

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS** held in the Boardroom, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road, Onchan, on Monday 5th February 2024 at 7:00 pm

Present:	Miss Z Lewin	(Chair)
	Mr D Crellin	
	Mr R Turton	(Lead Member for Housing)
	Mr D Quirk	(Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services)
Apologies:	Miss K Williams	(Vice Chair)
	Mr A Allen	
	Ms F Logan	(Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes)
In attendance:	Mr R Phillips	(Chief Executive/Clerk)

C24/02/01/01

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

None.

C24/02/01/02

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

1. 2024/25 Rate Setting

At the Meeting of the Board of Onchan District Commissioners held on Monday 22nd January 2024, the Board of Onchan District Commissioners have resolved that under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2006 the District Rate for 2024/25 will be 411 pence in the pound, equating to a 10.19% increase.

Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes, Fenella Logan commented on behalf of the Board of Commissioners:

In setting the rate for the 2024/25 financial year, the decision to increase rates by 10.19% is rooted in the economic challenges faced. High inflation, escalating utilities, rising refuse costs including an 8% increase in gate costs at the energy from waste plant. These factors have contributed to the need for a 38 pence rise, from 373 to 411 pence in the pound.

In addition, this year will also see additional burdens such as increases to staff costs due to pay awards dictated by the unions, inflated material and subcontractor costs, and the commencement of loan repayments for the newly developed Eastern civic amenity site. Running costs have surged, reflecting the broader financial landscape. In spite of this, our decision to increase rates by 38 pence is motivated by the need to address these challenges head-on and to ensure that the services our community depends upon continue to be available.

Similar to previous years, we recognize the economic climate and acknowledge the impact on ratepayers. The decision to draw from Reserves rather than borrow aims to alleviate some of the financial strain on the community. This is what we have decided to do as we commence the initial phase of the long overdue infrastructure project for public lighting improvements across Onchan.

Simultaneously, we are investing in our commercial properties located on the Main Road, Onchan. Keeping these properties in good operating condition is essential for ensuring a sustainable revenue stream. As a result of our commercial property portfolio, we are able to reinvest in public services and community initiatives. As part of our commitment to enhancing community facilities, we are also upgrading the floor of the sports hall at our local community centre. This rate adjustment reflects a proactive response to ensure that services continue to be provided of a high quality, not only in the current year, but into the future as well.

The rate increase serves the dual purpose of sustaining essential services, addressing challenges of our older infrastructure, continuing maintenance investment in our property portfolio and retaining robust Reserves. The decision to increase rates to meet (or near meet) our running costs allows us to retain a strong Reserve position which affirms our commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship. Not extensively drawing from Reserves strategically enables us to navigate multifaceted challenges and maintain financial flexibility for future investments without resorting to high-interest borrowing.

In essence, the rate increase to 411 pence in the pound is not just a response to current financial pressures but a forward-looking strategy that positions Onchan for sustainable growth, prudent financial management, and the ability to seize opportunities as they arise. We extend gratitude to our dedicated team for their diligent financial management in navigating these unprecedented times and we express our gratitude to the community for their understanding and support as we work together to build a prosperous future for Onchan.

Financial Year	Pence in the Pound	Pence Increase	Percentage Increase
2024/25	411	38	10.19%
2023/24	373	27	7.80%
2022/23	346	20	6.13%
2021/22	326	3	0.93%
2020/21	323	5	1.57%
2019/20	318	6	1.92%
2018/19	312	0	0.00%
2017/18	312	2	0.65%
2016/17	310	3	0.98%
2015/16	307	17	5.86%
2014/15	290	15	5.54%

C24/02/01/03 **MINUTES**

1. Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated were considered.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Turton and **RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.**

C24/02/01/04 **TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ARISING FROM SUCH MINUTES**

C24/02/01/05 **TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ADJOURNED FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING**

None.

C24/02/01/06 **TO DEAL WITH ANY BUSINESS EXPRESSLY REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE**

None.

C24/02/01/07**PLANNING DECISIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE
PLANNING COMMITTEE****(i) PA 23/01497/B King Edward Bay Golf Club**

Members were advised that the planning application is the demolition of the existing storage buildings on the application site and erect a single replacement shed for equipment storage and to provide on-course sanitary facilities.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
- The return date for the application is the 16th February 2024.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Crellin and unanimously **RESOLVED that PA 23/01497/B – King Edward Bay Golf Club be recommended for approval.**

(ii) PA 24/00043/B Miss A Stockdale – 2 Ennerdale Avenue

Members were advised that the planning application is to brick up a small window on the side elevation.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received; and
- The return date for the application is the 16th February 2024.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Turton and unanimously **RESOLVED that PA 24/00043/B – 2 Ennerdale Avenue be recommended for approval.**

iii) PA 24/00048/B Onchan District Commissioners – Springfield Court

Members were advised that the planning application is for the installation of 6 new lifts, an extension to the existing car parking facilities and the installation of roof-mounted photo voltaic panels.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received; and
- The return date for the application is the 23rd February 2024.

The Board agreed that the Authority would not comment on PA 24/00048/B – Springfield Court.

(iv) PA 24/00063/B Manx Wildlife Trust – Onchan Wetlands, Church Road

Members were advised that the planning application is for the installation of a shed.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received; and
- The return date for the application is the 23rd February 2024.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Crellin and **RESOLVED** that **PA 24/00063/B Onchan Wetlands, Church Road be recommended for approval.**

For: Miss Lewin, Mr Crellin and Mr Quirk
Against: Mr Turton

C24/02/01/08

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

None.

C24/02/01/09

REPORT FROM THE CLERK OR OTHER OFFICER

1. Replacement of District Boundary Signs

The report of the District Surveyor dated 30th January 2024, copies having previously been circulated was considered.

A discussion between the Members took place regarding:

- The replacement options provided within the report;
- Consideration to modernise the sign designs and the potential to include local artists;
- The format, font and wording of the signs, including the Manx example wording provided by Culture Vannin;
- Potential to further delay replacing the signs to reduce some of the Authority's current expenditure.

It was proposed by Mr Crellin and seconded by Mr Quirk and resolved that:

- **The 3 existing District boundary signs located at Governors Road, Whitebridge Road and Pork Jack be replaced with new aluminium signs and include the wording "Welcome to Onchan Failt Erriu dys Chonnaghyn";**
- **The 7 existing District boundary signs located on the Mountain Road, King Edward Road, Summerhill Road, Ballanard Road, Sir George's Bridge, Creg-Ny-Baa Back Road and the Begoade Road be replaced with new aluminium signs and include the wording "Welcome to Onchan"; and**
- **The required expenditure of £1,405 be funded from the existing Road Sign Maintenance Budget.**

For: Miss Lewin, Mr Crellin and Mr Quirk
Against: Mr Turton

Mr Crellin asked to be excused and left the meeting at 7:28 pm

2. Belgravia Road, Parking Restrictions Consultation Responses

The report of the Chief Executive/Clerk dated 31st January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to his report.

Mr Crellin returned to the meeting at 7:31 pm

A discussion took place between the Members regarding:

- The number of responses that had been received demonstrating interest from members of the public;
- It was noted that all responses received were from Onchan residents;
- The majority of respondents are in favour of restrictions being implemented to support the Authority's aims, but are not fully supportive of the currently proposed restrictions;
- There are concerns that the problematic vehicles currently parking in the area will move to another area within the District and cause similar issues;
- The historical issues which previous Boards have considered but were never resolved;
- The Department of Infrastructure's ("the DOI") 2023 proposal to restrict vehicles of a certain size from parking overnight on any speed-restricted publicly adopted highway. It was noted that the Authority wrote to the DOI in relation to the proposal but never received a reply;
- Previous and current liaison with the DOI and the Isle of Man Constabulary regarding the roadworthiness of some of the problematic vehicles in the area.

Mr Turton summarised that the Authority has undertaken the consultation as requested by the DOI, and the Authority must now liaise with the DOI to obtain their views as it will be the DOI's responsibility to accept, implement and enforce any restrictions in relation to the publicly adopted highway.

Miss Lewin requested that the Chief Executive/Clerk arrange a meeting with the DOI to progress the matter.

C24/02/01/10

CONSIDERATION OF ANY RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE

1. Cabinet Office – D-Day 80th Anniversary

A copy of the correspondence received from the Cabinet Office dated 31st January 2024 in relation to celebrations for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

Members requested that the Chief Executive/Clerk liaise with the Royal British Legion Onchan Branch regarding this matter.

C24/02/01/11

TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 34

None.

C24/02/01/12

TO CONSIDER ANY MOTIONS

None.

C24/02/01/13

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES**C24/02/01/14****HOUSING MATTERS****1. Commissioners Surgeries**

A copy of the report of the Housing Manager dated 30th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

Mr Turton highlighted that the Authority's District Surveyor is due to provide a presentation to the residents at the Springfield Court surgery due to be held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 regarding the proposed refurbishment project and the current planning application.

2. Housing Allocations – Update

A copy of the report of the Housing Manager dated 30th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the report.

Mr Quirk requested that figures be provided to the Board in relation to the Authority's social housing properties that are currently over and under occupied.

It was requested that the Housing Manager bring a report back to the Board for consideration.

3. Quarterly Standards of Performance Data

The report of the Housing Manager dated 31st January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

C24/02/01/15**CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS****1. Chair's Attendances**

Miss Lewin advised the Board that she had not attended any events on behalf of the Board.

2. Dates for the Diary

Date	Organisation	Event	Time
13 th February 2024	The Trustees of the Cross Pobble Chonnaghyn Award	Civic Reception – Kenyons Youth Café	7:00 pm
19 th February 2024	Onchan District Commissioners	Joint Political Meeting	6:00 pm to 7:00 pm
19 th February 2024	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm

C24/02/01/16**ANY OTHER BUSINESS****1. Kenyons Youth Café**

Mr Crellin noted that The Lieutenant Governor Sir John Lorimer and Lady Lorimer had recently attended Kenyons Youth Café and were very complimentary of the charity, its volunteers and the collaboration with the Authority.

2. 2024/25 Expenditure

Mr Turton requested that following the Authority's recent budget setting for the 2024/25 financial year Officer's investigate and report back to the Board regarding reducing the Authority's expenditure by considering amalgamation and closing one of the Parks or Refuse Departments depots.

A discussion between Members took place regarding:

- The proposal had been considered previously and was not progressed due to feedback from residents from Royal Avenue, Marion Road and the Park regarding the noise from the Refuse vehicles and their operations if they were to be based at Pennington Hall on Marion Road;
- The Authority's Refuse vehicles have previously been based at the Authority's Offices at Hawthorn Villa but were moved to a purpose-built depot in Snugborough Trading Estate following noise and road safety complaints from adjacent residents;
- The commercial garage unit located to the rear of Hawthorn Villa is leased and creates an income for the Authority; and
- Expenditure will be required to alter the infrastructure of each depot if they were to be considered for amalgamation.

Miss Lewin requested that a report be brought back to the Board for further consideration.

3. Dilapidated Property – Third Avenue

Mr Quirk requested an update from the Authority's District Surveyor regarding the unsightly property located on Third Avenue.

The Chief Executive/Clerk advised that a report will be provided for Members consideration at the Ordinary Board Meeting due to be held on Monday 19th February 2024.

4. Eastern Civic Amenity Site

Mr Quirk requested that Ms Logan raise the following queries at the next Eastern Civic Amenity Site ("the ECAS") Joint Committee meeting:

- Confirmation of what measures the site operation contractor has in place to stop commercial contractors from depositing items at the site;
- Can the DOI Waste Management Team provide a report or information in relation to the performance of the current Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) goods collection and disposal contractor as this service is due to be tendered as was recently advised to the Board.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive/Clerk will forward Mr Quirk's queries to Ms Logan to raise on behalf of the Authority at the next meeting of the ECAS Joint Committee.

There being no further business the public meeting was declared closed at 8:18 pm