in chasing rate debt. The Town Clerk advised members that progress is being made and some debt recovery has been successful. Legislation is being checked with regard to further actions available to the Commission.

Town Branding – the Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the first part of filming over 12 venues had taken place – the Department of Enterprise had wished to focus on people.

Abated Sum – Mr. Cowell commented on the play equipment and asked when the protective fence would be removed. The Town Clerk informed members that this would happen soon when a few final finishing works had been completed.

(2022/23:417) On-Going Matters - Register of Ruinous Property, Unightly Land and Buildings:

Resolved: To note the “Register of Ruinous Property ..” to 13th April, 2023, subject to the following and accepting that matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

Seymore House – Members were informed that it had only been possible to post the notices on the owner of this property and that this was done at his known addresses in the UK. Legal advice is being sought.

Finance and General Purposes:

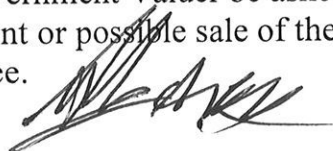
(2022/23:418) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Big Brother Little Brother – Boathouse Café:

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 12th April, 2023, advising of the assignment of the lease of the Boathouse Café on 30th March, 2023.

(2022/23:419) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Land at Poyll Dooley Road:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 12th April, 2023, advising of the expiring of the Licence to Occupy land in the Commission’s ownership.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed, the Government Valuer be asked to value the land for the purpose of an occupancy agreement or possible sale of the land and negotiation be commenced with the existing Licensee.



(2022/23:420) Finance Officer's General Report:

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 12th April, 2023, subject to the following:-

Post-Budget Price Increases: - Mr. McGuinness drew attention to the increases in costs advised after the town rate was set, particularly by the utility services and Treasury with regard to external audit services.

Internal Auditor – Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Beighton, seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed by 9 votes to 2, Messrs. Court and McGuinness voting against that the existing internal auditors be reappointed for a period of 3 years at the same costs as previous years.

(2022/23:421) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Rent Arrears Court Judgement and Execution:

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 5th April, 2023, advising of a recent discussion with our Advocates and the Coroner for Middle concerning the enforcement of a judgement for recovery of rent arrears. The circumstances were provided in detail within the report.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed, noting that Canon Greenwood's vote could not be determined at the time of voting, the matter be deferred until October, 2023, and it be added to the "Action Tracker" as an aide-memoire.

(2022/23:422) Technical Assistant's Report – Fixed Penalty Notices - Appeals:

Members considered the Technical Assistant's report dated 11th April, 2023, advising of appeals submitted in respect of fixed penalties issued for littering offences.

Resolved: That the following be noted:-

- Penalty 0718 – Proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed to uphold the appeal. A further proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Beighton that the Commission review the procedures to enable decisions on appeals to be made at officer level failed by 8 votes to 3, Messrs. Beighton, Kelly and Parker voting in favour.
- Penalties 0723 and 0724 – Mr. McGuinness welcomed the provision of additional photographs with regard to these penalties. Proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed by 9 votes to 2 to uphold the appeals and approach the offender to provide improved litter receptacle facilities. Miss Craine and Canon Greenwood voted against.
- Penalty 0726 – Proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed to uphold the appeal. It was noted that the property is included within the ruinous buildings reports.
- Penalty 0139 – Proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Beighton and agreed to reject the penalty.



Works and Development:

(2022/23:423) Technical Assistant's Report – Flat Registration:

Members considered the Technical Assistant's Report dated 11th April, 2023, bringing the Board's attention to a particular property registered under the Housing (Flats) Regulations 1982. The flat fails to meet the proportions required for registration under the current regulations in that the floor area is slightly less than prescribed.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. McGuinness that there be no requirement to re-register the flat and the existing registration stand.

Housing and Property:

(2022/23:424) Housing Committee:

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 4th April, 2023.

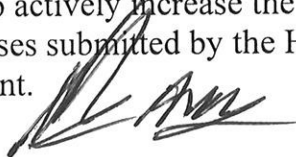
(2022/23:425) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Cronk Elfin Refurbishment Update:

Resolved: to note the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 5th April, 2023, providing an update on the refurbishment works progressing at Cronk Elfin.

(2022/23:426) Housing and Property Manager's Report – Identifying Public Sector Housing Demand:

Resolved: to note and approve the Housing and Property Manager's report dated 12th April, 2023, to which was appended suggested responses to a questionnaire issued by the Department of Infrastructure which assist in identifying public sector housing needs.

It was further resolved, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Williams, and agreed, that subject to the response to Question 6 being more strongly emphasised for the need to actively increase the provision of two-bedroomed public sector housing, the responses submitted by the Housing and Property Manager be presented to the Department.



Parks and Leisure:

(2022/23:427) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Ramsey Sprint and Sprintfest:

Resolved; To note the Deputy Town Clerk's report dated 12th April, 2023, updating members on progress being made with regard to the organisation of Ramsey Sprint by Straightliners and of the Sprintfest events.

Members were informed that no communication had been received from the public houses on the Quay, despite numerous attempts. The Deputy Town Clerk referred to two responses to road closures for which he is progressing a more detailed response.

Any Other Business:

(2022/23:428) Auldyn House Shuttering:

Mr. Kelly drew attention to the poor condition of shuttering at the site of "Auldyn House". Members were reminded that this site is included within Ruinous Building report.

(2022/23:429) Health and Safety – Working at Height:

The Town Clerk drew attention to a recent incident where unauthorised working at height had occurred as a result of actions of a member of the Commission, resulting in staff being disciplined. He took the opportunity to remind members that instructions to staff need to go through him or appropriate line managers.

The Chairman supported the Town Clerk's comments and indicated that whilst welcoming the initiative confirmed members cannot act in such a way.

(2022/23:430) Notice of Motion:

A proposal put by Mr. Cowell, seconded by Mr. Williams and agreed by 7 votes to 3, Canon Greenwood having temporarily lost remote connection, and Miss Craine and Messrs. Court and McGuinness voted against, to suspend Standing Orders to allow further discussion on a matter of Establishment.

The matter, in accordance with Standing Orders, was recorded in private.

The Finance Officer, and Minute Clerk withdrew from the meeting at 9.30 p.m., further minutes were recorded in private and were taken by the Town Clerk.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m. giving a time of 3 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.

Chairman.

