

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL INNERLEITHEN COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the INNERLEITHEN
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Committee Room 2, Council
Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6
0SA on Thursday, 23 August, 2018 at 3.00
pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), S. Bell, S. Haslam and Community
Councillor M. Douglas.

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer (D. Robertson), Principal Solicitor (H. Macleod),
Estates Surveyor (A. Graham), Area Manager – Live Borders (O. Robertson),
Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of Meeting of the Innerleithen Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 12 December 2017 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

2. **INNERLEITHEN MEMORIAL HALL - START-UP OFFICE SPACE**

2.1 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 12 December 2017, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure proposing that the vacant office space within Innerleithen Memorial Hall be made available to let to local start-up businesses. Members had noted a shortage of supply of business space in Innerleithen and had identified the vacant office space within the Memorial Hall as a possible solution to satisfying latent demand. Estates Surveyor, Andrew Graham, explained that, as the Memorial Hall was currently subject to a lease to Live Borders, the proposal would be contingent on agreement being reached on a partial surrender of that lease. This had been discussed with the Chief Executive of Live Borders and agreed in principle. The transfer would be of that part of the accommodation required for this project; the former contact centre and offices only and not the hall itself. It was envisaged that the space would be operated on a similar basis to the business incubator units currently being piloted by Scottish Borders Council at the Rosetta Road offices in Peebles. At Innerleithen Memorial Hall there was potential for a self-contained suite of offices on the ground floor in the space that was formerly occupied by the contact centre and there were a further five self-contained offices on the first floor. The report went on to set out the potential costs of refurbishment of the office space and the estimated rental level achievable. As the Common Good did not have a budget to meet the costs of the works the report proposed that an application be made to Scottish Borders Council's economic development budget for a grant to take this forward.

2.2 Members welcomed the report and were enthusiastic in their support of the proposal, which they considered a valuable opportunity for the town in addition to a possible means of establishing a funding stream for the Common Good. They agreed with the suggestion in the report that a phased programme of works would be appropriate, so that some rooms remained unimproved until the level of demand was established. If a grant was not

available Members suggested that a loan should be applied for to cover the initial costs or an alternative means of funding be explored with potential tenants. Olly Robertson, Area Manager – Live Borders, confirmed that Live Borders was supportive and would like to encourage this worthwhile project to make use of the vacant office space within the Memorial Hall. With regard to changes to the lease with Live Borders, it was agreed that ongoing discussions should include arrangements to split the costs in respect of services to the office space and the area remaining within management of Live Borders and also on the possibility of Live Borders managing the letting procedures on a recharge basis. Members also referred to the need to keep in mind the requirements of current users of the hall and agreed to keep all parties informed.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the potential costs and revenue associated with the proposal to provide business start-up space at the Memorial Hall, Innerleithen and that no budget had been identified to meet these costs.**
 - (b) **AGREED to take forward the proposal in principle and to request the Estates Surveyor, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Legal Officer to:-**
 - (i) **continue discussions with Live Borders regarding partial surrender of the lease and future arrangements around letting the office space and sharing the costs of services to the building;**
 - (ii) **make an application, on behalf of Innerleithen Common Good, to the Scottish Borders Council's economic development budget for a grant to take forward the necessary works; and**
 - (iii) **keep Members of the Sub Committee informed of developments by email.**
3. **INNERLEITHEN MEMORIAL HALL - REFURBISHMENT**
Mr Olly Robertson gave an outline to Members of plans by Live Borders to decorate and refurbish the hall. He advised that the intention was to paint the hall in December, to strip the floor surface, removing the floor markings, and to apply lacquer. An application had also been made to the Quality of Life budget for replacement seating. Members welcomed these proposals to provide a positive face-lift to the hall. Mr Robertson also made Members aware that the Live Borders property team would be asked to look into the requirement for a new extractor fan.

DECISION NOTED

4. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Thursday 13 December, 2018.

DECISION NOTED

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm