
PROPERTY UPDATE AND SUMMARY

Report by Head of Corporate Governance

HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

22nd August 2013

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Hawick Common Good Sub Committee on the property maintenance and responsibilities following the site visits in May 2013.**
- 1.2 The Councillors and property officers undertook inspections of the Pilmuir and St Leonards properties on 2nd May 2013.
- 1.3 The report lists the findings, actions and costs for each of the properties.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Hawick Common Good Sub Committee notes the findings of the inspections and notes the responsibilities of both Landlord and Tenant.**

3 SUMMARY

3.1 Hawick Moor.

Hawick Moor is included in the lease of Pilmuir farm to Derek Steen but rights to the race track and associated buildings are reserved to the landlord for use at the annual Common Riding. The tarmac track is used by the public at the Common Riding and other horse racing events throughout the summer.

It was agreed to carry out substantial remedial works to the road surface which had deteriorated to the extent that filling potholes was not practical. The tarring works on the road cost £6,500.

Drainage works had been carried out and it was agreed to backfill the open ditches with imported stone. The cost of the infill was £2,983.

New plastic running rail had been installed to the inside of the racecourse and it was agreed this was a huge improvement. An invoice is yet to be received for the rails but it is anticipated that this will be around £3,300 and £1,000 has been donated by the Hawick Common Riding Committee. The usual minor repairs were required to the racecourse buildings prior to the Common Riding.

3.2 Pilmuir Farm.

Farmhouse. The tenant, Mr Steen, highlighted damp/condensation problems in the bedrooms which, according to the Peter Cox Ltd report dated 4th March 2013, were non structural problems. Improvements to the insulation were suggested and carried forward for further discussion. It was noted the tenant/occupier had not carried out decoration or floor covering blaming the damp/condensation for lack of action.

Farm buildings – the tenant (Mr Steen) voiced his general dissatisfaction at the new roller door to the feed store because it took a long time to get fitted and was not bird proof at the time of inspection.

The tenant requested the new straw storage shed be erected without delay now that his lambing was complete. John Telfer Ltd proposed a start date of 15th May and completion by 30th June. The cost of the new shed was £35,300. Builder, electrical and plumbing works were also required which cost £4,500. The works were completed by mid July. These works were completed by the landlord and thereafter general maintenance is by the tenant. (see attached photos)

In general, replacement of fixed equipment, including fences, dykes and drains, is a Landlord responsibility and general repairs and maintenance is a tenant responsibility. Drainage works carried out in April and May cost £5,427. Replacement fencing works in April, which were partly carried over from last year due to the wet weather, cost £7,135.

3.3 Pilmuir Cottage.

The recently refurbished Cottage was visited and a conducted tour given by the tenants, Mr and Mrs Purvis.

The tenant had requested permission for the erection of new storage shed at the rear of the cottage for which the Tenant would be responsible for all costs.

The general maintenance and tidiness of the property is a tenant

responsibility and the landlord is to check this with regular inspections. The lease is a commercial lease requiring the tenant to run his dry stone dyking business from the property as per the business plan supplied to the landlord. It was noted that the tenant has hens and dogs and a bonfire was smouldering near the house. There are no outstanding works for the landlord since the front door seals were fixed.

- 3.4 St Leonards Farmhouse, Buildings and Cow Park field.
The general poor maintenance and tidiness of the property was noted. The landlord is to check the condition with regular inspections. There are no outstanding works by the landlord but the tenant, Mr & Mrs Burns, were complaining about dampness in the front room and this issue is covered by a guarantee from Peter Cox Ltd. The tenant had requested permission to erect a new lean-to building at the rear of the buildings but this request was still to be decided. During the visit it was agreed to replace some fencing prior to the Common Riding which cost £1,400.
- 3.5 St Leonards Cottage
The cottage was not inspected on this occasion.
- 3.6 St Leonards Fields (excluding Cow Park field).
The eight fields have been recently let for a five year period. Mr Young of Flex Farm has leased six fields and Mrs Burns of St Leonards has leased two fields.
Some fences and dykes are in need of replacing and some rebuilding. This is a landlord responsible but it may be possible to get grants to cover costs in 2014 or 2015 under the Scottish Government's Scottish Rural Development Programme scheme. Details of possible grants will be presented to the Hawick Common Good Sub Committee later.
- 3.7 Williestruther Cottage
A conducted tour of the cottage was given by the tenants, Mr and Mrs Drew Wilson. The property was generally very well kept and the cleanliness of the property was noted.
The tenant is looking for assistance with heating costs and it was suggested a new wood burning stove in the sitting room may help reduce the use of oil heating. A replacement of the open fire would be a landlord responsibility.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

The landlord expenditure is outlined in the report. Quotes will be obtained for the wood burning stove at Willestruther Cottage and presented to the Hawick Common Good sub-committee once available.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations

As with all leasing out of property, there is a risk that a tenant does not maintain the property in a clean and tidy condition. In order to mitigate

this, the Landlord and/or agent shall carry out regular inspections and remind the tenants of their responsibilities to keep the properties clean and tidy.

4.3 Equalities

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals contained in this report.

4.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant effects on the economy, community or environment.

4.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions.

4.6 Rural Proofing

Not applicable because no new Council policy or strategy is being requested.

4.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, Clerk to the Council, Head of Strategic Policy, HR Manager and Head of Audit & Risk have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

Approved by

Head of Corporate Governance

Signature

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Author

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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