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**PEEBLES COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE  
TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, 28TH  
FEBRUARY, 2023**

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**Please find attached the Appendix in respect Item on  
the agenda for the above meeting**

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14.	Open Questions (Pages 3 - 6)	15 mins
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## **COMMON GOOD EXHIBITION**

Question from Joe Wilton: Most residents of Peebles seem to know very little about the Peebles Common Good. A recent straw poll showed that, although the majority of those questioned had heard of the Common Good, very few had a clear understanding of how it was managed. When asked to name any of the 40 fixed assets that currently make up the Common Good, few could name even one asset. To try to rectify this lack of knowledge and engagement we think there is a strong need for a public (purely factual) exhibition describing Peebles Common Good. This idea was endorsed unanimously by the Peebles community council at their last meeting and the Peebles Civic Soc think this is a "good idea". We have already written a draft text for the councillors to consider and the Eastgate Theatre cafe has agreed to host the exhibition. Would the councillors support such a proposal?

## **COMMON GOOD INVESTMENTS**

Question from Lesley Morrison: Peebles CG has approximately £500,000 invested through Aegon Asset Management, a global investment company. SBC has declared a climate emergency. Can you reassure us that this money is invested in sustainable businesses and not fossil fuel or other non-sustainable companies? And shouldn't more of this money be spent investing for the future in local sustainable energy & renewables?

## **CLIMATE CHANGE/ENVIRONMENT**

Question from Joe Wilton: SBC has declared a climate emergency. Some of the Peebles Common Good assets offer a great chance for sustainable energy production, such as PV panels on roofs. This would also provide a long-term income to the CG Fund. Is this currently being considered by the councillors?

Question from Nic Barrett: In what ways is carbon reduction a factor in decision making around common good assets or allocation of funds?

## **PROCESSES and ADMIN**

Three Questions from Cat Hamilton

1. Could there be a publicly accessible AGM (with annual summary document) held where our elected councillors, as the committee of The Peebles Common Good, report back to the community, as stakeholders, the current situation of all the PCG assets & the PCG Fund?
2. There should be a named point of contact for Peebles Common Good. What/who is it and where can it be found?
3. The Peebles Common Good section of SBC website is not the easy to navigate. To find details you have to trudge through previous meeting minutes and documents. To fulfil the requirement of transparency, information should be 'clear and easily accessible' (Scottish Land Commission). How do the councillors propose to make information clear and easily accessible?

Two Questions from Richard Welander

1. An Ofcom report published last April highlighted the fact that more than 1.5million household across the UK have no access to the internet. Many more have only limited

access via their mobile phones. Do councillors agree that the publishing of all information about Common Good solely on the SBC website is not best practice (particularly when navigating to that information on the website is itself hard) and would they undertake to:

1. produce an annual report on the status of the Fund, the activities of the previous year and plans for the forthcoming year, to be published in the Peeblesshire News
2. to hold an annual open meeting in a suitable local venue (such as the Burgh Hall), at which the sub-committee chair would present an annual report and take questions, and (following the laudable current practice of the Peebles Community Council)
3. 3) post printed copies of the sub-committee latest minutes on the notice boards at the entrance to the Chambers Institute?

2. The Common Good register for Peebles, published last year by SBC on its website, contains errors and oversights. SBC have undertaken to review the registers 'at least every 5 years'. This seems an excessively long time to leave mistakes uncorrected. Tapping into the wealth of local knowledge in Peebles, would councillors please explore the possibility of instigating an effective mechanism for the capture of issues in need of correction or further investigation and to encourage SBC to undertake an annual (or biennial) review to incorporate new and/or corrected information on its website?

#### Five questions from Nick Barrett

1. Who is responsible for validation of the 12 CG asset lists, and who is responsible for valuations, insurance & maintenance?
- 2, Why is there such a big depreciation on many of the property values? Eg old corn exchange?
3. Who ensures that SBC's environmental protection policies are followed in the management & maintenance of CG assets, and how is compliance monitored & recorded?
4. How do long leases of CG assets apportion responsibility for all components of the asset, and who is responsible for enforcing those responsibilities?
5. Where are grants and applications listed / summarised on CG minutes and the SBC website?

#### **INCOME and ACCOUNTS**

##### Four Questions from Joe Wilton

1. The Peebles Common Good accounts show that the 8 lock-up garages at Kirkland St (within the Golf Club car park) bring in an annual rental income of just £800. That's £8.50 per month per garage. The current going rate for same is around £80 pm per garage. That's 10 x the current CG rent. Garages 1,2 and 3 Tweed Green may also be underpriced. What is the explanation for these low rents?
2. On a similar theme, who makes the decisions regarding who pays fees (and who doesn't pay fees), what the costs are for the use of Peebles Common Good land for events, commercial and not for profit/charitable?

3. How are rental incomes reviewed? Where is this recorded?

4. Although first established 600 years ago, the principle of the Scottish Common Good is still a brilliant idea - it keeps local money local. Can land or assets still be gifted to Peebles Common Good?

### **QUESTIONS FROM RUTH NOBLE**

1 Who is responsible for checking condition and safety of areas of Haylodge Park? Are you aware that the gate in the north-west corner is off one hinge, making it difficult to open and potentially hazardous? When will this be repaired? Picture attached

2. I commend the Callants' initiative re bench and picnic table installation. However I hope these will not be abused. I wonder if it might be useful to consider installing at least one picnic table with a disposable barbecue plate. This would save charring of tables or grass.

3. I note the (rather unsightly) shipping container adjoining the rugby building has been placed directly in front of a bench making it unusable. This bench was previously used by NHS staff for their (cigarette) breaks. Now the staff have to stand around. Was any consultation undertaken with them (apart from the statutory planning notification) and are there any plans to resite the bench? Picture attached



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