

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL GALASHIELS COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the GALASHIELS
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams on
Thursday 18 March 2020 at 10.00 am.

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman), A. Anderson, E. Jardine, H. Scott and
Community Councillor R. Kenney

In Attendance:- Treasury Business Partner (S. Halliday), Managing Solicitor-People and Court
(C. Donald), Estates Surveyor (J. Stewart), Democratic Services Officer (F.
Walling).

1. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 3 December 2020.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 9 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2020 AND
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory providing details of income and expenditure for the nine months to 31 December 2020, a full year projected out-turn for 2020/21, projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2021 and proposed budget for 2021/22. The Treasury Business Partner, Sara Halliday, highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 to the report provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2020/21. This showed a projected surplus of £25 for the year which was better than the previously reported deficit on 3 December, due to an improvement in the return on the Aegon Investment Fund. Dividends from the Common Good Fund's investment in Aegon Asset Management amounted to £6,631, with the revised projection estimated at 4.5% return. As a result of the market value dropping due to the impact of the COVID-19, this projected 4.5% return was less than the overall 5% target and the monthly distribution profile projections provided by Aegon, but was an improvement on the original 2.5% budgeted return. Appendix 2 provided a projected balance sheet as at 31 March 2020. It showed a projected decrease in the reserves of £31,086. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected rental income and net return for 2020/21 and actual property income to 31 December 2020; and projected property expenditure for 2020/21 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2020 was shown in Appendices 3a and 3b respectively. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected property valuations as at 31 March 2021. The value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment fund to 31 December 2020 was shown in Appendix 5. The report explained that the fund had a 0.61% unrealised loss in market value since investment, largely due to continued volatility in investment markets. Overall, taking account of the income received the fund had achieved a return of 14.09% since investment in February 2018.

DECISION

(a) AGREED within Appendix 1 to the report:-

- (i) the projected income and expenditure for 2020/21 as the revised budget for 2020/21; and
 - (ii) the proposed budget for 2021/22.
- (b) **NOTED within the appendices to the report:-**
- (i) the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 in Appendix 2
 - (ii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and
 - (iii) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.

3. **PROPERTY**

With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute of 3 December 2020, the Estates Surveyor, Jo Stewart, gave a verbal update on the proposal to harvest the mature trees at Ladhope. Ms Stewart explained that a meeting with a representative from the Golf Club, planned to take place in January, had been cancelled due to the re-introduction of restrictions. It was proposed to re-arrange this for May or when restrictions allowed. A representative from Agriforest would attend. Having sought further advice about timescales around removal of the trees, Ms Stewart clarified that practically the trees should be felled within the next five years and essentially within the next ten years. She referred to the proposal put together by Agriforest which had been circulated to Members. In discussion, Members recognised that extraction would be a significant and disruptive process which would have an impact on the Golf Club, the access road and surrounding paths. In terms of the removal of the timber and brash, it was noted that the proposal was to leave the brash in rows between the re-planting, which was more cost effective in addition to reducing the impact of extraction. Solicitor, Christina Donald, advised that a formal public consultation about the proposed timber extraction was not required under the terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, but acknowledged the Members' reference to the impact on local residents and that they had stressed the importance of as wide a consultation as possible. They agreed that, to help the Golf Club recover from the effect of closure during the Covid-19 pandemic, the work should not take place this year but it should happen during 2022 if possible. Ms Stewart was asked to arrange a site meeting when restrictions allowed, to include herself, the four elected Members of the Common Good Sub Committee, Community Council representative Mr Kenney, two representatives from the Golf Club and a representative from Agriforest. Members assumed that statutory requirements would include a traffic management plan from Agriforest, but asked for this to be provided at the meeting to enable early consideration of potential issues.

DECISION

AGREED to request the Estates Surveyor to arrange a site meeting, as detailed in the paragraph above, to discuss timber extraction at Ladhope.

4. **URGENT BUSINESS**

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

Councillor Aitchison drew attention to reports of damage caused by motorcycles and quad bikes using the road from Ellwyn Terrace and through Langlee Mains to gain access to a purpose built dirt track on the hill. He advised that the Police Community Action Team had been made aware of this.

**DECISION
NOTED**

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am