

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL GALASHIELS COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the GALASHIELS
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
held in the Transport Interchange, Galashiels
on Thursday, 14 September 2017 at 5.30 pm

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison, A. Anderson and H. Scott

Apologies:- Councillors E. Jardine and R Kenney

In Attendance:- Managing Solicitor - People and Court (C. Donald), Capital and Investments Manager (Kirsty Robb), Estates Surveyor (A. Phipps), Ecology Officer (A. Tharme), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

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1. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 22 June 2017.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signing by the Chairman.

2. **TREE PLANTING NEXT TO GALASHIELS GOLF CLUB, LADHOPE**

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 22 June, 2017, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure seeking to obtain consent for a grant application to be made on behalf of the Common Good Fund for the planting of trees at Ladhope. The Estates Surveyor, Annabel Phipps, provided the background to the proposal and Hugh Chalmers, of the Tweed Forum was in attendance to provide further information. Public consultation on the scheme was carried out by way of a drop-in session and meeting on 25 October 2016. Mr Chalmers explained that he had worked on the planting design with the Ecology Officer, Andy Tharme. The final design was agreed after consultation and was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Mr Tharme explained that the proposal helped to meet the Council's target in terms of woodland replacement under the Penmanshiel Compensatory Replanting Scheme. The scheme covered the cost of establishing the new woodland along with the associated works. It was forecasted that the funding would be available for maintenance of the trees for the first 10 years after planting and this would be monitored by SAC Consulting. The Common Good Fund would then be responsible for the cost of any routine maintenance. The forecasted figures showed a surplus, which could be reserved for the future maintenance of the trees. In response to questions, Mr Chalmers advised that use would be made of deer fencing around the planted areas as opposed to tree tubes. A meeting would be held with Cycling Scotland to discuss the layout of cycle tracks through the woodland. He confirmed that the Golf Club would continue to be kept informed of the proposals.

DECISION

APPROVED the planting of trees, as shown in the plan attached to the report, with Tweed Forum and SAC Consulting acting as agent, the Council's Penmanshiel Compensatory Grant Scheme as funder and Scottish Woodlands as the contractor.

3. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 3 MONTHS TO 30 JUNE 2017**

- 3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing details of the income and expenditure for the three months to 30 June 2017, a full year projected out-turn for 2017/18 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2018. The Capital and Investments Manager, Kirsty Robb, highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 to the report provided a projected income and expenditure position, showing a projected surplus of £2,630 for the year. There were currently no requests for financial assistance from the Galashiels Common Good Fund and the approved budget of £500 remained to be disbursed. The projected Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2018, shown in Appendix 2 to the report, indicated a projected decrease in the reserves of £33,562 due to the depreciation charge. This was not a cash transaction and was off-set by a corresponding contribution from the revaluation reserve at the end of the financial year. The breakdown of the property portfolio detailing the values of the individual properties and projected depreciation charges for 2017/18 was shown in Appendix 3.
- 3.2 The current position of the investment in the Newton Real Return Fund (Newton Fund) was shown in Appendix 4 to the report. The fund delivered a positive return of 1.2% in the quarter to 20 June 2017, in line with its benchmark of 1.1%. This was the Fund's second consecutive return in excess of benchmark since the previously reported under-performance in the second half of 2016. However, as reported at the end of 2016/17, KPMG were commissioned to evaluate the Newton Fund in terms of its continued suitability for Common Good and Trust Fund investments. KPMG had conducted this assessment and had indicated there were more attractive options available within the market which would provide improved performance. A further report would be produced and presented to full Council to seek approval to undertake a procurement exercise in line with the previously approved Scottish Borders Council Common Good and Trusts Investment Strategy.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED the projected income and expenditure for 2017/18 in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2017/18.**
- (b) **NOTED within the appendices to the report:-**
- (i) **the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2018 in Appendix 2;**
 - (ii) **the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
 - (iii) **the current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4;**

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm