

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams Live
Event on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 at
3.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), C. Cochrane and E. Thornton-Nicol (from para 3.2)

Apologies:- Community Councillor T. Combe

In Attendance:- Treasury Business Partner (S. Halliday), Solicitor (J. Webster), Estates Surveyor (T. Hill), Property Officer (F. Scott), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 2 September 2020.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 6 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory providing the details of income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the six months to 30 September 2020, a full year projected out-turn for 2020/21, and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2021. Treasury Business Partner, Sara Halliday, highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2020/21. This showed a projected deficit of £44,426 for the year. A total of £5,540 in grants and donations had been paid out to date. Appendix 2 of the report, provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 showing a projected decrease in the reserves of £133,727. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected rental income for 2020/21 and actual property expenditure to 30 September 2020 was shown in Appendix 3 to the report. Appendix 4 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 30 September 2020. The report explained that the fund has had a 7.91% unrealised loss in market value since investment, largely due to continued volatility in investment markets. Overall, however, taking account of the income received the fund had achieved a return of 4.83% since investment in February 2018.

DECISION

NOTED within the appendices to the report the:-

- (a) projected income and expenditure for 2020/21 in Appendix 1;
- (b) projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 in Appendix 2;
- (c) summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and
- (d) current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 4.

3. **APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

3.1 **Selkirk Mini Hockey**

There had been circulated copies of an application from Selkirk Ladies Hockey Club Youth Development (Selkirk Mini Hockey) for a grant of £250 to cover the extra expenses incurred due to Covid-19. It was explained that Selkirk mini hockey club had been running for over 50 years, coaching hockey to primary aged children in Selkirk and the surrounding valley communities. In order to follow Scottish Hockey's guidelines 'Return to safe play' it was explained that the club was required to sanitise all equipment prior to and after training, provide hand sanitiser for use of both coaches and players and have full PPE in the event of injury to any player. The amount requested was to cover the initial cost of purchasing sprayers, sanitisers and PPE and ongoing expenses the club would have, to continue to provide hockey safely under current guidelines. Members commented on the importance of the club to the young people of Selkirk and approved the application in full.

DECISION

AGREED to grant funding of £250 to Selkirk Ladies Hockey Club Youth Development (Selkirk Mini Hockey).

MEMBER

Councillor Cochrane declared an interest in the following application, considered in 3.2 below, in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and did not take part in the discussion or decision.

3.2 **Cycling Without Age – Scotland: Selkirk Community Chapter**

There had been circulated copies of an application from Cycling Without Age – Scotland: Selkirk Community Chapter for a grant of £8,450 for the purchase of a trishaw through the Cycling Without Age (CWA) – Scotland Scheme. Mr McPherson, who had submitted the application on behalf of the group, was in attendance to give background information. He explained that CWA was a movement which started in 2012 and had since spread to 50 countries around the world including Scotland. The purpose of CWA was to enable elderly, house bound or mobility-limited people to get out and about by offering free rides on a piloted trishaw. The aim of the Selkirk Community Chapter was to purchase 2 trishaws, a wheelchair carrier e-bike and sundry ancillary equipment at a total cost of £29,200. The organisation planned to apply to other Grant Awarding bodies for other elements of the project, the request for funding from the Common Good Fund for a single trishaw being sufficient to start up the project. Alongside this, the group would be working to attract more volunteer pilots for the trishaws and to ensure they underwent the prescribed training. The trishaw would be based in secure storage in the vicinity of the Haining House in Selkirk where advantage would be taken of the new path system offered by the current developments of the Haining House and Estate. Members discussed the application and received answers from Mr McPherson to their questions on various aspects of the project. They were very supportive of the scheme and the potential benefits to the elderly and mobility-limited residents of Selkirk. A question was asked as to the ownership of the trishaw should the Selkirk Community Chapter cease to operate and whether this would revert to the national CWA. After further consideration Members agreed to grant the full amount requested but that this be subject to a stipulation that, in the event of the Selkirk Community Chapter ceasing to operate, Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee would be consulted about where the trishaw would be sent for continuing use. Members also asked that the group continued to seek other funding sources to enable their funding target to be met and the project to be fully implemented.

DECISION

AGREED to grant funding of £8,450 to Cycling without Age – Scotland: Selkirk Community Chapter for the purchase of a trishaw, subject to:-

- (a) a stipulation that, in the event of the Selkirk Community Chapter ceasing to operate, Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee would be consulted about where the trishaw would be sent for continuing use; and**

- (b) **the understanding that Selkirk Community Chapter continued to seek other funding sources to meet their target and to enable the project to be fully implemented.**

4. **SOLAR ARRAY STUDY**

There had been circulated copies of a request to Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee from Selkirk Regeneration for consent to apply for an Enablement Grant from Community Energy Scotland for a basic feasibility study into the installation of an array of solar panels on an identified piece of land to the south and below the Rig. The piece of land in question was shown on an accompanying map and was within the holding of Smedheugh Farm, owned by the Common Good. Mr Lawrence Robertson was in attendance at the meeting to represent Selkirk Regeneration and to provide further information. One of Selkirk Regeneration's key ambitions was to encourage better use of renewable energy in the community. Sustainable Selkirk was set up to assist residents to reduce energy in their homes, with a former shop at 5 Tower Street being renovated to provide a community hub and energy advice centre. Opportunities in and close to Selkirk, for generation of renewable energy and low carbon transport, were investigated in co-operation with Community Energy Scotland through one of their programmes called Community Energy Futures. The ideas were discussed at an open meeting held in Selkirk at the end of October 2019. From this meeting, key proposals were identified for development. A second community meeting was scheduled for the end of March 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Research suggested opportunities for solar power in the form of a ground array of panels located away from normal public view on Common Good land at the Rig. Should the study suggest the project would be feasible Selkirk Regeneration would be eligible to apply for funding to develop the proposal. Members were supportive of the proposal and agreed to give consent as landowner for the feasibility study to be carried out. It was noted that, should the project be implemented, any income generated would come to the Common Good Fund as landowner. The Solicitor advised that, should the study suggest the project was feasible there would need to be a consultation process under the terms of the Community Empowerment Act. The Estates Surveyor confirmed that the tenant of Smedheugh Farm had been informed that the proposal was being discussed.

DECISION

AGREED to consent, as landowner, for a feasibility study to be carried out for the installation of a ground array of solar panels on an identified piece of land to the south and below the Rig.

5. **PROPERTY UPDATE**

With reference to the Briefing Note which had been circulated, the Estates Surveyor, Tricia Hill and Property Officer, Frank Scott, gave an update:

5.1 **Green Hut**

The works to the Green Hut were now complete. Councillor Edgar asked about the intruder alarm which was apparently not working. Ms Hill said that she would check the lease and advise Mr Scott if it was the responsibility of the Common Good so that it could be repaired.

DECISION

AGREED to request the Property Officer to arrange repair of the Intruder Alarm at the Green Shed if the responsibility of the Common Good.

5.2 **Selkirk Victoria Hall**

Mr Scott confirmed that the safety inspection with a cherry picker been undertaken. A stone balustrade had been taken down as it was unsafe and would need to be rebuilt.

One window needed to be replaced and all the other windows needed painting. Works to the roof were also required. Internal work was required in the men's toilets, near the main entrance, where Mr Scott had disconnected a rotten water tank. Work to remove the tank, plumb the men's toilets into the mains and refurbish the toilets would be priced in Spring 2021. A quote would also be obtained for the other works required. Councillors referred to a recent incident where a vehicle had clipped the pillar at the front of the Hall. Mr Scott had not been informed about this and agreed to contact the caretaker and to investigate further.

DECISION

AGREED that:-

- (a) **the minor internal works relating to the water tank in the men's toilets be carried out in early 2021; and**
- (b) **the Property Officer obtain quotes for the other works required, which had been identified by the inspection.**

5.3 Local Biodiversity Site

There had been circulated copies of a letter from The Wildlife Information Centre and accompanying statement and site plan giving the Selkirk Common Good, as landowner, notification that the Gala Rig area of Smedheugh and an adjacent field were being proposed as a Local Biodiversity Site in the new Local Development Plan (LDP). This was a non-statutory designation but could affect any future development on the designated land which required planning permission. The LDP was currently out for consultation with responses to be made by 25th January 2021.

DECISION

AGREED to note that the Gala Rig area of Smedheugh and an adjacent field were being proposed as a Local Biodiversity Site in the new Local Development Plan (LDP) but not to send a comment about this, on behalf of Selkirk Common Good, as part of the current consultation on the LDP.

5.4 Replacement of Electricity Poles

With reference to paragraph 6.7 of the Private Minute of 2 September 2020, Ms Hill reported that the new pole on Riverside Road was no longer required.

DECISION

NOTED

6. 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.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

7. MINUTE

The private section of the Minute of 2 September 2020 was approved.

8. PROPERTY UPDATE

Members considered a briefing note by the Estates Surveyor giving an update in respect of private property business.

The meeting concluded at 4.20 pm