

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

**held in Commissioners Office, Close Corran, Union Mills, Braddan at 2.00 pm on  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

**In Attendance:**

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

**AGM14/01 Welcome by the Chairman**

The Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

**AGM14/02 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Mr Slinn who was off island.

**AGM14/03 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.

**AGM14/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the 2011/12 AGM, which had been previously approved, were noted.

**AGM14/05 Chairman's Report**

The following report was given by the Chairman:

2013/14 has been a good year for Braddan: it seems we are - after too many years - getting very close to disposing of the case brought against the authority by our former clerk, Charles Lewin; we have significantly cut our parish rate – not that it met with universal acclaim – and held an all-embracing Parish Day for the first time in 19 years.

In addition we opened the new car park in Union Mills next to the shop, not that this is much to crow about given the length of time it took to get completed, and we still wait for the long promised car park at Quines Hill to be started.

However, we did manage to build a good working relationship with Beach Buddies, who have assisted with a number of litter picks - although if a small minority of residents and visitors didn't drop their litter in the first place we wouldn't have to go around picking it up for them – and continued to work closely with our MHK, Howard Quayle on many other matters.

2013 also saw the opening of the Cronk Grianagh skateboard/BMX facility and the refurbished Clybane play area, thus demonstrating our continued investment in the youth of the Parish.

We worked hard at trying to develop other capital projects large and small which we believe will bring benefits to the Parish, such as replacement homes for the people living in Cronkbourn Village, our new Parish centre at Strang and improvements to the old railway line at Union Mills.

During the year we have encouraged central government to introduce a shared equity housing scheme, a Freedom of Information Act, better regulation of illegal waste disposal and to more widely promote the Island's connection to Archibald Knox.

In return they have given us the toilet tax, increased waste disposal charges and continued uncertainty over local authority reform, housing management and a new area plan. Despite these challenges we will continue to do our best for our ratepayers.

Finally, I have really appreciated the opportunity to lead this authority, and I look forward to several more years working for our community.

#### **AGM14/06 Clerks Report**

The following report was given by the Clerk:

2013/14 was in general a very steady year for the Parish excepting the very dramatic throwing out of the Lewin case which was a real relief for staff.

However that now that has gone there is a need for refocusing the Authorities attention on its other responsibilities and how to make effective use of the resources is has.

#### **General:**

We did of course go through a rebranding exercise and we used the inspiration of the work of a famous parishioner, Archibald Knox, to design a new logo that was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> January. We continue to examine opportunities to highlight and promote his work on the island, and we were represented on a working group chaired by Mrs Christian President of Tynwald that looked at creating a legacy for the island relating to Archibald Knox.

We branched away from our normal traditional approach to Christmas Trees in the Parish, and bought a 6m artificial tree that certainly caused a stir in the village when stood outside the Memorial Hall. It, like the Great Wall of China can probably be seen from space, so maybe Braddan can apply for it to be the eighth wonder of the world. There was no criticism received regarding the Commissioners new approach.

We enhanced the storage in Memorial Hall to both tidy up the storage room and to make it more attractive to new users of the hall, and the usage has indeed increased.

New pieces of play equipment were installed in playgrounds which included a zip line in Clybane and specialist roundabouts for disabled children in the three parks and that has been well received.

The heat of the summer caused a major IT failure that we are still struggling to recover from it in terms of creating continuity.

The Parish Day that was organised by the staff within 7 weeks was, despite the weather in September, a great success.

The lack of progress Port Soderick car park has been frustrating and something we hope to resolve shortly.

In March after a great deal of research and financial analysis, a decision was taken to submit to the Department of Infrastructure our Plans for Strang Corner which does seem to have tremendous support from everyone we speak to.

### **Housing :**

Discussions with Central Government over the future of Cronkbourne Village have continued throughout the year. Whilst we have 10 vacant properties on the back row, which is the most problematic), there has been no clear decision made about the future of the village.

Similarly the potential compulsory purchase of Snugborough Farm House and land has also been discussed with Central Government with a Business Case for its purchase now under their consideration.

In terms of housing, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March there were 21 on the Waiting list, and 24 on the internal transfer list. We actually allocated 10 houses throughout the year, 6 were transfers, 3 were taken from the waiting list and there was 1 inter- authority transfer.

There were no major housing schemes during the year although we had 21 new kitchens installed as part of the Kitchen framework agreement.

At the Housing Conference in July we were presented with 25 recommendations from the Tolson Group that were approved by Tynwald and now we await the proposals from the Department of Health as to how these will be implemented, the most significant to us being the management of local authority housing.

### **Meetings**

There were 12 full board meetings throughout the year.

We held 3 Planning Sub-Committee meetings which were set up to prevent the Authority from missing the deadlines set for comments on Planning Applications.

### **AGM14/07 Finance Officers Report**

The following **Annual Financial Report – Year ending 31 March 2014** was given by the Finance Officer:

This financial year started with a balance of £12,361,708 in our reserves, of which £786,518 is held in the general revenue fund and £218,164 in the housing repairs reserve.

The accounts for the year ending March 2014 are in the process of being drafted and are not yet in a stage to enable me to declare indicative figures for the year end. 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 Grant Thornton (formerly BDO). We have yet to receive confirmation from Grant Thornton as to when our audit testing work is planned to start, but I am pursuing them for a date.

The assets of the Authority have undergone a full valuation in the year, and although the value of the housing stock has reduced by 9.77% and the value of the land on which it is built has reduced by 23.5%. Fortunately, the reduction of the percentage allowance for "use as social housing" has helped to cushion the blow; this allowance was reduced from 40% (a UK based figure) to 33.3%. The net turnout is actually an increase in values amounting to £87,000

The Parish Rate reduced by 9% from 227p in the £ to 225p in the £. The Parish Rate Book has grown by the addition of 12 new properties, 8 of which are new homes. However due to the demolition of the Central Abattoir at Cronkbourne the Rateable value of the Parish has reduced by 813 resulting in a reduction of income amounting to £1,829.25.

The General Rate fund started the year with an arrears balance of £4,599 brought forward, unfortunately £1,253.01 still remains at the year end, but we are continuing to pursue recovery from the three ratepayers concerned. At March 2014 the balance carried forward for rate arrears amounted to £2,880 made up of £4,954 in arrears and £2,074 of rates paid in advance. The arrears equate to 0.43% of the total rate due for the year and arise from 8 properties.

In the year allowances of £17,868 have been granted to charities under Section 74 of the Rating Act.

Rents in the year were revised based on a new pointing formula where the properties are valued by the facilities and amenities that the tenants enjoy, the rent increase for the year amounted to 1.8%. The net effect was an 8.9% increase in the total rents due. Rent arrears at the year-end amounted to £1144 and accounts for just 0.15% of the gross rents due.

There were a number of void properties this year with 21 properties spending a total of 543 weeks void in the year, 6 of the properties have spent the entire year vacant. This has cost £37,477 in lost rent and rates. 11 of these properties were reallocated and 10 are held vacant pending future refurbishment. The total budget spent on maintenance of Void properties was £67,081.

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. It has also become a popular venue for children's parties.

Staffing costs have remained largely static despite an increase 0.5% in line with the Civil Service pay award being made in March 2014 and back dated to April 2013. This is as a result of the on call pay being £470 less than the previous year. The authority has a dedicated team of 6 staff, who collectively have 69 years of experience, with years in service ranging from 6 years to 21 years. In the year to 57.5 days were lost to sickness.

Expenditure on legal fees has significantly reduced over previous years with expenditure in this area amounting to £23,811 however this has been reduced by the receipt of £10,213 from Tels for the recovery of costs for the Petition of Doleance brought against the authority in 2011. The net figure for legal costs is therefore £13,599 for the year. A breakdown of expenditure is as follows: -

- 17% or £4,121 was spent on General legal advice which includes Peninsula (HR advisers) fees and Court summons charges.
- 83% or £19,690 was spent in defence of the on-going civil action being taken by C S Lewin.

Domestic waste disposal charges at the EFW increased in April 2014 to from £35 to £57.35 per tonne, and the commercial waste disposal rate increased from £106 to £130 per tonne. The Parish disposed of 266 tonnes of commercial waste and 1,139 tonnes of domestic waste. Domestic waste shows an increase of 69 tonnes over the previous year and Commercial waste shows a reduction of 72 tonnes over the previous year. This is an overall reduction of 2 tonnes.

This year we have been busy hosting community celebrations which were as follows: -

In May 2013 we hosted the Cronk Grianagh Skate park opening, this event cost us £3,746 but in terms of experience gained and community spirit generated it was valuable.

September 2013 – Braddan Parish Day was the first for over 19 years! The cost of the event was £2,608 but £1,235 of sponsorship was raised to pay for the children's entertainment and was netted off against the cost. So the event cost the Rate account just £1,373 to host. We raised £816 from the raffle and donations which were donated equally between the Chairman's four chosen charities which were Norman Costain Trust, Oskars Dreams, Braddan Endowment fund and Port Soderick Hall Trustees.

In December 2013, rather than having a Christmas party the Commissioners donated funds towards various community groups and schools to allow them to have a party. A total of £1000 was donated to the following:

Age Concern  
Ballacottier Youth club  
Braddan School  
Ballacottier School  
Kewague School  
KB Crew  
Union Mills Brownies  
Union Mills Rainbows  
Braddan Brownies  
Braddan Guides

#### **AGM14/08 Election of Officers**

The Chairman vacated the Chair and the Clerk invited nominations for the Chairmanship of the Authority for the Municipal Year commencing 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

**a. Chairman**

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

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 2014/2015 Municipal Year**

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

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 Halsall.

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

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**

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

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

**e. To elect a representative to deal with Waste Services**

Mr Jessopp was nominated by Mr Halsall to attend any meetings relating to Waste Services the nomination was 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**

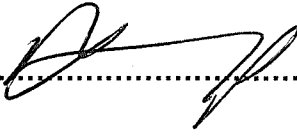
It was unanimously resolved that all the present Board members would serve on the Public Inquiry Committee.

**AGM14/09 Motions for discussion**

There were no Motions for discussion

**AGM14/10 Any Other Business**  
There were no matters for discussion

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.22 pm

.......... Signed

.....26/6/14.....Date

CHAIRMAN'S  
INITIALS

