

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS** held in the Boardroom, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road, Onchan, on Monday 28th July 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mr A Allen (Chairman)
 Mr S Wilson (Vice Chairman and Lead Member for Housing)
 Mr O Lockwood (Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes)
 Miss G Corkish
 Mr A Gibson
 Mr D Quirk
 Mr R Turton

In attendance: Mr R Phillips (Chief Executive/Clerk)
 Mrs S Johnson (Chief Finance Officer)
 Mr R Forgie (District Surveyor)
 Miss A Crellin (Executive Officer/Assistant)

C25/07/02/01

TO CHOOSE A PERSON TO PRESIDE IF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR BE ABSENT

Not Applicable.

C25/07/02/02

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS (in accordance with Standing Order 18.3)

The Chairman asked Members and Officers if they wished to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items due to be considered this evening.

The Chairman reminded Members and Officers that declarations of interests can be recorded now or when the agenda item is due to be considered during the meeting.

No declarations were recorded.

C25/07/02/03

BUSINESS REQUIRED TO BE DEALT WITH BY STATUTE BEFORE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Gibson announced and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office following the recent uncontested 2025 By-Election. The Chairman welcomed him to the Board of Onchan District Commissioners.

C25/07/02/04

MINUTES

1. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 14th July 2025

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 14th July 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated were considered.

Amendments:

Page 3 – PA 24/00196/C – Mr Collin Pervis – Field 534019, Onchan AFC & DHS&OB AFC Club House, Blackberry Lane

Second bullet point amend “5th April 2025” to “5th April 2024”

Page 8 – Any Other Urgent Business – Play Areas

First Bullet Point amend “sing” to “swing”

Subject to the above amendments, it was proposed by Mr Lockwood and seconded by Miss Corkish, and **RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.**

Mr Gibson did not cast a vote as he was not present at the meeting.

C25/07/02/05

TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ARISING FROM SUCH MINUTES

1. Page 8 – Overnight Accommodation (Emergency Accommodation) – Heywood Court Social Housing Complex

A Member stated that the overnight accommodation at Springfield Court should also be included within the minutes, as this was considered at the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 14th July 2025.

The Members of the Board stated that the overnight accommodation at Springfield Court was not discussed at the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 14th July 2025, only Heywood Court.

The Chairman advised the Member that the overnight accommodation at Springfield Court could be raised as an agenda item at a future meeting if required.

C25/07/02/06

TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ADJOURNED FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING

1. Election of Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services

The Chairman confirmed that there was currently a vacancy for the position of Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services following the resignation of Mr Quirk.

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position. The following nomination was received:

- Mr Andrew Gibson.

No other nominations were received.

The Chairman advised the Board **that the duly elected Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year is Mr Gibson.**

2. Election of Eastern Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee Representative

The Chairman confirmed that there is also a vacancy for the Authority's Eastern Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee Representative following the resignation of Mr Quirk.

The Chairman asked for nominations. The following nominations were received:

- Mr Andrew Gibson; and
- Mr Oliver Lockwood.

As more than one nomination was received, the election took place by secret ballot in accordance with the Authority's Standing Order 4.

Following the ballot, the Chairman advised the Board **that the duly elected Eastern Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee Representative for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year is Mr Gibson.**

C25/07/02/07**TO DEAL WITH ANY BUSINESS EXPRESSLY REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE**

None.

C25/07/02/08**PLANNING DECISIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING COMMITTEE****(i) PA 25/90676/B Mr & Mrs G Edwards - 34 Seafield Close**

Members were advised that the planning application the erection of dormers to front and rear roof slopes

In answer to questions, the District Surveyor advised:

- No comments have been received from neighbouring properties; and
- The return date for comments for the planning application is the 8th August 2025.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Gibson and seconded by Miss Corkish, and unanimously **RESOLVED that planning application 25/90676/B – 34 Seafield Close be recommended for refusal on the following grounds:**

- **Overlooking and loss of privacy; and**
- **Layout and density of building design, visual appearance, and finishing materials.**

(ii) PA 25/90677/B Mr & Mrs M Ryan - 6 The Fairway

Members were advised that the planning application is for the erection of a garage extension.

In answer to questions, the District Surveyor advised:

- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties;
- Comments had been received from the Department of Infrastructure, Highways; and
- The return date for comments for the planning application is the 8th August 2025.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Gibson and seconded by Miss Corkish, and unanimously **RESOLVED that planning application 25/90677/B – 6 The Fairway be recommended for approval subject to compliance with Highways comments.**

(iii) PA 25/90699/B Mr & Mrs R Dunnage & N Thacker – 51 Sunningdale Drive

Members were advised that the planning application is for the replacement of the existing detached garage and rear lean-to with a single-storey extension of the existing dwelling.

In answer to questions, the District Surveyor advised:

- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
- The return date for comments for the planning application is the 15th August 2025

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Gibson and seconded by Miss Corkish, and unanimously **RESOLVED that planning application 25/90699/B – 51 Sunningdale Drive be recommended for approval.**

8.2 Planning Communication

1. Manx Electric Railway Viaduct, Groudle – RBINV1387

A copy of the notice received from the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture in relation to registering the Manx Electric Railway Viaduct at Groudle on the Protected Buildings Register, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

No objections were received from Members. It was agreed that the District Surveyor would write to the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture to confirm the Authority's support regarding the protected buildings application for the Manx Electric Railway Viaduct at Groudle.

C25/07/02/09 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

None.

C25/07/02/10 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REPORTS FROM THE CLERK OR OTHER OFFICER

1. Joint Political Meetings

The Chief Executive/Clerk advised the Members of the Board that the Chairman had requested that this matter be included within the agenda for consideration.

The Chairman highlighted that he had met with the Chief Executive/Clerk to discuss whether the Authority should continue to hold Joint Political Meetings with the Members of the House of Keys for Onchan. The reasoning for raising the matter is that he had concerns regarding:

- Conflicts of interest and political sensitivity for the two Members who are civil servants; and
- He is aware that civil servants have regulations that they have to abide by; therefore, it appears as though they will be excluded from attending future meetings.

The Chairman asked the Board to decide if the Authority should continue to hold the Joint Political Meetings.

A discussion in relation to the following took place:

- Some Members queried that they are unsure of the grounds upon which the two Members who are civil servants are being excluded;
- Request that advice be obtained regarding the matter before making any decision;
- Highlighted that if there is a matter concerning a Member's own department within the Government, then the Member can ask to be excluded from taking part in that agenda item;
- Some Members stated their support for the meetings as they provide support to the Board and can aid in resolving any issues that the Board may be experiencing with any Government department;

- The Members who are civil servants highlighted that:-
 - In accordance with the Civil Service Regulations, they are not allowed to comment on any matter which relates to the Isle of Man Government;
 - There is no value for the two Members attending the Joint Political Meetings as they are not able to comment on the majority of matters to be considered;
 - One of the Members for the House of Keys for Onchan is the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, therefore creating another potential conflict regarding civil service employees and their political roles;
- Some Members raised their views regarding the Civil Service Regulations, and commented that the Members who are civil servants are misinformed. It was further requested that advice be obtained regarding the matter before making a decision as to whether the meetings are to cease;
- Some Members commented that they felt that the Joint Political Meetings had not previously been productive and little was achieved following each meeting; and
- Highlighted that Members can contact the Member of the House of Keys for Onchan at any time directly, rather than hosting quarterly meetings.

The Chairman concluded the discussion by stating that the Members who are civil servants have the right to raise their concerns regarding their employment and any potential conflicts relating to their political roles. Furthermore, the Isle of Man Government has regulations in place which the two Members have to abide by, the same as the Authority has governance measures in place in the form of Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Lockwood and seconded by Mr Wilson, and **RESOLVED that the Joint Political Meetings between the Members of the Board of Onchan District Commissioners and the Members of the House of Keys for Onchan shall cease with immediate effect.**

For: *Mr Allen, Mr Wilson, Miss Corkish and Mr Lockwood*
Against: *Mr Gibson, Mr Quirk and Mr Turton*

2. Onchan Pleasure Park – Development Proposals

To be considered In Committee.

C25/07/02/11

CONSIDERATION OF ANY RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE

1. Douglas City Council Civic Sunday – Advance Notice

A copy of the correspondence received from Douglas City Council giving advance notice that their Civic Sunday Service will be held on Sunday 28th September 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

2. Onchan Bowling Club

A copy of the correspondence received from Onchan Bowling Club inviting a Member of the Board to present the trophy at the Commissioner's Cup on Sunday 17th August 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

It was noted that Mr Lockwood would attend on behalf of the Authority.

C25/07/02/12**TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 25**

Mr Quirk asked the Chairman why the two questions to the Chairman and Vice Chairman which he had submitted under the Authority's Standing Order 25 and which were accepted by the Chief Executive/Clerk had not been included on the agenda for this evening's meeting.

The Chairman stated that the questions asked related to what is the Authority's complaints procedure. As the answer to the questions is already publicly available, it was decided not to make it an agenda item, but to answer the Member directly via email and to signpost him to the Authority's complaints procedure.

The Member highlighted that he takes offence at the response he received, and asked if the response could be made available to the public.

The Chairman confirmed that under the Authority's Standing Order 25.5, the Chairman has the option to answer questions via various methods, as well as having the authority to decide what matters are included on an agenda. He and the Vice Chairman provided an answer to the questions via email, which is considered appropriate and adequately provides the information requested by the Member.

The Member queried why the Chief Executive/Clerk had not responded to his email request to make the Chairman and Vice Chairman's response to his questions publicly available.

The Chief Executive/Clerk stated that he had responded to the Member regarding the matter and advised the Member to talk with the Chairman and Vice Chairman directly. Furthermore, it appears as though the matter is becoming a personal dispute between the Members; therefore, it is advised that the Member, the Chairman, and the Vice Chairman try to resolve the matter outside of the meeting.

The Chairman advised the Member that he could contact him at any time outside of meetings.

The Member responded that he will not be contacting the Chairman outside of the meeting, and that the matter regarding the questions relates to a vulnerable tenant who received a letter from the Authority requesting that they cut back their overgrown garden, and the tenant found the tone of the letter to be threatening.

The Vice Chairman advised that instead of taking the time to submit the questions under Standing Order 25, the Member should have signposted the tenant to the relevant Officer within the Authority to assist them, or if the Member wanted to, they could have provided a copy of the complaints procedure to the tenant.

The Chairman advised the Member that if he continued to raise the matter and continued to disrupt the proceedings of the meeting, then he would be asked to leave the meeting.

The Chairman concluded the discussion and requested that the Board move on to the consideration of the next agenda item.

C25/07/02/13**TO CONSIDER ANY MOTIONS**

None.

C25/07/02/14**ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES****1. Scheme 10 Barrule Drive – Post Tender Report**

To be considered In Committee.

2. Commercial Property – Elm Tree House External Refurbishment

To be considered In Committee.

C25/07/02/15

HOUSING MATTERS

1. Quarterly Standards of Performance Data – Quarter 1

The report of the Housing Manager dated 28th July 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

The Vice Chairman and the Lead Member for Housing expressed his thanks to the Lead Member for Finance, who has highlighted that some of the directional arrows shown in the report are not correct.

The Vice Chairman and Lead Member for Housing provided the Board Members with the following overview:

- The social housing quarterly performance standards data reports are a requirement of the Department of Infrastructure (“the Department”);
- The reports offer the Department an overview of local authority housing service provision;
- This report covers the period from 7th April to the 29th June 2025;
- **Rent Arrears:-**
 - As shown within the first two lines of the table, the total rent arrears and the number of tenancies in arrears have reduced compared to the same period during the previous year;
 - The reporting period does not fully represent the actual level of arrears held, as sometimes the reporting data period does not make an allowance for direct debit payments;
 - Approximately £25,000 of the total arrears is historic debts relating to former tenants; and
 - Clearance of these arrears continues to be progressed via the Authority’s Finance Department, legal advisers, and the relevant Coroner’s Office;
- **Responsive Repairs:-**
 - Lines three and four of the table show that the number of repairs raised is similar to the same period during the previous year, but the expenditure based on these repairs has increased;
 - The high level of expenditure relates to the number of storm-damaged fences and walls that occurred during Storm Eowyn at the start of 2025;
 - There are still many fences that require repairing before the end of the 2025/26 financial year, which will impact future reports;
 - It is noted that within the table, the arrow for the number of response repairs raised is incorrect;
- **Voids (Vacant Properties):-**
 - Lines five and six of the table show that the number of vacant properties is less than the same period during the previous year, but the level of expenditure is similar;
 - Some of these vacant properties required additional work and expenditure to bring them up to re-lettable standards;
 - This additional work also impacts the length of weeks that the properties were vacant before re-letting;
 - It was noted that within the table, the arrows for the number of void properties and the number of weeks void are incorrect.

- **Cyclical and Planned Maintenance:-**

- Cyclical maintenance is scheduled and routine work that is undertaken at regular intervals e.g. boiler serving;
- Planned maintenance is proactive maintenance scheduled to reduce responsive repairs e.g. gutter cleaning;
- Line eight of the table shows that the level of expenditure is similar to the same period during the previous year;
- Line nine of the table shows that the level of expenditure is much higher than the same period during the previous year;
- The reason for this increase is because of the project approved by the former Board to install electric room thermostats within all the general housing properties in the Authority's ownership;
- The project is now nearly complete, with only a few remaining properties left to complete;
- The funding for this project was resolved to be taken from the Authority's Housing Reserves;
- It is noted that within the table, the arrow for planned maintenance is incorrect.

- **Total Maintenance Costs:-**

- Line ten of the table shows that the total level of expenditure is much higher than the same period during the previous year; and
- The reasoning for this increase is due to the planned thermostat installation project and the high number of storm damage repairs undertaken during the reporting period.

The Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes commented that it would be useful to provide explanations for large movements in these figures shown within the reports, or if not provided in the report, then at least to have explanations prepared to give verbally at the meeting.

The Chief Executive/Clerk confirmed that the large movement referenced within the report relates to a planned maintenance project to install thermostats to all of the Authority's General Social Housing properties, and which was resolved to be budgeted for from the Authority's Social Housing Reserve.

The Chairman gave thanks to the Officers for the work which they have undertaken in relation to social housing provision, and commented that hopefully the refurbishment projects of the Authority, which are currently delayed, will commence in the near future.

C25/07/02/16

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that he and the Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes attended the Commissioner Surgery on Saturday 26th July at The Hub.

1. Dates for the Diary

Date	Organisation	Event	Time
26 th July 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Commissioners Surgery at The HUB – Commissioners Allen and Lockwood attending	10:00 am to 12 noon
28 th July 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
5 th August 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Commissioners Surgery at Heywood Court – Commissioner Wilson attending	2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
11 th August 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm

15 th August 2025	Royal British Legion – Onchan Branch	80 th Anniversary of VJ Day – Onchan War Memorial	10:45 am
23 rd August 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Party in the Park	12 noon to 6:00 pm
26 th August 2025	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm

C25/07/02/17

ANY URGENT OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:58 pm.

C25/07/02/18

CONSIDERATION OF ANY REPORTS FROM THE CLERK OR OTHER OFFICER

1. Onchan Pleasure Park – Development Proposals

The following was considered In Committee and transferred to the public domain.

The Chief Executive/Clerk advised the Board Members that a representative on behalf of a developer recently requested to meet with the Chief Executive/Clerk regarding a proposal to construct an indoor padel tennis facility within Onchan Pleasure Park.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the Board would meet with the developer's representative to discuss the proposals. The Chief Executive/Clerk was requested to arrange the meeting.

C25/07/02/19

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

1. Scheme 10 Barrule Drive – Post Tender Report

The following was considered In Committee and transferred to the public domain.

The report of the District Surveyor dated 28th July 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The District Surveyor advised the Members of the Board of the following:

- Following the successful appointment of J Clawson Ltd to undertake the works, and obtaining approval of borrowings to complete the external refurbishment of Scheme 10 Barrule Drive ("the Scheme"), the contractor has made the Authority aware that they are unable to complete the project for commercial reasons;
- The Authority's Architect for the Scheme prepared the Post-Tender Report, which has been circulated to Members, detailing the tender process and possible ways forward for the Authority to consider, including starting the entire process again and re-tendering, or trying to negotiate a construction cost with the Contractor who submitted a tender return that was previously unsuccessful; and
- It was highlighted that the Authority's Architect, the District Surveyor, and the Chief Executive/Clerk had all spoken with the Department of Infrastructure regarding the matter, and the advice obtained is included within the Post Tender Report.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Gibson and seconded by Miss Corkish, and unanimously **RESOLVED** under the provision of Standing Order 11 on the Making of Contracts that the Authority is to carry out a short period of negotiations with NK

Construction Limited to determine if the proposed specification changes are possible to reach an agreed construction cost.

2. Commercial Property – Elm Tree House External Refurbishment

The following was considered In Committee and transferred to the public domain.

The report of the Property Maintenance Manager dated 28th July 2025, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The District Surveyor advised the Members of the Board of the following:

- Elm Tree House external refurbishment comprises of the external refurbishment to the commercial property owned by the Authority known as Elm Tree House. The unit is split-level over three floors and has three individual commercially let units;
- Following the advertising for expressions of interest, tenders in respect of the works were issued on the week ending 9th June 2025 and were to be received by 12 noon on Friday 25th July 2025; and
- It is now necessary for the Board to consider the tender returns received.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Gibson and seconded by Mr Lockwood and unanimously **RESOLVED that:**

- **The tender received from Cedar Developments Limited to undertake the external refurbishment of Elm Tree House, Main Road, Onchan, be accepted and that the Contractor be instructed to commence the works; and**
- **Officers obtain further prices to carry out repairs to the roof of Elm Tree House utilising the remaining approved pre-tender budget.**

C25/07/02/20

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

1. Weed Management on Public Highways

The Members of the Board asked for an update regarding the weeds around the District following receipt of numerous complaints from residents.

The District Surveyor advised the Board of the following:

- The Authority's Refuse and Parks Department staff are currently trying to resolve the weed complaints being received from residents and the Board Members;
- Figures were provided showing which roads had been treated, and which had not. It was noted that the Authority had not sprayed many of the roads within the District due to issues regarding staffing, inclement weather, and limitations of the number of trained staff and the style of equipment currently being used; and
- Details were provided of the management plan being implemented for 2026 to avoid a similar occurrence happening again.

The Vice Chairman queried could the Authority use some of the General Reserves to pay contractors to undertake the weed spraying for this year to try to abate some of the complaints.

A Member queried could the Authority's trained staff be offered overtime to undertake weed spraying rather than engaging a contractor.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Wilson and seconded by Miss Corkish and unanimously **RESOLVED that:**

- **The Authority's appropriately trained staff will be offered the opportunity to undertake additional weed spraying and management throughout the District for 2025;**

- If required, a suitably qualified contractor be engaged to assist with the weed spraying and management throughout the District for 2025;
- That a budget of a maximum of £5,000 be taken from the Authority's General Reserves to cover the additional expenditure.

2. 2023/24 Year End Accounts

The Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes confirmed that he and the Chief Finance Officer had sought permission from the Chairman prior to the meeting to provide the following update in relation to the outstanding 2023/24 Year End Accounts.

The Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes advised the Board Members of the following:

- The Board was last updated regarding the 2023/24 Year End Accounts on the 16th June. Since then, a prior year adjustment has been calculated in respect of social housing property values, as requested by the Tynwald Auditor General;
- This adjustment has been sent to the Authority's external auditors, Crowe Isle of Man LLC ("Crowe"), for confirmation before it is processed; and
- Assuming confirmation is received promptly from Crowe, the accounts should therefore be available for signing and submission in early September.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes and the Chief Finance Officer for providing the update in relation to the matter.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 9:04 pm.