

Castletown Town Commissioners

Ordinary Board Minutes

3 October 2022

Present: Mr J. Horton (Chairman) (JH)
Mr J. Ludford-Brooks (Vice Chairman) (JLB)
Mr C. Leather (CL)
Mrs B. Cannan (BC)
Mr N. Rogers (NR)

Apologies: Miss D. Quinney (DQ)
Mr J. Cubbon (JC)

Attending: Mr H. Mackenzie, Town Clerk (HMCK)
Mr L. Wylie, Operations Manager (LW)
Miss H. Fox (minutes)

OB/047.22

Chairman's Welcome

Mr Horton opened the meeting and welcomed those present. He noted it had been an eventful month with the passing of Her Majesty, the Queen. He said it was an honour to attend the ceremony at Tynwald representing Castletown Town Commissioners. He also noted Market Square is a car park again and the matter will be discussed later on in the meeting however wished to highlight the feedback he has received from it being closed to cars and a community space to be very positive in the main. Mr Ludford-Brooks noted he had attended the Arbory and Rushen Civic Sunday. He also attended the Biosphere Awards as the Southern Civic Amenity Site was nominated for an award. Visit to the SCAS is to be rescheduled again.

OB/048.22

Minutes

It was resolved the minutes of the meeting of 5 September 2022 be approved as read and a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Mr Ludford-Brooks

Seconded: Mr Rogers

OB/049.22

Business out of the same

Fire station – Bottle Monkey

Visit took place with the board and the Clerk and it was noted that some progress has been made on the building. However, deadlines have still been missed for opening and there are still concerns amongst the board.

Grassed areas – Queen Street/Scarlett Road

The Clerk met with a resident who has concerns. It is noted there are tracks going through the grassed areas from continued use.

ACTION: Monitor through winter

Unsightly buildings

The Clerk has spoken with the owner of the Ship Inn who confirmed there will be progress made on this soon. The delay has been to high costs. Agreed if this is not done in the short term then the building must be boarded up and more hoarding added. Monitor situation.

The Clerk also confirmed the intention to write to other properties which are unsightly.

ACTION: Clerk to write to unsightly building owners.

Panna football arena

Spoke with DOI who have agreed in principle for it to go on the grass patch in Janet's Corner after checking it will be suitable.

Frisbee Golf

Mr Horton spoke again to Mr Skelly and advised he is going to contact Mr Wylie to discuss progressing this. Poulson Park or the reed beds suggested as possible locations.

Swimming Pool

No further update at present. As Mr Cubbon is not in attendance suggest defer until the next meeting.

Rent setting

The government suggested this year has seen the biggest variation in responses from local authorities. Awaiting further info on the % increase.

OB/050.22 Accounts

Accounts were presented. Mr Leather has a query on the accounts however this will be discussed in the committee session. No further issues with the accounts.

To discuss Market Square, it was advised to suspend standing orders

Proposed: Mr Ludford-Brooks

Seconded: Mr Rogers

Mr Horton wished to discuss proposals he made via email on a number of different topics regarding Market Square closure.

1. Another roll out of a survey – Mr Ludford-Brooks suggested similar questions should be used. Mr Leather disputed needing a survey at all as the original said approx. 75% of people are happy with the square closed to cars, with Betty Laurincova consultation highlighting the same. Mr Horton confirmed he wanted to make sure that everyone was consulted thoroughly and felt another survey should proceed. The board favoured this in the majority. The Clerk suggested the questions need to be clear and concise to yield the most useful feedback.

ACTION: The Clerk to draft survey questions in the next week.

2. *A letter drop to every household in Castletown* – to be inclusive so all residents of the town are personally made aware of the survey. It was suggested the board themselves could deliver these letters. Mrs Cannan agreed. The idea is that a QR code and a link to the online survey be provided rather than paper copies. Mr Leather highlighted a concern with people completing multiple surveys to skew results but the general consensus was that this wouldn't be too much of a concern if individually numbered copies were issued with barcodes or similar.
3. *Advertisement in the Isle of Man Courier* – Mr Horton suggested advertising in an island-wide publication would get an all-island perception. It was noted the original survey got 593 responses. It is undecided whether a Courier advertisement would be required as the Clerk highlighted the amount of social media coverage on the closure of the square suggests one media outlets are aware, word will spread quickly via the news sites.
4. *Invite any Blue Badge holders to a meeting to ensure their needs are met and opinions heard.* To ensure the correct solutions are reached, Mr Horton has suggested a focus group be arranged with membership from Manx Blind Welfare, Leonard Cheshire for example. This will give first-hand feedback from the correct stakeholders.
5. *Invite all Castletown Traders to a meeting* – it was noted that may not garner the desired results due to people (staff, residents and traders) being intimidated

by certain traders who voice their opinion in an aggressive manner. Mr Horton also confirmed he would like the media in attendance as there is no ambiguity or confusion following the meeting. He also wants the MHKs to attend as well.

6. *Give at least a months' notice of the dates the square is to be closed.* The Clerk confirmed that 3 months' notice has to be given anyway. It is suggested that a permanent order should be put in place.
7. *MHK attendance for all meetings* – board in agreement and agreed by both MHKs.
8. *Reach out to interested parties who wish to put on entertainment in the Square at no expense to the rate payers throughout the Summer Holidays.* The Clerk noted it is difficult to arrange free events now in the current climate. Mr Leather suggested we need to take the lead as CTC to inspire others to do events. One suggestion is for buskers to set up in the square. It was also noted that there is a domestic events fund via the government however this may not be available due to the financial situation.
9. *Increase and improve the signage around the town stating clearly where the car parks are and the blue badge spaces are.* All present agreed to this point as all have had feedback on this matter. It was suggested that the shops in Arbory and Malew Street should be included, however it may difficult to do this as they can change and may not be up to date. The Clerk suggested that if there is too much more signage around, it may create more clutter around the street. As most people have sat nav, google maps etc they should be aware of where car parks are. Floor signage was also suggested to satisfy conservation area regulations.

Mr Ludford-Brooks wanted to add that he is aware of other parishes/areas of the island wishing to do a similar thing to Market Square which shows it was successful.

Mrs Cannan noted the George Hotel expressed an interest to extend beyond their current boundary but all the board felt it was better to keep the square for multiple uses not just one licenced premises. The Clerk also noted there was interest from other businesses in being included in the square plan.

All board members noted the square has largely been empty of cars since it has been reinstated as temporary parking.

Castle Street being two-way again should have flow of people into the town and seems on target to be reopened as agreed following 1 year.

OB/052.22 Notices of Motion

No notices of motion were brought forward.

OB/053.22 Correspondence

- Remembrance Day Road Closure – the board do not comment of this road closure so the letter is noted.
- Mr Horton has been invited to a dinner at Bradda Glen. He will confirm if he is able to attend as Chairman.
- Invite by Chartwell Financial Planning who have opened in Castletown. Board must respond by 6 October for attending on 13 October.
- The Square official opening, the board were invited to this event. Mr Leather noted how well it went and all the traders in the building were positive. He noted the photographer pop-up and Art Squared were very good and doing very well.
- Castle Rushen High School have written regarding a donation for their awards evening. All members of the board agree to making this donation. Mr Ludford-Brooks to attend.
- Poppy Concert on 11 November for the Chairman plus partner. Mr Horton will confirm whether he can attend.
- Afternoon tea on 4 November at Morton Hall, Mr Horton is unable to attend as it is 1pm and he will be working. Invite to be circulated to the other members of the board for possible attendance.
- Over 60s club at Morton Hall on 11 December, Mr Horton is able to attend that and noted it was a good event in previous years.
- Housing communities board meeting at Colby Village Hall on 12 October at 7pm. Mr Ludford-Brooks to attend and has asked for Miss Fox to go as well.
- Mrs Cottier has offered a gift of some mountain ash trees. They will be put in Maynrys where the Japanese cherry trees which were also gifted are.
- Letter from Chief Min in response to Mr Ludford-Brooks' Notice of Motion acknowledging it.

Castletown football club

Mr Leather spoke to a member of the club advising he will attend a meeting following his holiday.

ACTION: Mr Leather to meet with Castletown Football Club.

OB/054.22 Planning

Planning applications from the September press list were discussed.

All approved, no objections.

OB/055.22 Consultations

The live consultations on the government website were listed.

OB/056.22 Matters for future discussions

Warm spaces

Age Concern wrote in regarding providing events for the community in the Town Hall under the 'Warm Spaces' initiative. CADs would run this, once per month. Costs need to be considered on this. Suggested it is trialled and see what the demand is like from there.

Mr Horton highlighted that a meeting needs to be arranged for Christmas.

Meeting closed: 20:25