

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 on 4 September
2013 at 3.00 pm

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

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

Member of the Public – Dr Lindsay Neil (to paragraph 4).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

MINUTE

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 19 June 2013. Attention was brought to the fact that Councillor Davidson's attendance should have been recorded.

DECISION

APPROVED the minute, as amended, for signature by the Chairman.

FINANCIAL MONITORING

3. There had been circulated, for information, a paper giving key figures relating to the outturn 2012/13 and proposed budget summary for 2013/14. The Senior Financial Analyst, Andrew Mitchell, highlighted the main points for Members. In 2012/13 there had been an excess of income over running costs of £49,801. Expenditure on the new shed of £36,257 and grants and donations totalling £17,997 left an excess of expenditure over income for the year of £4,453 which was deducted from the revenue reserves. The paper went on to list donations and contributions approved and paid in 2012/13 and those approved in principle from the 2013/14 budget, the total commitment to date for the current financial year being £11,590. The net assets of Selkirk Common Good Fund as at 31 March 2013 totalled £2,335,758. Mr Mitchell answered Members' questions on the list of property valuations provided. He advised that current funds were invested in accordance with the Council's policy. It was noted that Council had recently approved a Common Good and Trust Fund Investment Strategy which included a pooled investment fund to obtain a better earning base. Dr Neil asked why the assets within the Courtroom were not included in the list of moveable assets. The Legal and Licensing Manager, Anne Isles, explained that these items were listed under the museum list in 2007; there was no agreement with Scottish Borders Council that they were part of the Common Good.

DECISION

NOTED the key figures, revenue outturn 2012/13 and proposed budget 2013/14 as shown in the briefing paper.

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

4. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 19 June 2013, Mrs Isles advised the Sub Committee that she had been working on a paper, in consultation with the External Funding Consultant, to set out criteria against which to assess applications for financial assistance to the Common Good Fund. However, as this would have probable application for other Common Good Funds and for other cases where funding was provided by the Council, there needed to be further informal discussion with Members to carefully address all aspects and implications, including issues of equality. Once the approach and detail had been agreed a report would be brought to the Sub Committee for formal approval.

DECISION NOTED

Selkirk Silver Band

5. There had been circulated copies of a request from the treasurer of Selkirk Silver Band for a grant of £400 to help fund the annual Slow Melody Contest on 6 October 2013. The annual contest was hosted for children and adults from all over the Scottish Borders. According to the information given it had become increasingly difficult for the band to fund this contest alone. Various fundraising events throughout the year went towards general running costs of the band. Although Members recognised the value to the town of both the band and the annual contest, opinion was divided as to whether the event would not be able to go ahead without the grant. This was in view of the fact that the accounts showed a small surplus over the last two years. However the significant cost of running the band was also recognised as was the effort made by the organisation to raise funds to support itself. Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor Edgar, moved that the grant be approved. Councillor Ballantyne opposed the motion, although in doing so she stressed that the value of the band to the town was not in question.

DECISION DECIDED to grant £400 to Selkirk Silver Band.

Selkirk Hill Management Group

6. With reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of 19 June 2013, there had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from the Selkirk Hill Management Group. Selkirk Common Good had, since 1995, contributed to the costs of carrying out maintenance and repairs to the Hill and its access routes, these being in the ownership of the Common Good. In 2012 Selkirk Common Good had contributed £10,000 towards the maintenance costs. In order to give a measure of security for the group it was agreed to meet the request for a management payment of £10,000 per annum for the next five years, to allow the group to put in place a management plan to maintain the area for the use and enjoyment of the people of Selkirk.

DECISION AGREED to pay to Selkirk Hill Management Group a management fee of £10,000 per annum, for the next five years, for the maintenance of Selkirk Hill, subject to the availability of funds, and subject to the submission to the Sub Committee of the Management Plan and subsequent Annual Reports.

PROPERTY UPDATE

7. The Estates Surveyor, James Morison, gave a verbal update relating to Common Good property and raised several issues. Quotes had been requested for the replacement of windows at Linglie Farmhouse. Should grants be available for the work consideration would be given to also replacing windows in the cottages at Linglie. At Smedeugh Farm Mr Morison had confirmed with the tenant that the house was occupied by an employee. Grants had been received for new fencing with an invoice for the balance of £5,900 having been received. There were one or two other fences needing repair at an estimated cost of £2-3k. The total cost of the new fencing,

including grants, was approximately £25k. The tenant had raised a question about improvement of an existing shed at Smedheugh, which was not fit for purpose due to a missing roof ridge which allowed water to enter. It was agreed this would be discussed on the visit to the farm. The date agreed for the Members' tour of Selkirk Common Good property was Wednesday 18 September, meeting at the Victoria Hall at 2 pm.

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson left the meeting.

8. Discussion continued about the Green Shed. This was rented by Scotts Selkirk and was used to store their own equipment as well as equipment from other organisations including the Opera, and the Association of Selkirk Clubs and Societies. The Chairman had requested that all the groups contribute to the rent and maintenance of the building. The shed would be included in the tour of property inspection. Mr Morison went on to advise that the shooting leases had come to an end at South Common and Linglie. The syndicate who had South Common wished to continue but the syndicate at Linglie would not, although interest in this had been expressed by the contact for the South Common shoot.

DECISION

NOTED the property update.

URGENT BUSINESS

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

9. Community Councillor Combe raised the issue of the Selkirk Christmas lights, which had also been discussed with David Richardson from Environment and Infrastructure. Investment was needed for work which would include the installation of 5 power points in the town. The Chairman advised that, in the first instance, an application should be made to the Community Grant Fund to fund the project

DECISION

NOTED

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 Paragraph 6 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

PHONE MAST SITE – LINGLIE FARM

1. Members approved the granting of a new lease to Everything Everywhere (formally Orange) for the existing phone mast site at Linglie Farm.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 pm