

GARFF PARISH DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Monthly Meeting of the Commissioners'

To be Conducted using Video Conferencing Software

Minutes of the Meeting

Wednesday 1st April 2020, 7.00 pm

Present:	Mr J. Smith (JS) (Chair), Mrs J. Pinson (JP) (Vice-Chair), Mr N. Dobson (ND), Mr T. Kenyon (TK), Mr P. Kinnish (PK), Mr L. Miller (LM), Mr A. J. Moore (AJM), Mr. J. Quayle (JQ).
In Attendance:	Mr P. Burgess, Clerk, Mr M. Royle, Deputy Clerk/RFO
Apologies:	Mrs M. Fargher (MF).

7.00 pm

Public Session

All Members were connected to the video conference and ready at 7.02 pm. JS opened the meeting. Due to some Members having slow internet connections, JS requested that the meeting be conducted by audio only. This permitted clearer audio and therefore efficient discussion.

71/20 Planning Matters

Planning Applications

a)	20/00082/B Erection of a replacement sewage treatment works with associated landscaping and bridge for vehicle access Sewage Works Breeze Hill Laxey. <i>JS proposed deferral of consideration of this application. He noted that questions put to Manx Utilities by the Commissioners following the public meeting had not been answered to date. The Planning Officer dealing with the application had contacted the Office on the 25th of March 2020 and advised that Planning were in the process of drafting further questions for Manx Utilities to provide a response. MR advised that the Planning Officer had stated that the Planning Committee would find it difficult to meet during the current health emergency. The Planning Officer had advised that in this circumstance he would not be composing his report imminently. JS suggested that it would be preferable to postpone consideration of the application until the public were able to observe and contribute to a Planning Committee Hearing, or to any appeal that ensued. The consensus reached was that the Board should reserve further comment at this stage. The clerks were asked to liaise regularly with the Planning Officer and advise the Board if there were any indication that the application was being progressed for consideration by the Planning Committee. This was agreed.</i>	clerks
b)	20/00267/B Crowcreeen Ballaglass Glen Road Cornaa Alterations and erection of first floor extension to rear elevation, first floor extension to side elevation and front porch extension. <i>The Officers' comments on this application were noted. It was noted that this dwelling could be considered as traditional. In the opinion of the Officers this application was consistent with HP15 of the IOM Strategic Plan 2016 as the extensions generally respected the form and appearance of the current dwelling. There were no objections to this application.</i>	
c)	20/00309/B Crofton Baldhoon Road Laxey, Rebuilding stone walls and landscaping works adjacent to highway. <i>There were no objections to this application.</i>	
d)	20/00320/B Great Laxey Mine Railway, Laxey Valley Gardens Glen Road Laxey, Erection of two timber storage sheds adjacent to existing storage shed. <i>The Commissioners had been consulted in regard to these proposals by the GLMR prior to their submission to the Planning Authority. There were no objections to this application.</i>	
	Approval Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) – to note	
i)	20/00054/B Ashmead Croit E Quill Road Laxey, Erection of an extension to dwelling and a carport to existing garage – Approved 20.03.20.	

	<i>Noted, no further action.</i>	
	Refusal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) – to note	
j)	19/01830/B Part Field 613191 Ballamenagh Road Groudle Glen Baldrine, Change of use of part field to tourist use to create a glamping site to include the erection of 20 timber tourist accommodation cabins, one modified cabin to provide a welcome office and associated onsite parking for 22 spaces – Refused 23.03.20. <i>Noted, no further action.</i>	
	Appeal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) - ntr	
	Other Planning Matters - ntr	
72/20	Approval of Minutes	
a)	Approval of minutes of the meeting of the 4 th of March 2020 (Note: the meeting due to held on the 18 th March was cancelled due to the public health situation). <i>These were agreed to be a correct record of the decisions made at the meeting.</i> Proposed AJM . Seconded JQ . Resolved .	
73/20	Matters Arising & Other Business	
a)	<i>To discuss ongoing operational matters in the current public health situation.</i> JS referred Members to the 'Service Update' that had been issued on the 30 th of March 2020 (see appendix 1 below). This covered all types and aspects of service provision and was noted. ND asked for an update on the health of the refuse contractor's crews. MR advised that the Clerks' Office was in daily contact with Allan Kinrade and to date there were no health issues to report. As the Directors and principal roundsmen, Allan Kinrade and David Kinrade had adopted a policy of 'mutual-distancing' both on the rounds and socially. This would mitigate against the possibility of both of them contracting the virus at the same time, and would ensure that at least one of them could lead operations at all times. A wide range of other contingencies had been put in place, including lists of replacement drivers and operators who had been identified and approached. MR reported that negotiations had also been initiated with Paul Corteen at IDG with a view to having their organisation in reserve (they had vehicles and currently human resource capacity). Approaches to other local authorities with spare capacity could also be considered. A last resort contingency if the refuse vehicles could not be crewed due to the need to self-isolate, would be to postpone a collection for a week to provide the 14-day incubation period. This would cause several problems, but would avoid the need to send third party crews who would be inexperienced on what are logistically difficult rounds. The consensus was that, depending on the circumstance, the most appropriate contingency would be deployed; it was noted that any response would have to be flexible and dynamic. JM advised that government would be relaxing the licensing rules to enable more HGV drivers to drive other types of vehicle. <i>There followed discussion of further support measures that the Commissioners could offer to the contractor. The government issued advice on how those confirmed as having the Covid-19 virus, and those showing symptoms or in 'self-isolation' should deal with waste. These were discussed and noted. In the daily telephone conference meeting with the contractor on 01.04.20, the contractor had reported that the vast majority of Garff residents were placing their bins out in a manner that posed no risk to operator health, however, several properties had been identified where 'best practice' was not being observed. The clerks advised that for health reasons the policies on side waste and the 'lid down' policy be re-iterated to the public. This was agreed. MR advised that handouts had been drafted for the contractor to deliver to residents who were not following the policies. The handouts would re-iterate 'best-practice' in terms of bagging waste, bleaching handles, etc. These were noted. Sufficient copies of the various leaflets would be produced and provided to the contractor for distribution to those not conforming. The difficulties of access by the large 'tipping' refuse vehicles were discussed. These areas were serviced by a 'caged pick-up'. MR reported that as far as possible the bins were tipped manually, however, on occasions individual bin bags had to be handled. The contractor had reported that those residents whose properties were serviced by the pick-up vehicle bagged their waste in an adequate and safe manner. Members requested, however, that leaflets were distributed to each to re-</i>	clerks

	<i>iterate the standards expected. JP asked if wheelie bin liners could be distributed to these residents. The clerks were asked to liaise with the contractor in this regard. JM suggested clear bags so that the contents could be viewed. This would also be referred to the contractor.</i>	
b)	<p>To discuss the implications of the current public health situation on the finances of the Commissioners, particularly the impact on the ratepayer. A financial report had been circulated and noted. JS reminded Members that the clerks had previously advised the Commissioners that the reserves should be increased. There was a healthy reserve but some of these monies had been earmarked for large projects as part of the Garff amalgamation. JS suggested that the economic impact of the current health situation on the economy and particularly domestic incomes could mean that these projects would have to be funded differently, postponed, or indeed cancelled. The clerks advised that a full report on these matters for the next meeting. This would depend on the severity of the situation that developed in the coming months. There followed a conversation of current projects being delivered. It was agreed that the Board should consider whether to continue or postpone spending on these once works could re-commence. PB advised that government had announced that all local authorities would receive 80% of their income by June 2020 to ensure delivery of services. PB suggested that the budget prepared for YE 2021 should be reviewed on an on-going basis as the level of rate income was assessed. JP stated that only 'essential' services should be delivered going forward and spending should be restricted to absolute necessities. JQ agreed. JP also asked that regular financial reports were issued. JS instructed the officers to devise a format for not only reporting the current state of finances, but also for indicating and tracking where the finances would be at Year End. This would permit spending decisions to be made with more clarity in the difficult circumstances that had emerged.</p>	clerks
74/20	General correspondence – No matters to transact.	
75/20	Committees & Boards – ntr	
77620	Officers' Reports –	
	Finance – <i>To be circulated at the meeting for discussion at item 73/20.b above. Noted.</i>	
77/20	<p>Coolil Roi Report – <i>JM referred to a report she had circulated. Members indicated that they had read the document and noted its content. JM advised that the contingency plan was being implemented. She expressed concern that issues could emerge as a result of residents being alone so much because of the need to self-isolate. AJM asked how measures might be taken to address this without compromising the risk to health posed by the virus. JM had circulated a letter that was being sent to residents to advise them of how they might continue communication with their friends, neighbours, and relatives: using the telephone, talking through the window to relatives/friends attending outside, etc. ND stated that the letter would assist residents greatly. JP asked if a 'telephone be-friending' service could be set-up. JM advised that the Laxey Lifeline number could be used for these purposes. Details of this phonenumber were in the letter being circulated. JM stated that she had contacted government as she was concerned that members of the public who had mental health or dementia issues, etc might not be dealt with in the current situation: most services were not accessible at the moment. JM re-iterated the stages in the Coolil-Roi Contingency Plan making particular reference to the role that was planned for Steve Partington & Sam Quilleash to assist as temporary wardens should the Wardens become ill, etc. Steve and Sam had a close knowledge of the building and would be invaluable if circumstances became difficult. This was noted by Members. JP asked if arrangements had been made for residents to access their finances. JM advised that effective measures were in place.</i></p>	
78/20	H&S & Maintenance Report – Urgent Issues Only – H&S matters were central to the discussions above. No further instruction.	

79/20	Any Other Business – Urgent Matters Only	
a)	<i>LM referred to the forthcoming AGM. ND felt that the video conferencing system was effective and could allow all the business of an AGM to be conducted. AJM agreed. PK stated that in his opinion the AGM should be postponed. PB added that in the circumstances he felt that a postponement would be possible if legislation could be changed in time. MR stated that government could relax the LGA 1985 using their emergency powers. JP proposed that a 2-month postponement be considered. AJM re-iterated that in his view the AGM should not be postponed. JQ concurred stating that 'we should just get on with it'. AJM suggested that if a secret vote were needed could be accomplished by other means. JS advised that this was possible using FB Messenger, etc. In anticipation of the AGM the names of Members who might be elected to Chair and Vice Chair were voiced by some Members. PK suggested that the 'status quo' be continued in the current circumstances.</i>	
b)	<i>PK stated that once the current restrictions were over maintenance works should recommence immediately. This was agreed. MR advised that a plan would be put in place w/c 6th April 2020 in conjunction with the maintenance staff to ensure that works re-started promptly and in order of priority.</i>	Clerks SP/SQ
c)	<i>JS advised that a proposal had come in from a Member of Staff that the Rose Garden Shelter be converted to public conveniences. JS added that this would mean that additional public conveniences could be provided at much less cost than at the location in Laxey Valley Gardens. JP stated that several thousand pounds had been spent on architect's fees for the latter project adding that this would have been a waste of money. JS stated that notwithstanding this the Rose Garden Shelter proposal could provide a large saving to the ratepayer. AJM felt that the proposal was ideal and 'fitted the bill' for what was needed, particularly because the location was central. He added that services such as water and electricity and sewage were immediately available. The structure already existed and could be modified easily and cost effectively. It was noted that this was a proposal that had been rejected by the defunct 'Regeneration Committee' on aesthetic grounds. In light of this JP recommended that a named Member of the Public who had been on the Regeneration Committee be consulted as to the precise reasons why the proposal was discounted. PK stated that there were already toilets at the tram station. AJM pointed out that these were only accessible when the station was open, adding that the public could be put off from using them as they might be perceived as part of the station café operation. JS ended the discussion stating that it was a valid suggestion and requesting that the matter was placed on a future agenda so that the financial implications of both the Rose Garden Shelter proposal and the Valley Gardens proposal could be considered.</i>	
d)	<i>TK advised Members that the railings beside the tram lines at Baldrine had been replaced. This was noted by Members.</i>	
e)	<i>AJM asked if all the officers and staff operating from 35 New Road and at Cooil Roi could be thanked for their commitment in the current health situation. This was noted.</i>	
80/20	Urgent Matters in Private	
a)	<i>JP raised a matter she had read in the minutes of the 5th of February 2020. JS advised JP that it would be appropriate for her to comment as a tenant of a business leased by the Commissioners, but that could not be done at a Board meeting. JS advised JP that she could raise the comments by writing to the Board in her capacity as a tenant.</i>	
b)	<i>A discussion took place in regard to the use of video conferencing software. It was agreed that the option was viable and would allow regular meetings to proceed.</i>	
	Meeting closed at 8.35 pm	Date of next meeting: 15 th April 2020

Appendix 1

Covid-19 Service Update issued by the Clerks' Office 30.03.20

fService	Comment	Further Actions/aspects for further discussion by Commissioners
Cooil Roi Sheltered Housing	Priority, but please refer to JMs circulars, updates, & Contingency Plan.	JM to report
Refuse Collection	AK says all OK at moment. All staff currently working.	<p>AK requested nitrile gloves & hand sanitiser. Supplied 10 boxes to him 30.03.20 Sourced 20 boxes more from Jacksons Request gone to Fynoderee for hand sanitiser. They have been in touch to say they will have some with us by the end of the week.</p> <p>Side bags: policy needs to be considered. 'Lifted' lids: policy needs to be considered.</p>
Steve & Sam	Currently both well & currently based at home. Both been called out several times to assist with 'essential' tasks for Comms & Laxey Lifeline. Steve Closed Play Areas off. On call for emergencies/essential work at Cooil Roi (this would be under controlled conditions set by JM)	<p>Ordered additional PPE for them Additional nitrile gloves. & Normal gloves to supplement stock. Ordered good supply of 'coveralls' just in case & industrial masks on basis better than nothing in emergency (At the moment if we had any surgical masks it would be better to give them to the NHS anyway!). SP, SQ, PB, MR, to be issued with stock of all above. None of the items necessary yet, but will be supplied just in case. JM well stocked for PPE. If the situation becomes more severe, Steve and Sam may need to be redirected to vital tasks for the emergency services (fire & ambulance, etc) as well as government. In these circumstances PB & MR will cover any urgent Commissioners/Community matters.</p>
PB, SGW, & MR	All 3 currently well.	All 3 working from home on essential office tasks, agendas/supporting information, etc, taking phone calls, emails, etc. Conference calls to discuss and adapt contingency plans. To identify actions needed/assess PPE needs, liaise with contractors etc. Post is being collected from the office and dealt with from home.
Public Toilets	Currently open as you directed, and in accordance with IOM Government 'exemption' list.	Signage discouraging use by public installed. Cleaned with greater frequency. We have been contacted by Manx Independent Carriers as for the locations of Public W/C's in Garff. They are compiling a list for the drivers who may be out on unfamiliar routes.
Bring Banks	Closed.	DoI arranging closure signage. SP, SQ, PB, MR to monitor fly-tipping situation.
Litter/Dog Bins	Currently being serviced	Liaison ongoing with Kinrades. No reported problems as yet. The need for this service to be monitored and reviewed by Commissioners.

		Could be sealed and closed if circumstances deteriorate.
Laxey Lifeline	Getting on its feet.	<p>Advertising flyer being delivered to every Garff house by IOM Post w/c 30.03.20. Not handling cash.</p> <p>Majority paying (or younger relative off island) by mobile banking. One or two unable to do this. Underwriting scheme by the Commissioners would give flexibility and assist the elderly & vulnerable. Also means that cash is not handled at all. It is unlikely that the residents in this situation would not pay once the SI rules were relaxed – it is probable that all the money would be reimbursed. Vicki is, however, seeking assistance from private individuals/organisations.</p> <p>PPE equipment, including gloves and litter pickers issued to the Lifeline. Other consumables supplied by the office. SP, SQ, PB, MR, assisting when required.</p>
Gully Cleaning	Minimised	Weather forecasts being monitored. Yellow rain alert from Ronaldsway will trigger checks of gullies by SP/SQ/PB on the 'Critical-Gully List' (Minorca/OLH/ Shore Rd, etc). MR to check Church Road, Maughold, Port Lewaigue, Maughold, & Dreemskerry Road gullies.
Hedge-Cutting	Suspended	Review after 21 day period
Road Sweeping & Deep Gully cleaning	Suspended	A risk assessment has been undertaken & it has been determined that this service could be implemented if an urgent situation arose. Operator's self-distancing behaviour could be maintained easily.
Grass Cutting	Suspended for SP/SQ & contractors	Need to discuss any assistance that can be given beyond support measures announced by Government.
Other Maintenance	All suspended, unless emergency matter, damage, etc arises.	
Daily Checks of all facilities	Suspended	
Finances	Report to be circulated prior to meeting 01.04.20.	To be discussed at the meeting on 01.04.20.
Account Prep	Authority Accountant	We are continuing to prepare the year end documentation and spreadsheets to pass to the Authorities accountant. We will liaise with the accountant and update with a plan in due course.
External Audit	Deadline now 31 st Jan 2021	Treasury has written to the LA to advise Crowe (IoM) have been appointed as the LA's external Auditor. The usual deadline of the 31 st Oct has been delayed by 3 months to allow additional time for account prep.
Rates	Rates Collection	The Treasury minister announced today, 30 th March, that rates bills will be issued as planned, however persons who have difficulty

		paying may defer. Please see statement at the end of this document. – Appendix A
Campsite	Closed	Guests have been contacted and offered a refund or hold deposits and re-book at a later date. Most have opted to re-book at a later date.
Projects	Glen Road Rec. Area	Planning/production of tender documents can continue. Erection of tennis court fence suspended. Project Conference meeting of GRSC could take place?
	Laxey Valley Garden Conveniences	Liaison can take place with project Manager (Pegasus Consulting). But start date to be determined once health situation eases. Agenda item for future conference meeting?
	River Trail	Suspended TFN
	Laxey Business Network	Suspended TFN
	Snaefell Wheel Purchase	With Attorney General. If go ahead given, transaction could be completed remotely.
	Changing Cubicle Lease	Draft lease produced by advocate. Copy forwarded to 'The Shed Company Limited' for perusal and comment. Once agreed can be transacted remotely.
	Defib Cool Roi	Planning paperwork can go ahead.
Events	VE Day Celebrations (JM)	Cancelled
	Prash Laxaa	Cancelled
	Summer Concert Series (from 18 th July)	Review End of May 20 Prognosis not good!
	Laxey Fair	Cancelled
Meetings	To be conducted by Video Conferencing TFN	Proposal: go to single monthly meeting, with option to call a mid-monthly meeting. Some sub-committees could convene by conference if necessary and progress can be made remotely.

Appendix A – Extract from Treasury Minister's Statement -Monday 30th March 2020

Brief summary – Rates bills will go out as planned, if you can pay then you should. If you are having financial difficulties payment can be deferred. The minister said it was important that Local Authorities continued to provide services.

Pete sought clarification of this and received the following statement from a Senior Officer at Treasury which gives us comfort – well 80% comfort!

“Whilst this decision is intended to offer some support to those in our community most affected by the economic impact of the virus, Treasury have requested that we assure you that this will not make any difference to your funding stream. It remains the intention that cash flow is advanced to you in accordance with previous arrangements, resulting in 80% of the annual rates billed provided to you in the first 3 months”.

Next Update to be Issued to Members 6th April 2020.