



Borough of Douglas

Town Hall,

Douglas,

14th December, 2022

At a MEETING of the COUNCIL of the BOROUGH OF DOUGLAS, duly convened and holden at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, the 14th day of DECEMBER, 2022, in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, within the TOWN HALL, at which Meeting the following Members were present, that is to say: -

The Deputy Mayor

COUNCILLOR MISS N.A. BYRON

Councillors

Mr S.R. Pitts

Mr J.E. Skinner

Mr A.J. Bentley

Mr I.J.G. Clague. MBE

Mr D.R. Watson

Mr S.R. Crellin

Mr F. Schuengel

Mrs C.L. Wells

Mr F. Horning

Mr P.J. Washington

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Housing and Property were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were submitted by The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, JP.

1. **Chair of the Meeting**

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Miss N.A. Byron was unanimously elected to take the Chair.

2. **Minutes – 9th November, 2022**

The minutes of the monthly Council meeting held on Wednesday, 9th November, 2022, were approved and signed.

3. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

What plans are there to refurbish the flats and communal areas in St Georges House and Victoria House, the remaining occupied Lord Street and Quines Corner flats?

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

When apartments become void in these properties they are being brought up to the same standard and are being treated the same as any other void property.

The internal Communal areas of these apartment buildings have recently been reviewed and works need to be carried out to improve these communal spaces, specifically the decoration. A schedule is being created that will see improvements over the next 2 financial years. A number of higher priority improvements will be happening in the current financial year (before end of March 22).

To clarify all apartments on the North Side of Lord Street (Murrays, Athol, Derby, Hills) will be removed from the Councils Housing stock.

4. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

4.1 *How many Council properties have been fitted with positive input ventilation systems, how many are outstanding under the current programme?*

4.2 *Has the installation of positive input ventilation systems been successful in reducing the reported cases of mould and condensation in properties?*

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

4.1 *There are 224 positive input ventilation systems installed. The intention is to install the positive input ventilation systems to majority of the Council's existing aged housing stock.*

The current programme of installation is on-going and properties that are struggling with reported condensation issues are prioritised. The number that can be installed in each year is dependent on available budget. A Business case has been submitted to the DOI for the 2023/24 financial year requesting additional funding specifically for PIV unit installations, allowing the Council to expedite the programme.

In addition to the above, the Council is taking the opportunity to install positive input ventilation systems in all void properties. There are minor exceptions where ventilation within the property is sufficient.

4.2 *Positive input ventilation systems are a highly effective cure for condensation dampness and its associated problems within residential properties. It pushes harmful air out of the home and replaces it with fresh, filtered air. It ensures a constant flow of fresh, filtered air through the building, regardless of the conditions inside or outside the house. Where they been installed in Douglas Borough Council houses, the units have been crucial in preventing the build-up of moisture and associated problems, which can include the growth of mould and condensation.*

5. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

5.1 *How many members of staff attended a recent "Workplace Well Being" conference?*

5.2 *Were all staff, including manual workers given opportunity to attend?*

5.3 *What was the duration of the conference, the cost and what were the benefits gained by attendees?*

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

5.1 *Eleven*

5.2 *Attendance was extended to Chief and Assistant Chief Officers and the members of the Wellbeing Group (which includes manual staff, none of whom took up the offer to attend).*

5.3 *The conference was one day from 8.15am until 4.30pm at a cost of £80 per person.*

Attendance at the Wellbeing Conference is part of the toolkit provided to help organisations on the Isle of Man implement wellbeing initiatives into the workplace. The Conference is attended by representatives from a variety of different businesses who share ideas to improve wellbeing within the workplace. It helps expand knowledge and find solutions to problems: this can come from hearing about new techniques, new equipment, research data, or from listening to the guest speakers.

Various topics are covered, and these are covered by a range of speakers, such as mental health, equality and work-life balance.

Attending the Wellbeing Conference is a great way to hear how other organisations have successfully transformed the culture and behaviour of the workplace. It provides an opportunity to meet other service providers, and for other people to meet you, and network with others who have an interest in Wellbeing.

Wellbeing in the workplace is becoming ever more important to employers and employees.

6. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

The role of Town Centre Manager is a high profile post the holder of which should be easily accessible and available to entrepreneurs, retailers and the general public etc. which was one of the reasons for purchasing 13 Church Street. Following some extensive works being carried out when is it expected that the TCM will move back into the office, why is it closed and not in use for so long?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

In the time that the Town Centre Manager was based in Church Street, there were very few, if any personal callers from retailers, entrepreneurs and the general public. They access Town Centre Management in other ways. To date, no complaints or issues have been raised about the office being closed.

Whilst undertaking remedial works to rectify the damage caused by water ingress between the junction with the old and new buildings, it has been discovered that the floor joists underneath the shop front entrance are rotten and will need replacing to enable the shop area of the building to be brought back into a useable space. To replace the floor joists and protect them from water ingress from the entrance area, this will need to be removed and made watertight. The works will involve removing the entrance structure and adjacent timber windows, which are near to the end of their life expectancy and would not be salvageable.

This gives the opportunity to fully replace the windows and doors with double glazed units in a new frame to improve the energy efficiency of the space and improving the air tightness of the building. As part of the remedial works the intention is to replace the floor boards, carpet tiles, skirting boards, decoration the office space and other undetermined remedial works. These works have been forward as part of the 2023/24 Capital Scheme, the scheme will get underway once funding has been agree.

Supplementary Question:

What plans are there for the Town Centre Manager's office to become a commercially leases space?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

The Council have no confirmed plans to lease the building commercially, and would not do so without Council approval. The leasing of the building is being considered as a possible savings measure, this is a proposal that will be put forward as part of the Council's budget setting process for 2023/24. This proposal is on the basis that, as described in the response, the Council have seen little impact on the Town Centre Management service by not having the public office (shop) open and the offices can be accommodated in other available office space within the Town Hall.

7. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

Should a Hansard record of the proceedings in Council Meetings be introduced?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

Hansard is used for the official report of Tynwald and the UK Parliament, and many commonwealth countries.

Hansard production is complex, expensive, and time and resource intensive. It is not used by local government for these reasons, and as a non-legislative making body, it is not necessary.

The Council records its Council Meetings, and if a transcript of any part is required, this can be done.

Supplementary Question:

If the Council meetings are recorded how long are the tapes held for, do Members have access to them and how would they go about it?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

We would need to check with the Assistant Chief Officer (Democratic Services) upon her return from leave next week in relation to how long the recordings are kept for. No, Members do not have access to these files but a formal request would have to be made to the Assistant Chief Officer (Democratic Services).

8. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner to ask the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

8.1 *In order to assist the retail and restaurant business from the commencement of late night shopping each year free car parking starts at 5.00pm, therefore, is it not a contradiction in terms to commence “normal” off peak parking at 7.00pm at other times?*

8.2 *Does the Chair agree that 6.00pm would be more appropriate?*

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

8.1 *The free parking for Late Night Shopping starts from 5pm to enable office workers to head into town for late night shopping immediately after work. This is for a very short period of only three to four weeks and applies to Thursdays only. Office workers who work past this time are not charged any more.*

The off peak period to be introduced from 7pm charges £2 from 7pm until 7am every day. If the off peak period was changed to 6pm, then office workers who work past 6pm would be charged an additional £2 on top of the daily parking charge, which is not considered to be reasonable. Typically, commuters park all day and will only incur an additional 50p for staying between 6pm and 7pm rather than the full £2.

8.2 *No, it would not be more appropriate for the reasons cited.*

9. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

9.1 *Recent press statements report an increase in recycling rates from 5% to 15% since the introduction of fortnightly bin/refuse collection. What was the figure 5% based on?*

9.2 *Since the introduction of fortnightly refuse collection what volume of waste has been collected per round compared to the previous weekly collections?*

9.3 *Has there been an increase in volume of refuse since the introduction of fortnightly collection?*

9.4 *Since introduction of the “green waste” collection what volume has been collected per round?*

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

9.1 *The Council’s recycling rate is calculated as percentage of the recyclate material collected over the total amount of waste collected.*

9.2 *We cannot provide data per round as the round structure has changed, however, the data below shows that since the introduction of fortnightly residual collections, the amount of waste collected has reduced. This represents only one month’s data and therefore no trends can yet be identified.*

9.3 *As above, the early indications are of a reduction in waste collected.*

9.4 *Since the garden waste service was introduced, 90 tonnes of garden waste was collected while the service was operating. This represents only 10 weeks of data.*

Supplementary Question:

Are reports correct that there is a vehicle and two operatives deployed mid to late afternoons to collect rubbish, in the main ‘side waste’ from back lanes around the City (Town) since the introduction of fortnightly collections?

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

These reports are not correct.

10. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

What confirmation and guarantee of funding for the proposed Spring Valley Changing Rooms have been received from the Football Foundation or Football Association?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

None. The Council has received positive indications but no confirmation or guarantees. The success of the Council's application for funding will not be known until an application is submitted and considered by the Football Foundation.

Supplementary Question:

Is funding from these 'Bodies' reliant on the Council making application and not the Football Clubs?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Yes, it is the Council that has been in discussion with the Football Foundation and the Council which is delivering the scheme and so to whom the monies should be provided, if successful. Essentially it is our building, the clubs are going to be the tenants and it's always going to be open to any other club if it was ever necessary in the future it's not a dependant one on the clubs.

11. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Following concerns raised by local residents when will the existing changing rooms which have been condemned at Spring Valley football pitches be demolished and the resulting debris removed from the site?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

The target is to have the building demolished before the end of the current financial year. There is a delay due to the need to use an electric supply from the old building to the temporary changing rooms. An application has been made to MUA and awaiting dates for the supply to be installed in the temporary buildings. The demolition can only commence once this supply is in place.

Supplementary Question:

What costs for Herras fencing have been incurred by way of (a) rent and (b) purchase since the changing rooms were first condemned?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

This information can be provided by officers in the form of a briefing note.

12. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

Are litter bins around Douglas currently being removed from the roads and streets due to their increased use for household refuse?

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

Where there is evidence that pedestrian litter bins are being used by households to dispose of their rubbish, the bin is temporarily removed to limit the behaviour. This was a phenomenon ahead of the change in waste service and every effort is made to identify the household responsible.

13. Executive Committee – 24th November, 2022 – Clauses A1 to A16

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, "That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A16 inclusive of report of meeting held on Thursday, 24th November, 2022, be received by the Council."

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted For the Motion Councillors: Mr S.R. Pitts, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr D.R. Watson, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Schuengel, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr F. Horning, Mr P.J. Washington, the Deputy Mayor – 10

Against, Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – 1

Motion carried.

14. Executive Committee – 24th November, 2022 – Clause C17

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, "That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clause C17 of report of meeting held on Thursday, 24th November, 2022, be received, approved and adopted by the Council."

Amendment moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, "That resolution (ii) be amended to include the following wording, if the Monday in advance of the Council meeting falls on a bank holiday the mover of the Motion must give notice by 12 noon on the day following the bank holiday."

Question put on Amendment, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was agreed unanimously.

Question put on substantive Motion, as amended. A vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

15. Housing and Property Committee – 16th November, 2022 – Clauses A1 to A10

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor S.R. Crellin, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A10 inclusive of report of meeting held on Wednesday, 16th November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

16. Housing and Property Committee – 16th November, 2022 – Clause C11

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor S.R. Crellin, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in Clause C11 of report of meeting held on Wednesday, 16th November, 2022, be received, approved and adopted by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

17. Pensions Committee – 23rd November, 2022

Motion moved by Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Pensions Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

18. Regeneration and Community Committee – 22nd November, 2022 – Clause A9

Motion moved by Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Schuengel, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in Clause A9 of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted For the Motion Councillors: Mr J.E. Skinner, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr D.R. Watson, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Schuengel, Mrs C.L.Wells, Mr F. Horning, Mr P.J. Washington, the Deputy Mayor – 10

Against, Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts – 1

Motion carried.

19. Regeneration and Community Committee – 22nd November, 2022 – Clauses A1 to A8 and A10 to A11

Motion moved by Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Schuengel, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A8 and A10 to A11 inclusive of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

20. Environmental Services Committee – 15th November, 2022 – Clause A8

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley declared an interest in the item and retired whilst it was considered.

Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in Clause A8 of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 15th November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

21. Environmental Services Committee – 15th November, 2022 – Clauses A1 to A7 and A9 to B14

Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A7 and A9 to B14 inclusive of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 15th November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

22. Adjournment and Resumption

The meeting adjourned at 4.00pm and resumed at 4.15pm with the same Members and officers present.

IN PRIVATE

23. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner submitted a written question for response by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee. The question and response were circulated and noted on the minutes.

24. Executive Committee – 24th November, 2022

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Thursday, 24th November, 2022, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

25. Regeneration and Community Committee – 22nd November, 2022

Motion moved by Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Schuengel, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022, be received by the Council.

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

The Council rose at 4.35pm.



For: Town Clerk & Chief Executive