

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

held in Commissioners Office, Close Corran, Union Mills, Braddan at 7.00 pm on  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013

**In Attendance:**

Mrs M Hodge	Chairman
Mr A Jessopp	Vice-Chairman
Mr C Slinn	
Mr J Quaye	
Mr P Halsall	
Mr J C Whiteway	Clerk
Miss M J Radcliffe	Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer

**AGM13/01 Welcome by the Chairman**

The Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

**AGM13/02 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.

**AGM13/03 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the 2011 AGM which had been previously approved, were noted.

**AGM13/04 Chairman's Report**

The following report was given by the Chairman:

The AGM last year followed the local authority elections, which brought some changes to the Board: Ray Corkhill, a longstanding and much-valued Commissioner, lost his seat, as did Juan Cottier. Our two new members, John Quaye and Colin Slinn, are proving to be very able indeed, and are making a great contribution to what is now I believe, the strongest Board of Commissioners that we have had for a very long time. We have developed an excellent relationship with Howard Quayle our 'new' MHK who is extremely proactive in the Parish, and takes a great deal of interest in the activities of the Board; he regularly makes time to attend our monthly meetings when he can update us with what is going on in Tynwald, and we can raise any issues that he may be able to assist with. Traffic speeds and the new car park at Union Mills, which opened in November, are both examples of where Mr Quayle has been able to speed things up a bit, and we are hoping for a similar outcome at Port Soderick. With the outcome of the political boundary review due to be debated soon, and Local Government reform back on the agenda it is good to have confidence that Braddan's views will always be positively represented.

CHAIRMAN'S  
INITIALS

H

There have been one or two 'negatives' this year: we were saddened to hear of the death of Tommy Daugherty at the end of last year; Tommy lived with his daughter Caroline in a Commissioners house, and served as a Commissioner for several years in the 90's; he was a staunch supporter of the Board, and of local government in general. He was a regular attendee at almost all the Civic Services and his absence is now sadly noted on those occasions across the Island.

The long legal saga with the previous clerk continues in spite of his incarceration for election fraud, but we are hopeful that this year may see a satisfactory outcome. And despite the best efforts of Colin and the staff, the old Anchor pub at Port Soderick Glen continues to deteriorate due to the refusal of the owners to take any action.

On the positive side, Union Mills Football Club had a very successful season last year, and we have now completed the preliminary exercise for the development of the Strang Corner Field. A draft report was submitted just a couple of months ago to both DoI and the Treasury, so we are hoping for a positive response. The long-awaited BMX track and skate park at Cronk Grianagh Park is already being very well used, and will be officially opened in a month or so. Congratulations must go to the staff for their consultation with the young people of the parish, which has produced such a successful outcome. Financially we are now very secure, and were able to make the political decision to actually cut the rates by 2p in the pound this year; I believe we were the only local authority able to do that.

So onwards and upwards: 2013/4 is looking very promising on several fronts. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board for their unstinting support during the year, and also Colin Whiteway and the staff for their long-standing loyalty to the Parish. Braddan today is a very successful local authority, and I know that the teamwork that we have here is the envy of many others.

#### **AGM13/05 Clerks Report**

The following report was given by the Clerk:

It was a successful year and we were able to have some very tangible achievements, such as the car park and playgrounds set out in our Business Plan, as well as the background work associated with the lodging of a Business Case for Strang Corner Field.

#### **General:**

We were graced with the Olympic Torch travelling through the Parish at TT week so we were privileged to be part of what was a great occasion for Great Britain.

Early in the year The Rally Office left the Memorial Hall and we took the opportunity to give the Hall a facelift.

Unfortunately we were faced with a legal challenge over our responsibilities within the Trees and High Hedges legislations. On the positive side the experience in dealing with this matter led us to a position where we were asked to give oral evidence via video link to a Scottish Parliament Select Committee who were examining updating their legislation in the light of our experiences.

In November the Community Warden ran a Dog Fouling campaign in November. The focal point was the Marine Drive from where the majority of complaints emanate, and numerous posters displayed in that area and, bright coloured washable paint was used to highlight the problem. The campaign was a great success and plans will be made to run the campaign again in the summer.

As part of our process of reaching out to the parishioners we established a Facebook page late in the year which seems to get more use than the website.

The Authority took part in the response to the Central Government reports on Local Authority reform and the Scope of Government report. The outcome is now awaited.

After some sterling work undertaken by Paul Parker our Community Warden in engaging with the youth of the Parish, we were awarded the Investing in Children Certificate which we intend to work toward retaining it next year.

### **Housing :**

A National Review of Affordable Housing was commissioned by the Department of Social Care and the Authority gave both verbal and written evidence to the research team. The results are expected in October 2013

Following discussions with the IOM Constabulary it was agreed that the Police Office would move from the flat in Close Corran into the Commissioner's Office which released a flat back onto the housing register.

Unfortunately the work on the refurbishment of Cronkbourne Village stalled at due to higher than expected costs and the project is being re-evaluated.

Investigating into opportunities of providing more LA housing in the Parish commenced during the year and will continue to the next year.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March there were 26 on the Housing Waiting list and during the year we allocated one house and facilitated 8 transfers.

### **Meetings**

During the year there were 14 full board meetings and 10 PIC meetings.

### **Staffing**

On a positive note Moira Radcliffe's pension issue was resolved after more than 5 years.

Moira continued with her further finance qualifications and passed the Accounting in Business, Maintaining Financial Records module which adds further toward a Foundations in Accountancy qualification.

Gill Corlett and Phil Barron both completed a Sage Finance package.

## **AGM13/06**

### **Finance Officers Report**

The following **Annual Financial Report – Year ending 31 March 2013** was given by the Finance Officer:

This financial year started with a balance of £12,935,441 in our reserves, of which £650,064 is held in the general revenue fund and £153,964 in the housing repairs reserve. The accounts for the year ending March 2013 are in the process of being drafted but indicative figures for the year are good

and show a surplus of approximately £123,000. In the coming weeks I will be working with the support of Ian Begley from SMP to pull the accounts together. In the coming months the board will be asked to consider drafts of the Financial

Statements before they are issued to the Auditors BDO (formerly PKF). We have received confirmation from BDO that our audit testing work is planned to start on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012.

The internal audit has been carried out by Moore Stephens. This provided the board with an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control systems, not just financial controls but those in many areas of the organisation.

One of the findings from previous internal audits was the need for a treasury management policy and during the year the Board introduced a policy which necessitates an assessment of financial institutions where funds are to be invested before any funds are placed with them. During the year we invested £570,000 which has returned interest of approximately £2,300.

We have not had to borrow funds during the year, although this hasn't prevented us from carrying out some exciting schemes which have been funded from reserves, including the Skate Park, the BMX Track and the Union Mills Car Park.

The Parish Rate Book contained 1898 properties at the end of the year, having grown by the addition of 16 new properties, 8 of which are new homes. This resulted in the rateable value of the parish increasing by 2,452 resulting in £5,566 of additional rate income to the Parish.

The General Rate fund started the year with an arrears balance of £1,691 brought forward, unfortunately £342 of this balance remains at the year end, but we are continuing to pursue recovery from the two ratepayers concerned. At March 2013 the balance carried forward for rate arrears amounted to £3,598 made up of £4,599 in arrears and £1,001 of rates paid in advance. The arrears equate to 0.40% of the total rate due for the year and arise from 14 properties. This is unusually high for us and is caused by a ratepayer challenging the valuation of a number of their properties with the Rent and Rating Appeals Commissioners.

In the year allowances of £17,618 have been granted to charities under Section 74 of the Rating Act, these charities deserve a mention for the work they do:

The Joey Dunlop Foundation £717.32  
 The Ardwhallan Adventure Centre £326.88  
 Port Soderick Hall Trustees £45.40  
 Share the Care Hospice Shops £2,315.40  
 Hospice Care £9,007.36  
 Rob Vine Fund £467.62  
 The Children's Centre £656.03  
 St Christophers Fellowship £1,924.96  
 Autism Initiatives £481.24  
 British Red Cross £1,561.76  
 Manx Cancer Help £114.86

The rent increase for the year was 10%. Rent arrears at the year-end amounted to £839 and accounts for just 0.13% of the gross rents due.

Rents in the forthcoming financial year will be based on a new pointing formula where the properties are valued by the facilities and amenities that the tenants enjoy.

There were a number of void properties this year with 13 properties spending 417 weeks void in the year, this cost £26,900 in lost rent. 6 of these properties were reallocated and 6 are held vacant pending future refurbishment. The total budget spent on maintenance of Void properties was £24,714.

Control of expenditure on housing maintenance in previous years has enabled us to create a housing maintenance reserve fund. There were a number of schemes carried out in the year, which will be funded from this reserve and cost in the region of £20,000. The transfer to the reserve for the year is currently calculated at £61,000.

Memorial Hall continues to be used by charities and youth and community groups free of charge, currently only two groups benefit from this the Brownies and the Age Concern Lunch Club which are well attended and provide valuable activities for members of the community.

Staffing costs have remained largely static despite an increase of 0.20p per hour in line with the Civil Service pay award made in October 2012. This is as a result of the on call pay being £320 less than the previous year and a policy of recovering pay for private mileage from staff using the authority vehicle, being introduced.

Employee Pension contributions were changed to a banded contribution rate which is calculated on the whole time equivalent pensionable pay from 1 April 2012, whereas previously staff paid 6% contributions, their contributions now vary from 6.5% to 7.2% depending on their assessed pay. Employer contributions have remained unchanged at 23% for the year.

The authority has a dedicated team of 6 staff, who collectively have 63 years of experience, with years in service ranging from 5 years to 20 years. In the year to 47.5 days were lost to sickness.

Expenditure on legal fees has once again been a high cost to the authority, (although not as high as previous years) with expenditure in this area amounting to £28,478 for the year, which can be broken down as follows: -

- 6% or £1,677 was spent on General legal advice which includes Peninsula (HR advisers) fees and Court summons charges.
- 33% or £9,510 was spent on the defence of a case brought under the Trees and High Hedges legislation
- 91% or £25,941 was spent in defence of the on-going civil action being taken by C S Lewin.
- 5% or £1,491 was spend in recovery of the costs awarded in the case brought by Tel's for a petition of doleance. 42% of the £24,000 of costs awarded to us in this case have now been recovered which reduces this years legal costs by £10,140

Domestic waste disposal charges at the EFW increased in April 2012 to from £30.74 to £35 per tonne, whereas the commercial waste disposal rate

remained at £106 per tonne. The Parish disposed of 338 tonnes of commercial waste and 1,070 tonnes of domestic waste. This is an overall reduction of 193 tonnes over the previous year.

Finally the bad news – debtors - as I've indicated previously we are continuing to pursue aged debtors through the Courts, and then chasing the coroner to assist us in obtaining payment. Our provisional year-end figures show we have debtors of £268,990 which is categorised as follows:

Rent Debtors	£839
Rate Debtors	£4,599
VAT Debtor	£37,346
Trade & Sundry Debtors	£226,205

Trade and Sundry debtors are high due to the invoices for waste disposal having been issued on 31<sup>st</sup> March and the Housing Deficiency claim for £191,473 being outstanding at the year end.

And finally, I feel I have to end on a lighter note! The Local Authority Finance Officers group has gone from strength to strength this year; we have collectively argued against pressure brought from many sources and we all find this a very helpful forum for debate and discussion on a variety of issues affecting Local Authorities across the island.

#### **AGM13/07 Election of Officers**

The Chairman vacated the Chair and the Clerk invited nominations for the Chairmanship of the Authority for the Municipal Year commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013.

##### **a. Chairman**

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.

Mr Jessopp thanked the members for their support and assumed the Chair.

##### **b. To elect Vice Chairman for the 2013/2014 Municipal Year**

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

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

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

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

Mr Halsall was nominated by Mr Jessopp and the nomination seconded by Mr Quaye.

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

##### **d. To elect a representative to serve on the Eastern Community Amenity Site Committee and the Kerbside Implementation Team**

Mr Slinn was nominated by Mr Jessopp to attend the ECAS Committee meeting and the nomination seconded by Mrs Hodge.

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

**e. To elect a representative on the Kerbside Implementation Team**  
Mr Jessopp was nominated by Mr Halsall to attend the KIT meetings and the nomination seconded by Mrs Hodge.  
There were no further nominations and Mr Jessopp was elected by unanimous vote.

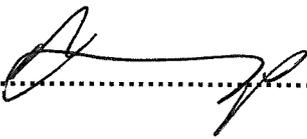
**f. To elect a representative to serve on the Municipal Association**  
Mr Quaye was nominated by Mr Jessopp and the nomination seconded by Mrs Hodge.  
There were no further nominations and Mr Quaye was elected by unanimous vote.

**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.

**AGM13/08 Motions for discussion**  
There were no Motions for discussion

**AGM13/09 Any Other Business**  
There were no matters for discussion

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 02.40 pm

..........Signed  
.....27/6/13.....Date

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

*H*