MINUTES OF ISLE OF MAN MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING
HELD AT BRADDAN COMMISSIONERS’ OFFICES AT 1930 ON THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2015

Present:

Vivian Quane
Andrew Jessopp
Kevin Weir
Raina Chatel
Ann Corlett
Roz Bate
Bob Pilling
Alison Lynch
Paul Craine
Robert Moughtin
Rob Callister
Alan Jones
Helen Kinvig
Peter Gunn
Barbara Dunworth

Lezayre – Chair
Braddan
Castletown
Douglas
Douglas
Laxey
Malew
Marown
Marown
Maughold
Onchan
Peel
Port St Mary
Rushen
(Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Simon Clucas and Nigel Dobson - Lonan, Steve Hamer - Michael, Mike Berry and Adrian Cowin - Arbory, David Talbot - Patrick, Andy Brew - Lezayre

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising from Minutes

(a) Annual General Meeting: The Secretary advised that all necessary arrangements had been made and reminded Members to kindly bring prizes for the raffle.

ACTION: Members
(b) **Website Costs:** Members discussed the question of paying Tony Beecroft’s expenses relating to managing our website, which he kindly has done free of charge for many years. An initial proposal of £300 per annum met with dissent from several members. Discussion took place culminating in the Secretary being instructed to write to Tony asking how many hits the website receives in a year and details of his actual expenses and time spent.

**ACTION: Secretary**

**Treasurer’s Report**

The report had been circulated and was noted.

**Secretary’s Report**

The report had been circulated and was noted. The Secretary elaborated on several items.

**Whitley Council/Public Services Commission**

Robert Moughtin reported that the Employers’ side of the Whitley Council felt that the new PSC would not provide their members with adequate representation, and so they debated with the Minister about this; the Minister asked them to put their views into writing. Robert reminded Jon Callister that when he attended a Municipal Meeting he intimated that one of the members of the new commission could be given responsibility for local government boards. There will be a further report in June.

**Richmond Hill Consultative Committee**

Now that there are six monthly intervals between meetings, Paul Craine recommended removing this item from the agenda until after the next meeting in June.

**ACTION: Secretary**

**Toxic road spill at Peel**

Andrew Jessopp commented on this recent event, saying that the actual hazard of ash is very similar to the silt, but less so than bottom ash. There is no real environmental impact involved and, if properly managed, there should be neither risk to the environment nor any impact on the health of people living in the area. However, it does appear that the whole thing has been badly managed, with little or no regard for regulations.
**World War I Commemorations**

Alan Jones gave his report, which has been circulated and is attaches to these minutes.

**Training Forums for all Clerks and Commissioners**

The Secretary reported that Mr Jonathan King, Deputy Clerk of Tynwald and Clerk of the Council, having given the date 29 September for the Forum meeting on “Working with the Legislature”, had requested as early a start time as possible. Members discussed and decided that 5.45pm was the earliest feasible time. The Secretary will confirm this to Mr King and establish whether or not the venue is to be the Legislative Buildings.

**ACTION: Secretary**

**Consultation Document on Reform of Domestic Rates**

It appears that there is little support for asking people to value their own houses, i.e. people have to choose which band to go into, but if they get it wrong there will be penalties. House prices increased but are now reducing again and this is a complicating factor. Because of the previous system in 1969 there are anomalies existing now.

Members discussed this issue, with varying points of view. There was concern over loss of commercial rates. There are cases where a high value house owner is paying less than some smaller property owners. It was felt that the consultation was disappointing as you were forced to give certain answers which did not really cover what was involved.

A Member suggested that a group of Municipal Association Members should get together in the future, to enable a Local Authority view to be formed and submitted. Members agreed that this would be a very good thing and we should try to do this. It could then be said that there was a discussion, these were the points raised and we are in agreement; we feel that this has not been properly looked at and there are alternatives.

**Energy from Waste Plant**

The Chairman invited Mr Callister to give an update on his Energy from Waste Plant Report since the last executive committee meeting, which was held in April. The Chairman first advised the meeting that she had found the Report very useful and she thanked Mr Callister for taking the time to research the Tynwald Debates and the Escalating Gate Fees at the Energy from Waste Plant, which are being passed on to the Local Authorities between April 2013 and April 2018.

Mr Callister then handed out copies of the Oral Question and the written questions asked in Tynwald Court on Tuesday 21 April 2015, copies of which are attached to these minutes.
A general discussion took place in respect of ‘fixed costs’ associated with the Energy from Waste Plant until 2029, the SITA (IOM) Limited Contract with the Isle of Man Government Department of Infrastructure and the overall Waste Strategy of the Island.

The overall consensus of the Members present was that Local Authorities should continue to promote ‘Recycling’, even if this means that the overall gate fee at the Energy from Waste Plant may increase.

Mr Callister outlined that the ‘fixed costs’ associated with the day-to-day running of the Plant were around £5.1 million per annum, regardless of whether it was one tonne or fifty thousand tonnes. However, the overall fixed costs are reduced by £1 million per annum because the 50,000 tonnes (average figure) going through the Plant generates ‘Electricity’ which is sold to Manx Utilities.

Mr Callister also advised Members that the fixed costs only represented £82 per tonne.

£5.1 million (fixed costs) - £1 million divided by 50,000 tonnes = £82 per tonne.

A general discussion took place in respect of ‘capital costs’ associated with the Energy from Waste Plant. Mr Callister outlined that the Capital Costs represented a Loan between the Department of Infrastructure and the Isle of Man Bank.

This, again, was a fixed cost at £3.4 million per annum.

£3.4 million (fixed costs) divided by 50,000 tonnes = £68.00 per tonne.

The overall consensus of the Members present was that Local Authorities should not have to pay Capital Costs for projects and schemes set up by Central Government.

One Member asked Mr Callister to confirm what he considered was a "fair rate" in accordance with Section 67 of the Public Health Act 1990. Mr Callister confirmed that, in his personal opinion and not speaking on behalf of Onchan Commissioners, there was a strong argument for setting the rate at no higher than £82 per tonne. However, if Local Authorities took on board some of the Capital Costs, the rate could be set at £118 per tonne, but no higher without first going to arbitration.

Members present were very grateful for many points raised by Mr Callister which are important at this time. Mr Callister in turn was grateful to hear other people’s views on the document, as he still is convinced that something is not quite right. Several Members felt that there was a very real need to plan ahead for the time when the present incinerator reaches the end of its life in 2029. A member commented that we need Government to give us a policy statement as to whether recycling still will save money. The two main issues are Recycling and Maximum Costs.
The Chairman thanked Mr Callister very much indeed for all his hard work on this. Mr Callister said he had enjoyed the comments around the meeting table.

The Chairman also thanked the Members for an interesting and informative debate. She asked Members where they would like to go from here and what do they want Local Authorities to do?

Minister Gawne

A Member commented that Government is going to find out what Local Authorities want to do and what a reasonable charge is. Further discussion took place, culminating in a decision to invite Minister Gawne to our August meeting, with nothing else on the agenda but Waste Management; by then hopefully he should have all the facts to put forward, to see if he can give us the answers to our questions, as there is a Government forum on this subject in May.

In this respect it was noted and agreed that, due to the Manx Grand Prix Festival period, our August meeting will be held one week early on the 20th August.

ACTION: SECRETARY

Any Other Business

(i) The New Highways Bill: The Chairman asked Members for their opinion on the new Highways Amendment Bill and the fact that there is to be no extension of time to respond. The question of street lighting was discussed and it was felt that Government should not have the power to dictate. A Member commented that the Highway Authority have a duty to manage the highways but if something goes wrong they are not liable: this needs amendment. It was felt that if they were liable it would be an incentive to be far more efficient with repairs and finding ways of traffic management etc. and also looking at it in a more sustainable way.

(ii) Caravans: A Member commented that in the press it was stated that if you are a Manx resident and wish to take a caravan off the Island, you have to bring the same caravan back to the Island or else you do not get a permit. Questions have been asked of MHK’s but only four have answered to date.

It was noted that Lezayre Commissioners have said ‘no’ to Sulby Claddaghgs being turned into a caravan park. You can get a permit for a two week stay but it must not be left unattended overnight or it will be confiscated after three nights.
The Chairman thanked everyone for attending this evening and felt it had been an excellent meeting which she hoped the Members had enjoyed.

The meeting closed at 2150

Date of next monthly meeting: Thursday 25 June 2015

This follows the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 28 May 2015

Signed………………………………………………………………………………….. Chairman

Date……………………………………………………………………………………