

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, 12 May, 2016 at 5.00 pm

Present:- Councillors B White (Chairman), B Herd; Community Councillor R. Kenney.

Apologies:- Councillors S. Aitchison and J. G. Mitchell

In Attendance:- Estates Surveyor (J. Morison), Community Services Managing Solicitor (C. Donald), Capital & Investments Manager (K. Robb), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 18 February 2016.

DECISION

NOTED the Minute

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2016**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing details of the income and expenditure for year 2015/16 including balance sheet values at 31 March 2016 and proposed budget for 2016/17. Capital Investments Manager, Kirsty Robb, explained that during the course of revaluation of the Common Good assets, information contained in the title deed for Old Gala House indicated that the whole of the property should have been included. An amended report was tabled at the meeting which reflected the net property revaluation gain of £102,560 leading to an increase in reserves of £67,951 after a depreciation adjustment of £36,192. This gain was detailed in the Balance Sheet, shown in Appendix 2 of the amended report and in the Property Portfolio shown in Appendix 3 of the amended report. Mrs Robb explained that in addition to now being shown in the 2015/16 accounts there would be a re-statement of the 2014/15 account. She went on to highlight the other main points of the report. With regard to the investment in the Newton Fund, over the full year to 31 March 2016 the Quarter 4 rally had not quite got the full value of the Newton Fund back to its March 2015 level, resulting in a 1.5% fall in like for like market value over the year. Nevertheless the closing market value of investments at 31 March 2016 yielded a 1.3% unrealised gain since inception. Common Good Fund dividends received in 2015-16 amounted to £496, approximately 2.0 % of funds invested. Members discussed the accounts and received answers to their questions. A query was raised as to why a figure had been put into the 2016/17 budget for property expenditure as Members understood that the Common Good was not responsible for maintenance of any property. Mr Morison explained that a nominal figure of £1000 had been put in for Property Expenditure for reasons of prudence. With regard to paragraph 2.3 of the Minute of 18 February 2016 Mrs Robb confirmed that investigations were still being carried out into the source from which the income from the Ladhope Trust was being generated.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED within the appendices of the amended report the:-**

- (i) **actual income and expenditure for 2015/16 in Appendix 1;**
 - (ii) **final Balance Sheet value as at 31 March 2016 in Appendix 2;**
 - (iii) **summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
 - (iv) **current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4.**
- (b) **AGREED the proposed budget for 2016/17 as shown in Appendix 1 to the amended report.**

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

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 4 September 2014, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure seeking consent to plant a mixture of native trees on the land next to Galashiels Golf Club at Ladhope. The report explained that the Ladhope Trust land was classed as a Common Good asset and that in October 2014 a new lease had been granted to the Golf Club for the 9 hole course. An area of 28.1 hectares (69 acres) next to the golf course was currently overgrown grass, gorse and small trees. Part of this area used to be leased to the Golf Club when it was an 18 hole course. Previous discussions with Borders Forest Trust to plant the area with trees did not progress and now the Forestry Commission and Tweed Forum proposed to plant a mixture of trees on the area. Funding for tree planting and associated deer fencing was available from Forestry Commission Scotland through a 30 year forestry Grant Scheme contract. Tweed Forum had agreed to act as agent for the funding application without charge. The Estates Surveyor introduced to the meeting Hugh Chalmers of Tweed Forum and David Kennedy of the Forestry Commission, Scotland who provided further information about the proposals. A site meeting had been held and there was confidence that the area would make a good new woodland without restricting public access. The proposed planting would leave footpaths intact and wide enough to keep the views available over Galashiels. A plan and aerial photograph showing the initial planting design were attached to the report. It was explained that longer term there could be an opportunity for mountain bike trails through the Ladhope land as well as part of the neighbouring Glendearg property where a similar tree planting scheme was being progressed with Tweed Forum and the Forestry Commission. Mr Kennedy outlined the sequence of events that would take place following an official grant application to the Forestry Commission and confirmed that the project was at a very early stage. The importance of early consultation with Galashiels Community Council and other local groups was agreed. The committee of the Golf Club had no objections subject to there being an open area between the fairways and the tree planting area and subject to the majority of vehicle access being from Glendearg. Mr Kennedy answered questions about design in terms of proposed species of trees and proportion of each species. However he stressed that this was as yet only a draft design. Members agreed they would like to see a detailed planting design prior to the official grant application being taken forward. However they were happy to approve the project in principle.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to approve, in principle, the planting of trees as shown on the plan attached to the report, with Tweed Forum acting as agent, Forestry Commission Scotland as funder and with a Forestry Commission approved contractor carrying out the work;**
- (b) **that a detailed planting design, in terms of type and proportion of each species, be circulated by email to Members of Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub Committee for information and agreement; and**

- (c) **a public consultation meeting be held on the proposals and that Galashiels Community Council and other appropriate local groups be invited to the meeting to give their views.**

The meeting concluded at 5.55 pm