

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the KELSO
COMMON GOOD SUB-COMMITTEE held
via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 27th June,
2023 at 5.30 pm

Present:- Councillors T. Weatherston, S. Mountford and E. Robson (Chairman)

Apologies:- Community Councillor Gavin Horsburgh

In Attendance:- Director of Finance and Procurement (Suzy Douglas), Solicitor (Lauren Mitchell), Democratic Services Officer (F Henderson).

1. MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Kelso Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 27 June 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to APPROVE the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

1.2 Action Tracker

The Action Tracker had been circulated. The Chairman advised that there was no update from the Woodland Trust and a longer term plan would require to be discussed prior to an update in September 2023.

- 1.3 In terms of the actions in respect of the Pinnaclehill Woodland, there had been circulated copies of a briefing note on work required at Pinnaclehill Woodland. Ballantyne Tree Services (on the BSC Works framework) had quoted for the following works at a cost of £600 + VAT:

- From the access next to Pinnaclehill Lodge, the trees on the mount are a mixture of semi-mature Douglas Fir, young Cherry, semi-mature Spruce and Sycamore. In the past, approximately 10 years ago, height was taken off a Fir.
Recommend: this time severing a 1m strip of ivy on the trees main stem, in particular those at the rear of 22/23 Pinnaclehill Park, when it dies back, reduce weight and sail affect within the trees crown.
- The trees in the Linn (burn running to the river) are a mixture of mature Beech and Sycamore. There was the odd dead Elm and stumps were noted on the opposite bank which was not work previously aware of
Recommend: sever ivy clearing 1m strip on mature trees adjacent the burn.
- Rear of 23 Pinnaclehill and top of steps, to the left just before the steps going down is a group of Hazel, four Sycamore and a Laurel. In the past these have been laterally reduced over the fence line. **Recommend:** Coppice hazel group, laterally reduce by 2m the Sycamore and Laurel.
- The bank behind 22 to 32 Pinnaclehill was particularly steep, and there were a number of 22m+ Beech, Lime and Sycamore. Storm Arwen caused the loss of a number of trees, most noticeable being a Beech which did have *Kreztshumaria deusta* which affected the structural length of the main stem. The trees remain where they fell across the banking.

Recommend: ivy severance take place on all large trees, including those at the top of the bank. Also here, Maple and Lime may be pruned back and crown lifted 5 over the fenceline.

- The riverside footway between the two benches had a number of low growing Sycamore and Elm.
Recommend: crown raise to 4m over the footway.
- At the bottom of the second set of steps a mature Sycamore is leaning towards the river.
Recommend: severing ivy to reduce weight.
- Rear of 52 Pinnaclehill Park, the Horse Chestnut was pruned over 10 years ago now. That, along with Holly and Sycamore may be pruned back to clear fenceline.
Recommend: Lateral crown reduction to fend line at 5m.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) that Ballantyne Tree Services be instructed to carry out the work as detailed in the briefing note at a cost of £600 plus VAT as soon as possible;
- (b) that the Tree Officer assess any further work required in terms of safety and confirm that there were no other trees infected with *Kretzschmaria deusta*;
- (c) that their thanks to the Tree Officer be recorded for arranging the work to be undertaken.

2. MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2023

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Finance and Procurement providing details of the income and expenditure for the Kelso Common Good Fund for the year 2022/23 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2023, a full year projected out-turn for 2023/24 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2024. Appendix 1 to the report provided the projected Income and Expenditure position for 2022/23, which showed a surplus of £11,820 for the year, which was higher than the surplus previously reported in January 2023. Director of Finance and Procurement advised that the projected surplus for 2023/24 was £8,880. Appendix 2 to the report provided an actual balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 and showed a projected decrease in reserves of £101,288. Appendix 3(a) to the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing rental income and net return for 2022/23, and actual property income to 31 December 2022. Appendix 3(b) provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected property expenditure for 2022/23, and actual property expenditure to 31 March 2023. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property valuations at 31 March 2023. Appendix 5 detailed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2023. The Director of Finance and Procurement highlighted the main points in the report and answered Members' questions. In response to a question about capital valuations, the Director advised that the valuation had previously been undertaken in house, however it had been recognised that it was more important to have a valuation in March of each year and DMM Hall had undertaken the valuations, which had been very close to the internal valuations previously supplied.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED** that the projected income and expenditure for 2023/24 detailed in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2023/24;

(b) NOTED:-

- (i) the actual income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1;**
- (ii) the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 and projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2024 in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (iii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report;
and**
- (iv) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5 to the report.**

URGENT BUSINESS

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chair 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 or to keep Members informed.

3. PINNACLEHILL PARK - OCHARD PROJECT

There had been circulated copies of a request from Residents within Pinnaclehill Park to develop a small area of common good land currently designated as the 'play area'. Mrs Kirsty Robb, Resident presented the concept to the Members and explained that the land was a grassed area which was cut twice a year. There was no play equipment on the site, and there never had been any, with a path at one edge which gave access to the riverside walk as detailed in the map supplied. The purpose of the project was to turn the space into a community orchard with a strong emphasis on increasing the use of the space and the biodiversity of the site. The space would include benches to allow residents to meet and interact with each other.

- 3.1 All residents had been invited to attend an open meeting to discuss the proposed project and to gauge support or otherwise for the project. The meeting had been attended by 8 households and emails and notes of support had been received from a further 7 households. Possible plans and ideas had been discussed and some Volunteers to take the project forward were identified. The draft plans and information discussed with the Residents were submitted for information, including process and timing, benefits to the community, benefits to nature and the environment and funding. Following discussion the Sub-Committee agreed to support the project in principle, however prior to any further consideration and approval, the following actions required to be undertaken by the Residents:-

- Planning Permission sought
- Estimated costs be drawn together
- A formally constituted Group be established
- A bank account in the name of the constituted Group be opened

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) that the Solicitor to the Kelso Common Good identify and confirm that the area of land in question was in the ownership of the Common Good;**
- (b) that on confirmation that the area of land was in the ownership of the Common Good, the following steps be undertaken by the residents, and a lease of the land would be considered;**

(c) **that the following actions be undertaken by the Residents**

- **Planning Permission sought**
- **Estimated costs drawn together**
- **A formally constituted Group be established**
- **A bank account in the name of the constituted Group be opened**

The meeting concluded at 5.50 pm