

GARFF DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS	
Wednesday 4th October 2023, 7.00 pm	
Commissioners' Offices, 35 New Road, Laxey	
Minutes of the Meeting	
	Present: Mr S. Ryzak (SR) Chair; Mrs M. Fargher (MF) Vice Chair, Ms M. Christian (MC), Mr S. Clague (SC), Mr T. Kenyon (TK), Mr P. Kinnish (PK), J. Pinson (JP), Mr. J. Smith (JS). Officers: Mr P. Burgess (PB), Clerk, Mr M. Royle (MR), Deputy Clerk/RFO, Mrs J Mattin, Housing Manager. Apologies: Ms. A. Creer (AC).
7.00pm	Public Meeting <i>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> <i>This was noted. SR advised that MC had been delayed but would be attending the meeting shortly.</i>
	Planning Matters
87/23	Planning Applications
a)	Deferred: 23/00883/B Woodside Cottage, Breeze Hill, Laxey Isle Of Man IM4 7DL Removal of dormer extension and replace with first floor extension to the existing property line <i>SC declared a conflict of interest and withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this discussion. It was noted that the first-floor extension was at the rear of the property and that the visual impact would be minimal. There were no objections to this application.</i>
b)	23/00968/B 16 Ballagorry Drive, Glen Mona, Maughold Proposal: Removal of chimney stack, to be replaced by matching roof tiles. <i>It was felt that the visual impact of these proposals would be minimal. There were no objections to the application.</i>
c)	23/01007/B The Paddocks, Ramsey Road, Laxey Renovation & change of use of existing building from office units to tourist accommodation. Installation of log burning flues. <i>The visual impact of the changes was considered, particularly as viewed from the A2 when travelling south. Any impact was deemed to be insignificant and there were no objections to the proposals. It was also noted that matters relating to wood burning stove installation and flues would be assessed by Building Control.</i>
d)	23/01055/B 2 Marguerite Cottages, Glen Road, Laxey Proposal: Conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation. <i>The visual impact of the changes was considered. These were felt to be minimal. It was noted that Flood Risk Management had objected to the proposal as it involved the creation of ground floor sleeping accommodation which they presumed against in this location. The latter objection was noted, however the Board resolved that the Commission would not object to the application in their submission.</i>
e)	23/01056/B Cronk-Na-Quill, Old Laxey Hill, Laxey Proposal: Remove existing timber windows, install new white PVC windows into existing apertures. <i>JP asked if PK should declare an interest in this matter. PK felt that he did not have a conflict of interest. The officers advised that the property could be determined to be in the vicinity of PKs property and that, as a perception of an interest had been expressed, it may be better for an interest to be declared. PK declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. It was noted that the windows being replaced were at the rear of the property and could not be viewed from any public position. They were also a 'like for like' replacement of timber with PVC. There were no objections to the proposals.</i>
f)	23/01057/B Glen Road, Laxey. Proposal: Construction and replacement of existing walls for the purpose of providing flood protection to Glen Road, Laxey. <i>The construction of the new flood wall defences along this section was welcomed. It was noted that the Department had liaised and agreed how the wall would be constructed with each of the</i>

	<i>affected residents and had gained their support. Members expressed concern that the 'river' face of the wall would just have a concrete finish. This matter was discussed in detail, particularly the fact that the concrete wall would appear out of character when viewed from the public pathway on the opposite bank of the river. It was agreed that the Board would request a site meeting with the Department and submit their concerns about the wall finish to the Planning Authority.</i>
g)	23/01076/B 18 Dumbells Terrace, Laxey Proposal: Replacement of front door. <i>It was noted that the proposed door was of a broadly similar configuration and colour. There were no objections to the proposals.</i>
h)	23/01042/B Claughbane Quarry Claughbane Plantation Mountain Road, Maughold Proposal: Creation of car park. <i>This application was carefully considered. It was agreed that the car park would not cause unacceptable visual intrusion and would increase the amenity value of the area for the public. There were no objections to the application. The clerks were instructed to contact DEFA Forestry to request that a 'no overnight parking' restriction be placed on the car park.</i>
i)	23/01044/B Dhoon School, Glen Mona, Maughold Proposal: Removal of Manx sod bank and replacement with new metal fence. <i>The necessity of making the current hedge safe was noted and discussed. Drainage issues, which had contributed to the collapse were noted. The impact of the proposed bow top fence was carefully considered, and the consensus reached was that the introduction of a metal fence would be inappropriate in this rural location. The clerks were instructed to contact the Department to request that a more appropriate solution be considered.</i>
j)	23/00388/B Fields 612727 & 612728, Baldrine Farm, Baldrine Road, Baldrine Construction of seven detached houses and associated infrastructure. <i>These amendments were noted. The implications for a property at the junction of Baldrine Road and the A2 were considered. It was felt that no comment was necessary as the new proposals were matters that Highways needed to assess and determine. The Commissioners reaffirmed their Objection to the full application.</i>
k)	23/01045/B Ben Veg, The Colony, Port Lewaigue, Maughold Proposal: Proposed alterations and extension to dwelling to provide replacement garage and additional living accommodation, together with erection of a detached garden room building to rear garden. <i>SR declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this discussion. The application was discussed and considered. The consensus being that the changes would not have a significant visual impact. The clerks were instructed to submit no objections to the proposals.</i>
l)	23/01089/B Ballaskerrow Mill, Ballagawne Road, Baldrine Proposal: Erection of single storey extension to South West Elevation <i>This application for an orangery extension was noted and considered. There were no objections.</i>
m)	23/01114/B 64 Ard Reayrt, Laxey. Proposal: Erection of a raised decked area and associated stairs, replacement of the existing front door. <i>These proposals were noted. There were no objections.</i>
	Approval Notices (DEFA Planning Committee)
	23/00969/B Installation of replacement porch, Seaview, Fairy Cottage, Laxey.
	23/00179/B Erection of decking and pergola to rear garden (retrospective), Ballagorry Beg, Glen Mona, Maughold.
	23/00384/B Alterations including the erection of ground and first floor extensions to provide additional living accommodation, Capel Glen Pinfold Hill Laxey.
	Refusal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) – ntr
	Appeal Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) – ntr
	Planning Enforcement (DEFA Planning and Building Control) – ntr
	Withdrawal Notices (DEFA Planning And Building Control) – ntr

	Demolition Notice (DEFA Planning And Building Control) – ntr
88/23	Approval of Minutes
a)	<i>Approval of minutes of meeting of 6th September 2023. These were considered. TK proposed that they were a correct record of the decisions made at the meeting. Seconded, MC. Resolved.</i>
89/23	Matters Arising & Other Business
a)	<p>To discuss an initial submission to the Review of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan. <i>Members had studied the consultation documents and a summary document prepared by the clerks. The review process is designed to culminate in a revised Isle of Man Strategic Plan that runs to 2041 and provides a lead in balancing housing need, community vitality, and infrastructure development across the Island. A wide range of matters were discussed including where future development should be focussed geographically; whether around Douglas/Onchan, around towns/villages, or around a mixture of both. The need to focus the plan on community revitalisation and development was considered. There followed a discussion of the need to ensure that areas such as Glen Mona and Baldrine are revitalised both in terms of some limited additional affordable housing and in terms of infrastructure, shops, services, and other facilities. The consensus was that there is a need for affordable and sustainable housing in these and other outlying areas of Garff. It was felt that the right policies would allow development that would support both the young entering the housing market and those in retirement who may wish to access sheltered housing, etc. It was also noted that it was the young who would be the ones generating income from taxation and in this sense providing them with affordable housing would assist in keeping them on the Island. The need to protect and maintain the character of rural areas whilst also addressing housing needs through a new strategic plan was also discussed. It was also agreed that through the plan government should be seeking to revitalise commercial areas in villages and towns and hence help to build sustainable local economies.</i></p> <p><i>There followed discussion of the impact of car ownership, parking, and school infrastructure. The role of empty homes and second homes in diminishing community vitality and adding to housing shortages was also considered. Increasing the rates on the owners of neglected dilapidated housing and on second home owners was discussed. The inclusion of measures to address climate change was also welcomed, but it was noted that achieving a detailed consensus as to how changes should be made was difficult. References were made to the difficulties of enhancing public transport on the Island, particularly in remote areas. Members were asked to make individual submissions to the office by the 23rd of October for collation. The clerks were then instructed to make a submission to the consultation by the 31st of October.</i></p>
b)	<p>To discuss the consultation on the Town and County Planning Act. <i>Members had studied the consultation documents and a summary document prepared by the clerks. MR summarised the amendments proposed in the consultation document which seek to clarify matters relating to aspects such as the need for planning permission when transforming garden areas into hard standing. There is also a proposal to streamline applications for demolition and re-build in conservation areas so that both elements are the subject of just one planning application. Members requested further time to consider the proposals. Members were asked to make individual submissions to the office by the 23rd of October for collation. The clerks were then instructed to make a submission to the consultation by the 27th of October.</i></p>
c)	<p>Highways Maintenance Service Level Agreement – Email from the Department dated 21.09.23. stating there is an opportunity to hand back the Highway Maintenance service to DoI if any Local Authority feels they no longer want to continue implementing the service. <i>It was noted that the correspondence from the Department had arrived with no notice or discussion at any level. There followed a brief discussion of issues experienced in relation to gully-pot cleaning, hedge-cutting, and street sweeping. The outcome of the discussion being that the clerks were asked to contact the Department for further details.</i></p>
d)	<p>To discuss the 'Race Side' river wall on Glen Road (<i>raised by PK</i>). <i>PK was advised that the Department had stated on several occasions previously that they would be attending to the footpath and river wall on the 'race side' of the river but would not be doing this until all the property flood defence works were completed along Glen Road on the opposite side of the river. This was noted.</i></p>

e)	<p>Proposed PROW through Laxey School Grounds: To note several items of correspondence received in support of the proposal. Circulated to Commissioners.</p> <p><i>PB reported that the Department had indicated that the DoI's legislation officer had been asked to draft an Order to designate the path as a Public Right of Way. The Commissioners would be updated as the legislative process was progressed. PB advised that the Department could not indicate when the Order would be ready to be put before Tynwald.</i></p>
f)	<p>Feedback from MF & SR regarding the Ramsey Boundary Review Pre-Inquiry meeting held on Monday October 2nd.</p> <p><i>SR & MF fed back on the Pre-Inquiry meeting. SR drew the attention of Members to the significant amount of land which Ramsey was seeking to appropriate. This would approximately double the area size of the current Town boundary. The necessity of such an expansion was questioned, particularly as none of the land currently in Maughold was suitable for any development (as admitted by Ramsey Commissioners themselves in their own submission to the Inquiry). MR felt that there was a lack of any clarity in the reasons for the request, adding that Ramsey had submitted no justification for wanting the land in Maughold. SR advised that the timing of the request for a boundary change had been questioned strongly, particularly in light of the forthcoming publication of the Area Plan for the North and West (the draft form of which states that there is very little current housing need in the north) and the recently announced wholesale review of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan. It was agreed by many parties that it would be much more prudent to await the outcome and conclusions of these two planning policy documents. The consensus was that in the absence of clear rationale for the boundary extension the reason was financial. In particular the bid to appropriate around a hundred properties in Glen Auldyn would provide a significant additional rate income for the Town Commission without the need to provide further services to the properties. This would also mean a drastic reduction in the rate income of Lezayre Parish. It was noted that as there were only two properties in the area of Maughold highlighted that there would be miniscule financial impact on Garff of the proposed changes. Notwithstanding this, the view of the Board was that the changes were completely unnecessary. Although there are only a few properties involved in Garff it was felt that the Board should do their utmost to protect the interests of the residents who would be forced to pay significantly higher rates for no additional services.</i></p> <p><i>Procedural matters regarding the running of the Inquiry had been established at the meeting. SR advised that those at the meeting were keen to see that the voices of all the community were heard in this matter. It was also noted that there were no Ramsey Commissioners or MHKs present at the meeting, just the Town Clerk and Ramsey's legal representative.</i></p> <p><i>Updates on the dates for the Inquiry will be announced in due course. It was agreed that MF and SR be registered to speak at the Inquiry.</i></p>
g)	<p>To discuss frequency of meetings (raised by PK).</p> <p><i>This matter was discussed with some members supporting a return to twice monthly meetings and several supportive of maintaining just one meeting per month with an option to call a further meeting should urgent business arise. As no clear consensus could be developed no definitive change was approved. SR asked that the matter be brought back to a future meeting to see if a consensus could be formed. He reminded Members that in the current circumstances mid-monthly meetings could easily be called to consider urgent matters.</i></p>
h)	<p>To discuss and assess printing of planning application documents following trial period (<i>raised by SC</i>).</p> <p><i>IT was agreed to continue making the plans available to Members and public in the manner which had been done for the last and this meeting. The clerks were asked to approach the Department with a view to having the issue of full plans re-instated. In the meantime, clerks to arrange for the plans to be on display in the Boardroom from the Thursday prior to every meeting.</i></p>
90/23	General correspondence -
	<p>Resident email dated & circulated 27.09.23 regarding the future use of Garwick Glen.</p> <p><i>The consensus was that this proposal to have Garwick Glen designated as a National Glen be welcomed and supported. A discussion took place. It was agreed that the clerks should contact</i></p>

	<i>both MHKs seeking their support in this initiative with a view to making a joint approach to Government. Clerks to report back to the Board in due course.</i>
91/23	Committees & Boards – By exception
92/23	Operational Reports
a)	35 New Road – Update on meeting with DoI in regard to the provision of additional sheltered housing and new office premises. <i>Members were advised that contact had been received today from the DoI. They had asked several questions which JM was collating and responding to. It was anticipated that an update would be ready for the meeting on November 1st. This was noted.</i>
b)	Cooil Roi – Report to be circulated. JM referred to the report she had circulated prior to the meeting which outlined progress with the river wall reinstatement outside the complex and the new road that will become additional parking. She reported that matters were progressing well, and the works should be completed shortly. JM advised that there were now twenty people on the Cooil Roi waiting list. She also advised that a new community social worker had been appointed. To discuss the need for Cooil Roi a sub-committee. JM felt that a sub-committee would provide more opportunity for matters relating to the Complex to be discussed and for new ideas to be debated. SR suggested that further support be offered through the formation of a formal committee made up of a 'Lead-Member,' a second Commissioner and one of the other officers. MF suggested that the formation of a sub-committee with clear terms of reference be considered. It was noted that any decisions on matters would still need to come to the Board for approval. The officers were asked to draft a Terms of reference document for the Board to consider at a future meeting. A variety of other discussions took place relating to matters of fire policy and the employment of contractors. The discussion ended.
93/23	Any Other Urgent Business <i>(to be submitted in writing by mid-day the previous Tuesday to the date of the meeting).</i>
a)	Dhoon Glen – <i>MF confirmed that the office had received a letter from DEFA Forestry advising that resources were now being committed to reopening the closed path at Dhoon Glen. They had given no firm dates but had said that they would open the section up as soon as possible. This news was welcomed by Members. The clerks were asked to post a copy of the letter on the website.</i>
b)	Condition of the DoI's toilets at Laxey Harbour – <i>An issue with a new remote locking mechanism on the harbour toilets had arisen but had been resolved. The issue had prompted a discussion amongst Board Members of the condition of the toilets. SR felt that the fabric of the toilets was in a deplorable condition, and they needed a full refurbishment. He felt that this was causing additional challenges and making them very difficult to appear clean. It was also noted that they were sometimes used inappropriately by some members of the public. There followed a discussion of the cleaning regime. It was noted that they were cleaned once a day seven days a week by the Commissioners. Some Members felt that it was inappropriate that the local authority was paying to clean the Department's facilities. MR reported that the Department had been approached several times in recent years requesting an upgrade, particularly to the disabled cubicles. These had been rejected. Several Members felt that the Commissioners should hand back the cleaning of the toilets to the DoI, particularly if they were not prepared to upgrade them. It was agreed that the clerks should write to the Department to request a site meeting to discuss upgrading the toilets and their future ownership.</i>
c)	Laxey Fair – MC reported that a meeting had taken place at which a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer had been appointed. There was no representation from the Commissioners on this body.
d)	Commissioners Website – <i>the clerks reported that the current Garff website was on an old website that was now not supported. They were asked to obtain quotations for the creation of a new site.</i>
e)	<i>JS & PK gave apologies and left the meeting at 10.01pm.</i>

94/23	Matters in Private
a)	<i>Cooil Roi Private matters – A staffing matter was discussed.</i>
b)	<i>To discuss a property lease – A matter was discussed.</i>
	<i>Meeting closed at 10.14pm</i>
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday November 1 st 2023