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CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH, 2016

A MEETING of the CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER,
ROSETTA ROAD, PEEBLES on WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH 2016 at 4.15 pm

J. J. WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Council,

29 February 2016

BUSINESS		
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Order of Business	
3.	Minute of the meeting of 31 August 2015 to be approved. (Pages 1 - 4) (Copy attached.)	2 mins
4.	Appointment of Vice-Chairman - consider	2 mins
5.	Update - Una Richards, Director and Audrey Dakin, Project Officer, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (Pages 5 - 6)	20 mins
6.	Any Other Items Previously Circulated	
7.	Any Other Items which the Chairman decides are urgent	
8.	Date of Next Meeting	

NOTES

1. Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.
2. Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

Membership of Committee:- Councillors W. Archibald, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, K. Cockburn,
V. M. Davidson, G. H. T. Garvie and G. Logan

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CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST

MINUTE of MEETING of the CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Rosetta Road, Peebles on 31 August 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors W. Archibald, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, G. Garvie, G. Logan.
Apologies:- Councillors K. Cockburn, V. Davidson.
In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer (Mr. D. Robertson), Director of Regulatory Services (Mr. B. Frater), Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).
Una Richards, Director and Audrey Dakin, Project Officer, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Councillor Garvie 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.

WELCOME

2. Councillor Garvie welcomed Una Richards and Audrey Dakin, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) to the meeting. Una Richards advised she had worked with Scottish Borders Council over the years and had built up a good relationship. In referring to the Chambers Institution she advised of the importance of setting a vision for the building for the future and of the importance of having the support of the community and how awareness of the building would be raised.

PRESENTATION – CONSULTATION PROCESS

3. (a) Stage 1 – Information Gathering, Research and Preparation
In briefing the meeting Una Richards explained that Stage 1 related to Information Gathering, Research and Preparation and the following information had been gathered:-

Boards supplied by Tweeddale Museum on history of the Chambers Institution.

Information on current uses gathered through site visit, photos etc.

Local organisations – contact list.

Scottish Borders Council Strategic Assessment 2014 - May 2014: Information note. Population by age group for selected Scottish Borders town and villages.

Information was still sought on details of any other properties which the Council owned within the High Street of Peebles and a list of the services which the Council provided throughout Peebles at present, including what services were provided, to whom and the location from which the services were provided from.
- (b) Stage 2 – Consultation – Initial Consultation Open Days
The following work had been completed:-

Display boards – existing boards on history supplemented with new ones on current uses, layout and for Post-it note suggestions (drafts of the boards were circulated at the meeting).

A draft Questionnaire was circulated at the meeting.

Discussions took place in relation to the community consultation/open days and

Members discussed the contents of the questionnaire and there was agreement that a question should be included to gather information from respondents on how they used other buildings. It was important that a mechanism be established to ascertain what groups used the various halls and it was noted that the Community Centre was oversubscribed. SHBT would publicise the initial consultation by public advertising and posters would be displayed in shop windows. Information would also be made available on the both SBC and SHBT websites. It was also important that the views of pupils from the High School were obtained and a suggestion was made that contact be made with the Head Teacher and perhaps a presentation could be given to the school pupils during assembly. It was noted there was a perception that the Chambers Institution was a closed building and so it was not a welcoming building. Doors needed to be opened to bring people into the building to speak to them about the questionnaire, get their views and move forward from there. A date needed to be agreed on for consultation. A way forward might be to have a gazebo in the courtyard on a Saturday when one of the forthcoming craft fairs was taking place. In referring to a condition survey it was noted that a survey had been completed recently and SHBT should liaise with Neil Hastie, the Council's Estates Officer about this. Commitment of up to £30,000 with one-third from the following:- Chambers Institution, Peebles Common Good and Scottish Borders Council, although it was noted that Chambers Institution funding might be required for the wider capital programme. A report on provision of funding would be considered at a future meeting

(c) Stage 3 – Feasibility Study

A feasibility study would be broken down into three packages of work:-

- (i) initial sketch schemes produced on the basis of the draft vision;
- (ii) costed condition survey; and
- (iii) viability appraisal to determine the capital costs for delivering the vision as well as viability and options for securing capital funding

It was noted that approval had not yet been given to proceed to Stage 3.

Una Richards and Audrey Dakin were thanked for their excellent presentation and left the meeting.

DECISION

AGREED that

- (i) **SHBT be commissioned to carry out the survey up to an amount of £30,000;**
- (ii) **Members feed any comments to SHBT by no later than 4 September. (After note: amended to 11 September);**
- (iii) **SHBT would liaise with Neil Hastie, Estates Manager about the building survey for the Chambers Institution;**
- (iv) **the Service Director Regulatory Services would liaise with the Council's legal department to ascertain the ownership of the allotments located at the back of the Burgh Hall;**
- (v) **Audrey Dakin would circulate papers tabled at today's meeting to Members; and**
- (vi) **Audrey Dakin would circulate dates re consultation to Members.**

MINUTE

4. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of Meeting of 28 May 2015.

DECISION

RATIFIED for signature by the Chairman, subject to the amendment detailed below.

With reference to paragraph 5(a) of the Minute it was noted that Councillor Garvie had been appointed Chairman subject to ratification at the next meeting.

VOTE

Councillor Bhatia, seconded by Councillor Garvie, moved that Councillor Garvie be appointment Chairman.

Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Archibald, moved as an amendment that Councillor Archibald be appointed Chairman.

On a show of hands members voted as follows:-

Motion - 2 votes

Amendment - 3 votes

Accordingly, the amendment was carried and Councillor Archibald was appointed Chairman.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Archibald be appointed Chairman.

5. With reference to paragraph 5(b) of the Minute it was agreed the appointment of Vice-Chairman be considered at the next meeting.

DECISION

AGREED that the appointment of Vice-Chairman be considered at the next meeting.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

6. The dates for the next two meetings would be identified and notified to Members in due course.

DECISION

AGREED that dates for the next two meetings would be identified and notified to Members in due course.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 a.m.

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Paper for the Chambers Institution Trust and Tweeddale Area Forum meetings on 2 March 2016

Chambers Institution, Peebles Community Consultation

Introduction

In 1859, William Chambers gave the building for the “social moral and intellectual improvement of the community of the said Burgh and County of Peeblesshire general and comprehends [to] ... be used as a public Reading Library, Gallery of Arts and Museum of natural and other objects for the instruction of the public, and a great Hall for public meetings and exhibitions of various kinds”.

Scottish Borders Council commissioned the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) to carry out a



The Chambers Institution, view from the High Street. © HES

consultation exercise with the local community to explore how they view and use the Chambers Institution today and their ideas for the future of the building.

The consultation has included background information gathering, a questionnaire and a series of stakeholder workshops (Tweeddale Area Forum, Vision for Peebles event, Bookbug, Parish Toddlers and St Andrews Leckie Parent and Toddler groups).

Analysis of results

208 questionnaire responses were submitted. A further 173 additional people attended the Stakeholder workshops, giving an overall total of 381 people involved in the consultation.

Analysis of the questionnaire

- The building is **highly valued** by the local community and there is strong support for it to remain a building for community use and one where the community comes first.
- The majority of respondents also identified that there is a **need for change** at the building including upgrading of access, facilities and services, more investment in maintenance and for innovation and revitalisation of some of the existing services housed in the building. There was general acknowledgement that this will require a re-ordering of the layout of the building, especially to improve access to those parts of the building most used by the community, although opinions varied as to the scale of the re-ordering exercise needed.
- **Peebles Library** was the most regularly visited space in the Chambers Institution, and was identified as the anchor use within the building. The other spaces most regularly used by the community were the Burgh Hall, the Tweeddale Museum and Art Gallery and the courtyard. The inclusion of a variety of uses within the building was viewed as positive, helping to increase vibrancy of the building.



Peebles Library



Burgh Hall event

- Of all the important spaces in the building, the **Burgh Hall** was identified as the one most clearly under-performing currently and consequently the one with most scope for increasing its relevance to the community and intensifying its usage. A wide range of preferences for use of this space and a variety of proposals for increasing floor area through the introduction of another floor or gallery at high level were expressed.

• Some **challenges** were identified by the community. A more user-friendly booking facility for the Burgh Hall was suggested, plus it was noted that the uncertainty over who was responsible for management and decision-making – the Chambers Institution Trust, Scottish Borders Council or the new Sport and Culture Trust – was unhelpful in terms of retaining and building ongoing community support for the building.

Analysis of stakeholder workshop responses

- There is general support for the **library to have ground floor space**, as a means both to improve access to this service and to provide a welcoming entrance to the building and gateway to other uses housed there.
- **More flexible** accommodation in the building was desired, in particular in relation to removing the fixed staging in the Burgh Hall and providing more smaller meeting or breakout spaces.
- There was a strong desire to promote use of the building by **young people and for education**.
- There was an appetite for **closer collaboration** between the uses in the building e.g. the Tweeddale Museum and the John Buchan Story. Individual comments on the use of space showed the community exploring how a re-ordering exercise for the building could help promote this collaboration by ensuring uses with greater synergy were located near to each other.
- The cost of hiring the Chambers Institution should be **affordable** for the local community.
- There was also recognition that Peebles was generally well served with community halls, and that any decision on the future uses of the Burgh Hall should be mindful of the need to **avoid duplication** and hence competing with other venues in the town. Respondents recognised the potential scope for synergy with other venues, and that this should be explored. These findings were supported by evidence gathered from interviews with key contacts, including research into other community venues in Peebles.

The Community consultation results have fed into a proposed updated Vision for the building:

Local people want the Chambers Institution to maintain and enhance its role as the cultural heart of the community and for it to be attractive, welcoming, well-cared for, accessible and affordable.

The key uses of the building were identified as: library, museum, art gallery and meeting spaces, and the quiet contemplative courtyard setting for the War Memorial.

Recommendations for taking forward this consultation

We recommend the updated Vision for the building be adopted as it summarises the community's aspirations for the building and identifies the uses that the community has highlighted as critical to be housed in the building.

Further we recommend that a re-ordering exercise is undertaken for the Chambers Institution. This should include the appointment of a design team to prepare a number of sketch schemes to explore the architectural feasibility of delivering the ideas for the building put forward by the community. The sketch schemes should be the subject of a further community consultation to determine a final scheme. The final scheme should be costed and a viability appraisal prepared for it. This will provide a realistic roadmap to deliver a 21st century vision for the building.