

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

held in the Commissioners' Office, Close Corran, Union Mills, Braddan at 2pm on
Thursday 5 August 2021.

In Attendance:

Mr A Jessopp	Chairman
Mr N Mellon	Vice Chairman
Mr A Morgan	
Mr J Quaye	
Mr P Scott	
Mr J C Whiteway	Clerk
Miss M J Radcliffe	Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer

- AGM21/01 Welcome by the Chairman**
The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and congratulated Mr Scott and Mr Morgan on their appointment and wished them well for during their first term of office.
- AGM21/02 Acceptance of Office**
The Clerk passed all Commissioners the Acceptance of Office agreement and they were all duly signed and returned to the Clerk
- AGM21/03 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.
- AGM21/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting**
The Minutes of the 2019 AGM, which had been previously approved, were noted.
- AGM21/05 Chairman's Report**
When I look back over the last year or so much of what has happened during that period doesn't seem real but more akin to an episode of 'Tales of the Unexpected'.

However, life, in a fashion, has continued, albeit in a very different way, and along with it the work of the Commissioners.

Overall, I think the authority has coped very well, by adapting the way we operate to meet the new challenges covid has brought to our shores. Although we don't know what additional challenges will be thrown at us in the coming months, what I do know is we will rise to each and every challenge and do our utmost to overcome them.

Of course we couldn't have asked for a better time for a global pandemic to sweep the planet, it wasn't as though the authority had anything important planned.

Despite the upheavals I reckon that in many ways the last year and half have been the most rewarding period of my time as a Braddan Commissioner, not least because everyone pulled together and worked damned hard to keep the show on the road for all our ongoing and planned projects. I think the previous board and their staff can justifiably be proud of their achievements during this difficult period.

So what have been a few of the highs during this period?

Well, without doubt top of the list has to be the commencement of the Strang Corner Field development which has been a long awaited day for me. There is still a mammoth amount of work to complete before it will be ready to welcome visitors, but it will surely be worth the wait.

CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS



The success of the wild flower seeding on several roadside verges has been joy when the areas have been in full bloom and I hope more areas will be seeded in coming years.

The Presentation to Keith Shimmin for all his hard work keeping the area around Keristal neat and tidy for many, many years was also a highlight, and of course the teamwork demonstrated by all the Commissioners and staff, without whom none of our achievements would be possible.

However, there are also been a few lows, not least the delay in getting the new housing units completed, but hopefully they will be ready for occupation by the autumn.

The realisation that we had underestimated the size of the task in trying to keep the roads in the Parish clear of detritus.

The failure to get the Cabinet Office to fully incorporate the views of the Commissioners in the new Area Plan for the East was a big disappointment as has the inability, so far, of the trustee in bankruptcy of the previous clerk to recover any money yet for the ratepayers of Braddan.

But I won't dwell too long on these matters and will instead look forward to working with a new board for the benefit of the parish and its residents.

Thank you.

AGM21/06

Clerk's Report

As our last AGM was 2nd May 2019 I will first just give a brief overview of 2019/20.

We were not overrun with matters, but some significant decisions have been made during this period.

During this year we replaced the playground matting for all our play areas. In housing schemes we also undertook a refurbishment of Close y Lhergy properties that had started to look a bit tired and they came out well.

After building an additional bowl to the urban skate park in Grianagh Park we found that there was a need for the original structure to be refurbished. Whilst it is a concrete structure that does not mean we ignore the need to continue keeping it up to scratch. A £40k resurfacing that was undertaken should last 10 years.

At the end of June 2019 the Board introduced the Corporate Governance and Code of Conduct policy which is a requirement of a local authority.

In preparation for the Area Plan for the East Public Inquiry we contracted the Pegasus Group, who are Town and Country Planners, to give us technical support and assistance and they were a great help during the process.

The Inquiry actually opened in September 19 and the Inspector's report was published three months later. I'm sure the Chairman will comment but it wasn't particularly favourable to Braddan as almost half of the development in the East will be on greenfield sites in the Parish.

It did give a slightly clearer indication on the future of Camlork, which for a long time had been a contentious matter for local residents of Strang Road, and it did establish some green gaps that help to stop the coalescence of some of the settlements in the Parish and hopefully the coalescence of Douglas and Braddan.



The process continued throughout the next year culminating in adoption of the Area Plan by the Cabinet office in September 20 and approved by Tynwald in November 20

During the year there was an attempt by the Cabinet Office to implement the modernisation of the rates system but this seemed to fall by the way side.

An investigation by the Eastern Civic Amenity Site committee into the replacement for the existing civic amenity site in Middle River started in October 2019. It was felt that the existing site was not fit for purpose and not good value for money.

In January 2020 we ordered another 200 recycle trolleys after a successful trial of 100 trolleys

The most significant development in 2019/20 was the issuing of the tender documents for Strang Corner Field.

On 21st March 2020 the pandemic hit and the island went into lockdown.

No one had ever anticipated they would be told to work from home as the draft contingency plan was always to decant to the Memorial Hall. We had planned for a plane crashing on our building but we had never even thought about a bug that would change the world and the way we work.

I wasn't actually on the island when we went into lockdown but the staff led by Moira, assisted by our IT contractor, quickly established a plan and I returned home to find my office and work on my doorstep ready and waiting for me.

The last meeting of the year was actually held virtually and we were told that the local elections expected to be in April had been postponed for a year.

On then to 2020/21:

The tenders for Strang Corner were opened on 29th April, and even the lowest tender of £6.7m construction costs was a real shock. It instigated a flurry of emails to various Departments of Central Government looking for even a small contribution to help soften the blow.

Unfortunately the request for help fell on deaf ears and work was required to find ways to reduce the costs to a manageable level.

In April we accepted a one-year extension of the agreement to manage the Department of Infrastructure's housing stock at Cronk Grianagh. There is a hope that this will move on to a further and longer extension of time in the future.

The investigation into a new CA site reached the stage where a site at Middle Park had been identified, and a design and build contract was negotiated with the land owner Dandara.

The April elections were postponed and we carried on meetings over the Internet until we met again in the Boardroom on 2nd July 2020.

In August there was a little flurry of activity where there seemed to be a political will from Santon to merge with Braddan. I actually hit the Press and we were faced with a barrage of negativity from Marown who felt we were after world wide domination, well at least in Middle.

Eventually it all petered out as the political will to merge just disappeared.

In the estimates process for the year, money had been set aside for the appointment of a new member of staff who would man the reception and help the

Housing Officer with her growing work. We appointed the officer in August and we had made some changes to the reception area and created a new office and counter to improve her working conditions.

After lots of discussions and debate, on 6th August the tender for Strang Corner Field was accepted and it was agreed that a Business Case would be sent to the Department. To support that case we undertook so more market research just to confirm our previous research and findings that showed there was public support for the project.

Just after this, the target date for completion for Mullen Doway came and went. It was at least 6 months behind at this stage, but worse was yet to come.

With the support shown in the market research, on 29th of October the business case and Petition for the funding of a loan was submitted to Department. It was only on 23rd December, following a concerted effort to get a decision, that approval was given.

Whilst this major issue was being managed, we didn't neglect the other rather more mundane aspects of our work which included providing spring bulbs for various groups for planting, the Board trying to appease an irate resident of the village concerned over traffic speed, and they even took the opportunity to name the four blocks of flats at Mullen Doway, Brennan, Gibb, Knox and Porter.

In December the Board acknowledged the great work a local resident had done in and around Port Soderick and Keristal and a small presentation was made to Mr Shimmin to recognise his community Spirit.

Unfortunately the pandemic raised its head again and the first meeting of 2021 was via the Internet.

During this lockdown period the Board adopted a Playground Risk Management policy and updated its "Return to Work after COVID 19" policy.

Whilst approval for the Strang Corner Field petition had been given and the contractor advised that the contract was to proceed, the actual final decision to press on was made at the estimates meeting on 28th January.

That was the stage where all the finances were examined and it was determined that it was possible to fund the project, but a lot of hard work will be needed by the staff.

Again during the estimates process when Strang Corner Field was the main item, the Board did not simply drop everything and they were still committed to the kerbside recycling, weekly waste collection, green waste collection and the services transferred from Central Government which are street sweeping, gulley emptying, weed spraying, and hedge cutting.

Provision was made for further refurbishment of the playgrounds at Snugborough and Clybane, an extra 100 recycle trollies were budgeted for and plans were still being made to fund a new public toilet block in Cronk Grianagh Park.

The staff returned back to the office in February.

By the end of the year Mullen Doway had suffered and been further delayed by the lockdown situation. There were promises of opening in June if everything went well, but like the rest of the building industry it wasn't manpower that was the major problem, it was actually getting hold of materials.

Work on our housing stock over the past three years has just grown, not only have we taken on the Cronk Grianagh houses, there has been a much higher level of turnover

In 18/19 we had 4 vacant properties to fill, 19/20 we had 9 and 20/21 there were 13.

Dealing with a vacant property isn't a case of just asking someone new to move in, its about making sure it has been emptied, having it decorated and repaired/upgraded if required, having it cleaned and the new tenant being identified, financially assessed and moved in.

We went back into lockdown in March and we finished the year virtually with notice that the postponed local election had been postponed again until July.

AGM 19/07

Annual Financial Report – Year ending 31 March 2021

This financial year started with a balance of £13,651,880 in our reserves, of which £1,002,820 is held in the general revenue fund and £55,475 in the housing repairs reserve. The general revenue reserve has increased in the year to £1,026,827. The housing repairs reserve has reduced to £52,752. Overall, the reserves have reduced by £465,793 to £13,186,087 the majority of which relates to the Pension Reserve.

The accounts for the year ending March 2021 have been subject to audit by Crowe and we are currently waiting for them to finalise their testing works. In the coming months the Board will be asked to consider the final draft of the Financial Statements before they are signed off. A copy of the latest draft (draft 2) has been circulated to members for information.

Our Internal Auditors, Evolution Accounting have examined some interesting themes in the year including, website content and social media policy, remote working, software and portable assets and 5 year tenancy review process. We are working our way through the recommendations from the reports to address the issues raised.

The Parish Rate increased to 203p in the £. The Parish Rate Book has grown by the addition of 5 new properties, 4 of which were new homes. The Rateable value of the Parish has increased by 2,485 resulting in an increase in income of £5,044.

The General Rate fund started the year with an arrears balance of £2,499 brought forward, unfortunately £784 still remains at the year end, but I am pleased to report they have been subsequently paid by the two ratepayers concerned. At March 2021 the balance carried forward was £4,488 made up of £6,505 in arrears and £2,017 of rates paid in advance. The arrears equate to 0.58% of the total rate due for the year and arise from 18 properties, which we are continuing to vigorously pursue them for recovery.

In the year allowances of £17,728 have been granted to 15 separate charities under Section 74 of the Rating Act.

The rent increase for the year was 1.9%. The average rental value of our properties is £111.90. 5% of our tenants are on an uplifted rent which attracts an additional £11,200 of rent income. Rent arrears at the year-end amounted to £2,008 and relate to just six accounts, one is an historic balance, and all the others have either agreed payment plans or have since paid the outstanding balances.

There was an 11% turnover of properties this year with 17 properties spending a total of 296 weeks void in the year, one of these properties was held void pending renovations and has spent the whole year void as a result. The cost of renovating this property was £24,576. The remaining 16 properties spent an average of 15.25 weeks vacant. The total loss in rental income amounts to £32,186. The total budget spent on maintenance of Void properties (excluding the major void) was £73,261 an average of £4,578 per property.

Salary costs for the year increased by £6,678 due to the 2.75% pay increase being awarded in line with the Public Service Commission 3-year agreement. We also employed an additional member of staff in August 2020, to an administrative assistant position. The authority has a dedicated team of 6 staff, who collectively have 95 years of experience. Four members of staff are on the out of hours on-call rota and between them they received 43 call outs in the year, 67% of which were on a weekend, 81% of which related to housing matters. Days lost to sickness absence in the year amounted to 46.

Our five Board members have had a busy year; there were 36 board meetings (17 of which were virtual meetings) with an average meeting length of 2.25 hrs. Between them the five Members claimed attendance allowances covering 579 hours of meetings of which 135 hours was spent preparing, reading and researching, and 361 hours in Board meetings, 83 hours spent attending the other meetings, committees, seminars and events. This equates to an average time commitment of 9.6 hours each a month.

Our refuse services have seen the biggest adverse impact as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, the closure of the Civic Amenity Site during lockdown and the withdrawal of the kerbside service for 5.5 months of the year resulted in the general refuse service meeting the demand.

In April 2020 we entered into a Refuse Collection contract with Kinrade Bros Haulage Limited, who have provided an impeccable service, which has resulted in a notable reduction in complaints raised. We have also introduced a fortnightly green waste service throughout the summer months in an attempt to reduce the weight of waste being disposed of in the wheelie bins. Domestic waste disposal charges at the Energy from Waste Plant (EFW) increased to £93.70 per tonne; and commercial waste disposal rate increased to £186.55 per tonne. The Parish disposed of 322 tonnes of commercial waste a reduction of over 12.7% on the previous year. And 1,317 tonnes of domestic waste, an increase of over 14.8% over the previous year. The average household disposed of 976kg (2020: 848kg). The estimate for domestic refuse disposal fees was overspent by £11,710 as a result.

In April 2020 we entered into a kerbside recycling collection contract with Douglas Borough Council, this allowed the introduction of a brown cardboard collection. Unfortunately, the suspension of the service throughout the lockdowns has significantly impacted the amount of waste collected in the year. The service collected just 56 tonnes of recyclable waste; a reduction of 32 tonnes on the previous year. The average weight per household is 42kg (prior year 66kg). The total was made up of 12 tonnes of paper and card, 29 tonnes of glass, 15 tonnes of plastics & cans. Recycling accounted for just 4% of all the waste disposed by the residents of Braddan (2020: 7%), but we continue to work towards a target of

14%, encouraging recycling wherever possible, and this needs to be a focus for the coming year.

Our borrowing with HSBC has increased by £1,731,147 as a result of the draw down of funding for the Mullen Doway project, the payment of this loan is met by the Housing Deficiency grant from the DOI.

Our estimates projected a reserve of just £997 for the year, but at the year-end we transferred just over £24,000 to our reserves. This is, in the majority for schemes which were unable to progress due to the various lockdowns and restrictions. These included:

- Election costs – due to postponement
- Purchase of new electric vehicle
- Purchase of iPads for new Board members
- Street Light column testing
- Bench maintenance
- Snugborough Road maintenance and line painting
- Purchase of land at the former Sewerage Treatment Works
- Design costs for the Eastern CA Site

Some of these projects have since been shelved, and some have been progressed, with the costs carried forward to the current financial year, which will be shown as overspends funded from reserves in the current year.

AGM21/08

Election of Officers

The Chairman vacated the Chair and the Clerk invited nominations for the Chairmanship of the Authority for the Municipal Year commencing 5 August 2021.

a. To elect a Chairman for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year

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

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 a Vice Chairman for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year

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

There were no further nominations and Mr Quaye was duly elected to the post of Vice Chairman.

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

Mr Morgan was nominated by Mr Jessopp and the nomination seconded by Mr Scott.

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

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

d. To elect a representative to serve on the Eastern Civic Amenity Site Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

g. To elect a representative to serve on the Braddan Endowment Fund

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

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

AGM21/09 Register of a Members Financial and Other Interests

The Clerk distributed new forms to all those present.

AGM21/10 Attendance Allowance and Travelling Costs Policy

It was **unanimously resolved** that no member would charge an attendance allowance fee for attending Civic Sundays as they were a social gathering.

It was further **unanimously resolved** to continue with the Policy of not charging for travelling expenses.


AGM21/11 Motions for discussion

There were no motions for discussion.

AGM21/12 Any Other Business

There were no matters for discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

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Signed 

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Date 12/8/21