

Minutes of the 11th Meeting of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee held on 08 May 2014 @ 09.00am in the Council Chamber.

Present:	Hon. Wilson Duncan	-	Chairman
	Hon. Gavin Ellick	-	Deputy Chairman
	Hon. Cyril George	-	Member
	Hon. Mrs Christine Scipio-O'Dean	-	Member
	Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex	-	Member
	Mr Trevor Graham	-	Director, ENRD
	Mr Derek Henry	-	Deputy Director, ENRD
Invited:	Dr Judith Brown	-	Marine Section Manager – Item 11.5
	Mr John Clement	-	Crown Estates Advisor – Item 11.8
	Mr Darren Duncan	-	Head of Division, ANRD – Item 11.8
	Mr Nicky Lawrence	-	Secretary

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Open Agenda.

11.1 Matters arising from meeting of 10th April, 2014.

10.3 Parking layout in Jamestown.

No further action at this time.

Affordable housing.

The Director informed Committee that work is ongoing to progress works for the Comprehensive Development Areas (CDA) planned for Half Tree Hollow and Bottom Woods. These areas will provide approximately 100 homes. He also stated that consideration is also being given to people on low incomes and different options are being looked at, but it is still work in progress. The cost of steel framed homes versus block built homes was also discussed.

A member asked when will land be made available to first time buyers. The Director said that in the past people bought land that was practically inaccessible and without services. Plans are now in hand to identify and provide serviced plots for interested buyers.

Plans are also in hand to excise unproductive forest land which could be used for house building. This is in the process of being taken to Executive Council for endorsement.

Estates Strategy Panel.

The Deputy Director informed Committee that a memorandum is being prepared by the Estates Management Adviser for Executive Council regarding property sales. The Estates Strategy Panel will hold initial discussions regarding the sale of property but the decision will need to be clarified if the matter should come back to ESP but will be taken to ExCo.

Action: Estates Management Advisor

10.4 Clearing of Verges.

The Deputy Director informed Committee that work is in progress.

10.5 District and Community Roads.

The Director informed Committee that work is in progress.

10.9 Solar lights.

The Deputy Director informed Committee that he is still pursuing the matter and has recently emailed the company who manufacture the lights for a response.

Action: Deputy Director

Bus Shelters.

The Director said that no new shelters can be built due to a lack of resources. A member informed Committee that in the past funding had been sourced by Councillors from the Governors Discretionary Fund and had been granted on the condition that the shelters would be maintained by the Community.

The Director said that he really would like to see an efficient bus service and the subject of bus shelters and street lighting should be incorporated in these plans.

11.2 Improved structure for Committee meetings.

The Director explained that the role of the Highway Authority is regulated by the Road Traffic Ordinance which states that the Authority is responsible for road closures and road signage issues.

The ENRC has a broader remit which includes EMD, Nature conservation, Forestry, Roads, Properties etc.

He told members that to have more structured meetings Committee rules and procedures should be followed and documents distributed in good time.

Agenda items should be accompanied by relevant papers for decision making or for information.

11.3 Asset Management.

A member told Committee that at the Public Accounts Committee last month the Building Surveyor discussed with PAC the subject of SHG Asset Maintenance and future funding for these assets. Asset maintenance was a high risk area identified by the Chief Auditor.

One area of concern is High Knoll Fort, an area of cultural heritage, but there are other areas which need essential maintenance.

The Director is exploring funding for SHG property maintenance through the setting up of a Trading Account where revenue from property sales and maintenance can be reinvested in properties. A request was made to the Environment and Natural Resources Directorate for quarterly updates which was agreed to.

Action: Director

11.4 Access for loading in Main Street.

The Director presented a paper seeking approval from Committee for the temporary closure of parks on the Main Stand for use by traders in Jamestown to allow them access to their business premises for the purpose of loading and unloading of goods within a two hour limit. It was stressed that it is essential that traders carry out this work outside of peak hours. Committee approved the proposal and suggested that ESH should issue a Press Release to inform traders.

Action: Director.

11.5 Draft Protection of Wrecks and Marine Archaeological Heritage Ordinance.

The Marine Section Manager presented a draft of the Protection of Wrecks and Marine Archaeological Heritage Ordinance for Committees approval to take to public consultation.

She told Committee that there had been feedback from the owners of some of the wrecks who were in agreement with the proposed Ordinance.

The purpose of the Ordinance is to protect cultural heritage, help make marine based recreation sustainable, protect biodiversity and marine archaeological heritage and also form part of the marine management plan. Wrecks act as artificial reefs and this Ordinance will protect fish life in these areas.

Members raised a few questions such as if a wreck was discovered who would own it and why is line fishing banned near the wrecks listed. The MSM responded by informing members that wrecks are the property of SHG and line fishing is not allowed because of the risk of lines becoming entangled within the wrecks.

Members felt that an agreement should be in place between dive operators and EMD for the maintenance of the anchor points.

Committee gave approval for the draft Ordinance to go to public consultation with the aim of presenting the document to Executive Council on the 17th June 2014.

Action: Marine Section Manager

11.6 Changing regulation governing 'No Parking' signs on Main Street.

The Director of ENRD presented a paper proposing that Executive Council creates a legally recognised sign in the Road Traffic Ordinance for parking that may include a maximum time limit.

The current signs are confusing. It is suggested that these signs be replaced with others stating e.g. "P-2hrs max". Committee agreed to the proposal.

Action: Director

11.7 Removal of cycling prohibition on St Helena.

The Director of ENRD presented a paper proposing that the cycling prohibition in certain areas of St Helena be removed to facilitate sustainable transport and eco-tourism development.

The issue of road safety was raised by members and it was proposed that steep gradient warning signs be erected on roads where appropriate. It was suggested that the Police should become involved to identify areas of risk such as blind spots. It was also stipulated that wearing helmets should be compulsory. Committee approved the proposal.

Action: Director

11.8 Development at Longwood Dairy Buildings.

A member reported that concerns had been expressed by current users of the said buildings, as they were required to evacuate the buildings shortly. These concerns were brought to the attention of the Head of the Agriculture and

Natural Resources Division who provided an update on the situation. The buildings in question from which the users are being evicted play a significant role in the agricultural sector as they are used by farmers for pig production and storage of seed potatoes etc.

It was stressed that the concern is not necessarily just regarding the agricultural sector. There is a wider policy issue regarding evicting individuals who are making a significant contribution to the islands economy from any government premises without them having a viable alternative. A potential site was identified for agricultural use in the Land Development Plan but apparently there was no interest and no funding available to develop it. It was suggested that ESH may have funding that might be able to be accessed in such circumstances.

The member gave an example of how in the past when businesses had to be relocated to accommodate other development the costs were met by SHG. concern was expressed that there is no funding earmarked to assist those affected. The Directorate and the ENR Committee was asked for support to formulate a new Policy or a Policy clause that covers this type of circumstance. The feeling was that if individuals are making a significant contribution to the islands economy they should have some protection.

The Director responded by saying that he fully understood the concerns and with any landlord/tenancy relationship there is a contract agreement, but government should act responsibly and have an open process whereby they can support a householder or a business who have to relocate. He said that in this particular case the individuals concerned expressed different views to different people which is unfortunate as this makes it difficult for the Directorate to find a solution.

The Crown Estates Advisor and Head of Agriculture & Natural Resources informed Committee that they had been working on this issue for the last six months trying to find a pragmatic solution. CEA said that an alternative solution cannot be found until the individuals tell them what they need.

The member stated that this is a generic issue and not just for the individuals at Longwood. A Policy is needed for the protection of all businesses island wide who are tenants of SHG premises and who may at some time be required to relocate to accommodate other businesses.

It was agreed that a policy directive is required and the Director undertook to pursue this further and bring the matter back to ENRC.

Action: Director

11.9

Cross cutting issues.

There were no cross cutting issues.

11.10 Any other urgent business.

Botley's Road.

A member asked for an update on the Botley's Road as the subject had been raised at a recent Constituency meeting at Blue Hill. He told Committee that he was under the impression that works had been undertaken on the road but had been informed at the constituency meeting that nothing had been done.

The Deputy Director of ENRD updated members by saying that the sum of £2,500.00 had been allocated towards this road at the December meeting, from the District & Community Roads budget. This was to supplement a sum of money from the ANRD budget for this road. At the February ENRC meeting it was made known that this sum of money was not to be used on the Botley's Road but instead was intended specifically for the road to the Fitz Stevens Estate.

The Head of ANRD told Committee that no money was spent from the ANRD budget as he was advised by the then Roads Manager that it would have been a waste of money as the amount available would not have made a significant difference. He said that expert advice was needed on how best the road can be repaired and maintained and also how much money would be needed to undertake the works. A site visit had been arranged.

11.11 Confirmation of date for next meeting – 12th June 2014.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.53hrs.

Confirmed.......... Date.....2-6-2014.....