

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of MEETING of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in the VICTORIA HALL, SELKIRK on
19 June 2013 at 3.30 pm

Present: Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), M. Ballantyne, V. Davidson (para 9).
Community Councillor T. Combe

In attendance: Legal & Licensing Services Manager, Senior Financial Analyst (A. Mitchell),
Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

Members of the Public – 5

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 1 March 2013.

DECISION

NOTED the minute.

SELKIRK FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

2. With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 27 March 2012, the Project Manager, Mr Conor Price, was in attendance to give an update to the Sub Committee on the Selkirk Flood Protection Scheme. Mr Price explained that the scheme had been approved in August 2012 and planning permission in principle had been obtained. Work was now being carried out on detailed design plans which should be available by the end of the current year. Once detailed plans had been approved tender documentation would be prepared with the hope that the works could be started in 2014. With regard to funding, the Scottish Government was expected to confirm their position late summer/early autumn of this year. Mr Price gave assurance that he would inform Members as soon as firm information about funding was received. Meanwhile communications with the local community were taking place to minimise impact and disruption on residents and to landowners including the Common Good Fund. Defences would be built along the riverside of Victoria Park but every effort would be made to protect the trees and land would be reinstated once the work was complete. There was some work to be done to confirm ownership. Compensation would be due to landowners where appropriate and this would be done under the guidance of the District Valuer. In response to a question from Mr Combe about the presence of wooden stakes along the river bank Mr Price confirmed that these had been used by a consultant as part of the groundworks investigation and that, as the work had been completed, he would ensure that they were removed. Discussion continued about various maps and registers available that may assist in identifying land owned by the Common Good.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

3. Before considering the applications for financial assistance the Senior Financial Analyst tabled a briefing paper at the meeting which summarised the current financial position of the Common Good Fund in respect of grants and donations. The paper indicated that £11,590.00 had already

been approved and was committed out of the current year's budget. With a proposed grants and donations budget of £30,000 for the financial year, and taking into account the expected donation to the Selkirk Hill Management Group based on the 2012/13 level, there would be just over £8,000 remaining in the budget for additional applications. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 1 March 2013, Councillor Ballantyne expressed concern that there appeared to be no clear criteria against which to assess applications for financial assistance to the Common Good Fund. Members were aware that more applications seem to be coming to the Sub Committee with an expectation that the Common Good Fund should be approached for money as a first choice, rather than a last alternative. The funds were very limited so this often led to disappointment for applicants. The Legal and Licensing Services Manager reminded those present that the Common Good Fund was not in essence a grant giving organisation, its main responsibility being to look after property and heritable assets. It was agreed that it would be helpful to consider criteria for considering grant applications at the next meeting.

DECISION

AGREED that a paper be brought to the next meeting to support a discussion on the criteria that should be adopted in the consideration of grant applications to the Common Good Fund.

Scottish Chamber Orchestra

4. There had been circulated copies of a request from the Fundraising Co-ordinator of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra for a grant of £1,500 towards the cost of performing at the Victoria Hall, Selkirk, on Sunday 15 September 2013 as part of its 'Summer Nights' tour. Having noted the organisation's financial statements and that the purpose of the Chamber Orchestra included touring, Members decided not to grant the application. However they agreed that help 'in kind' for the concert could be supported.

DECISION

AGREED not to give a grant to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra towards their concert in Selkirk.

YES (Yarrow, Ettrick and Selkirk) Arts Festival

5. There had been circulated copies of a request from the Project Manager of the YES Arts Festival for a grant of £2,120 as a contribution to event management and marketing of the festival which would take place from 12 – 15 September 2013. Whilst supportive of the proposals for the festival, Members noted that the organisation's outline budget had a contingency amount of £3,000, which was in excess of the donation being sought. It was considered therefore that a grant to fund this from the Common Good Fund was not an appropriate use of the limited funds available.

DECISION

AGREED not to give a grant to the YES (Yarrow, Ettrick and Selkirk) Arts Festival.

Selkirk Parish Church

6. There had been circulated copies of a request from the Congregational Board of Selkirk Parish Church for a donation of £5,000 towards the cost of renovating the Church Hall to include new toilet facilities, a private meeting room, energy efficient refurbishment and an access ramp. Members noted that responses to other grant applications were being awaited and that an application for assistance was also being made to the Landfill Community Fund. It was understood that the scheme fitted with that avenue of funding and it may be that the application would attract sufficient funds from that, or other, sources, thereby obviating the need for money from the Common Good Fund. Members therefore agreed to defer a decision on whether to contribute to the project until the result of the application to the Landfill Community Fund was known.

DECISION

AGREED to continue until the next meeting the application for financial assistance for the renovation project at Selkirk Parish Church.

REPORT OF RHINOS P7 TOUR TO DUBLIN

7. With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 1 March 2013, there had been circulated copies of a report on the Selkirk Rhinos P7 Tour to Dublin. The report explained that 15 players participated in the tour to the Seapoint International Rugby Blitz, Ireland's largest mini rugby festival. All the boys were from Selkirk and the Lilliesleaf, Ettrick and Yarrow catchment areas and they were accompanied by two coaches and two parent helpers. In addition to several photographs included within the report an itinerary for the three day tour was attached. A key objective for the organisers was that no child would be unable to travel for financial reasons. This would not have been possible without the efforts of fundraisers, sponsorship and the financial support from Selkirk Common Good Fund. The report went on to describe the benefits of the tour for those taking part, which included international travel experience; improved rugby performance and development; self esteem; and learning and enhanced aspirations. The report concluded that this was a valuable experience for everyone involved and the Common Good Fund Sub Committee was thanked for its support. Members were very pleased to receive the interesting feedback report, commented on its high quality and asked for their thanks to be passed to the convenor of Selkirk Rhinos.

DECISION

NOTED the feedback report.

PROPERTY UPDATE

8. The Legal and Licensing Manager referred to the ongoing use of Smedheugh Farm by ENS Ltd, a company supplying overhead line services. Although the initial period of occupation was estimated to be 6 months the company had indicated that it could be at Smedheugh for three years. The Estates Surveyor would negotiate with the company with a view to receiving an income from ENS and would also look into issues raised in relation to planning permission for the caravans that had been sited there. The Legal and Licensing Manager also advised that the work at Linglie Farm was ongoing and that the shop had been repainted before the Common Riding had taken place.
9. Discussion continued about management of the Hill, the Hill Management Group being a sub group of the Community Council. Councillor Ballantyne suggested that the financial support from the Common Good Fund to the Hill Management Group could be in the form of a contract rather than annually in response to a grant application. If fixed at a reasonable level and for a set number of years this would give a measure of security for the group for financial planning and to put in place an appropriate management plan. In response to a query about the financial returns from the Golf Club to the Common Good Fund the Chairman explained that there was a Golf Club representative on the Hill Management Group and he would discuss this with him. However he described the good working relationship between the Hill Management Group and the green keepers from the Golf Club and emphasised the value of the work carried out by the Golf Club in maintaining a large section of the hill for the Common Good Fund.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson joined the meeting.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

Minute

1. Members noted the private section of the Minute of 1 March 2013.

The meeting concluded at 4.40 pm