

GARFF PARISH DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday 15th December 2021, 7.00 pm

To be conducted virtually by Zoom

Minutes of the Meeting

Present: Ms M. Christian (MC), Ms A. Creer (AC), Mrs M. Fargher (MF) (Chair),
Mr T. Kenyon (TK), Mr P. Kinnish (PK), Mrs J. Pinson (JP), Mr J. Smith (JS), Mr S. Ryzak (SR).

In Attendance: Mr P. Burgess (PB), Clerk, Mr M. Royle (MR), Deputy Clerk/RFO, Mrs J. Mattin (JM) Housing
Manager.

Apologies: Mr S. Clague (SC)

7.00pm	To open the meeting and request that Members consider this agenda and declare any interest that they may, or may be perceived to have, in its business. <i>This was noted. No Member declared an interest in any matters on the agenda. JS Chaired the meeting and began by offering the Best Wishes of the Board to Mr Clague who was unable to attend the meeting.</i>
160/21a	Report from JM regarding Cooil Roi matters <i>It was noted that training on the local Authority's sheltered housing provision would take place in due course at a time when the Board were not meeting virtually. JM advised that the rent increase had been set at 2% by the Department. The new rate for YE 23 would also have an impact on this figure once it had been set by the Board which would be factored in to the rise. In response to the developing Covid situation all visitors and residents would now need to wear a mask in public areas and when accessing the buildings. The Christmas Party would still take place but would be limited to residents only, with all attendees performing a LF Test. The outside entertainers were not now attending. All residents had been notified of this and were happy to proceed with the event. All Covid mitigations were in place in accordance with the updated Covid Contingency Plan. JM advised that PPE stocks were good. JM advised that she would be calling a meeting of the Cooil Roi Sub-Committee in the New Year to discuss maintenance jobs that it would be necessary to carry out in the coming period. Date to be agreed by committee members.</i>
7.12 pm	<i>At this point MF left the meeting due to internet connection problems. It was agreed that MR should liaise with MF should any matters on the agenda require her guidance and input. JM also left the meeting following conclusion of item 160/21.a.</i>
161/21	Planning Matters
	Planning Applications
a)	21/01445/B Cronk-E-Chule Wheel Hill Laxey, Removal of existing windows and door and installation and bi fold doors to rear elevation. <i>There were no objections to this application. The Clerks were given instruction on the comments to submit to the Department.</i>
b)	21/01476/B Shell Seekers Fairy Cottage Laxey, External alterations and additional use of dwelling as tourist accommodation. <i>It was felt that the proposals would provide minimal impact and would actually improve the visual aspect of the property. Parking provision was discussed. JS suggested that a pedestrian crossing would improve road safety in this vicinity. It was agreed that the Commission would defer to the expertise of Highways Division in this matter.</i>
c)	21/01449/B Fir Trees Clay Head Road Baldrine Alterations to dwelling and extension of residential curtilage. <i>There were no objections to this application. The Clerks were given instruction on the comments to submit to the Department.</i>
	Approval Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) – the following matters were noted. No further instruction.
a)	21/00875/B Construction of reinforced concrete wall with stone cladding, blockwork rendered masonry walls and soil embankments for the purpose of providing flood protection, Amulree And Adjacent Car Park, Tennis And Basketball Courts Glen Road Laxey – Approved.

b)	21/00976/C Change of use of public house to a residential dwelling, New Inn New Road Laxey – Approved.	
c)	21/01132/B Erection of extension and raised terrace to rear elevation, 21 Baldrine Park, Baldrine - Approved	
	Refusal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) - ntr	
	Appeal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) - ntr	
	Planning Enforcement (DEFA Planning and Building Control) - ntr	
162/21	Approval of Minutes	
a)	Approval of minutes of meeting of 1 st December 2021. <i>These were agreed to be a correct record of the discussions and decisions made. Proposed JP, Seconded SR. Resolved.</i>	
163/21	Matters Arising & Other Business	
a)	To consider budget estimates for YE 23 and for the Authority's 5-year Financial Plan. <i>MR reported that ECAS costs would rise by 4.7% for YE 23 whilst there would be a small reduction in charges for NCAS. He added that a combined rise of 3% had been factored in to the draft budget which would cover the overall changes that had now been announced at the two sites. MR advised that PB had undertaken research and the EfW charges were expected to rise by around 2%; this had been factored in to the draft budget. He also advised that spending on gully cleaning and hedge-cutting had increased during YE 22 and that this level of spending was maintained in the budget planning going forward into the next five years. The refuse collection charges for the next three years would also be determined during January 2022 once the tender process had concluded. PB advised that it was anticipated that staff wages would rise by a factor of around 1%. JP stated that she heard that government/local authority wages would rise by about 2/2.5%. The current draft estimates were provisional but suggested a rate rise for YE 23 of around 4%; the level of increase was also dependent on any more projects the Board brought forward: these would be determined at the designated budget meeting set for Wednesday 19th January 2022. MR added that playground equipment needed to be replaced at Laxey Promenade and advised that suggestions for new facilities made by AC, PK, and MC were currently being costed for presentation to the Board. JP noted that some indicators in the UK were suggesting that inflation would rise to 5.2% in the coming year. JP wondered whether this should be factored in to the budget. SR felt that this would be prudent considering the recent inflation predictions and the additional demands of gully cleaning, etc. PB commented on inflationary measures such as RPI but felt that the indications were that the Isle of Man would experience lower inflation of 4.6%. MR stated that there was enough flexibility in the current draft budget if inflation did rise several points beyond this 4.6% figure. JP added that the level of rate increase should be considered carefully to ensure that no residents were put into debt. AC asked if an increase in Maintenance staff be considered. MR reported that a contractor has been engaged for an additional day for the last three months; this could be continued in YE 23. AC felt that this could be coupled with a drive to encourage residents to take care of their property frontages and immediate areas in their vicinity. SR added that Members should bring forward proposals for areas across the Sheading which could be improved through a detailed action plan. AC reminded Members that it had been agreed that they should submit suggestions several months ago; MR reported that to date three Members had submitted suggestions. TK noted that the tasks undertaken by maintenance staff were listed on a Board in the office; an indication of current maintenance tasks was also circulated on a monthly basis. MC asked if residents could be advised of how the Commissioners were spending money. PK stated that much more was being done in the last five years since the formation of Garff. SR suggested that as there were only 1.8 maintenance staff there was a limit to the number of tasks that could be undertaken. TK agreed with this pointing out that Garff was a huge area to cover. It was noted that Garff was physically the largest local authority on the Island with the Island's fifth largest population after Douglas, Ramsey, Onchan and Peel. TK noted that a newsletter had been distributed to all residents in recent years prior to the Covid outbreak. The clerks advised that this could be considered by the Board but that this would cost several thousand pounds for printing and distribution; adding that</i>	

	<i>it may be more cost effective to use social media, particularly the local sites in Laxey and Maughold.</i>	
b)	To discuss a date in February 2022 for training on Commissioners responsibilities as employers and on forming positive effective working relationships between staff and Members. <i>The clerks were instructed to ask if the training could be delivered over two evenings. Clerks to report back to the Board in due course.</i>	
c)	Update on: 1. Communication with the Executive Director of Manx Utilities in regard to acquisition of land at Garwick Glen. <i>TK questioned the motives of MU suggesting that this indicated that a sewage treatment plant would be installed in Garwick Glen. MR advised that the clerks had approached MU and asked whether this was the case. The response received was that there would need to be some kind of development at the location as it was the lowest point of the sewage system; this could involve either a pumping station if the pump to Meary Veg option were chosen or an IRBC should the treatment option be chosen. , etc. There followed discussion of the scope and size of any works and the impact on the Glen. JP suggested that the Glen could be made more accessible to the public. PK stated that such use would be a good step forward. TK added that Garwick Glen was partly open and had a public path through it which the Commissioners had requested be improved. AC pointed out that MU had answered openly when the Commissioners had asked questions. She noted that the options had not come in as yet, and in that sense the Board could not make a decision until all the options and details were put before them. JP asked where the pumping stations would be located if the pumping option were successful. MR advised that the indications from MU were that there would be five and that these would be at the Cairns Site, on Old Laxey Hill, in Baldrine (x 2) and close to Groudle. MC asked if the Commissioners should request that MU come forward with the options in the next two months. PB pointed out that the discussions being undertaken with the various landowners were sensitive and were likely to take some time PK suggested asking for an update on progress at the end of January. PB advised Members that the negotiations would be involving the AG's office and that the process with landowners was likely to be complicated and lengthy. SR stated that in his opinion the Commissioners should not 'badger' MU on this matter, adding that we needed to be patient and work with them.</i> 2. Update from the Head of Environmental Health on aspects of water quality in Laxey Bay. <i>Documents giving feedback ifrom DEFA n relation to these matters had been circulated. These were noted. No further discussion took place in regard to this matter.</i>	
d)	To update the Board on matters in relation to contact with the owner of the the End Café on Laxey Promenade. <i>MR reported that positive dialogue had taken place with the owner of the property following an exchange of communications in recent months. Correspondence from the owner had subsequently been received advising that arrangements were being made with Building Control and competent contractors for demolition of the structure in due course. It was agreed that the situation should be monitored and that positive dialogue should be maintained with the owner of the building with a view to encouraging a resolution to the situation in the coming months.</i>	
e)	PK to report on various highway matters in Laxey including liaison with Kerry Sharpe MLC. <i>PK advised that he had liaised with Kerry Sharpe MLC who was now a member of DoI. It was noted that such approaches had been undertaken personally by Mr Kinnish and not in his role as a Commissioner; members could only make such an approach if instructed by the Board. There followed discussion of the level of requests for actions put by the Commissioners to the Department. AC advised that as a resident she had submitted an FoI request to the Department asking for information on the number of requests for all the jobs and actions that had been requested by the local authority and residents in the recent period. This was noted. JP asked PK to list the actions he had discussed with Mrs Sharpe. He advised that these included a handrail on the beach steps, various highway sections that needed to be tarmacked, etc. He advised that</i>	

	<i>he had also spoken to the DoI liaison officer on these matters. MR advised that PK had also submitted his list of requests to the Commissioners' Office; these had been passed on to the Department several months ago.</i>	
164/21	General correspondence	
a)	<i>Resident – complaint in regard to hedge cutting (document circulated 10.11.12). This was noted. MR reported that the clerks had written to the landowner with a view to arranging a site meeting to discuss the matter. Clerks to feedback on progress in due course.</i>	
165/21	Committees & Boards – by exception	
166/21	Operational Reports	
a)	35 New Road -	
b)	Cooil Roi -	
167/21	Any Other Urgent Business <i>(to be submitted in writing by mid-day the previous Tuesday to the date of the meeting).</i>	
a)	<i>SR asked if there were any resources that were needed by staff should they be required to work from home. The clerks advised that they would approach the Board should any equipment/resources be needed. JS added that 'home-working' had operated very successfully during previous lockdowns.</i>	
b)	<i>JP asked if correspondence she had submitted in regard to had been circulated. MR apologised advising that he would check and circulate if it had not been circulated to date.</i>	
c)	<i>MR reminded the Board that there were outstanding matters and considerations in regard to previous discussions about improvements to the Promenade, particularly in respect of proposals for beach hut/lounge facilities on some of the grassed areas. Several Members had written in to the office expressing their views. JS asked the clerks to liaise with MF with a view to placing the matter on a meeting agenda in January 2022; a decision could then be communicated to all interested parties.</i>	
d)	<i>JP advised that she had visited Maughold and Lonan and would submit a list of suggestion for improvements in due course.</i>	
168/21	Matters in Private	
a)	<i>MR briefed Members on the refuse collection tenders advising that two had been received. These were noted.</i>	
b)	<i>Correspondence from L&LHT was read and noted.</i>	
	The meeting closed at 9.15pm Date of next meeting: January 12 th 2022	