

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, 15th December, 2021, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. A. J. Oldham, Ms L. L. Craine, Messrs' A. R. Beighton, G. S. Court, R. D. Cowell, Canon N. D. Greenwood, S. R. Kelly, J. McGuinness, L. Parker and W. G. Young.

Apologies: Messrs F. B. R. Williams and L. I. Singer.

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

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Tim Cowin, as newly appointed Town Clerk to his first public Board Meeting.

(2021/22:232) Bye-Election North Ward:

The Chairman, in his capacity as Returning Officer, referred to the Bye-Election in North Ward held on 25th November 2021, and in welcoming the new members of the Board to their first public board meeting presented Mr. Luke Parker, Ms Lamara Louise Craine and Mr. Adam Robert Beighton with their Certificate of Election for the unexpired term ending 1st May 2025.

(2021/22:233) Minutes:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 17th November, 2021, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(2021/22:234) Matters Arising:

No matters were raised.

Matters for Information:

(2021/22:235) Action Tracker December, 2021:

Resolved: To note the "Action Tracker" to 15th December, 2021, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

Parking – Members were reminded that a special meeting will take place on Tuesday, 21st December, 2021, at which the Minister for Infrastructure will be accompanied by the Director of Highways and it was considered opportune to discuss parking at that meeting.



(2021/22:235) Action Tracker December 2021 Continued:

Toilet Art – the Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the artist was waiting for suitably clement weather to commence the art work.

Ramsey Quayside – noted that a Special meeting with the Minister is to be held on 21st December, 2021.

Planning Enforcement –Mr. Cowell conveyed the dissatisfaction of the party concerned at the actions and decisions taken in the matter. The history of the actions, in that change of use of property in an area of the town zone “Industrial” in the Strategic Plan had been breached were explained for new members, the zoning being in place to ensure that retail trade does not become removed from the town centre.

Empty Pubs – the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the brewery’s proposals are yet to be received.

Public Toilets (Hire for TT) – the Housing and Property Manager informed members that he will submit a report to the January 2022 Board Meeting and in response to a question from Mr. McGuinness confirmed that ordering the units in January would be in sufficient time.

Area Plan for North and West – the Town Clerk informed members that a response had been received from the Cabinet Minister that afternoon advising that the Minister believes the addition of sites is acceptable in view of further consultations, etc., required to be progressed.

Live Streaming of Meetings – Mr. McGuinness informed members that he had provided rough costings to the Deputy Town Clerk.

Bicycle Shelters – the Town Clerk informed members that the shelters, to be provided and installed by the Department have been ordered and should be delivered within the first quarter of 2022.

Cronk Elfin Refurbishment – the Housing and Property Manager informed members that the scheme is scheduled to start in March 2022 after which monthly reports will be provided.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2021/22:236) Town Clerk’s Report – Bye Election North Ward:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 8th December, 2021, detailing the result of the Bye-Election for three members of the Town Commission for North Ward held o 25th November, 2021, and advising that the Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) Act 2020 has an Appointed Day Order, will be laid before Tynwald as a result of which the legislation will come into effect from 1st July 2022.



(2021/22:237) Town Clerk’s Report – Isle of Man Local Government Superannuation Scheme:

Resolved: To note and approve the Town Clerk’s report dated 1st December, 2021, which details the response from the Douglas Borough Treasurer, on behalf of Administrators of the IOM Local Government Superannuation Scheme with regard to queries raised by the Commission with regard to the investments placed.

A proposal by Miss Craine, seconded by Mr. Court that the Administrators be informed that the actions go against the Climate Change Bill and Environment, Social and Governance issues and they be asked to consider divestment did not receive any further support on being put to the vote.

(2021/22:238) Town Clerk’s Report – Municipal Association Meetings:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 30th November, 2021, advising of dates of meetings in 2022 of the Isle of Man Municipal Association, and, where arranged the, speakers at such meetings.

(2021/22:239) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Publication Scheme:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 8th December, 2021, concerning request made by Cabinet Office that the Commission respond to the principle of the introduction of a publication scheme for local authorities. Members noted the information published in a scheme operating in the UK and draft responses to the Cabinet Office’s questionnaire.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed that the draft response to the questionnaire be submitted, subject to Section 7 being expanded to reflect that the Commission has a greater number of policies in place beyond that of “Elections and Engagement”.

(2021/22:240) Finance Officer’s General Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer’s general report dated 8th December, 2021.

Works and Development:

(2021/22:241) Town Clerk’s Report – Climate Change Duties:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 1st December, 2021, detailing a presentation made by officers from the Cabinet Office with regard to climate change. A response to questions put at presentation, held on 15th November, 2021, were detailed.

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report.



(2021/22:241) Town Clerk’s Report – Climate Change Duties Continued:

Mr. McGuinness commented that whilst it is important to add consideration of climate change issues to budgetary proposals the Commission must be able to qualify why decisions and actions, that would not appear to have regard to these, have been taken.

(2021/22:242) Town Clerk’s Report – National Broadband Strategy:

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report dated 30th November, 2021, advising of the request made by Manx Telecom to meet with the Commission to discuss the status of the National Broadband Plan.

Resolved: That a special meeting be arranged no earlier than February 2022.

(2021/22:243) Town Clerk’s Report – Riverside Development Proposals:

Resolved: to note the Town Clerk’s report dated 1st December, 2021, advising of the developers’ “Zoom” questions and answers presentation held on 6th December, 2021, concerning the development of land at Ballachrink Farm, Ramsey. It is understood the presentation will be made available to view on the developers’ website.

(2021/22:244) Town Clerk’s Report – Section 13 Agreement PA 20/00433/B:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 1st December, 2021, advising that the Seton 13 Agreement in respect of the commuted sum in lieu of the provision of affordable housing and public open space has been signed by all parties. The commuted sum will be paid to the Commissioners no later than the habitation of the first dwelling sold.

(2021/22:245) Town Clerk’s Report – Town Centre 20 mph Proposals

Members discussed the Town Clerk’s report dated 30th November, 2021, concerning the proposal to introduce 20 mph speed limits in certain areas of the town centre and advising of discussions held with the Department of Infrastructure with regard to the practicalities of implementing the proposals. Members noted that the proposals now included West Quay because the Department feel it undesirable to place the number of street signs needed to advise of and detail the zones. The proposals also include the siting of a “tabled” pedestrian crossing point which would result in the loss of 2 parking places from Parliament Street.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk seek more details about the siting of the pedestrian crossing and the matter be discussed at the Special Meeting to be held on 21st December.

Mr. McGuinness asked if the steepness of the traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the Courthouse Grounds could be brought to the attention of the Department.



(2021/22:246) Technical Services Manager’s Report - Planning Applications:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager’s Report dated 8th December, 2021, detailing planning applications received from the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, under the planning consultation procedures, be noted and no objections be made to such applications.

Housing and Property:

(2021/22:247) Town Clerk’s Report – Public Sector Housing Rents and Allowances:

Resolved: To note the Town Clerk’s report dated 29th November, 2021, advising of the increases in rent, administration allowance and maintenance allowance for public sector housing for the year commencing 1st April, 2022, as applied by the Department of Infrastructure.

Mr. Parker queried a policy that the Department had mooted some years ago to apply a 5-year fixed rental policy – the Housing and Property Manager informed members that he understood that the matter was still under discussion.

Parks and Leisure:

(2021/22:248) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Lhergy Frissell Hill Climb:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 8th December, 2021, advising of the request made by the Manx Motor Racing Club Ltd., for the closure of certain roads to facilitate their 2022 Manx Classic Event.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. Court seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the Commission is supportive of the road closure and suspension of parking on Saturday, 30th April, 2022, in the vicinity of Lhergy Frissell and Lheaney Road, between 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m..

Notice of Motion:

(2021/22:249) Amalgamation of South and North Ward:

Mr. Cowell put the Notice of Motion standing in his name 9th November, 2021, namely

“That, in accordance with Part 9 of the Local Government Act, 1985, a scheme is prepared and submitted to the Department of Infrastructure to reduce the number of wards within the Ramsey Town District to a single ward with twelve elected Members.”



(2021/22:249) Amalgamation of South and North Ward:

Attention was drawn to the need, in terms of Standing Order 20(2), to suspend such Standing Orders to allow the matter to be considered within six months of it having been previously presented to the Commission. Mr. McGuinness explained the provision of Standing Orders and proposed their suspension. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Young and agreed.

Discussion ensued during which members expressed the view that irrespective of which ward they are elected to – they represent the town. Mr. Cowell commented that he was expressing the view of the public that they wanted “One Town, One Commission, One Ward” and his view that having one ward would generate greater interest in the Commission and elections. Mr. Parker commented on the cost implications to the Town.

Resolved: That, following a proposal by Ms Craine, seconded by Mr. Kelly that the matter be deferred for further reporting, including costings. The proposal was carried by 6 votes to 4 – Messrs Beighton, Cowell, Parker and Young voting against. Members were informed that Departmental approval will be required to the proposals.

The matter will be included within the “Action Tracker” for further report.

Any Other Business:

(2021/22:250) Representative Report – Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board:

Resolved: To note the representative report submitted by Mr. McGuinness in respect of a recent meeting of the Northern Local Authorities Swimming Pool Board.

(2021/22:251) Sundry Matters:

Ms Craine drew attention to the following matters and was advised as detailed:-

Late Opening Public Conveniences – it had been an oversight not to have had the public conveniences open beyond the usual times during the time of the recent Young Farmers’ Tractor Run – it was noted that applicants for events usually make a request for public conveniences to be open this but it will be included in a “check-list” should the event be repeated.

Bathing Huts South Promenade – it was noted that there are no plans at the moment for the provision of bathing huts on the South Promenade.

Close Caarjys Pathways – problems with water ponding on pathways in the vicinity of Close Caarjys will be investigated and if necessary reported to the Department of Infrastructure.

Ms Craine was informed that matters of this nature could be brought directly to the attention of members of staff.



(2021/22:252) Finance Officer's Report – Bank Account Signatories:

Members considered the Finance Officer's report dated 15th December, 2021, concerning the changes necessary to signatories to bank accounts held by the Commissioners.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Oldham and carried without division, that with effect from 1st January, 2022, Mr. T. R. K. Cowin be approved as a signatory to all of the Commission's bank accounts and Mr. T. P. Whiteway and Mr. P. S. Harrison be removed as signatories, also from 1st January, 2022.

The Chairman thanked the public and media for attending and closed the public session 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.

(2021/22:253) Minutes:

Resolved: To note, for record purposes, that no minutes from the Board meeting held on 17th November, 2021, were recorded in private and that those of the private budgetary meeting held on 8th December, 2021, will be presented at the January, 2022, Board meeting.

Matters for Information:

(2021/22:254) Housing Committee:

Members were advised that the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 7th December, 2021, subject to the following:-

Clause 73a) Notice to Quit – the Housing and Property Manager explained the circumstances, in that the tenant would not engage with staff members trying to help and thereby avoid the last resort of Court Proceedings now being taken against the tenant. Members were informed that although some tenants had greater rent debts payment plans were in place and, albeit slowly, the debts were being reduced.

Clause 77 – Vacant Properties – Mr. Parker referred to the number of vacant properties and was informed that this was because several tenants had recently been offered transfers to the new Mayfield properties. Mr. Parker asked if members could be advised of the numbers on the housing waiting lists.

Clause 79a) – Purchase 2 Electronic Tablets – it was proposed by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed that the tablets be purchased, subject to them being able to be properly secured.

Clause 79b) – Removal of names from Committee Reports - it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Oldham and agreed that future Housing Committee reports do not include names.

(2021/22:255) On-Going Matters “Action Tracker”:

Resolved: To note the “Action Tracker” to 15th December, 2021, subject to the following and accepting that some matters may be referred to within other Clauses of these minutes:-

- **Rates Arrears** – the Town Clerk undertook to determine the current status of discussion with the Government Valuer.
- **Off-Street Parking** – the Deputy Town Clerk informed members that no correspondence has yet been received from the company selling the former Albert Road Site.

Members asked officers to ensure that the tracker was included with the distributed agenda papers in future.

Members also considered the tabled schedule of Ruinous Buildings as presented by the Technical Services Manager, to 15th December, 2021, subject to the following:-

- **10/11 West Quay** – it was confirmed that an application for demolition has been submitted and the owner is now in correspondence with DEFA and the Fire Service.

The Technical Services Manager informed members of her understanding that it was the wish of members that she give a talk to the Board about the Ruinous Buildings – this will be arranged after the budget / rate setting process.

Finance and General Purposes:

(2021/22:256) Town Clerk’s Report – Leave of Absence:

Resolved: That in accordance with the detail of the Town Clerk’s report dated 6th December, 2021, and following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Court and agreed Mr. L. I. Signer be granted leave of absence in terms of Section 12 of the Local Elections Act 1986.

(2021/22:257) Finance Officer’s Report:

Resolved: To note and approved the Finance Officer’s Report dated 8th December, 2021, subject to the following:-

Bank Balances – the Finance Officer explained a query from Mr. Parker with regard to the difference in the heating reserve in 2021 as compared to 2020 – in that a reserve is desirable to keep communal heating costs to tenants as low as possible.

Potential Aged Debt Write-Off – it was proposed by Mr. McGuinness seconded by Mr. Court and agreed to write off, for accounting purposes the aged debt detailed in Appendix 4 to the report. Mr. McGuinness explained the history to this debt and members asked if future leases should include provision for personal or shareholder guarantees.

Works and Development:

(2021/22:258) Town Clerk's Report – Bleak House:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 8th December, 2021, advising of the request made by the owner of leasehold interests at Bleak House, Mooragh Promenade, to meet with the Commission.

Resolved: That following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Parker and agreed that the company be invited to meet the Commission in February 2022 to present the requirements to repair the property and their views in how to progress their proposals.

The Technical Services Manager asked members to be mindful of how they progressed this matter to avoid any precedents being set.

(2021/22:259) Town Clerk's Report – Queen's Pier Lighting:

Members considered the Town Clerk's report dated 30th November, 2021, concerning the request made by the Queen's Pier Restoration Trust for assistance with the potential provision of lighting on the Queen's Pier. Reference was made to Section 254 of the Local Government Consolidation Act 1916 which refers to this matter.


Resolved: That, following a proposal by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Court and agreed that the Town Clerk determine whether agreement can be made with a Trust in respect of the provision of electricity only and to an amount to be decided.

(2021/22:260) Technical Services Manager's Report – Christmas Lights:

Resolved: To note the Technical Services Manager's report dated 6th December, 2021, detailing costs and options available to the Commission for the provision of decorative lighting and give the matter further consideration as part of the budgetary process.

Members reported that the public was split as to the desirability or otherwise of the provision of decorative lighting but agreed to consider the provision further during the budget process. The Deputy Town Clerk, in response to a query, undertook to explore the possibility of seeking sponsorship for decorative lighting.

Mr. Kelly queried the playing of music from the Courthouse and was advised of the lack of a suitable licence, other than for part of the grounds and was advised that because the area was partially residential it was occasionally a cause of complaint when music was played at the Courthouse due to the height of the speakers.



Housing and Property:

(2021/22:261) Housing and Property Manager’s Report – Toilet Cleaning Contract 2022:

Resolved: That, further to the Housing and Property Manager’s report dated 8th December, 2021, and a proposal by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed, expressions of interest and the tender process be commenced in respect of the five-year contract for cleaning the town’s public conveniences.

Members noted that the contract will commence on 1st April, 2022. The Housing and Property Manager advised members that he would go through the “tender pack” with any member wishing further information.

Parks and Leisure:

(2021/22:262) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Radio Caroline Weekend”:

Resolved: That, further to the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 8th December, 2021, and a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. McGuinness and agreed, the Commission support and offer logistical assistance for the concept of a Radio Caroline weekend being organised in 2022.

(2021/22:263) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – Scenic Car Tours:

Resolved: That, further to the Deputy Town Clerk’s report dated 8th December, 2021, and a proposal by Mr. Court, seconded by Mr. Cowell and agreed, the Commission provide initial support, including road closures, to facilitate motoring events being staged by Scenic Car Tours during the Festival of Motoring in 2022 and 2023.

(2021/22:264) Deputy Town Clerk’s Report – TT Fan Zone:

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk’s tabled report dated 14th December, 2021, concerning a request received from the Department for Enterprise with regard to the creation of a “TT Fan Zone” style area in Ramsey during TT 2022. Members noted that the proposals could require use of the Town Hall’s Atrium and Boardroom. Members were advised that long-standing booking exist with regard to the Boardroom.

Discussion ensued during which a proposal was put by Mr. McGuinness, seconded by Mr. Oldham that the Commission agreed to support the principle of the Fan Zone area and with regret cancel the existing bookings. An amendment was put by Mr. Cowell, seconded by Mr. Beighton that the Fan Zone be supported but the existing bookings be honoured if possible.



(2021/22:264) Deputy Town Clerk's Report – TT Fan Zone Continued:

A further amendment was put by Mr. Beighton, seconded by Mr. Parker and ultimately agreed to support the Fan Zone, honour the existing bookings if possible but should it not be possible ask the organisers make recompense, possibly by way of tickets to attend any events to be held in the Boardroom.

It was noted that further discussions will be held with the Department for Enterprise.

The meeting closed at 9.47 p.m. giving a time of 3 hours for the payment of attendance allowances.



Chairman.