

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the HAWICK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 25
May 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present:- Councillor G Turnbull (Chairman), W McAteer, D Paterson,
C Ramage, Mr J Campbell (Hawick CC) Mr W Fletcher (Burnfoot CC).

Apologies: Councillor S Marshall, N. Richards.
In Attendance:- Estates Strategy Manager (N Curtis), Managing Solicitor (R Kirk), Pensions
and Investment Manager (K Robb), Property Officer (F Scott), Democratic
Services Officer (F Henderson).

1. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 16 March 2021.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 for signature by the
Chairman.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE

- 2.1 With regard to paragraph 2.1 of the Minute of 16 March 2021, it was noted that the cost of repairs were higher than anticipated and the Head of Cultural Services was preparing a report on options.
- 2.2 With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 16 March 2021, in respect of facilities for campervans at the common haugh, Members noted that a call had been logged with Scottish Water requesting information about the emptying of chemical toilets at the Common Haugh and a response was awaited. The Members were dissatisfied with this response and requested that it be escalated as soon as possible. Mr Scott advised that he had met contractors to get costings, but permission from Scottish Water was essential. Costings were expected in the next couple of weeks.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Ramage declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 Escape Youth Services

In view of the fact that Councillor Ramage had declared an interest in this item of business and Councillors Richards and Marshall were not in attendance, there would be no elected member representation from the Hawick and Denholm Ward and the matter could therefore require to be deferred to a future meeting.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to defer consideration of the application from Escape Youth Services; and

- (b) **that a further meeting be arranged as soon as possible to consider the application.**

3.2 Hornshole Greenway Development Group

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from the Hornshole Greenway Development Group in the sum of £7,000 towards the development stage of the project and to help with attracting the full funding to sustain the Hornshole Greenway into the future. The Hornshole Development Group was a recently established Group which had clear objectives including commemoration of the history and culture of Hawick, advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development. The aim was to deliver the objectives through the design and delivery of a 7.5 kilometre multifaceted 'Interpretative Greenway' through the town to hornshole which had a strong focus on a wider green objective and included the creation of an iconic sculpture. The development of the Hornshole Greenway would be a major asset to the town, whilst bringing direct benefits to local residents who were able to utilise, engage with and help shape and develop the multi-faceted project. There would be the opportunity for younger members of the community to learn about and embrace a greener agenda and act as ambassadors, whilst attracting visitors to the town and bringing substantial economic benefit to the community as a whole. The total estimated cost for the full project was £1.3m and the contribution from the Common Good would fund the engagement of a professional company to assist with information gathering and preparation of application to major grant funders, preparatory work for educational components of the project and general administration and preparatory work required. The Sub-Committee unanimously supported the application.

DECISION

AGREED to award £7,000 to the Hornshole Greenway Development Group towards the development stage of the project and to help with attracting the full funding to sustain the Hornshole Greenway into the future.

3.3 Borders Against Racism

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Borders Against Racism in the sum of £5,000 towards the development of a series of events to celebrate Frederick Douglass' speech in Hawick 175 years ago. Mr Bannerman was present and spoke about Frederick Douglass who was a prominent writer, social reformer and activist who escaped from slavery. He was central to the anti-slavery movement as well as the 1960s civil rights movement in the United States and promoted and advocated for equal rights of African American. Frederick Douglass travelled to Ireland and Great Britain and while in England, Douglass gave one of his most famous speeches, The London Reception Speech; he spoke of the irony where the United States "boasted of love, justice, and purity" when it denied freedom and the law of the right to marry between people of colour. He visited Scotland twice and on a visit to Hawick in November 1846 and although locked out of the Relief Chapel, at the request of the Free Church, he eventually spoke in the West End Chapel. Mr Bannerman wished to erect a commemorative plaque to Frederick Douglass at Myerslaw Court which sat on the site of the former Relief Chapel. The property was owned by SBHA, who had indicated their willingness to collaborate on such a project. In addition to the plaque it was proposed to provide an educational pack for all local schoolchildren, a mural and a booklet to widen the knowledge and understanding on an emancipation and anti-racism platform on an annual basis.

- 3.4 The Sub-Committee were very supportive of the application in principle, however were less inclined to support under the Borders Against Racism banner and sought assurances that the name would be reviewed to reflect a more Hawick focus.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to award £5,000 to the Borders Against Racism towards the development of a**

series of events to celebrate Frederick Douglass' speech in Hawick 175 years ago, including a plaque, mural and a booklet to widen the knowledge and understanding on an emancipation and anti-racism platform on an annual basis; and

(b) that the application be progressed but renamed to reflect a more local dimension.

4. MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2021

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory providing details of income and expenditure for the Hawick Common Food Fund for the year 2020/21 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2021, a full year projected outturn for 2021/22, and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2021. Appendix 1 to the report provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2020/21. This showed a projected surplus of £3,124 for the year, which was better than the surplus figure reported at the 16 March 2021 meeting, as a result of an underspend in Grants & Donations, tree planting and the general property expenditure budgets, mainly off-set by a delay in the receipt of the Pilmuir Servitude payment. Appendix 2 provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 and showed an increase in the reserves to £11,555, due to the annual release from Revaluation Reserve off-set by unrealised gain on the Aegon Asset Management Fund. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual rental income and net return for 2020/21. Appendix 3b provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property expenditure for 2020/21. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property valuations at 31 March 2021. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2021. Mrs Robb answered members' questions and advised that Aegon would be presenting to the Council later in the year.

DECISION

(a) AGREED the projected income and expenditure for 2021/22 in Appendix 1 as the revised budget for 2021/22.

(b) NOTED:

(i) the actual income and expenditure for 2020/21 in Appendix 1;

(ii) the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021, and projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2022 in Appendix 2;

(iii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and

(iv) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.

5. ST LEONARD'S PARK, HAWICK

There had been circulated copies of a letter dated 6 May 2021, from the Ancient Orders of Mosstroopers requesting to hold a foot race on Sunday, 5 September 2021 from 9.00 a.m.

**DECISION
AGREED.**

6. HAWICK COMMON RIDING COMMITTEE

There had been circulated copies a letter dated 6 May 2021, from the Hawick Common Riding Committee in respect of the condition of the Hawick Moor and in particular the racecourse. While the Committee fully understood that things were difficult at present due to the ongoing COVID pandemic and the speculative plans for redevelopment of the Moor by the Town of the Horse group, they raised concerns that the track had remained untended last year and again this year, with the possibility of racing scheduled for later in the year. Mr Scott highlighted that there was a mole problem on the racecourse which was being dealt with by the Tenant and recharged to the Common Good.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED** that the usual track maintenance would be carried out in 2021.

(b) **AGREED** to advise the Common Riding Committee.

7. MAINS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Curtis explained that Aitken Turnbull were liaising with a Quantity Surveyor to prepare costings for the project. Greencat Renewables from Teviot Head wind farm had given pointers to Town of the Horse and suggested that they contact Scottish Government' Community & Renewable Scheme to obtain a feasibility study for obtaining mains electricity to the site. All this would be factored into a final business plan.

DECISION

NOTED.

8. HAWICK MARKET

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 16 March 2021, Mr Curtis advised that the Market was being advertised via Economic Development, Communities & Partnerships team (SBC), Business Gateway (now SoSE) and Communities team (SoSE) and through SBC social media channels. Particulars had been emailed to one individual and Jack Walker.

DECISION

NOTED Update.

9.0 PROPERTY UPDATE

9.1 Hawick Moor

Mr Scott, Property Officer, reported on vandalism to the toilets on the Moor. The culprits had been identified and the parents had agreed to pay for the damage in full.

DECISION

NOTED.

9.2 Property Inspections

Mr Scott advised that the work on Pilmuir Farm steading had stalled due to Covid. Phase 1 was progressing and permission was sought to award the next phase (Phase 2) of the project to the contractors who had successfully bid for Phase 1.

9.3 Car Parking at Acreknowe reservoir to be looked at.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED:-**

(i) **the update on the Moor; and**

(ii) **the update in terms of Pilmuir Farm Steading.**

(b) **AGREED:-**

(i) **that Phase 2 of the Pilmuir Farm Steading Project be awarded to the contractor who successfully bid for Phase 1; and**

(ii) **that car parking at Acreknowe reservoir be looked at.**

10. FUNFAIR AT COMMON HAUGH, HAWICK

It was reported that two requests had been received for the use of the Common Haugh for funfairs as follows:-

11 July – 18 July 2021 (Daily 1p.m. – 10 p.m. and 1p.m. – 5 p.m. on Sunday) (Showman's Guild)

24 June – 27 June 2021 (Private Individual)

It was noted that traditionally the whole of the car park was given over to the showman's Guild for the annual funfair, however concerns were raised in terms of the amount of work remaining to complete the flood scheme and cars moving about the car park while the funfair was in operation. Concerns was also raised in terms of private individuals operating funfairs.

DECISION AGREED

- (a) **that Officers work with the Showman's Guild to accommodate the funfair at the Common Haugh between 11 and 18 July 2021.**
- (b) **to refuse permission for a private individual to operate a funfair within the Common Haugh but to support the private individual working with the showman's guild.**

PRIVATE BUSINESS

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 Paragraphs 6 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

11. PRIVATE MINUTE

Members approved the Private Minute of Hawick Common Good Fund Sub Committee held on 16 March 2021.

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm