

	GARFF DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS Wednesday 29th November 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), A. Creer (AC), 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. Apologies: Mrs J Mattin, Housing Manager.
7.00pm	Public Meeting 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. Declarations were made as reported below.</i>
	Planning Matters
103/23	Planning Applications
a)	23/01312/B Keayn Reayrt, Croit E Quill Road, Laxey. Erection of a detached two storey dwelling. <i>Correspondence from a resident in regard to this application had been circulated and was noted at the meeting. Two residents with an interest in this application were invited by the Chair to make a brief statement. The residents outlined that they were opposed to the proposals and referred to a previous planning application (22/01060/B) at the site that had been refused by the Planning Committee. The residents felt that the new application was not significantly different in either design or size from the previous application. They were opposed to the application as it would negatively affect their property in the same way. They stated that it would cause loss of light, loss of privacy, and that differences in ground levels would mean that the 2m high fence would effectively be 3m high on their side of the boundary. The consensus among the Board was that the application should not have been accepted as the proposals were not significantly different from the refused application. Members felt that the proposed dwelling constituted over-intensive use of a small plot and would be obtrusive. It would also cause an unacceptable level of overlooking/loss of light in relation to the neighbouring property 'Two Ways'. The Clerks were instructed to submit an Objection to the proposals.</i>
b)	23/01138/B Conrhenny Carpark Conrhenny Plantation / Community Woodland Creg-ny-baa Back Road Creg Ny Baa. Extension of the existing car park and temporary accommodation of a food vending facility for a period not exceeding five years within the existing car park. <i>An objection from a Member of the Public was read and considered. The Objector stated that the proposals would cause further unacceptable visual intrusion to the character of the area and was concerned that the visibility splays were inadequate at the exit onto the highway. Successful developments of forestry amenity at South Barrule were noted. The consensus was that these proposals would encourage more visitors to the plantation and the vicinity which would have positive benefits for the Garff area. Concerns were expressed about the difficulties of exiting the car park safely with the current configuration and limited visibility splay to the left. The clerks were instructed to make comment on the adequacy of the visibility splays and to request that the Department consider ensuring that the proposed mobile takeaway is as 'in-keeping' with the character of the area as possible to reduce its visual impact: it was felt that a more permanent well-designed structure would be more acceptable. Sensitive landscaping/mitigation could also be considered for the current car park and proposed car park extension.</i>
c)	23/01277/B The Old Sunday School, Glen Road, Laxey Alterations to door, window, canopy and driveway - additions to approved application PA 16/01210/B (Retrospective). <i>There were no objections to this application. The consensus being that the refurbishment of the building was of high quality and was a great improvement to the character of the area.</i>

d)	23/01281/B 15 All Saints Park, Lonan Extension to front elevation, bi-fold doors to rear elevation, alterations to sunroom, new window in gable wall and associated works. <i>There were no objections to these proposals.</i>
e)	23/01288/B 24 Baldrine Park, Baldrine Amendment to previously approved PA 20/00730/B to incorporate pitched roof instead of approved flat roof. <i>The consensus was that this was an improved design. No objections.</i>
f)	23/01305/B Queens Hotel New Road Laxey Re-rendering of the external finish. <i>There were no objections to these proposals.</i>
g)	23/00932/B Part Field 615019 Land Adjacent To The Salmon Lake Center, Mines Road, Laxey. Creation of new parking area, installation of new footbridge, and installation of new foot path. SC declared an interest and left the room for the duration of the discussion of this application. <i>The consensus was that these proposals would enhance the amenity of the area. There were no objections to this application.</i>
h)	23/01306/B 14 Cronk Cardle, Corony, Maughold, Creation of a doorway from an existing window to rear elevation (retrospective). <i>This retrospective application was noted. Notwithstanding this, there were no objections to the development.</i>
i)	23/01347/C 5 Reayrt Ny Glionney Close, Laxey, Change of use from spare room to beauty therapy treatment room. <i>The Clerks were instructed to make a submission deferring consideration of any potential highways/parking issues to the Highways Officer. The proposal for an additional parking space was noted. There were no objections to the proposals.</i>
j)	23/01321/B & 23/01322/CON Laxey Wheel Visitor Entrance, Mines Road, Laxey. Erection of a building to provide a visitor entrance hub, staff accommodation and administration space to replace existing visitor entrance kiosk. <i>The consensus was that the proposed building was of poor design quality and was out of character with this important heritage site. The Board resolved to Object to the proposals and encourage MNH to bring forward a design that more appropriately respects the importance and cultural integrity of the Laxey Wheel. The demolition element to the application was noted.</i>
	Approval Notices (DEFA Planning Committee) <i>The following approvals were noted. No further instruction.</i>
k)	23/01076/B Replacement of front door 18 Dumbells Terrace, Laxey.
l)	23/00936/B Erection of garden store Cornaa House, Ballaglass, Glen Road, Cornaa
	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
104/23	Approval of Minutes
a)	Approval of minutes of meeting of 1 st November 2023.
105/23	Matters Arising & Other Business
a)	YE 23 Audited Accounts to be agreed & signed off. <i>MR reported that the auditors were now due to be presenting the audited accounts for the Board's consideration at the meeting on December 6th 2023. This was noted.</i>
b)	To discuss apportioning monies to the mobile and family library in the YE 25 budget. <i>Members were briefed on the level of previous donations towards provision of the service. It was agreed that this matter would be considered as part of the budget setting process due to be discussed at the meeting on December 6th 2023.</i>

c)	<p>To discuss the Scoping Report produced by Orsted on their proposals for a wind farm array off the east coast of the Island (<i>Officer's Report issued 23.11.23</i>).</p> <p><i>Members had attended the 'drop-in' session held on Monday 20th November in the Glen Gardens Pavilion. A document on the Scoping Report being undertaken by Orsted had been circulated. A discussion of the potential effect of a large wind farm array in the proposed location took place. It was noted that the array would be dominant in views from the eastern coastline and mountain uplands and would have a significant visual impact. It was noted that Orsted had claimed that the array would provide a large volume of exportable electricity and that there would be substantial income for the Manx Government & taxpayer. The potential effect on ferry routes was discussed, but Orsted had stated that the location would not impact on the passage of either Manx or Irish shipping. MR referred to the terms of the Scoping Report which appeared to be wide ranging and thorough. MR had met with Manx Birdlife who were also named as a stakeholder in the process and who would be bringing forward a view in due course. A Member raised a concern about potential disturbance to the munitions deposited by the UK military in the north-eastern sector of the Irish Sea. It was stated that these were generally in the Beaufort Dyke off the coast of Galloway which was much further north than the proposed array site: although strong tides and weather meant some had scattered further afield. Orsted had committed to engaging closely with the Manx public and had stated that they would come to a meeting in the future to speak directly with the Commissioners. It was noted that the 'Scoping' process would take some considerable time and that a planning application submission was anticipated during 2025. The Commissioners would monitor the progress of Orsted's proposals as they were developed.</i></p>
d)	<p>To discuss implementation of the new dog byelaws (<i>brief officers report issued 23.11.23</i>).</p> <p><i>An options report had been circulated. These and a range of other options were discussed. The cost of employing a part-time warden was discussed but at this stage the general consensus was that this would place an inordinate burden on the rates. This would be reviewed on an ongoing basis going forward, however. JP suggested that volunteer dog wardens could be engaged, perhaps from the Laxey Dog Club. The clerks were asked to approach the Dog Club in this regard. Other approaches such as new signage and the use of CCTV were discussed. The clerks were asked to price up a CCTV camera that could be used in various locations as issues arose. It was noted that a Member of the Public had written in suggesting that the Commissioners establish a 'hotline' number for anonymous reporting when fouling incidents occurred. The consensus was that this was an idea that should be implemented and trialled once the Department had actioned the byelaws. The discussion concluded with confirmation of the decision to explore the hotline option, assess the cost of mobile cameras, and further investigate the feasibility of bringing in experienced enforcement wardens for occasional enforcement when there were particular issues.</i></p>
e)	<p>To discuss proposal by PK for a fence between the Bowling Green and the River on Glen Road, Laxey.</p> <p><i>PK outlined his view that there was a need for a 3m high fence by the river at the Bowling Green to stop footballs from being lost and to deter young people from entering the river. PK suggested that Laxey Football Club may contribute to the cost of a fence which would be in the region of £8,000. Several Members expressed opposition to PK's proposal. JP asked if a sensory garden could be established in the location for older people: her view being that the Commissioners had spent a lot of money on young persons' facilities in the area. She felt a sensory garden would provide a facility for older people. Other members felt that the Bowling Green was not a suitable location for a sensory garden and should be maintained as an area that was available for ball sports, and other recreation. PK stated that the provision of facilities for young people gave them something to do and also assisted in reducing petty vandalism in the Village.</i></p>
f)	<p>To discuss speed signage in Laxey Village (generated by AC in email dated 20.11.23).</p> <p><i>AC outlined her concerns about poor speed limit signage in areas of Laxey Village. In particular she felt there was a need for 'repeater' speed signs on Glen Road and other roads where a 20mph limit was in force as vehicles often exceeded the speed limit. Many of these roads had no pavement and the speed of vehicles posed a danger to pedestrians and other road users. The increased use of painted road markings was suggested by JP. AC asked if one of the SID signs could be deployed</i></p>

	<p>on Glen Road for a period as a proactive measure. MR to investigate possible installation points and have a unit installed.</p> <p>The clerks advised that Highways had suffered greatly from budget cuts and the constraints meant that they were being very selective about any initiatives that they would implement. MR advised that Highways were working on a project to improve road safety at the Ard Reayrt Junction, and that all local authorities had been told that due to the lack of a sufficient budget there would be a reduction in the amount of highway network initiatives that would be undertaken for the foreseeable future. It was agreed that 20mph repeater signs would be installed along Glen Road and that the Commissioners would continue to lobby Government for further road safety improvements across Garff.</p>
g)	<p>To discuss management of stones on Laxey Beach.</p> <p>The works currently being undertaken by the Department on Laxey Beach to move the stones were discussed. It was noted that the Department had stated that they were moving them to protect the sea wall, harbour pier, and highway which are their assets. This was on the basis that the stones would absorb some of the energy of the waves and decrease the amount of vibration transmitted across the road to properties on the Promenade during stormy conditions. The stones would also assist with protecting the sea wall from being undermined. It was noted that the stones could easily be redistributed naturally, particularly during winter storms. There followed a discussion of the cost of the works. It was noted that, in common with other local authorities, the Commissioners leased the beach area from the Department for a peppercorn rent: this arrangement has been in place for at least forty years. AC questioned what liabilities this arrangement placed on the ratepayer. The clerks advised that as the Department were acting to protect their own asset and that, in these circumstances, the Commissioners should not be responsible for conducting or funding the works. It was also noted that the sea wall was not in the area marked on the lease plan.</p> <p>The Chair invited a Member of the Public to address the Board from the floor. The resident asked for the Board's opinion on the extent of the storms over the last few winters and the amount of debris that came over during periods of overtopping. There followed discussion of this and factors such as wind direction, tides, and to what degree the position of the stones on the beach affected the amount of debris that was deposited. JP stated that she had asked for past data on how long it takes to clear up the debris. MR advised that such data was not recorded, adding that the majority of the clean up was conducted by the Department who own the highway and who have larger machinery.</p> <p>There followed a general discussion of various options for beach management. It was noted that the beach stones moved variously depending on the weather conditions. Several Members asked if there was any data on the impact of stone management on vibrations at properties along the Promenade. The Chair invited comment on this from a Member of the Public who advised that the stones definitely take energy out of the waves; adding that when the stones are present at the Harbour end of the Promenade their "house did not shake." The Chair thanked those Members of the Public who had contributed to the debate.</p> <p>The clerks were asked to forward a copy of the lease to Members. PB reported that the Commissioners leased several properties from the Department in Laxey on peppercorn rents, including the Rose Gardens and the Heritage Gardens. AC requested that a list of these leases be circulated to Members at the same time as the copy of the lease for Laxey Beach.</p>
	<p>9.17pm: JS gave apologies and left the meeting to attend another appointment.</p>
106/23	<p>General correspondence -</p>
107/23	<p>Committees & Boards – By exception</p> <p>ECAS: TK reported that the ECAS budget would be set at the December meeting of the Committee. It was noted that the site operator (Douglas Corporation) was indicating that they were requesting that the operational costs for the site would need to rise by 15% for Year End 2025. There followed discussion of the recent tender process that had taken place for operating the site and the high level of this proposed rise and its implications for the budget set by the Commissioners. TK would attend the meeting and express the Board's concern about the level of increase being proposed.</p>

108/23	Operational Reports
a)	35 New Road – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th December 2023. Meeting to discuss Budget for YE 25. <i>This meeting was noted by all Members. The clerks advised that preparatory information would be circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting. It was also noted that the Chief Constable would be in attendance to discuss policing matters from 7.00pm until 7.30pm.</i>
b)	Cooil Roi – A report had been circulated by JM and was noted.
109/23	Any Other Urgent Business <i>(to be submitted in writing by mid-day the previous Tuesday to the date of the meeting).</i>
a)	<i>AC asked if the Auditor General had responded to the Commissioners' request that he investigate the costings of MU's proposals for a sewage treatment works to serve Laxey and Baldrine. PB reported that requests for an update had been sent several times, but the Auditor General had indicated that his investigations had not been completed. The clerks were asked to write again to request an update.</i>
b)	<i>The launch of the first skiff produced as part of the Laxey Skiff Community Project would go ahead at 3.00pm on Saturday 2nd December. This was noted.</i>
c)	<i>SC requested that the Commissioners write to Highways asking for repair works be undertaken on the Garwick Road which was in a perilous condition. PB to submit a report to the Department.</i>
d)	<i>JP requested that Bus Vannin be approached with a view to re-instating the Laxey Skipper Bus to serve between Laxey Promenade and the Upper Village on a set schedule.</i>
e)	<i>MR advised that the Cabinet Office were hosting a drop-in session at Cooil Roi Lounge for the public regarding the funding of care for the elderly in the future. This would take place between 4.00pm and 7.00pm on Tuesday 5th December.</i>
f)	<i>JP referred to the recent visit of the Lieutenant Governor to the Laxey Skiff Community project. This had been a very successful and enjoyable occasion.</i>
g)	<i>SC asked if there had been any updates with the situation at the former End Café on Laxey Promenade. The clerks advised that there had been no communications from any party in this regard.</i>
110/23	Matters in Private
	Note: Local Government Act 1985, section 65; Disclosure of Information 'Any member or former member of a local authority who, without the consent of the authority, divulges any information communicated to him in confidence as such member shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1000.'
	Any urgent Business in Private.
a)	<i>A staffing matter was discussed.</i>
	The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.38pm Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6 th December 2023 (Budget setting meeting)