

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEEBLES
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday,
24th May, 2023 at 5.00 pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), D. Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone, E. Small
and V. Thomson, G. Thomson (Peebles Community Council)

In Attendance:- Acting Chief Officer Corporate Governance, Acting Chief Financial Officer, C.
Cooke; Democratic Services Officers (L. Cuerden and D. Hall)

1. **ORDER OF BUSINESS.**

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

With reference to paragraph 4.1 of the Minute of the meeting held on 19 April 2023, the Chair updated members on progress of the Common Good Fund information panels for the upcoming exhibition. The panels were now complete and the Chair sought approval for the purchase of two artist easels on which to display the boards. This was agreed.

3. **MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 19 April 2023 and the updated Action Tracker.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute and Action Tracker.

4. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2023**

There had been circulated copies of a report by Acting Chief Financial Officer Suzy Douglas, the purpose of which was to provide details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles 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 showed the actual income and expenditure position for 2022/23, with a deficit of £27,891 for the year. This was higher than previously reported on 28 February 2022 due to an increase in the repairs and maintenance spend. Appendix 2 showed the actual balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 with a decrease in reserves of £270,843. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio with actual rental income and net return for 2022/23. Appendix 3b provided a breakdown of the property portfolio with actual property expenditure for 2022/23. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio with actual property valuations at 31 March 2023. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2023. In response to a question regarding the omission of the fixed assets of Kingsland School site and Kingsmeadows toilets from the balance sheet, it was confirmed this was due to significant use of those assets by Scottish Borders Council and so they appeared on that balance sheet instead. The matter was subject to an ongoing review. In response to a question about parking charges revenue from Greenside car park allocated to Scottish Borders Council rather than the Common Good Fund, Ms Douglas undertook to investigate the matter in time for the next meeting.

DECISION

APPROVED the recommendations as follows:

- a) Noted the actual income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1;
- (b) Agreed the projected income and expenditure for 2023/24 in Appendix 1 as the revised budget for 2023/24;
- (c) Noted the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 in Appendix 2;
- (d) Noted the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee – 24 May 2023
- (e) Noted the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.

5. **KINGSMEADOWS CAR PARK BAYS**

Robert Reid presented two proposals to remark Kingsmeadows Car Park to maximise available space while maintaining bus/coach parking and bottle bank access and uplift. The car park was currently free to use with 62 marked bays for cars, 3 disabled parking bays and 2 coach bays. The shape of the car park presented challenges for planning an efficient layout. Option 1 – Perpendicular Rows allowed for 73 cars (+11), 3 disabled bays and 2 coach bays. This option provided maximum occupancy however necessitated increased turning movements for car drivers and the need for coach drivers to reverse before exiting. Option 2 – Parallel Rows allowed for 70 cars (+8), 3 disabled bays and 2 coach bays. This option increased capacity and was similar to the current configuration whereby coaches did not have to reverse, however it provided a less efficient use of space. This option proposed 9 additional car spaces in the central area currently unmarked and occupied by coaches, cars or motor homes. Indicative costs from SB Contracts for the two options were as follows: option 1 - £3,300; option 2 - £2,860; and option 3, to remark existing bays - £2,200. There followed a discussion on provision in the plan for a licensed mobile coffee cart that currently operated between the toilets and the disabled parking bays. Robert Reid was to liaise with the cart operator to ascertain their exact location and include in any further iteration of the layout plan. On the matter of spaces for motor homes/camper vans, it was suggested that the additional central bays in option 2 could be chevron marked to accommodate 3 or 4 motor homes or short wheel based trucks. It was also suggested that a wider conversation was required around where to welcome and accommodate motor homes to Peebles. Electric charging/parking bays had not been considered in the plan; the estimated cost was £1,000 per bay. It was reported that there was currently underway a feasibility study on EV charging points throughout the Scottish Borders and further information was to be brought before Elected Members at a later date. There was general agreement that option 2 was the preferred layout with accommodation for larger vehicles in the central area. The timing of the remarking was to be considered for Autumn 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to option 2 for the marking of Kingsmeadows car park, with provision for a licensed coffee cart and mobile home/short wheel based truck bays to be factored in, with work scheduled to begin in Autumn 2023.

6. **KINGSMEADOWS CAR PARK TOILETS**

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting on 28 February 2023, the Chair proposed that Kingsmeadows Car Park toilets opening regime remained unchanged until such time as a report on opening costs could be discussed at a future meeting.

DECISION

AGREED that the Kingsmeadows Car park toilets opening regime remained unchanged.

7. **VICTORIA PARK - NEW LIGHTING**

Alex Young presented options for the illumination of two footpaths between Kingsmeadows Road and Springhill Road. Both paths were currently in darkness during the winter months with one designated as an official route to school. Following discussions with the Chair, bollard lighting and standard street lighting had been considered with the latter more cost effective. The estimated cost was £56,946 inc VAT. Possible funding sources were the Peebles Parking Fund, the Road Safety team and developer contributions. In response to questions about the lighting design, it was confirmed that the fixtures were LED down lighters which spread the light along the footpath and minimised glare to neighbouring houses. There was general agreement that the work needed to be done with the suggestion that work on one path be carried out in Autumn 2023 and the other path in Spring 2024 if constrained by funding. The matter was to be discussed again at the August meeting of the Peebles Common Good Fund where a decision was to be made on the programme of work.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) IN PRINCIPLE to start work in August 2023 subject to alternative funding being sourced**
- (b) to add an item to the agenda of 16 August 2023 meeting to agree the programme of work**

8. TREE PLANTING IN HAYLODGE PARK

With reference to paragraph 4.2 of the Minute of 19 April 2023, there followed a discussion on how to proceed with the coordinated planting of gifted trees which ensured biodiversity. Simon Wilkinson, Tree Officer had provided a response to the committee in which he undertook to liaise with Parks once information on tree species, size and numbers were provided in future. There was a request for a report on a tree planting strategy in all Common Good parks to be presented at some point in the coming year by the Greenspace Officer/ Parks Manager as it was felt that further expert guidance was needed on the matter.

DECISION

AGREED to request a report on a coordinated tree planting strategy for all Common Good Parks

9. WILDFLOWER PLANTING IN COMMON GOOD PARKS

- 9.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Carol Cooke the purpose of which was to seek Members' agreement to adopt management principles that aligned with the wider 'Pollinators Along the Tweed' project for a ten year period at Haylodge and Victoria parks. The management principles were to include wildflower planting through seeding/plug plants and bulb planting along with less intensive grass cutting practices in selected areas where appropriate. The project aimed to create and enhance pollinator habitats along the River Tweed corridor under the auspices of the Destination Tweed initiative. Council officers had worked with Buglife and Tweed Forum on the assessment proposals and the management and maintenance implications. There followed a brief discussion on the cost of active wildflower management as opposed to leaving an area to grow wild naturally. It was reported that SBC had invested in machinery via the Nature Restoration Fund to carry out the cutting and lifting of arisings in a bid to reduce the nutrient content of the soil which promoted wildflower growth. Currently the cuttings were disposed of into a green waste skip for composting. Further investment into equipment was to be considered in the coming year, again via the Nature Restoration Fund. Current workforce and management regimes were considered adequate to maintain wildflower areas with no additional costs to be incurred by the Common Good Fund.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to adopt and align with the Pollinators Along the Tweed Management Principles at Haylodge and Victoria parks; and**
(b) to enter into the Landowner Agreement outline in 3.6 of the report

- 9.2 Marina Piper, Project Manager Destination Tweed, provided an update to Members on progress regarding the Tweed Trail and Tweed Stories/Interpretation projects. Tweed Trail was to be a 113 mile walking trail and facilitated cycling from Moffat to Berwick-Upon-Tweed. There was to be physical and digital interpretation to animate and engage user experience on the trail. There were proposed upgrades to sections of pathway in Haylodge Park and Tweed Green to create a new 3 metre wide multi-use bound path funded by Sustrans and repair existing sections of Tweed Green path where necessary. There was to be scope for seating and landscaping and habitat enhancements. It was proposed to widen and regrade the mound site behind Haylodge hospital, to widen the Eddleston water bridge and upgrade the link path to The Cuddy to two metres and to three metres for the path to town. New signage was also proposed. The Chair proposed an agreement in principle to the plans, with further discussion to be had at a later date when a more detailed programme of work was available, after 30 June 2023.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) IN PRINCIPLE to the plans to improve sections of footpath through Haylodge Park and Tweed Green as part of Destination Tweed project**
(b) to discuss the matter further once a more detailed programme of work was made available after June 30 2023.

10. **ENERGY SAVING ALTERATIONS**

With reference to the Minute of the meeting on 28 February, there was a request for officers to bring forward a report on how environmentally sustainable Common Good buildings were and how they could be improved going forward.

DECISION

NOTED the request

11. **FUNDING APPLICATION**

There had been circulated copies of a funding application from the Peebles Pensioners Association. The application had requested £2100 to purchase a high specification laptop. The Secretary had until now used her personal laptop for administration, film showing and presentations by guest speakers and it was no longer fit for purpose due to its age. There followed a brief discussion on additional funding sources and it was agreed to fund half of the cost of the laptop, with the Peeblesshire Charitable Trust suggested as a possible source of the remainder.

DECISION

AGREED to award £1050 to the Peebles Pensioners Association to go towards the purchase of a new laptop.

12. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.**

Emily Cropton, Destination Tweed Connecting Threads project officer, presented to members a proposal to install a floating water organ by Dumfriesshire based artist Mark Zygadlo on the River Tweed in Haylodge Park. The organ had previously been installed on the River Nith, Dumfries and in Findhorn. The organ which generated music based on the depth, current and flow of the river was to be sited west of Fotheringham Bridge and secured on its eastern side from Friday 30 June to Sunday 2 July 2023. The converted catamaran was also to be untethered for the artist to paddle it up and down the river to the

area where rowing boats had previously been moored further downstream. Alongside the installation there was planned a small number of family friendly, accessible activities on the river banks which may include: boat/canoe trips to get close to the Water Organ; citizen science activity to measure and learn about water quality; invitation to paddle, dip or swim in the area west of the bridge, supported by Borders Water Rescue Team; wildlife walk with botanical flag making workshop to decorate the bridge; and a miniature boat making workshop. Security options for Saturday night were being explored. Peebles Youth Trust was to be approached with a view to working in partnership with the project to positively engage the local youth population. SEPA was aware and were supportive of the plan as a partner in the Destination Tweed project. Peebles Trout Fishing Association was to be approached once permission to go ahead was granted. There was general agreement to the plan and Ms Crompton agreed to return to the Committee with an evaluation of the project at a later date.

DECISION

AGREED to the plan to install the water organ on the River Tweed in Haylodge Park

13. **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.

14. **MINUTE**

Members considered the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 19 April 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the private section of the Minute for signature by the Chair.

15. **OLD CORN EXCHANGE SHOP**

The Committee agreed to extend the closing date for lease submissions for a further month.

16. **TWEEDGREEN PAVILION**

The Committee heard an update on planned maintenance work to the Tweedgreen Pavilion. There was agreement in principle to approve the works subject to the submission of additional information.

17. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The future meetings were scheduled as follows:

- 16 August 2023
- 22 November 2023
- 28 February 2024
- 12 June 2024

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 pm