

Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee of the Municipal Association held at Braddan Commissioners' Office on Thursday 24 November 2011 at 7.30pm

Present

Robert Moughtin	Maughold Commissioners (Chairman)
David Talbot	Patrick Commissioners (Vice-Chairman)
Kathryn Edds	Arbory Commissioners
Margaret Hodge	Braddan Commissioners
Bob Pilling	Malew Commissioners
Paul Craine	Marown Commissioners
Rodger Gimbert	Peel Commissioners
Bernadette McCabe	Port St Mary Commissioners
Helen Kinvig	Port St Mary Commissioners
Peter Gunn	Rushen Commissioners (President)
Barbara Dunworth	Secretary

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from: Alan Jones of Peel Town Commissioners, Carol Malarkey of Douglas Borough Council, Steve Hamer of Michael Commissioners and Brian Byers of Lonan Commissioners

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of meeting held 27 October 2011, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from Minutes

Mrs Margaret Hodge, Chair of Braddan Commissioners, reported that the issue of rate arrears had stirred up something of a hornet's nest. Members discussed their Commissions' responses. Some were not very happy with the service they receive from Treasury but most simply wanted a list of debtors. Mrs Hodge confirmed that Braddan Commissioners' Finance Officer remains very willing to assist Member authorities. The Chairman thanked her for this kind offer.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report had been circulated and was duly noted.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary's report had been circulated. The Secretary reported that she had contacted Mr Bob Wright, Drainage Operations Manager of the Isle of Man Water & Sewerage

Authority, who said they would be pleased to offer a tour of the plant at Meary Veg. Tours usually commence at 1400 and end by 1600. They would need to know numbers in advance and groups normally comprise 10-12 people at a time. However, Mr Wright advised waiting until the warmer weather as it is an open-air site and very much subject to the elements. I advised that we would contact him again with a view to arranging a visit, possibly in late March or early April. Members agreed that this would be more suitable. Some Members asked if the visit could be arranged at a later time, although it was thought this may not be possible.

ACTION: Members/Secretary

Press/Media/Website

A press release was submitted to Isle of Man Newspapers and appeared in the press in November; it will also be placed on the website. Our Chairman was invited to speak on the programme Mandate on Manx Radio in December, at extremely short notice; he spoke very well on behalf of the Municipal Association, taking part in an active debate.

Waste Management Consultative Group

Bob Pilling reported that he had received a copy of the document but had not heard anything further and will therefore report in January 2012.

Whitley Council

Robert Moughtin attended the Whitley Council Terms & Conditions Sub-Committee which discussed a Government Uniform Pension Scheme. This has been approved for Tynwald and it is now for the various groups to negotiate implementation.

The Council also discussed road safety and concerns on the Employees' side regarding the TT accident at Signpost Corner. They plan to look at this issue with regard to TT, MGP and Southern Hundred Races, to ensure personnel are protected at all road events. There is a meeting on 25 November of the Whitley Council Employers' side.

Richmond Hill Consultative Committee

David Talbot attended the meeting on behalf of Paul Craine who was unable to attend due to a last-minute change of time.

The Committee was introduced to its new Chairman – Brenda Cannell MHK.

The first point of discussion was the Environmental Compliance Audit carried out by Fichtner Consulting Engineers. In summary: "It was noted that the plant is generally in good condition and is being operated in a manner appropriate to an EfW facility controlled by the Waste Incineration Directive (WID). Two separate licence variations had been issued since the 2009 audit and the plant was found to be compliant with all of the varied conditions. However, the audit found non-compliance with 16 existing licence

conditions. A number of these conditions were also non-compliant in the 2009 audit, so these problems should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.” The SITA plant manager agreed to report back to the Department within three weeks, as to how he proposed to remedy these problems. The meeting further agreed that this report and the Department’s conclusions be made available to all members of the Committee. The meeting received reports on levels of dioxins etc. released into the atmosphere.

The Committee discussed the frequency of future meetings. There was a proposal that there be a change to two meetings a year. On a casting vote from the Chairman the Committee agreed to the proposal.

Paul Craine joined in a general discussion, culminating in a proposal from Bob Pilling of Malew Commissioners, seconded by Rodger Gimbert of Peel Town Commissioners and unanimously **agreed** that we should write to Minister Gawne, voicing our disquiet at the decision to reduce the number of meetings per year without there being a full attendance at the meeting, and asking if this is in the best interests of the population on the Island.

ACTION: Secretary

Keep Mann Tidy Initiative

David Talbot of Patrick Commissioners and Bob Pilling of Malew Commissioners attended a meeting organised by the Department of Infrastructure, which reported on a consultation undertaken by ‘Keep Britain Tidy’ consultants. Only 169 people on the Island had responded to the survey. The Department was looking to encourage the Local Authorities to sort out their own street cleaning. Some larger authorities, such as Douglas, already had a contract with Government.

ACTION: Members

Local Government Reform

Members discussed the possibility of holding a seminar on “Working Together” and inviting non-members to join with us. The intention being that we would take the initiative, rather than being pushed into it by Central Government.

ACTION: January Agenda

HGV Vehicles

Peel Commissioners requested this agenda item in respect of long or heavy vehicles travelling to the sandpit using Peel as a shortcut and the resulting vibrations causing damage to older properties. They asked whether other local authorities had similar issues. Members discussed this problem and Robert Moughtin advised that Maughold quarry operators had applied to extend their licence for another 40 years and this had been refused due to the poor quality of the road which was falling away. It was felt that there need to be restrictions on category B Class roads. Rodger Gimbert said Peel was seeking support from the Municipal Association. Bob Pilling of Malew Commissioners proposed writing to Mr Sewell at the Department of Infrastructure (copied to Peel Board and

Chairman); the proposal was seconded by David Talbot of Patrick Commissioners, who suggested asking Mr Sewell to attend a Municipal meeting to discuss this matter.

ACTION: Secretary

Contingency Planning

Mrs Margaret Hodge, Chair of Braddan Commissioners, said this arose out of the audit when they had received criticism for the second year running about not having a “disaster recovery plan”. Their Clerk contacted a company who had a big fire last year and went through the whole process, and is now more than happy to give a talk to local authorities, being in the perfect position to advise because there are so many different things to consider. Braddan e-mailed all local authorities and 30 people have shown interest. Depending on the response they could accommodate up to thirty people, or with more request the use of the Strathallan Suite. Mrs Hodge asked members who have not responded to contact Colin Whiteway, Clerk to Braddan Commissioners.

Pertaining to this issue Bob Pilling advised that Malew Commissioners were concerned about Balthane Industrial Estate and the close proximity to the airport of large quantities of gas and oil. A meeting was held last year regarding seeking advice from Fire Officers. It may be possible to organise this early in the New Year.

Rodger Gimbert of Peel Town Commissioners advised that there is a data recovery facility at Village Walk, Onchan.

ACTION: Members/Agenda

Any Other Business

1. Bob Pilling of Malew Commissioners said discussion had led to the appointment of three more traffic wardens (making 9 in all) and Members should be aware they may need to park more carefully.
2. David Talbot of Patrick Commissioners was concerned about who is going to pay for the ongoing costs of the sewage system, now that the responsibility had been transferred from the Department of Transport to IOM Water & Sewage Authority. The March 2011 annual report states: “These costs are covered by Government” but it is reviewed annually and they have powers to increase the water rate in order to cover the sewage costs. He felt this needed to be carefully watched to avoid a stealth tax being applied to the ratepayer. Also, the assets of the Iris scheme have been transferred into IOM Water & Sewage along with an £87m debt which was owed to Government, with no indication in the report of how this was to be paid.
3. Rodger Gimbert of Peel Town Commissioners asked members to discuss the Government Strategic Plan 2007-2011 which had been circulated, and explained certain points which he wished to draw to their attention. Rodger felt that all local authorities need to be aware of all the ramifications but the picture is not as black

as it has been painted. Discussion ensued and the Municipal Chairman and Members present expressed appreciation of the trouble Rodger had taken.

4. The Chairman proposed writing to all non-members, once again pointing out that, with local authority elections now high on the agenda, joining or rejoining the Municipal Association is in their best interests in putting forward their points of view. He said that we need to make our views known to Government, and make sure that we understand all the reasons behind our beliefs: we should work together to show a united front. The Chairman also suggested inviting non-members to attend a meeting or we could hold a seminar. Members agreed that this matter needed further discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: Agenda

5. Bob Pilling of Malew Commissioners asked if Members had heard anything more about the Boundary Committee and a brief discussion took place on this subject.
6. Rodger Gimbert of Peel Town Commissioners advised that Peel is in favour of annual elections, with members retiring by rotation, to avoid having an entirely new Board. When new people come in often they do not understand how things work. Members discussed their views.

There being no further business and due to no meeting being held in December, the Chairman wished Members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The meeting closed at 2140

Signed..... Chairman

Date of next meeting: 26 January 2012