

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, Council HQ on
Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at 3.00 pm

- Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), V. M. Davidson and T Combe
- Apologies:- Councillor M. Ballantyne
- In Attendance:- Solicitor (R. Kirk), Senior Finance Officer (J Yallop), Estates Strategy Surveyor (N. Curtis), Democratic Services Officer (F Walling).

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman advised that Dr Lindsay Neil had requested, prior to the meeting, to give a presentation to the Sub Committee during the meeting. The Chairman declined this request as prior notice had not been given of this matter to enable the item to be put on the published agenda. Dr Neil had left a reference in respect of the matter he wished to raise and agreed to email the Chairman with details. He did not stay to attend the meeting.

1. MINUTE

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 29 November 2016.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman

- 1.2 With reference to paragraph 1.2 of the Minute, regarding the Common Good Funding Plaque, the Estates Strategy Surveyor, Norrie Curtis, was asked to identify projects that had received financial assistance from the Common Good Fund and, where appropriate, to send plaques for display.

DECISION

AGREED that the Estates Strategy Surveyor, in liaison with the Democratic Services Officer, identify those projects which had received financial assistance from Selkirk Common Good Fund and to send plaques for display.

- 1.3 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute, regarding the let of winter grazing on Selkirk Hill, it was noted that there were still no sheep on the land. The Chairman stressed the need for the ground to be grazed for management purposes.

DECISION

AGREED that the Estates Strategy Surveyor pursue further, with the tenant, the issue of grazing on Selkirk Hill.

2. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2016

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 six months to 31 December 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 I to the report provided a projected income and expenditure position. This showed a projected surplus of £16,505 for the

year. Appendix 2 to the report provided a projected Balance Sheet to 31 March 2017. It showed a projected decrease in the reserves of £59,853 due mainly to the further investment in the Newton Fund. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected rental income for 2016/17 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2016 was detailed in Appendix 3 to the report. In response to a question about actual property expenditure, Mr Curtis, detailed property repair costs still to come from the 2016/17 budget in relation to fencing completed on the boundary of Smedheugh and South Common Farms and drainage work at South Common. The Chairman had been approached by the tenant of Linglie Farm, regarding a stretch of fencing required to complete a length of fencing which had been partially grant-funded and asked Mr Curtis to look into this as soon as possible. With regard to grants and donations, Mr Yallop advised that there was approximately £4k remaining in the budget once all approved grants had been paid. In terms of the performance of the Newton Investment, detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, Mr Yallop advised that over the quarter to 31 December 2016 the Newton Real Return fund was estimated to have delivered a negative return of 4.8% against its benchmark of +1.1%. The report explained how this had been the result of the make-up of the cautiously positioned portfolio. Although this had to an extent negated its annual performance, the Fund was estimated to exceed its target return of 4.5%, by returning 4.8% for the year. KPMG had been commissioned by the Council to assess the Fund's performance against its peers offering similar diversified growth funds. Although information on quarter 4 was not yet fully available the assessment confirmed that the Fund had performed well in the long term against its peers. Mr Yallop advised that Newton's performance against benchmark and against its direct competitors would be monitored. In addition, a visit to their offices in London had been arranged by officers to discuss the Fund's current performance and outlook for the future.

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 that, with regard to expenditure on property repairs, the Estates Strategy Surveyor follow-up as soon as possible the request for a length of fencing to be erected on Linglie Farm.**

3. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There had been circulated copies of an application from Selkirk Junior Football Club for a grant of £600 to purchase socks and shorts as part of new strips. It was explained that the club had been established for a number of years and had maintained regular membership of approximately 100 – 120 children. The aim was to provide football coaching to youngsters from pre-school to 17 years of age, regardless of background, gender, ability, religion or race. Sponsorship for teams' match shirts had been secured from local businesses and the club was expecting to raise £1500 from fund-raising events. Members were keen to support the application. In discussing the club's accounts they expressed concern at the pitch hire which was being paid to the senior Football Club and which had recently been increased. In their opinion this was an unreasonably high amount. In this respect, Mr Curtis was asked to look at the terms of the lease of the ground from Selkirk Common Good to Selkirk Football Club.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to grant Selkirk Junior Football Club £600 for the purchase of socks and shorts; and**
- (b) that the Estates Strategy Surveyor check the terms of the lease of the ground from Selkirk Common Good to Selkirk Football Club.**

4. PROPERTY

In a general discussion on property issues, Councillor Davidson referred to proposed refurbishment work to be carried out on the building at Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom and any potential effect on businesses in the vicinity. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Private Minute of 29 November 2016 it was noted that the trees on Victoria Park had not yet been cut back. It was agreed that the contractors should be pursued to ensure this work could be carried out before the nesting season. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 30 August 2016, Mr Combe highlighted that the Property Officer had not yet met with him to determine what work was required on the ramp at the Green Hut. In further discussion, the Chairman drew attention to a possible shortfall in funding to refurbish the Council-owned Corbie Mill Arches in North Bridge Street, following the Flood Protection work. It was agreed in principle to contribute towards the cost of refurbishment, if required, up to a total of £5k; the final decision to contribute to be delegated to the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure in consultation with the three elected Members of the Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee.

**DECISION
AGREED that:-**

- (a) if requested, and subject to further information, a contribution of up to £5k be made towards the cost of refurbishment of the Corbie Mill Arches, North Bridge Street; the final decision to be delegated to the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure in consultation with the three elected Members of the Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee;**
- (b) the Estates Strategy Surveyor pursue the contractors to carry out the required work on the trees on Victoria Park as soon as possible; and**
- (c) the Property Officer arrange to meet Mr Combe on site at the Green Hut to discuss the work required to improve the fit of the door on the new ramp.**

5. PRIVATE BUSINESS

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.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

6. MINUTE

Members approved the private section of the Minute of 29 November 2016.

The meeting concluded at 3.40 pm