

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

PEEBLES COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the PEEBLES
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held via MS Teams on Wednesday, 8 June,
2022 at 5.00 pm

Present:- Councillors D, Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone, E. Small (from paragraph 8), R.
Tatler and Community Councillor P. Maudsley
Apologies:- Councillors V. Thomson
In Attendance:- Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), Treasury Business Partner (S.
Wilson), Estates Surveyor (T. Hill), Democratic Services Team Leader

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor Begg, proposed that Councillor Tatler be appointed as Chairman. This was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Tatler be appointed as the Chairman of the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Pirone, seconded by Councillor Begg, proposed that Councillor Thomson be appointed as Vice Chairman and this was unanimously approved.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Thomson be appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of Meetings of Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 23 February and 16 March 2022 had been circulated.

DECISION

NOTED for signature by the Chairman.

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2022

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director Finance and Corporate Governance providing details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles Common Good Fund for the year 2021/2022 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2022, a full year projected outturn for 2022/2023 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2023. Appendix 1 provided the actual income and expenditure position for 2021/22 and showed a surplus of £11,858 for the year. Appendix 2 provided an actual balance sheet value as at 31 March 2022 and showed an increase in the reserves of £7,844,603. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual rental income and net return for 2021/22. Appendix 3b provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property expenditure for 2021/22. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the actual property valuations at 31 March 2022. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2022. The Treasury Business Partner highlighted the main points in the report and explained that the increase in reserves was partly due to the annual release from the Revaluation reserve but in the

main due to the reclassification exercise being carried out by Estates and Legal Services. It was noted that the final accounts were still subject to audit.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the actual income and expenditure for 2021/22 in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (b) the projected income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2022/23;**
- (c) to note the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2022, and projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (d) to note the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report;**
- (e) to note the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5 to the report.**

5. JEDDERFIELD FARM UPDATE

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director Infrastructure and Environment providing an update on the terms of the lease that had been entered into by Scottish Borders Council on behalf of Peebles Common Good regarding Jedderfield Farm, Peebles as approved by the Committee in private on 17 November 2021. The report explained that Jedderfield Farm was a Common Good Asset that became available following the death of the previous agricultural tenant. The successors to the tenancy had indicated they did not wish to take on the tenancy resulting in the tenancy falling from 4th June 2020. Jedderfield farm was advertised for lease and seven applications for the lease were received. These applications were reviewed and scored using a scoring scheme approved by the Peebles Common Fund Sub-Committee and a preferred tenant was selected and approved by the Sub-Committee. A Lease had been agreed with Susanne McIntosh, the owner of Kailzie Equestrian Centre for 10 years for an annual rent of £17,500. The lease was a Modern Limited Duration agricultural tenancy; with the land being used for pastoral agriculture, with the tenant entitled to grow grain and crops and for grazing of horses, sheep and ponies. The Estates Surveyor answered Members questions. With regards to checking of the farm, Ms Hill advised that this was normally carried out by the Estates Section every 5 years when revaluations were due but the property team could perhaps carry out a more regular inspection. Members were keen that this was done on a more regular basis so Ms Hill undertook to discuss this with the Property Maintenance Team and report back at the next meeting. In response to a question on the potential level of clawback by the tenants for works carried out to the property and concerns that this would result in an overall loss to the Common Good Fund over the 10 year period, Ms Hill advised that it was impossible to predict what level of compensation for improvements there would be but agreed to provide a copy of the lease to Members for their information.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the terms of the Lease agreed with Susanne McIntosh; and**
- (b) that proposals for regular inspection of the property be considered at the next meeting.**

6. PROPERTY UPDATE

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 23 February 2023, the Estates Surveyor advised that the cost of opening the Haylodge toilets at weekends over the winter period would be £2,600 for cleaning plus approximately a further £250 for utilities. Members were supportive of the opening but expressed some concerns regarding the pipes freezing and asked that the need to insulate the pipes be checked and actioned if required. The Chairman advised that he would ask the Communications section to publicise this additional opening.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the opening of the Haylodge toilets at weekends over the winter period subject to appropriate insulation of the pipes.

7. REQUEST TO LOCATE PEEBLES MEMORIAL TO "WITCHCRAFT" ACCUSED ON TWEED GREEN

The Chairman welcomed Elisa Smith to the meeting. She advised that there was support in Peebles for the erection of a memorial to mark the victims who had been executed as a result of accusations of witchcraft. The memorial would be a granite slab approximately 2 feet by 1 foot that would lie close to the ground with a firm foundation. It would be designed to look like the pages of a book and would contain the names of all the victims from the Tweeddale Area. Any ongoing maintenance would be carried out by William Purves Funeral Directors. Members were supportive of the proposal and asked Ms Smith to bring back details of the design and possible siting together with a written agreement from William Purves regarding future maintenance.

DECISION

AGREED in principle to the siting of a memorial to the "witchcraft" accused on Tweed Green subject to the provision of details regarding siting, design and future maintenance.

MEMBER

Councillor Small joined the meeting.

8. INTEREST LINK GRANT REPORT

With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 24 February 2021, there had been circulated for information a copy of a report from Interest Link on the outcome of the grant funding provided by the Common Good Fund.

DECISION

NOTED the report

9. 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 make an early decision.

10. PEEBLES HIGHLAND GAMES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Chairman advised that he had been approached regarding the erection of a memorial stone to mark the 50th anniversary of Peebles Highland Games. It was proposed that the memorial be located next to the benches in Haylodge Park. Members agreed to approve the request in principle subject to further details being provided.

DECISION

AGREED in principle to the siting of a 50th anniversary memorial in Haylodge Park subject to further details being provided.

**11. 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 6 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

12. **MINUTES**

Members approved the private sections of the Minutes for the meetings held on 23 February and 16 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 5.50 pm