

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of Meeting of the CHAMBERS
INSTITUTION TRUST held in Via Microsoft
teams on Wednesday, 18th November, 2020
at 3.00 pm

Present:- Councillors K. Chapman (Chairman), H. Anderson, S. Bell, S. Haslam,
E. Small and R. Tatler
In Attendance:- Capital & Investments Manager, Estates Manager, Projects Manager (S.
Renwick), Solicitor (G. Sellar), Democratic Services Team Leader

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 6 February 2020

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE**

2.1 **Trees**

With reference to paragraph 1.2 of the previous Minute, regarding the replacement of trees in the quadrangle, the Chairman advised that the tree officer had recommended one Small Acer (Red bark) and one Acacia (Yellow foliage), to be planted at the Quadrangle at an estimated cost of £80.00 each. These could be sourced and planted within the next 3-4 weeks.

DECISION

NOTED.

2.2 **Status of the Chambers Institute Trust and its Trustees**

With reference to paragraph 5.3 of the previous Minute, Gillian Sellar, Solicitor undertook to prepare this for the next meeting.

DECISION

NOTED.

2.3 **Museum Space**

Neil Hastie advised that he had not spoken to Live Borders regarding this matter and that they were not currently occupying either the Library or Museum at present. Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Anderson, proposed that officers undertake discussions with Live Borders on the merging of the spaces and bring forward a recommendation to the Trust.

DECISION

AGREED to approve Councillor Bell's proposal as detailed above.

3. **FINANCIAL MONITORING FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2020 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2020/21**

3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory, providing the details of the income and expenditure for the Chambers Institution Trust for the year 2019/20 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2020 and proposed budget for 2020/21. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual income and expenditure for 2019/20. This showed a surplus of £37,898 for the year, which was

ahead of budget mainly as a result of an increase in rental and service income and a projected surplus of £26,904 for 2020/21. Appendix 2 to the report provided an actual balance sheet as at 31 March 2020. It showed an increase in the reserves of £368,650, due to the revaluation of properties offset slightly by unrealised loss on the Aegon Asset Management (formerly Kames Capital) Investment Fund. Appendix 3 to the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing the effect of the revaluation. Appendix 4 to the report showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2020. Kirsty Robb, Capital & Investments Manager highlighted the main points in the report and suggested that Members may wish to consider increasing their investment with Aegon Asset Management given the level of cash reserves. In response to a question regarding the amount to be invested she advised that this would depend on the cost of any works that the Trust might approve. She further confirmed that money could be removed from the fund within 3 days if it was required for other purposes.

- 3.2 Members asked Neil Hastie for likely costs and timescales for works to the Burgh Hall. He advised that some estimates for the kitchen works were still awaited but a full refurbishment was likely to be in the region of £10k-£12k. Previous discussions had considered whether a full kitchen replacement was needed. Members views were divided so it was agreed that quotes should be obtained for both options before a final decision was taken. The estimated cost of the replacement ceiling was £65k but updated quotes would be needed as the works were quite extensive. Neil Hastie further advised that the Burgh Hall was currently being used by the NHS for its Flu injection programme and would also be required for the upcoming Covid-19 vaccination programme which could see the hall in use till at least May 2021. This would prevent the ceiling works from being carried out but if access to the kitchen could be achieved without going through the main hall then the works in that area might be able to proceed. With regard to the kitchen it had previously been agreed that there be consultation with the relevant stakeholders to ascertain what their needs would be and this was reiterated. The importance of engaging with Live Borders was also emphasised. The Chairman enquired about the scaffolding currently being erected and was advised that this was for routine maintenance to the roof. It had been intended to carry this out during the summer but contractors were only now available.
- 3.3 Following the discussions on the works to the Burgh Hall, Councillor Bell proposed that £80k be transferred from cash reserves to Aegon Asset Management which would leave the sum of £20k for works to the hall and this was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the actual income and expenditure for 2019/20 in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) the proposed budget for 2020/21 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (c) to note the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2020 in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (d) to notes the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3 to the report;**
- (e) to note the current position of the investment in the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 4;**
- (f) to obtain quotes for a replacement kitchen, both full and partial replacement and check if works could be carried out while the hall was being used by the NHS;**

- (g) to delay obtaining quotes for the replacement ceiling until the hall was available for the works to be carried out;
- (h) to consult with both Live Borders and the relevant stakeholders regarding the works to the hall;
- (i) that the sum of £80k be transferred from cash reserves to Aegon Investment Management.

4. **PROPERTY UPDATE**

In addition to the property matters dealt with above, Neil Hastie advised that there had been a request from the Bridge who were looking for alternative office space. He had tried to get an update from them so see what they required and asked if they had contacted any Members. Councillor Haslam advised she was aware of this and would ask that they provide the required information. It was also reported that some minor works had been carried out to the area occupied by the CAB to assist the way that they were working. The Chairman asked if a representative of Live Borders could be invited to the next meeting. Councillor Haslam suggested that this request could be passed via the Executive Member, Councillor Jardine who met with them regularly.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) that further information be sought from the Bridge regarding their possible need for office space;
- (b) to note the CAB works; and
- (c) that a representative from Live Borders be invited to attend the need meeting.

5. **URGENT BUSINESS**

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

6. **REQUEST TO KEEP TOMMIES ON PERMANENT DISPLAY IN THE QUADRANGLE**

Councillor Anderson advised that the Community Council had asked if the Tommies could be kept on permanent display in the quadrangle and that the Trust reconsider their previous decision. The Chairman advised that following the demise of the Peebles British Legion ownership of the Tommies had passed back to those who had provided the funding for their purchase and that they had already been removed from the quadrangle and storage was no longer provided by the Council. Members noted that the situation was out of their hands but agreed that they would not have been minded to change their previous decision. The display of the Tommies in future would depend on their new owners not the Trust.

DECISION

NOTED the current position

7. **BOER WAR PLAQUE**

The Chairman advised that the Community Council had raised concerns regarding the Boer War Plaque which was located on the building now occupied by the Peebles Community Trust. The Trust had previously agreed that it was not appropriate to transfer it to the quadrangle and the Museums Service was the most appropriate home for it. Peebles Community Trust needed to be made aware of the importance of this asset.

DECISION

NOTED.

**8. 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 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

9. MINUTE

The private section of the Minute of 6 February 2020 was approved.

10. MATTERS ARISING

10.1 The Trust agreed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 27 January 2021

10.2 The Trust agreed to the planting of the trees as detailed at paragraph 2.1 above.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm