

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BRADDAN PARISH
COMMISSIONERS**

**held in Commissioners Office, Close Corran, Union Mills, Braddan at 7.00 pm on
Tuesday 24th May 2011**

In Attendance:

Mrs M Hodge	Chairman
Mr A Jessopp	Vice-Chairman
Mr R Corkhill	
Mrs K Beecroft	
Mr P Halsall	
Mr J C Whiteway	Clerk
Miss M J Radcliffe	Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer

AGM11/01 Welcome by the Chairman

The Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

AGM11/02 Issue of Summons / Agenda

It was noted that all members had received Summons/Agenda at least three clear days before the date of the meeting.

AGM11/03 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the 2010 AGM which had been previously approved, were noted.

AGM11/04 Chairman's Report

The following report was given by the Chairman:

Another year has flown by, and the Parish of Braddan continues to flourish, with Team Braddan, Commissioners and Staff all working well together. The Commissioners were very pleased to be able to retain the rates at £2.27: the same level as last year, and the year before. This is a genuine indication of the healthy financial position that the parish is in, and the Finance Officer's Report will demonstrate this even more clearly.

Unfortunately we still have the litigation commenced by the previous clerk hanging over us, but this should draw to a conclusion by the end of the calendar year, and we shall then be able to move forward and spend time and money more positively for the benefit of the parish. On the legal scene we have recently had a notable success in challenging a Petition of Doleance brought against the Commissioners by a business rate-payer in the parish. We were accused of non-compliance with the Local Authority Act with regard to the disclosure of financial information. The old legislation refers to 'books of account' which it deemed should be available for inspection by any rate-payer, and was of course drafted when all financial transactions were documented in large leather-bound ledgers, which indeed could fairly easily be made available to any rate-payer wishing to view them. Nowadays, along with most Local Authorities, all our financial affairs are held on computer files, together with a lot of confidential personal data relating to staff and tenants. Our view was that it was not possible to provide the carte blanche access to our computer system that the rate-payer in question

seemed to be requesting, but that detailed financial statements together with audited accounts would always

be available for inspection at anytime, both online on the Commissioners website, and in paper format from the office on request. The Deemster concurred with our interpretation of the Act in the electronic age, and found in our favour accordingly. Costs were awarded to us; to date we do not have information of the exact amount but it will be several thousands. We are pleased to have had our stance vindicated, and to have been able to achieve a definitive interpretation of the legislation for the modern age; this will be of benefit to all Local Authorities on the Island.

The development of Strang Corner Field is one of the main projects that has had to be put on hold while money had to be put aside for legal costs, but we hope to hold an Open Day later in the year when we can show some of the exciting ideas that have been put forward for inclusion in this scheme. Other developments that should have been well underway by now but have been delayed, are the two car parking schemes, one at Union Mills and the other at Port Soderick Village Hall. Both of these have been held up due to traffic management issues with Highways, but we are hoping that both schemes will get the 'green light' very soon. A comprehensive survey of traffic speeds along the Old Castletown Road would seem to indicate that the current speed zones **are** reducing speeds to some degree, so there may be an argument in favour of reducing the rather draconian vision splays currently being demanded by the planners for the Port Soderick Village Hall car park.

Other schemes in our area to which we have contributed in one way or another include the Richmond Hill 'improvements' where we declined the invitation to provide street lighting; the Cooil Road Development Order where we were somewhat ambivalent, some Commissioners feeling that although it appeared to be somewhat premature, in advance of the Eastern Area Plan, it did at least offer some imminent overall control over the development along the Cooil Road and was therefore to be reluctantly supported, whilst others remained firmly of the view that the EAP must come first; in the event the Order was withdrawn by DoI, which solved our dilemma! The Southern Area Plan is currently at Public Inquiry stage; we understand that the Eastern Area Plan will be the next to be put out for consultation, so that will be our opportunity to contribute to the Plan that should lay the foundation for all development for the coming decade or so.

The Bus timetable review has created some discussion in the Parish, and the Commissioners are continuing to press for a safe crossing place and bus stop at Mount Murray, mainly for schoolchildren crossing the main road to catch their school buses morning and afternoon.

On the Housing front, there is currently some discussion taking place at national level with regard to achieving the best use of our public housing stock, with comparisons being made between the public and private sector rent levels. We in Braddan are actively looking for the opportunities for building more Commissioners' houses within the Parish.

Various refuse disposal issues have arisen during the year, probably the most high profile is the future of the Kerbside Collection scheme which was piloted in Douglas, Braddan and Onchan, and paid for by the old DoLGE for a three year period. That period comes to an end in September, and initially all three authorities agreed to continue, and pay for, an extension through until next April, the end of the financial year. During that time a thorough

assessment of the costs and value of the scheme would be undertaken, and decisions then made as to whether it should continue or not. Onchan have now decided unilaterally to pull out of the scheme, which leaves Braddan and Douglas to continue to fund the scheme in our areas until next April. Douglas has commissioned a comprehensive independent report on all aspects of waste disposal; this has now just been received and we shall be considering its findings before making a final decision on kerbside. Meantime we have agreed to continue for one year our current arrangement with Onchan for our ordinary refuse collection; Douglas will continue to operate the site for the next year.

So we are looking forward to a more positive year this year, and next year will bring election time again for the local authorities. We hope that the current Board have served you well over the past four years: we have certainly endeavoured to do just that. As always, our doors, telephones and emails are open and we welcome all your comments, and constructive criticism.

AGM11/05

Clerks Report

The following report was given by the Clerk:

We started the year with our 2nd business plan which was well received.

We set off with great gusto working closely with Braddan School in line with our Business Plan, donating a memorial clock presented by the Chairman, and the staff participated in their Mini Parish Walk which was a great day out. We also donated drinking bottles to all participants in the walk, but unfortunately, our intent was not reciprocated and is something we need to work on, develop and extend our work also to Ballacottier School.

The most significant public sector change this year was the Government restructuring. With the dissolution of Department of Local Government and the Environment we have ended up working with three different departments, DoI, Dept Social Care and DEFA. There have been some pluses and minuses to the working arrangements and we have working steadily throughout the year to develop the various relationships to our mutual benefits.


As the Chairman has reported there was an increased workload created by the litigation action taken by Mr Lewin and Tels Ltd, for whom he is a Director which did hamper any developments we would have liked to have made. Thankfully as we reached the end of the year the work relating to Court cases reduced quite dramatically and there was an expectation and the end of the year that we could move forward a quicker pace in 2011.

On the social arena there were no ASBO's served in the Parish only 2 ABC's which is indicative of good standards of behaviour.

Meetings

There were thirteen Public Meetings of Board three of which were called with very short notice and in quick succession in January and February to approve the outstanding accounts. Whilst this created an availability problem there was still over a 90% attendance record

In October all Local Authorities were contacted by the Chief Ministers Office who asked if any would establish a Register of Interests in accordance with

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the Principles of Corporate Governance. The Board resolved to participate in the voluntary scheme that will be updated at all future AGM's.

Housing

At the 1st April 2010 we had 43 on our Housing List, and at the end of the year we had 34.

Single applicant no children	11
Couples no children	5
Single with children	12
Couple with children	6

During the year we allocated 8 from the Housing List and also arranged 5 Internal Transfers.

Unfortunately we had to evict 1 of our tenants for none payment of rent

Maintenance:

There were 334 orders raised for work to be done, and 288 (86%) were completed on time.

122 within 24 hours

114 within 7 days

52 within 28 days

Satisfaction Survey

99% Good

1% Average

0% Poor

Boiler replacement was to be the first phase of the major works determined by our Housing Planned Maintenance Programme, but unfortunately becoming involved in a Framework agreement drawn up by Central Government has simply slowed the process down to a snails pace and it the scheme to become a 2011/12 project.

The remedial works at Cronkbourne Village have made very slow progress during the year, although the drainage works have been completed. It is hoped that this will have an impact on the damp issue. By the end of the year negotiations were on-going with the various Government Departments and Dalrymples consultants to move the scheme forward.

Parish Improvements

The much needed car parks at Union Mills and Port Soderick just could not be progressed due to traffic management issues all within the control of the Department of Infrastructure. However as part of the traffic management equation we did develop a path under Union Mills bridge that allows people to get from the Lhergy Cripperty to Strang Road without crossing the main road.

Work to upgrade the roadways and general tidiness of Snugborough Trading Estate commenced during the year with minor road repairs were completed. A meeting of traders has been resurrected and they were pleased to note that the Authority had considered a scheme for street lighting in the estate that will be a 2011/12 project.

I was slightly surprised to be approached by the Youths in the Parish who had worked with Paul, our Community Warden, the local Police Officer Chris Dentith and the organisers of the Youth Club to compile a Youth survey to establish what things they thought would meet the needs of the youths in the Parish. We responded quickly to a request for additional equipment at the Youth Club in the Memorial Hall and provided a new snooker table and table tennis table. At the end of the year Paul had started investigations into how we could develop a BMX track at Grianagh Park.

I am also pleased to report that we provided a new noticeboard outside the Post Office which displays our Minutes and other local issues. We are grateful to the Methodist Church for allowing us to erect the noticeboard on their land.

Staff

Last year we encouraged staff to look at areas of personal development. I am pleased to announce that Tracy Beattie, the Housing Officer successfully completed a 6 months training course that lead her to a Chartered Institute in Housing Level 2 Certificate in Housing

Paul Parker also jumped into the fray and successfully completed BTEC Professional/Advanced Award in Neighbourhood Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour case supervision which means that he is now a Member Chartered Inst of Community Justice Professionals

Conclusion

The staff worked hard throughout the year to meet all the challenges put before them and from the developments put forward in the Business Plan for 2011/12 were anticipating another good year ahead of them.

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Finance Officers Report

The following report was given by the Finance Officer:

For the past three years, my annual report has covered external Audit as a key issue, as we've been working towards getting the backlog of audits completed. I'm pleased to be able to report that we are now up to date with all our Audits and are currently working towards the production and subsequent audit of the Accounts for the year ending March 2011. The accounts for the years ending March 1999 through to the year ending March 2010 are available for inspection at the office.

We have worked closely with our internal auditors Alexander Elliot who have examined the workings of the authority in detail and reported on various risks for us to consider and this process is on-going.

I am also pleased to be able to report that the authority is now in a strong financial position with a general revenue reserve amounting to £256,006 at the end of March 2010.

Due to the strong financial foundations we now enjoy, we've been able to hold the rate in the £ at 2.27p for the 2011-12 financial year whilst still moving forward with projects to improve facilities for the community.

We've been able to continue to provide the Hall to youth and charity groups free of charge, and three groups make the most of this deal, the Brownies, the Youth Club, and the Age Concern Lunch Club are all well attended and provide valuable activities for members of the community. The hall is also

used for dance lessons and is becoming increasingly popular as a venue for children's birthday parties.

We've granted £11,148 worth of allowances for rates to Charities under Section 74 of the Rating and Valuation Act 1953, these charities deserve a mention for the work they do for the both the Parish and the island Community:

The Joey Dunlop Foundation £451.59
 The Ardwhallin Adventure Centre £326.88
 Port Soderick Hall trustees £45.40
 Share the Care – Hospice Shops £1316.60
 Hospice Care £9007.36

Our limited investments in the year have returned £1,800 and we hope to be able to increase our investments in the forthcoming year to achieve even greater returns.

Our salary costs are once again lower than estimated by £8,945. This is partly due to no pay increases having been granted to staff since April 2009 as annual staff pay awards are determined by reference to the better of two indicators either the Whitley Council Manual Pay award or the Manx Civil Service Pay Award neither of which have increased in the year.

The Commissioners have a dedicated team of 6 staff who collectively have 51 years of experience with the organisation, with years in service ranging from 3 years to 18 years (an average of 8.5 years). In the year to March 2011, 35.5 days were lost to sickness; 12.5 days were lost to compassionate leave.

Legal costs remain a large expense to the authority with £150,778 having been spent in the year on fees, this being made up of £7,831 on day to day legal advice and £124,029 in costs relating to actions being taken by former employees, a further £18,918 was incurred due to the Petition of Doleance taken against the authority by Tels Limited to obtain access to our accounting records.

At March 2011 the balance brought forward for Rate arrears amounted to £2,402.08 made up of £2,947.40 in arrears and £545.32 of credits and overpayments. The arrears equate to 0.26% of the total rate due for the year and account for just 6 ratepayers. All the arrears have been pursued in accordance with our policies but 4 ratepayers have chosen to ignore these procedures and have been issued with default summons. We will continue to pursue the debts until they are settled.

The parish rate book continues to grow with 79 new properties being added in the year to March 2011. The rateable value of the Parish has increased by 17,495 since March 2010 attracting an additional £39,000 in rate income at the current rate in the £.

The rents increased by 5% which brought an additional £26,680 of rental income. Rent arrears at the end of March amounted to £1,585 which equated to 0.25% of the rent due for the year. We will continue to pursue these debts until they are settled.

Our housing maintenance reserve has continued to grow in the year although the figures are not yet available; at the end of March 2010 this reserve amounted to £124,128. We are aware that many of the major fittings within the properties are reaching the end of their useful life. We are currently working on projects to replace internal doors, bathrooms, kitchens and boilers in a number of properties and we will be able to draw on our reserves to progress some of these projects faster than we would if they're progressed as capital schemes.

In the year there have been 230 weeks of rent lost due to void (or empty) properties. This equates to 1.85% of the overall rent due on our housing stock. Our average turnaround time between tenancies is 5 weeks. We have four properties which are being held vacant for future use as transit properties for the Cronkbourne Village refurbishment project, and whilst the progress of this scheme is taking longer than originally anticipated, having the properties vacant will enable the project to move quicker once the work begins.

We have commenced the internal inspections of all our properties and this has proven invaluable in identifying the condition of our properties, not only from the point of how the tenants are maintaining their homes to ensure compliance with their tenancy agreement, but also to define the condition of the fixtures and fittings for future projects. This will enable us to create a rolling programme of projects to maintain the properties to the high standard that our tenants have become accustomed.

Whilst drafting of the accounts for the year to March 2011 has been commenced we are not yet at a stage where a current position can be confirmed, although initial indications are that the results will, once again, be positive. We are working towards the timescales set out in the Audit Act and will be in a position to release the draft accounts by July and the Audited accounts by October.

AGM11/07

Election of Officers

a. Chairman

The Chairman vacated the Chair and the Clerk invited nominations for the Chairmanship of the Authority for the Municipal Year commencing 25th May 2011.

Mrs Hodge was nominated by Mr Corkhill and the nomination seconded by Mrs Beecroft.

There were no further nominations and Mrs Hodge was elected by unanimous vote.

Mrs Hodge thanked the members for their support and resumed the Chair.

b. To elect Vice Chairman for the 2009/2010 Municipal Year

Mr Jessopp was nominated by Mr Corkhill and the nomination seconded by Mrs Beecroft.

There were no further nominations and Mr Jessopp was elected by unanimous vote.

c. To elect two representatives to serve on the Richmond Hill Consultative Committee

Mr Jessopp was nominated by Mr Halsall and the nomination seconded by Mrs Beecroft.

Mr Halsall was nominated by Mr Jessopp and the nomination seconded by Mrs Beecroft.

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There were no further nominations and Mr Jessopp and Mr Corkill were elected by unanimous vote.

d. To elect a representative to serve on the All Island Housing Advisory Committee

Mrs Hodge was nominated by Mr Corkhill and the nomination seconded by Mr Halsall.

There were no further nominations and Mrs Hodge was elected by unanimous vote.

e. To elect a representative to serve on the Municipal Association

Mrs Beecroft was nominated by Mr Jessopp and the nomination seconded by Mr Halsall.

There were no further nominations and Mrs Beecroft was elected by unanimous vote.

f. To elect a representative to serve as a Youth Co-ordinator for the Parish

Mrs Paul Parker, Community Warden was nominated in his absence by Mrs Beecroft and the nomination seconded by Mrs Hodge.

With no further nominations Mr Parker was elected by unanimous vote.

g. To elect five representatives to serve on the Public Inquiry Committee

It was unanimously resolved that all the present Board members would serve on the Public Inquiry Committee.

h. To elect a representative to serve on the Kerbside Implementation Team

Mr Jessopp was nominated by Mr Halsall and the nomination seconded by Mrs Hodge.

There were no further nominations and Mr Jessopp was elected by unanimous vote.

AGM11/08 Motions for discussion

There were no Motions for discussion

AGM11/09 Any Other Business

There were no matters for discussion

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 07.25 hrs

..... Signed

.....Date

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M.H.

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