

Northern Districts Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee

Special Meeting held at Lezayre Parish Hall at 7:00pm on Wednesday 13th November 2024

1. **Apologies for absence:** None

2. **Attendees:**

Committee	MHK's	Others
Jimmy Allison - Andreas	Alf Cannon – Chief Minster Ayre & Michael	Stephen Willoughby – DOI Local Government Unit
Steven Curphey - Ballaugh	Tim Johnston – Ayre & Michael	Steven Bevan – RTC – Secretary Committee
Stan Ryzak - Garff	Daphne Caine - Garff	Norman Cannell – RTC - Finance
Darren Hope - Jurby	Andrew Smith - Garff	Barbara Wallace – RTC
Karl Brew – Lezayre (Chair)	Lawrie Hooper - Ramsey	
Robert Cowell – Ramsey (Deputy - Chair)	Alex Allinson - Ramsey	
Ivan Burton - Bride	Tim Crookall – DOI	

Present: Clerks from Andreas, Ballaugh, Jurby, Garff and a Bride Board member.

3. **History of Site** – a short presentation was given on the history of the site.

4. **Options:** At present it was seen that there are two options available for the site. For the 7 parishes to run the site based on the rateable value or for the site to close.

5. **Local Authority Views:**

Andreas – Bride need to raise their rates; their rates are not realistic. It is going to cost Andreas residents an additional 10p to cover short fall if they are expected to pick up their share of the difference. If Government take away the commercial rate Bride's rate will triple. Bride's reference to cost of £254 per person doesn't match £125 in accounts. When the site was acquired the machines and skips had to be purchased. £20,000 is being put into reserves every year for plant replacements. The site is utilising its reserves at present to keep the site going. Don't understand why Bride can't increase their rates? It would cost an additional £20 per person per year. Bride residents want to use the site.

Ballaugh – Do not agree with the overpayment and will not subsidise Bride. The facility is very much need. Need to be able to draw a line under what has gone on in the past. Questioned the running of the site by RTC and would look to setting up a separate Board with its own Clerk and site manager. Bride need to come back to the site but recognise that a short term closure maybe needed.

Garff – The site is needed and it is unfair what is going on. Other sites are charged on rateable value. The committee have been working hard to resolve the issue that Bride has, and the chairman of the committee actually wrote the proposal paper for Bride as they were struggling to formalise it. Bride would only agree to arbitration if they were guaranteed a reduction in their contributions. How can parishes go back to their residents and say you are paying more to subsidise Bride. Bride have to pay, we should all be working together.

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Jurby – Same as Garff and the other parishes. Not prepared to subsidise Bride by putting up Jurby Rates – it isn't right or fair to put back on other parishes.

Lezayre – Same opinion as the others, can't subsidise Bride's running costs. There was no consideration about the quarries when looking at the site set up but now there is, quarries are underwriting parish costs. Can see going forward that the site will be handed back to the DOI. Questioned who and how this is being led from Bride, the clerk or the Commissioners? It isn't right.

Ramsey – Thanked Bride for attending the meeting. The site is very much needed but firm that won't pay deficit for Bride. Notice has been given on the site and we are right at the end of the line now. It isn't about who pays what now, it is about how it is going to affect other parishes on the island. Rate reform is needed, a central commercial rate. This all needs a shakeup. Central Government must step in as the parishes can't agree and we are lost – pleading for a solution.

Bride – Thank you for the invitation. Bride want to be part of the site, there is time for a solution, and needs to be done before everyone looks foolish. Bride want a Board, the committee is unwieldy. DOI have said that a board can be set up in time before April. With regards to cost sharing – Bride are paying so much, it is disproportionate. The rates are done to death, need to keep rates out of it and work per capita.

Chair commented that there seemed to be a common thread through statements that no-one wants to subsidise other parish.

6. DOI – Mr Crookall thanked the committee for their comments. He was happy to see everyone at the meeting and can see a way forward. The DOI do not want the site back and do not want northern residents having to use other sites. Residents want the facility and a solution. The DOI are happy to assist in anyway. Thanked Mr Willoughby for all the hard work he has done and is willing to help resolve the issue.

7. MHK's Comment:

Mr Cannon – the site is a valuable facility and works well, having visited site he was impressed with the cleanliness, and use has improved over the last few years. Pleased to hear that Bride want to help and come back to the table. If no resolution, then need to find a way to keep the site open. If the site is handed back need to think about how it is charged out – one solution is a legislation change for all sites. Need to assess how the site is paid for? Rates or a different solution – there is no law in place at present and Bride have done their assessment. Who is subsidising who? Shouldn't judge others and services they are providing. Need to keep the site open and fix charges, as they are not fairly distributed. If a solution isn't possible then Government are going to have to work through legislation to support.

Mr Johnston – Need to grab the positivity in the room, the structure isn't working well so need a new committee going forward. Must keep the site open. The legislation is what it is, it isn't great to hand back the site. MHK's not here to strong arm local authorities. If people of Bride aren't happy with the solution, then they need to go back to local authority, and local authority needs to check in with its parishioners as to what they want. There is a broader challenge going forward for all, but the cat is out of the bag now.

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Ms Caine – Don't disagree about rate reform, but that can't be sorted out quickly. How big is the gap? All sites have always been on rateable value. Bride have the lowest rate on the island and it is disproportionate to other local authorities. Local authority reform – how do you best provide the service – Ramsey to Douglas not going to happen, people want to use the nearest site. Bride won't move, won't pay, how do you match that? No-one is going to budge, so how can this be taken forward if neither side will budge? It's never acceptable. Can't see where the two sides come together.

Discussions in the room around going down to per property. The need to future proof the site and rateable value best way.

Mr Smith – a reality check is needed – rate reform is not an urgent solution. There is a need for the site in the north. The site is run well both operationally and financially. The other sites are charged on the same basis. Great to see Bride attend meeting – where there is a will there is a way.

Dr Allinson – Thanks for organising the meeting. Dispute resolution is needed. The site is well run and very much needed, the consequences on rate payers with any increase not great.

Mr Hooper – Does not want the site to close, can understand the issues. The bigger picture coming is rate reform, can get government to impose solution through legislation. Amendments could see statutory power for failure to provide, so encourages parishes to find a resolution. Not prepared to let site close, wants it open. No-one wants government to run it either. Re-use is wanted and needed.

General conversation

Garff – Bride gave notice after the rates were set, the site is using reserves now to operate the site, it's a difficult and unfair.

Mr Hooper – Understands the issues, if parties want to convert to Board it won't happen in the next year. Bride need to come back to the table till issued resolved, it isn't in everyone's interest to walk away.

Ramsey – legislation is weak, it needs changing, the legislation needs to be forceful and done by next year.

Mr Hooper – law as it stands, the DOI can change it but at risk of getting something untenable. Rateable value is default, it works, its rubbish.

8. Chair Summary – the chair thanked the political members for their insight. He noted that there is a big chasm that must be resolved, and it may be that the site needs to be handed back to the DOI.

9.. Outcome – Committee Chair then spoke – Great to see Bride at the meeting, he noted that there may be a need to reset the committee or maybe it would be best to hand the site back.

Discussions then took place around the table:-

Mr Crookall – Its great that you want to sort things out, and the DOI definitely do not want the site back.

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Lezayre – this has a massive impact on other authorities.

Mr Crookall – the DOI are willing to help – with meetings. Could Bride come back into the committee for the forth coming year whilst sorting out.

Bride – how can we go back to parishioners and ask them to pay 3 times more than others? Need to get away from rates and go per capita.

Garff – Bride want to pay less, but no benefit to others.

Lezayre - Bride's last contribution was £70,000, reserves are paying for the site – which included money Bride contributed over the years. Trying to be responsible in running the site – didn't want to just close it and walk away.

Mr Cannon – Bride have offered £21,000, that is better than nothing.

Lezayre – we have explored all options and recently revisited the options to keep the site open, but the various Boards returned with a no. They do not want to pick up the deficit. Gravel pits are subsidising Bride.

Mr Cannon - Could you run the site for a further year, Bride come back in and pay for the year to try and resolve the issues.

Ballaugh – Could we do the same as we do for Refuse collections? Pay at least the standing charge plus interest, that way Bride would pay the least?

Garff – but Bride get 75% of their rates from the quarry.

Bride – won't pay into the site for another year, unfair to ask residents to do that. Bride not part of committee anymore, we've walked away.

Discussions ensued around Ballaugh's suggestion of the refuse rate – must be noted that Ramsey are not part of that arrangement and undertake their own collections. It was agreed that Ballaugh would circulate the figures to all.

Garff – everyone is paying the rateable value, why is it fair for one parish to put this in action? Why should we change for one parish. Need to change but need to stay together and change not walk away. Come back in and sort it out, pay dues.

Lezayre – perhaps we need to pass this back to the DOI and have a reset?

Mr Hooper – be warned that the DOI is busy, elections are coming up and this could take time to organise. Even as a board it would still be based on rates

Lezayre – it is more economic to run as a committee, it keeps the running costs low.

Ramsey – this isn't new we've been discussing all this for quite a while now.

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Meeting handed to Committee Chair to close – Thank you to everyone for coming tonight, especially Bride. The committee have been trying very hard to resolve this issue, but as a committee we still have boards that we have to go back to. If Ballaugh can circulate the figures from the Northern Parishes Refuse Collection for people to look through as soon as possible, a meeting will be arranged within next couple of weeks as rates have to be set soon.

Meeting closed at 20:11.



Chairman

26/11 2024

