

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, HQ on
Tuesday, 30 August, 2016 at 3.00 pm

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

In Attendance:- Solicitor (J Webster), Senior Finance Officer (J Yallop), Estates Strategy
Surveyor (N. Curtis), Democratic Services Officer (F Walling).

One member of public.

1. **MINUTE**

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

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2016**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the details of income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the three months to 30 June 2016, full year projected out-turn for 2016/17 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2017. Senior Finance Officer, John Yallop, highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 to the report provided a projected income and expenditure position. This showed a surplus of £17,369 for the year, which was in excess of that originally projected, due to a £1,000 one-off payment for servitude right over Selkirk Hill for a water pipe. The proposed budget was based on a distribution of 2% from the Newton Fund Investments which would be subject to the overall performance of the fund. Appendix 2 to the report provided a projected balance sheet to 31 March 2017. With reference to paragraph 2.1 of the Minute of 8 June 2016 an additional investment of £55,000 had been transferred into the Newton Fund. This left a projected closing cash balance of £93,320 at 31 March 2017. A breakdown of the property portfolio was detailed in Appendix 3, showing the projected rental income for 2016/17 and where applicable actual property expenditure to 30 June 2016. Appendix 4 showed the value of the Newton Fund to 30 June 2016. During Quarter 1 the Fund had generated a positive absolute return, ahead of its return objective. The Fund performed well in volatility following the Brexit vote, due to being very cautiously positioned ahead of the Referendum. The market value of Selkirk Common Good investments at 30 June 2016 had yielded a 7% unrealised gain on the total invested to date. With regard to Grants and Donations there had been a total amount of £6,904 paid to 30 June 2016. Taking into account the approved, but not yet paid, £10,000 payment in respect of the Hill Warden Management Agreement, a balance of £9,596 remained for allocation.

2.2 In the ensuing discussion on the accounts Councillor Davidson asked whether there had been any progress on the agreement, at the end of 2012, to lease an area of ground on South Common Farm to Scottish Water for the installation of a new water storage tank. The Estates Strategy Surveyor agreed to look into this.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED** the projected income and expenditure for 2016/17 shown in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2016/17;
- (b) **NOTED:-**
 - (i) the projected Balance Sheet value to 31 March 2017 in Appendix 2 to the report;
 - (ii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3 to the report; and
 - (iii) the current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4 to the report.
- (c) **AGREED** to receive an update at the next meeting on any progress in relation to the agreement made in 2012 to lease an area of ground on South Common Farm to Scottish Water.

3. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 Selkirk Community Council

There had been circulated copies of an application from Selkirk Community Council for a grant of £5,000 as a contribution towards the cost of upgrading the footpath to Philiphaugh Sawmill to allow disabled access. Councillor Edgar explained the background to this application. The footpath, which was on Council owned land on the top of the new flood protection embankment, was partly tarred but had one section which had a surface of chips rather than tar. The intention was to uplift the existing chips and resurface with an overlay of bitumen. The work would be carried out by the contractors, RJ MacLeod, who had carried out the work on the Selkirk flood defences. It was noted that the estimated total cost of the upgrade would be £26,350 with £21,350 of that being provided by RJ MacLeod. Members discussed the application and were unanimous in their support of the proposal. It was agreed to approve in principle a grant of £5,000 but first to make a query about whether the balance required could be funded from the Scottish Borders Council Small Schemes budget as this would be the preferred funding source if eligible.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £5,000 to Selkirk Community Council, as the balance towards the cost of upgrading the footpath to Philiphaugh Sawmill, if funding for this project cannot be allocated from the Small Schemes budget.

3.2 Live Borders

There had been circulated copies of an application from the Disability Sport Development Officer of Live Borders for a grant of £4,000 towards the total cost of £8,404 for a new swimming pool hoist for Selkirk Leisure Centre. Live Borders proposed to purchase an Arjo Neptune pool lift and swim chair. This equipment would be used by those in the community who had a disability or required additional support when transferring from changing area into the pool. Live Borders were contributing £2,400 from their budget. Before discussing this application Councillor Davidson confirmed that she was no longer a trustee for Live Borders. Mr Yallop raised the appropriateness of the application given that Live Borders was in essence a commercial organisation. However it was noted that Live Borders was in fact a charity. In the ensuing discussion Members were keen to support the proposal. The facility would allow even the severely disabled to access the pool and the installation of the hoist would benefit numerous families and community groups across the area. It was pointed out that this would be an upgrade to the pool which would help to secure its future. Reference was made to the annual capital grant

from Scottish Borders Council to Live Borders and the Mr Yallop agreed to check their commitment and whether there was any slack in the capital allocation. It was noted that ClubSport Ettrick and Lauderdale were also being asked to make a contribution. Members suggested that consideration be given as to whether a contribution could be sourced from the Quality of Life budget. After further discussion Members unanimously agreed that the Common Good Fund should support the proposal and to make up the balance required to purchase the hoist, up to a total of £6,000, after alternative sources of funding had been explored.

DECISION

AGREED to grant up to £6,000 to Live Borders to meet the balance required to purchase a new swimming pool hoist for Selkirk Swimming pool, after alternative sources of funding had been explored.

4. PROPERTY

The Estates Strategy Surveyor, Norrie Curtis, gave a verbal update on current property issues with reference to actions from the last meeting. He confirmed that the Property Officer, Tom Holmes, had instructed the required works to be carried out on the wall alongside Buccleuch Road. With regard to the Green Hut and the problem with the fit of the door on the new ramp Mr Combe agreed to meet with Mr Holmes on site to discuss what needed to be done. The Chairman confirmed that repairs to the parapet at the bridge over the mill lade in Victoria Park had been carried out and that the Common Good Fund had contributed towards the cost. He offered to look into the cost of a small plaque to erect on the bridge, drawing attention to this historical feature, as suggested at the last meeting. It was also agreed that a small sign should be designed and used to indicate where Selkirk Common Good funds had contributed towards particular projects. Mr Curtis agreed to consult the Council's sign shop and look into the cost of designing and producing appropriate signs. The Chairman also asked Mr Curtis to enquire about repairs to the gate pillars at Victoria Hall. It appeared that work had started on these as the surface had been chipped off but they had subsequently been left and looked unsightly. In further discussion about the maintenance of Common Good property Members asked for a programme of works to be produced containing a prioritised list of the works required.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the updates.

(b) AGREED that:-

- (i) a site meeting be arranged between the Property Officer and Mr Combe to discuss the work required to improve the fit of the door on the new ramp at the Green Hut;**
- (ii) the Chairman look into the provision of a small descriptive plaque to erect on the mill lade bridge in Victoria Park;**
- (iii) the Estates Strategy Surveyor investigate the cost of producing small signs to indicate where Common Good funds had contributed towards particular projects;**
- (iv) the Estates Strategy Surveyor investigate the position with regard to the repair of the gate pillars at the Victoria Hall; and**
- (v) a prioritised programme of works be produced in respect of the ongoing maintenance of property owned by Selkirk Common Good.**

5. **ITEMS LIKELY TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
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.

6. **MINUTE**

Members approved the private section of the Minute of 8 June 2016.

7. **PROPERTY**

Members considered an update from the Solicitor.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm