

27 November 2018

Dr Michelle Heywood  
Chairman  
Port St Mary Commissioners

Dear Michelle

### **Resignation**

It is with regret that I write to give you my formal resignation from the board of Port St Mary Commissioners.

I wish to give the following by way of explanation to both you as Chairman of the authority and to the ratepayers of Port St Mary who chose to elect me to the board in 2016.

Firstly, I feel that I must draw attention to the conduct of a small minority of board members, in the hope that the remaining board members will seek to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to deal with this behaviour **before** the next election.

There have been many instances of behaviour by a small number of board members which I believe to have been detrimental to the boards standing with the public, its staff, and its ability for effective decision making for the benefit of Port St Mary and its ratepayers.

These include but are not limited to - threats of legal action being made against the board, unfounded and unsubstantiated accusations leading to a police investigation, continuing personal attacks on members and their integrity and many (unsuccessful) attempts to undermine your authority as chairman. The atmosphere which I view as being intentionally created is one of aggression and conflict and provides for a toxic environment and divert the boards time and energy away from dealing with real issues.

I notice from the minutes of the previous board meeting that following my departure, steps were taken to address a personal attack on me, and my integrity - and I thank those members who took action on that occasion.

As you are aware, it has always been my intention to serve only 1 term on the board, and it would of course be a simple matter to continue for the very few remaining meetings until the end of this boards term, however, despite your constant efforts as Chairman to maintain civil and respectful debate, I believe that the current members behaviours are likely to continue and therefore my continued presence on the board is likely to be unproductive.

Secondly, as you will be aware, as the proposer of the boards reduction in numbers from 9 members to 5, I have found the lack of justification in over-ruling of the proposed reduction to be unsatisfactory. Despite seeking clarification from Mr Harmer MHK, Minister for the Department of Infrastructure, the ministers written reply does not answer this question.

Perhaps the closest we will have to accept is the ministers response in Tynwald, that “This was seen as a sensible compromise option by the chairman of the inquiry” - although this explanation is not mentioned in the inquiry report.

The option of reducing to 7 was, of course, considered by the board and rejected in May 2018. Interestingly in Tynwald Mr Hooper MHK accurately summed up the feeling of many board members when this was originally discussed, when he comments “I cannot imagine reducing a board by two members is going to make a significant improvement in the affairs of the local authority.”

Unfortunately by deciding that compromise was needed in favour a small but vocal minority of the board who have sort to undermine the boards decisions, the result is an outcome that has no real benefits to the authority, and one that the majority of the board did not want.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Phair