

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, 8 December 2016 at 4.30 pm

Present:- Councillors B White (Chairman), S. Aitchison, B Herd and R Kenney

Apologies:- Councillors J. G. Mitchell

In Attendance:- Managing Solicitor, People and Court (C. Donald), Capital & Investments
Manager (K. Robb), Estates Surveyors (A. Graham, A. Phipps), Democratic
Services Officer (F. Walling).

Public - 7

1. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 8 September 2016.

DECISION

NOTED the Minute.

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 6 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing details of the income and expenditure for the six months to 30 September 2016, full year projected out-turn for 2016/17 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2017. Capital and Investments Manager, Kirsty Robb, highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 to the report provided a projected Income and Expenditure position which showed a projected deficit of £55 for the year and a projected closing cash balance of £6,478. The projected Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2017, in Appendix 2 to the report, showed a projected decrease in the Revaluation reserves of £36,247 due mainly to the projected depreciation charge. Appendix 3 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio. There was no rental income from the properties owned by the Common Good. The value of the Newton Fund to 30 September 2016 was shown in Appendix 4 to the report. Over the quarter the Fund again delivered a positive absolute return and although being behind its Benchmark figure for the quarter remained well ahead for the year to date. It was explained that the first of two annual dividends (£393) received in October 2016 from the Fund were not shown in the actuals in Appendix 1. The proposed budget for 2016/17 was based on a distribution of 2.0% which would be subject to the overall performance of the Fund. An amount of £3,000 had also been projected for income received from donations from other Ladhope Estate and Ex Provost Mercer Bequest.

DECISION

(a) **AGREED the projected Income and Expenditure for 2016/17 in Appendix 1 to the report.**

(b) **NOTED within the appendices to the report:-**

(i) **the projected Balance Sheet value as at 31 March 2017 in Appendix 2;**

- (ii) **the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
- (iii) **the current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4.**

3. **JUST CYCLE LTD**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Lynne Marshall on behalf of the organisation Just Cycle Ltd. Chairman, Grant Martin, was in attendance to support the application. Mr Grant explained that Just Cycle recycled and re-used bikes that would otherwise have been thrown out. Unused bikes were recovered from a range of sources including two of the Council's recycling centres. In addition to reducing waste the aim was to help more people to cycle safely and to reduce the number of short journeys they made by car. The charitable aims of the organisation were environmental, educational, recreational and reducing inequalities. This was a young company which had successfully completed its first year in business and which was aiming to increase income and run an expanded project in 2017. A grant of £1260 was requested which would be used to cover the monthly shortfall in rent costs for a 7 month period from January to July. Currently about £300 per month was earned from the sale of bikes although there was no charge to low income families. The organisation was looking to find ways of increasing income until it could self-fund the overheads. Details were given in the application of other funding sources that had been tried. Mr Grant added that some lottery funding had been used to provide new helmets free of charge with the bikes to low income families. Members recognised this as a laudable project from which there should be significant benefit for the community in terms of all the benefits of encouraging cycling activity and reducing the number of bikes sent to landfill. However they believed that funding assistance should be available through another budget and that it would be inappropriate for Galashiels Common Good Fund to support the project, particularly as it was based outside Galashiels at Tweedbank. The Councillors offered to help Just Cycle Ltd to obtain the funding required from an alternative source, noting that the preparation of a sustainability plan would help in this regard.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) **not to award a grant to Just Cycle Ltd for the monthly shortfall in rent costs;
and**
- (b) **to assist the organisation to obtain funding from an alternative source.**

4. **GALASHIELS CAMERA CLUB**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Galashiels Camera Club. The organisation was represented at the meeting by Secretary James Paxton and Treasurer Ford Renton. It was explained that the aim of the club was to practice and promote photography amongst its members and members of the public. The objectives were to expand photographic knowledge and skills through lectures, competitions, tuition and other activities within a social environment. A sum of £300 would assist the club stage its annual Agricultural competition. This was the annual showcase which attracted members of the public and other camera clubs in the Scottish Borders. Mr Paxton further explained that the application had been made as funds which were currently held would become seriously depleted by the purchase of new equipment needed to enable the club to continue to function. Members discussed the application and noted the contribution of the club to the town of Galashiels in many ways including the production of photographs from local events and the processing and re-production of archive material. They suggested that there may be a more appropriate budget from which to source the grant requested and also believed that the club should be eligible for funding of the capital cost of the equipment that was required. The Councillors agreed to defer the application to Galashiels Common Good Fund in order to firstly explore the

possibility of obtaining the funding assistance from another budget. They also agreed to enquire on behalf of the club about possible eligibility for a grant for the replacement of equipment.

DECISION

AGREED to defer the application from Galashiels Camera Club for assistance to stage its annual Agricultural competition, in order to firstly explore the possibility of obtaining funding assistance from an alternative budget.

5. TREE PLANTING NEXT TO GALASHIELS GOLF CLUB, LADHOPE

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 12 May 2016, there had been circulated notes and comments from the Tweed Forum following a public consultation event held on 25 October 2016. The Tweed Forum, acting as agent for the Common Good, was consulting on a proposal to plant a mixture of native trees and Scots Pine on the land next to Galashiels Golf Club at Ladhope. The plan was to plant about 8 hectares of Scots pine with the remainder native trees such as oak, birch and hazel, making a total of around 18 hectares of woodland with up to 20% open space to preserve views, paths and habitats. The trees would be protected by a combination of deer fence, rabbit net, tree shelters and vole guards which would be removed over time as the trees grew. In conjunction with the two areas of tree planting at Ladhope and the already approved adjacent area on Glendearg Farm, a network of mountain bike paths was proposed. Verbal and written comments were collected from the consultation event at which approximately 50 attendees registered their names. There was a strong feeling that the trails established within the woodland should cater for recreational uses such as walking and horse riding in addition to mountain biking. It was suggested that a working group, made up of representatives from different user groups, be set up to take the proposals forward with the Tweed Forum. It was also stressed that Galashiels Golf Club should continue to be consulted and involved at every stage. Mr Hugh Chalmers, of Tweed Forum, was in attendance at the meeting to provide further information and answer questions. It was noted that revenue from the trees when mature would come back to the Common Good but that details of the maintenance programme and sources of funding for maintenance were still to be confirmed as part of the plan. Councillor White noted that the Ladhope Estates were there for the recreational benefit of the people of Galashiels and advised that he had consulted about the proposals with a number of local organisations including Galashiels Community Council, Stow Community Council, Energise Galashiels, Langlee Residents Association, Lucy Sanderson Association and the Focus Centre. All were in agreement with the principle of the plan being put forward. With regard to the design of the planted area and inclusion of recreational trails, Members agreed that a specific trail designer should be consulted and that a working group should be set up to consider the options. They emphasised the importance of all interest groups, including mountain biking, horse riding and walking being represented. It was also agreed that one of the Galashiels Councillors should be on the group.

DECISION

- (a) AGREED to allow Tweed Forum to take forward the proposal to plant woodland, on land next to Galashiels Golf Club at Ladhope, with a mixture of native trees and Scots Pine, subject to agreement by the Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub Committee of the final plan and design in terms of planted areas, open space, recreational trails and maintenance programme.**
- (a) NOTED that:-**
 - (i) Tweed Forum would set up a working group, on which all interest groups were represented, to agree, in consultation with a trail designer, a network of trails which catered for all users and interests;**

- (ii) **an update would be provided by the Tweed Forum to the Galashiels Common Good Fund Sub Committee meeting of 9 March 2017.**

The meeting concluded at 5.30 pm