



# Jurby Parish Commissioners

*Barrantee Skeerey Yurby*

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Jurby Parish Commissioners Held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 7.00 pm, Parish Hall, Bretney Road, Jurby.**

**Present:** Mrs K L Charman (KLC), Mrs S J Melvin (SJM), Mr D Hope (DH), , Ms L J Kennedy (LJK).

**In attendance:** Clerk (Mr G B Kennedy), Gary Cobb (Airport Director), Andy Ralphs (CEO IOM Gov), Tim Johnston (MHK), Alf Cannan (MHK), David Bellamy (MWT), Members of the public , Manx News, Energy FM and Manx Radio

The doors were opened at 6.40pm and due to fire regulations the number of attendees was limited to 100 with a large number of Members of the Public outside the doors.

**Apologies:** Lee Quaggin (LQ)

The Clerk Chaired the meeting due to individual Commissioners' conflicts of interest

### **1 Jurby Airfield Zoning and Safeguarding - North West Draft Plan**

The Chair opened the meeting and set out the basic rules for the meeting, asked the panel to introduce themselves and. The invited speakers were then asked to present.

**Andy Ralphs** – most senior government official to cabinet office as CEO since November 2023 – discussed background of the North West Plan published in June 2022. Explained legal process, stressed it is just a draft plan. NO plans to build an airport in Jurby. Next step would be wait for the inspector's report to come out mid October which Cabinet Office will then publish. In hindsight engagement is really important and we haven't done this very well.

**Gary Cobb** – airport director for past 2 years – explained his involvement and background to aviation safeguarding. Jurby Airfield has been safeguarded since 2004 in the Strategic Plan. This means the runway zones in red and yellow to ensure that no development occurs within these zones that would directly impact the airfield in the eventuality that it would be needed in an emergency – closure of Ronaldsway for months to years would be an example of that. Since 2012 planning has been kept a close eye on to ensure 30m height restrictions are adhered to within these safeguarded air space zones. Stressed that the area safeguarded is the size equivalent to what currently exists at Ronaldsway. Also talked about climate change and sea levels rising – Jurby inland and Ronaldsway next to sea.

**David Bellamy** – Manx Wildlife Trust – explained the ecological interest they have in the site – reserved for nature by IOM Gov to formalise the protection of IOM's largest habitat of red listed species of legally protected birds including sky larks. The airfield has biosphere status evaluated by UNESCO. David read out some quotes from Tynwald regarding it. The area is zoned in the North West plan as a nature reserve. Asked the Airport Director to be mindful of this.

The Chair then asked for questions from the floor, Chair predominantly asked for residents, landowners and business owners in Jurby to speak first due to those being primarily affected by the changes.

### **Question 1**

MoP 1– been resident as a farm owner since 1986 – 2 questions to Andy Ralphs:

1. Are cabinet office and the DOI aware of due process?
2. Why have they clearly not followed this?

**Response:**

DOI are responsible for the plan and due process as far as he can see has been followed.

**Question 2**

MoP 2– resident and the runway extension goes right over the top of his house – question to Gary Cobb:

1. The map has been in the public domain since Jan 2023, so is the way this been dealt with incompetence or underhand?

**Response:**

Repeated much of what had already been said and that it is his role to safeguard aviation space, that clearly engagement with those affected would have been better.

**Question 3**

MoP 3– resident next to airfield – question to panel:

1. If the intention in the next 50 years or so is to use Jurby as an airport then please come clean now...(stated about property devaluing “blight”)

**Response:**

Andy Ralphs referred back to the document and said lessons will be learnt. Stated the map has been withdrawn and he is committed to full community engagement before the Airport Masterplan is started. Gary Cobb re-iterated their stance on safeguarded zones “should we ever need to build an airport.”

**Question 4**

MoP 4– resident and the runway goes over the top of her house – quoted Gary Cobb’s Manx Radio interview when he took up his role on the island. 2 questions:

1. Who instructed Gary to draw the map up and why was there no engagement with the public?
2. Questioned sea levels rising – Jurby is 12ft lower than Ronaldsway and will be affected first due to creeping from the Lhen Trench as soon as sea levels start to rise. Asked for a response?

**Response:**

Andy Ralphs & Gary Cobb both answered exactly the same responses from previous questions.

**Question 5**

MoP 5– resident on the Bretney Road – questioned Gary Cobb:

1. You stated that a contingency would be needed should Ronaldsway be out of action for months to years, but what would likely cause that, given that planes have enough fuel on board to turn back to their destination airports now if unable to land. Where is the logical consistency?

**Response:**

Gary Cobb discussed emergency contingencies for Ronaldsway – didn't really answer the question.

**Question 6**

MoP 6– resident and landowner Sandygate – questioned the speakers:

1. Which one of you is going to take responsibility for this and apologise?

**Response:**

Andy Ralphs repeated lessons will be learnt and community will be engaged in full before the Airport Masterplan. Still no apology.

**Question 7**

MoP 7– co owner of land on Summerhill Road – question regarding Climate Change Document:

1. Sea levels – Ronaldsway is 16m above sea level; Jurby is 26m above sea level; Andreas (that hasnot been mentioned yet) is 20m above sea level – all available on gov website as a PDF. In the document the words 'airport/airfield/Ronaldsway' are not mentioned at all. 'Jurby' is mentioned 5 times – none in relation to the airfield. This document was published in Nov 2022 and revised in Feb 2024. Asked for a response?

**Response:**

Gary Cobb didn't understand the question – repeated why Jurby was the best location for a contingency airport.

**Question 8**

MoP 8– question to Gary Cobb regarding sea levels:

1. What risks are there currently to the airport with flooding – given that it is going to be 1500 years or so before we are affected by sea level rises, and why not improve approach lighting to the runway like there used to be so planes can land in fog?

**Response:**

As the sea levels rise Ronaldsway will become more fog bound and have more incidents of fog. Need a CAT2 ILS in order to develop Ronaldsway. Can't place approach lighting out where it used to be due to sea shelf.

**Question 9**

MoP 9– question to Gary Cobb:

1. You said your job is to safeguard, but it is also to follow government process and abide by the law. A FOI request to DOI asking about minutes of meetings and data held on prior discussions regarding the plans came back with 'no data held'. Due process has not been followed – read some quotes out about Gary's time in Scotland (Chair questioned the relevance of this due to it not being about Jurby – public heckled and question was allowed due to building a picture of previous work and the impact this had on communities).

## **Response:**

Gary Cobb stated it wasn't a 'meeting' it was a discussion so therefore no minutes were recorded. Discussed Air Traffic Control issues in Scotland and how this was dealt with in the isles. Gary's budget management was also counter questioned which he answered.

## **Question 10**

MoP 10 – resident Bretney Road with MoP 5 – questions to Gary Cobb and MHKs:

1. Do you think Ronaldsway is fit for purpose now and will be still in 15 years time?
2. Both of you have told different people in this room that you were unaware of this box going into the plan – how can you sit there and say that?

## **Responses:**

Gary Cobb – 99% of Airport Masterplan will focus on Ronaldsway which is fit for purpose and will be for another 20-30 years. Re-iterated 'threat' to airport and why it is prudent to safeguard aviation space at Jurby.

Alf Cannan (MHK) – “deeply concerned” by what has come out of the North West plan. Reassure as a constituency MHK that he is taking this very seriously. His initial view was not what he thought it was going to be and understands the impact the zones have had. As an area MHK they have to have distant views on these things but as everyone knows he also is resident on Summerhill Road and a landowner so at some point during the process he has to declare a conflict of interest. Tynwald would not get to vote on this plan until it had gone through planning first. Stated he had only heard about the Airport Masterplan recently.

Tim Johnston (MHK) – echoed what Alf said. Stated that the correct procedures had not been followed. Apologised for the stress and anxiety this has caused those parties directly impacted. Sat down to a huge round of applause from the audience.

## **Question 11**

MoP 11– small holding 28 acres Summerhill Road – questions to speakers:

1. The map/box has been implemented deceitfully into the North West plan. Statement directed to MHKs “you have to own this, you are both Ministers so you knew” (discussed SEZ and no planning law, IOM becoming another Monaco. 400 hectares would be a mass investment that the island doesn't have financially. Have Economic Dept had any discussions regarding this)

## **Response:**

Tim Johnstone stated that no one had been in to discuss with his department about SEZ. There is no Government policy or funding for this.

The Chair moved this on to next question as discussion moved away from the Agenda

## **Question 12**

MoP 2 – second question to Gary Cobb:

1. How much do you think it would cost to build a brand new airport from ground up and what would it cost to upgrade Ronaldsway to be issue free?

### **Response:**

Gary Cobb guesstimated 100-150 million GBP and was loudly heckled by audience.

50 million GBP to upgrade Ronaldsway but it has constraints such as the sea shelf and the A5 road.

Couldn't put an approx. cost on the full total as he isn't up to date with highways costings and materials needed etc.

He highlighted google maps for Ronaldsway and told the audience to have a look at height protection on buildings etc within a 13km radius. That you can read up on "blight" at Heathrow online.

He then repeated the process involved for the Airport Masterplan – proposal – impact statement – planning – mitigation.

## **Question 13**

MoP 12– Andreas resident – landowner in Jurby – question to Gary Cobb:

1. You talk about upgrades to ILS, why don't you just budget for the best upgrade you can get for Ronaldsway and concentrate on that?

### **Response:**

Gary Cobb stated that due to the constraints Ronaldsway has that CAT2 ILS would be the only upgrade they could do for the size of the airport and runway. CAT3B is the best in the World but not able to be implemented at Ronaldsway due to constraints.

**David Bellamy asked if he could make a final statement which was allowed by the Chair**

David Bellamy counteracted the consultation process with a final statement – it has been in the making for 8 YEARS with zero public engagement – the last person who tried to build on an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) was Boris Johnson; the last person who destroyed an SSSI was Donald Trump – you are not in good company. David presented JPC with documents to be included in the minutes for the public to access.

**MoP1 asked if he could make a statement which was allowed by the Chair**

He read out statement from a document put together by Government back in 1997 off the back of the Landfill and Incinerator debacle in 1995. It sets out the process for interest in land and the procedures that should be followed for due process. This highlights that they have not been followed and lessons have not been learnt from previous mistakes:

## **Summary of Recommendations in Sept 1997 N J Cringle (Chairman); J A Brown; J N Radcliffe**

### **R1**

We recommend that Government should examine the current procedures for selecting sites for investigation

### **R2**

We recommend that property owners –

- (a) Are notified of Government interest in their property in a professional and sensitive manner
- (b) Receive written notification within a reasonable period prior to public statements being made; and
- (c) Within the notification period, are offered the opportunity for a meeting with the relevant Government Department

### **R3**

We recommend that in future when schemes of this nature are under consideration –

- (a) The press releases contain as much information as is practicable and are available to the public; and
- (b) A service is set up which would provide additional information on request and answer queries

## **Question 14**

MoP 13– question to JPC:

1. I spent 8 days at the public inquiry for the North West plan. We received our documents in March for this. Why did no one from JPC attend the inquiry or apply to speak at it regarding the airfield changes and come to think of it why was there no one there that I recognised from Jurby as a whole?

### **Response:**

Chair informed MoP that we received our documents for the April meeting. We missed the changes.

## **Question 15**

Another MoP 14– counter questioned MoP 13– if Lezayre Parish Commissioners had the documents back in March did you read them and spot the changes

### **Response:**

MoP 13 replied he did not.

## **Question 16**

MoP 8– second question to Alf Cannan:

1. Is there any military interest in Jurby that you know of?

### **Response:**

No.

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Chair concluded the meeting at 9:20pm - thanked the panel for coming, thanked the audience for coming and MoP for their questions.