

**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, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, at 7.00 p.m.

**Present:** Messrs. A. J. Oldham, A. R. Beighton, G. S. Court, R. D. Cowell, Revd Canon N. D. Greenwood, S. R. Kelly, L. Parker, L. I. Singer, F. B. R. Williams and W. G. Young.

Apologies for absence Miss L. L. Craine and Mr. J. McGuinness.

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

**(2023/24:111) Minutes:**

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, and those recorded when the meeting was reconvened on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**(2023/24:112) Matters Arising:**

following matter, not specifically appearing within the Agenda was raised:

Mr. Parker referred to comments made by Mr. Singer with regard to the Cronk Elfin Refurbishment [Clause 095 referred] and informed members of the obligations of the principal contractor and of his understanding that the sub-contractor about which there had been concern is now back on schedule.

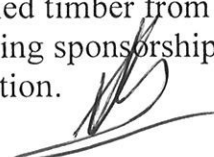
**Matters for Information:**

**(2023/24:113) Action Tracker August, 2023:**

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

**Empty Pubs** – Mr. Cowell queried progress with regard to the sale of “The Stanley Hotel” – members were informed that it is understood that the sale has “stalled”. Mr. Cowell also referred to the re-opening of “The Central Hotel” – members being informed that this is understood to be imminent.

**Ramsey South Promenade Changing Huts** – Mr. Kelly updated members on recent discussions with the Swimming Group; the Department of Infrastructure is agreeable, subject to conditions, to the siting of the changing hut; traffic arrangements will need to be varied; a budget of £3,500 is set aside . Reclaimed timber from the Queen’s Pier can be used and the Swimming Group have been seeking sponsorship and have volunteer tradesmen willing to undertake the construction.



**(2023/24:114) Action Tracker Budget Approved and Proposed Projects:**

Resolved: To note the Action Tracker of Budget Approved projects at 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 and that for proposals for 2023/24, subject to the following:-

**Coronation Park Toilets** – the Housing and Property Manager informed members that planning approval has been granted.

**Town Hall Solar Panels** – Mr. Singer queried if any response has been received concerning the possibility of “Climate Change Grant” for this purpose – members were informed not. The Town Clerk referred to the positive meeting with the Members of the House of Keys for Ramsey and indicated that he would chase for a response.

North Promenade Changing Facility: Mr. Cowell queried the expiration of the planning approval; members being informed that it is understood to be March 2024. It was noted that the swimming groups were not in favour of siting changing facilities on the North Promenade. It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed that a survey be undertaken to determine whether or not this is the case following which consideration be given to reallocating the funding for this project.

**Finance and General Purposes:**

**(2023/24:115) Town Clerk’s Report – Access to Cash Survey:**

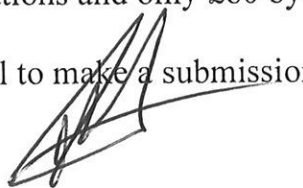
Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, concerning the Access to Cash Survey being undertaken by the Isle of Man Government, a copy of which had been provided to members.

Mr. Singer commended the importance of the Commission responding to the survey – he felt the survey to be biased against use of cash and felt that so many areas of the community would suffer if cash were not available – referring to charities, tipping, street collections, he felt that not everyone used “smart phones” and some people do not have bank accounts. In making his comments Mr. Singer proposed they form the basis of a formal response.

Mr. Parker seconded the proposal stating that card machines “go-down”, withdrawal points run out of money and many people find managing cash easier.

Mr. Oldham commented that the last RBL Poppy Appeal raised over £17,000 by way of cash donations and only £80 by way of card donations.

The proposal to make a submission was carried. Individual responses were also encouraged.



**(2023/24:116) Finance Officer's General Report:**

Resolved: To note and approve the Finance Officer's general report dated 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, subject to the following:-

Mr. Cowell, in his capacity as Lead Member, drew attention to the larger payments including waste disposal and housing repairs and reminded members that any questions on any matters of finance could be addressed to the Finance Officer at any time.

**Works and Development:**

**(2023/24:117) Town Clerk's Report – Painting Lamp Post (Artwork):**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, advising of the request made to paint a lamp post situated in Parliament Street.

Mr. Kelly commented that the proposals were not conducive to Health and Safety and could be dangerous and so proposed that the Commission object to the proposal. Mr. Singer agreed stating that he could see no point in only one lamppost being painted – a theme might be better involving the shop premises rather than the lamppost which would be more effective.

Mr Cowell agreed with his colleagues and suggested the applicant be invited to paint a park shelter instead.

Mr. Williams was in support of the proposals – encouraging art work will brighten the Town. Mr. Parker agreed with Mr. Williams stating that the health and safety issues would be responsibility of the applicant.

The Town Clerk advised that ultimately Health and Safety was the responsibility of the Commission the issues concerned electrical safety and working at heights. Mr. Signer further commented that the art work would be more effective if it were on an adjacent shop.

Mr. Cowell seconded Mr. Kelly's proposal which was carried by 6 votes to 4. Messrs. Kelly, Oldham, Young, Singer, Greenwood and Cowell voting for.

It was further resolved and agreed following a proposal by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Beighton that the applicant be informed that the Commission is agreeable to the principle of the shop premises being decorated.

**(2023/24:118) Town Clerk's Report – Poyll Dooley Fields Presumption of Dedication:**

Mr. Williams declared an interest in this Clause and took no part in the discussion thereon.

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, advising correspondence received from Mr. Willimas, in his capacity of Highways and Public Rights of Way Manager for the Department of Infrastructure. The report advises members that the Department of Infrastructure has commenced preparation of a Draft Order with regard to public rights of way at Poyll Dooley and the Commission will be able to make further comment as part of the process.

Members asked that the Department be requested to provide more detailed mapping.

**(2023/24:119) Town Clerk's Report – Statutory Nuisances:**

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk's report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, advising of correspondence received from DEFA with regard to further suspension of statutory nuisance investigation services.

**(2023/24:120) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – Isle of Man Anti-Cancer Association Roadshow:**

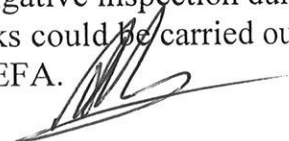
Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, conveying the request of the Isle of Man Anti-Cancer Association to site an ambulance in Station Road Car Park on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2023, as part of their Cancer Awareness Road Show.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Oldham, seconded by Cowell and agreed permission be granted.

**(2023/24:121) Technical Services Manager's Report – Beach Cleaning:**

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2023, advising of possible costs for regular beach cleaning and that responses are awaited from DEFA and the Manx Wildlife Trust with regard to their guidance on this matter.

Mr. Young queried the recent attendance of Commissioners' staff and others at the foreshore – members were informed that this was an investigative inspection during which no rubbish was found. It was reiterated that no works could be carried out prior to receipt of advice from Manx Wildlife Trust and DEFA.



**(2023/24:122) Technical Services Manager's Report - Planning Applications:**

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's Report dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, subject to the following:-

REF NO: 4093  
P.A. NO.: 23/00827/C  
PROPOSED: Additional use as tourism accommodation  
NOTES: P.A. - Change of Use  
SITE: **Mountain Dream, Bowring Road, Ramsey**

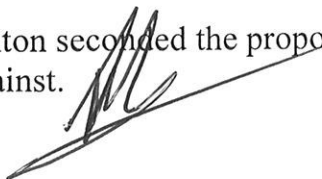
Mr. Kelly drew attention to the requirements of parking as detailed within the 2016 Strategic Plan and therefore proposed that the Commission object to the proposals on the grounds of lack of parking. Mr. Beighton commented on the need to have a summary of matters about which the Commission can raise concerns within planning. Mr Cowell referred to the provision of parking for proposed development of apartments at the former Britannia Hotel and it members were informed that the proximity of a bus stop and a public car park were relevant factors. In response to a query members were informed that no objections had been submitted to the Planning Committee with regard to the application.

Mr. Singer seconded the proposal to object, which failed by 7 votes to 3, Canon Greenwood being the only other member voting in support.

REF NO: 4096  
P.A. NO.: 23/00832/B  
PROPOSED: Conversion of ground and first floor units to create 2 additional apartments including alterations to external elevations including new windows, doors, render and stone cladding  
NOTES: P.A. in Detail  
SITE: **3, West Quay, Ramsey**

Discussion ensued during which members expressed the view that the Quayside needed mixed use development and accordingly, Mr. Cowell proposed that the Commission submit no objection to the application. Mr. Singer concurred stating that to object might stymie other proposed development in the area.

Mr. Beighton seconded the proposal, which was carried by 9 votes to 1, Mr. Oldham voting against.



**(2023/24:113) Technical Services Manager’s Report - Planning Applications Continued:**

REF NO:	4044	<b>Amended Plans</b>
P.A. NO.:	<u>23/00066/B</u>	
PROPOSED:	Change of use from public house (use class 1.3) to create ten apartments (use class 3.4) while retaining original element of building, demolition of previous extensions and erection of new replacement extension	
NOTES:	P.A. in Detail	
SITE:	<b>Britannia Hotel, Waterloo Road, Ramsey.</b>	

Mr. Singer queried if the above application was simply “Change of Use” – members were informed that the application was “In Detail” and that the amended plans reflected minor amendments from plans already seen.

**Parks and Leisure:**

**(2023/24:114) Town Clerk’s Report – Library Quarter 2 2023:**

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, reporting on the activity of the Town Library to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

Mr. Singer commented that members of the public speak well of the library and the services provided and proposed that the members’ thanks be recorded to the library staff for all they do. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed.

**Any Other Business:**

**(2023/24:115) Beach Wheelchair Access:**

Mr. Cowell referred to the loss to the Town of the wheelchair facilitating beach access, which has been relocated to Peel, and commended the Commission investigate how best to replace this.

**(2023/24:116) Disclosure of Private Information:**

Mr. Cowell drew attention to matters, discussed in private being discussed in public which he considered unacceptable. Reference was made to the recent meeting with the Members of the House of Keys for Ramsey and the Town Clerk confirmed that this meeting was private until such time as the Board sanctioned otherwise.

**(2023/24:117) “Publication of Board Agenda”:**

Mr. Cowell asked when the Board Agenda for the Commissioners meeting [Public Session] became accessible to the public as it was his understanding that the papers were “private” until commencement of the meeting?

The Town Clerk informed members that the agenda papers were usually placed on the Commission’s website on either the Friday or Monday after the day upon which they had been posted to members. He also informed members that it is usually on the date of posting or shortly thereafter that the papers are emailed to members. Mr. Cowell commented that the matter needed to be more definite and proposed that the papers be downloaded to the website on the Tuesday before the Board Meeting and the papers remain private until this is done. Mr. Kelly seconded the proposal.

Mr. Williams proposed an amendment that the papers be downloaded on the Friday, to allow the public to see items on the agenda and contact members if they wished to discuss matters with them. The amendment was seconded by Mr. Beighton and carried by 9 votes to 1, Mr. Oldham voting against.

Mr. Singer queried the practice of matters being brought from private into the public agenda – members were advised that the procedure to formally move this action during a public meeting did not change.

**(2023/24:118) Dog Fouling:**

Mr. Singer drew attention to increasing incidents of dog fouling in residential areas and asked if the Commission could budget for more “dog fouling bins”? The Technical Services Manager informed members that there are 138 suitable bins positioned around the Town all of which are considered to be within “walking distance”. It was agreed to ask the Town Warden to vary his patrols and members were asked to advise of any particular problem areas.

Members recognised that most dog owners were responsible for properly disposing of dog faeces.

**(2023/24:119) Sundry Matters:**

- 119a) Ramsey Rocks** - Mr. Court took the opportunity to promote Ramsey Rocks on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, from 2.00 p.m., with live music, bands and stalls.
- 119b) Morning Moments** – Mr. Court informed members that this group would be undertaking another sea swim on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2023.
- 119c) Ramsey in Bloom Competition** – Mr. Court referred to the recent presentation of awards for the Ramsey in Bloom Competition and took the opportunity to thank all competitors and staff for their involvement.

**119d) Radio Caroline Weekend** – Mr. Cowell referred to his attendance, as Deputy Chairman of events held over the Radio Caroline Weekend. He commented on his enjoyment of and the success of the weekend and commented that he hoped the Commission could discuss what help could be offered for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events being planned in 2024.

**(2023/24:120) Live Streaming:**

Mr. Kelly raised the matter of live-streaming of the Commissioners' meetings referring in particular to the problems of poor quality and the loss of last month's "recording".

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the live-streaming uses "Facebook" being the media source most easily accessed; there are problems the system crashes as was the case at the close of last month's public meeting it was not on the RTC's page and the problem was with "Facebook". The live-streaming drops in and out and the "broadcast" produced is not "studio quality".

Mr. Cowell suggested that the Commission look at a self-sufficient system and queried if a "back-up" of voice recording was feasible. Mr. Oldham queried if the live-streaming could have a "hard-drive".

A proposal was put by Mr. Parker that the Commission investigate and budget for improved live-streaming provision. Mr. Cowell put an amendment to include investigating costings for a sound-deck and storage. Mr. Parker seconded the amendment which was carried unanimously.

**(2023/24:121) Sundry Matters – Town Clerk:**

The Town Clerk drew attention to the following matters:-

**121a) Air Port Parking :** It was noted that a response had been received to the Commission's comments on proposed changes to car parking fees at Ronaldsway Airport. Members felt that the response did not address the concerns and it was proposed by Mr. Beighton, seconded by Mr. Kelly and agreed to bring to the attention of the.... The Commission's concern that their views have not been addressed.

**121b) Overnight and Weekend Parking** – an acknowledgement has been received following submission of the Commission's correspondence that they did not wish to comment on parking of larger vehicles and motorhomes.

**121c) Lithium Batteries** – a response has been received.

**121d) Civic Sunday Invitations** – received for 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2023, from Lezayre Parish Commissioners and Port St. Mary.

The Chairman thank those watching the live-streaming and closed the public meeting at 8.10 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.

**(2023/24:122) Minutes:**

Resolved: To note for record purposes that no matters from the July 2023, Board Meetings were recorded in private.

**Matters for Information:**

**(2023/24:123) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:**

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023, subject to the following:-

*Town Branding* – Mr. Beighton queried to progress in promoting the Town Branding. members were informed that Phase 1 would go live from September until Christmas.

*Kerbside Recycling* – Mr. Singer queried progress with regard to kerbside recycling – members were informed that there are limited options available to the Commission and that costings are still needed. Mr. Singer’s request that the wording be corrected to reflect that a presentation by Douglas Corporation had taken place was agreed.

**(2023/24:124) On-Going Matters - Register of Ruinous Property, Unightly Land and Buildings:**

Resolved: To note the “Register of Ruinous Property ..” to 9<sup>th</sup> August , 2023, subject to the following:-

The Technical Services Manager confirmed that Notice has been served on the owner of the property listed second in this list and confirmed that the owners of the property listed last on the list are engaging and undertaking work.

**Finance and General Purposes:**

**(2023/24:125) Town Clerk’s Report – “Media”**

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2023, seeking the Board’s directive with regard to engagement with and provision of information, not spontaneously reported by, the media.

Discussion ensued during which members were generally in agreement that there should be no cost implications; social media is an appropriate source, there is nothing stopping individual members making comments but members should always make it clear when they are making comments in a personal capacity [the Chairman or respective Lead Members usually lead formal media statements].

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Cowell, seconded by Mr. Kelly a “Press Policy” be drafted by the Policy Committee in due course.

**(2023/24:126) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Ramsey Community Hub:**

Members noted the Mr. Oldham’s involvement with the Ramsey Community Hub – following a proposal by Mr. Singer, seconded by Mr. Beighton it was agreed that Mr. Oldham be permitted to remain in the meeting during discussion on this matter.

Resolved: To note the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, drawing attention to the operation of Bingo at the Community Hub and the use being made by Manx Care to facilitate the “Northern Family Hub” within the Courthouse.

Mr. Cowell confirmed that he is assisting The Hub with regard to their licensing requirements.

Mr. Beighton commended The Hub and congratulated its Committee on the initiatives taken and being taken. In doing so Mr. Beighton proposed that the Commission promote events at The Hub because of the community involvement. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Cowell and carried by 7 votes to 2, Messrs. Williams and Young voting against.

Mr. Oldham did not take part in the discussion nor did he vote.

**(2023/24:127) Finance Officer’s Report:**

Resolved: To note Finance Officer’s report dated 4<sup>th</sup> August, , 2023, subject to the following:-

**Rent Arrears** – Mr. Cowell, as Lead Member, advised that there was improvement in the list of rent defaulters since the list was presented and that tenants are engaging when problems arise.

**Aged Debtors** – Mr. Cowell advised that several of the debts appearing on the Aged Debtors list had been paid. It was confirmed that two debts will be progressed through the Small Claims’ Court if two “7 Day final notice” letters do not result in payments being received.

**(2023/24:128) Technical Assistant’s Report – Fixed Penalty Notices Appeal:**

Members considered the Technical Assistant’s report dated 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, advising of an appeal submitted against a Fixed Penalty Notice issued in respect of a perceived littering offence.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Cowell, seconded by M r. Beighton and agreed by 9 votes to 1, Mr. Young voting against, the appeal be accepted.

**Housing and Property:**

**(2023/24:129) Minutes Housing Committee:**

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2023, subject to the following:-

**Clause 014a) and 104b)** Members were informed of ongoing problems detailed within these Clauses.

Mr. Kelly queried if individual members might assist in speaking to tenants. The Housing and Property Manager advised that this would be inadvisable on GDPR and “Safeguarding” grounds as some tenants might be considered vulnerable and advised members to refer any concerns, or indeed any tenants, to the housing officers. Members were reminded that the regular tenants’ newsletters give contact details should assistance be required. Members asked to be supplied with a copy of the next newsletter.

**Clause 15e)** Members were informed that the action proposed within the Clause is subject to satisfactory property inspections.

**(2023/24:130) Housing and Property Manager’s Report - Close Woirrey Demolition:**

Member considered the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, detailing the quotations received for the demolition of Close Woirrey,

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Parker seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed without division that the quotation submitted by Manx Demolition Ltd., be accepted.

**(2023/24:131) Housing and Property Manager’s Report – Cronk Elfin Refurbishment Update:**

Resolved: To note the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, providing an update on the refurbishment works progressing at Cronk Elfin.

**(2023/24:132) Housing and Property Manager’s Report – Public Sector Rents 2024-25:**

Members considered the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, with appended questionnaire issued by the Department of Infrastructure with regard to the proposed level of public sector rents for 2024/25.

**(2023/24:132) Housing and Property Manager’s Report – Public Sector Rents 2024-25 Continued::**

The following resolutions were carried:

**Regularity of Setting Rents** – Proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Singer and agreed that rent levels be set annually. (Mr. Cowell was temporarily out of the Boardroom and did not vote.)

**Level of Increase and Maintenance Allowance** – proposed by Mr. Beighton seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed by 8 votes to 2, that the Lead Member for Housing and Housing and Property Manager liaise to determine the level of increase which would affect the maintenance allowance.

A further proposal by Mr. Singer, seconded by Mr. Williams that any increase should not be more than 2% was carried by 6 votes to 4; Messrs. Court, Kelly, Oldham, Parker, Singer and Williams voting in favour.

**Parks and Leisure:**

**(2023/24:133) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Community Use Piano:**

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, advising of the offer to provide a Community Use Piano for use in Rasmeay.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. Cowell seconded by Mr. Court and agreed, the kind offer be accepted and the piano be placed at the Courthouse Grounds subject to the agreement of The Community Hub. Mr. Young was temporarily absent from the room and did not vote.

**Suspension of Standing Orders:**

It was proposed by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue to its conclusion. Mr. Young was temporarily absent from the room and did not vote.

**Any Other Business:**

**(2023/24:134) Sundry Matters:**

**134a) Available Funding** – Mr. Cowell drew attention to the proportion of rate income “freely available” [approximately 20%] and asked members to be mindful of this.

**135b) Cooil ny Marrey Vacant Properties** - Mr. Cowell queried if the vacated properties at Cooil ny Marrey site could be made available for housing for younger applicant on the housing waiting lists. The Housing and Property Manager informed members that the properties are no longer fit for purpose.

**(2023/24:134) Sundry Matters Continued:**

**136c) Provision of Allotments** – Mr. Williams proposed, Mr. Beighton seconded that investigation be made into the provision of allotments within the Town. The proposal was carried by 9 votes to 1, Mr. Parker voted against.

**137d) Lheighney Field Site** – reference was made to the suggestion that the Lheighney field might afford Ramsey Football Club some additional training facilities. Members were informed that the Department’s Director of Estates had not yet responded to the matter.

**Matters of Establishment:**

**(2023/24:135) Minutes Establishment Committee:**

Resolved: To note and approve the minutes of the meetings of the Establishment Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, and 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, subject to the following:-

Mr. Cowell’s request that “cycling to work” reference be no longer included as a regular matter of reporting, was agreed, unless circumstances changed.

A proposal with regard to regrading was formally put by Mr. Cowell seconded by Mr. Beighton and carried without division.

The meeting closed at 10.17 p.m. giving a time of 3 ½ hours for the payment of attendance allowances.

  
Chairman.