

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHAMBERS
INSTITUTION TRUST held in via Microsoft
Teams on Wednesday, 2nd August, 2023 at
4.00 pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), D. Begg, M. Douglas and V. Thomson

Apologies:- Councillors J. Pirone

Absent:- Councillors

In Attendance:- Locality Development Co-ordinator, Director Corporate Governance, Property Officer and Director of Finance & Procurement

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. MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 10 May 2023 and the Action Tracker.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the action tracker and the Minute for signature by the Chair.

3. BENEFICIARIES GROUP UPDATE

3.1 The Chair reported that there had been no meeting of the Beneficiaries Group since 9 May. Sam Coe, Beneficiaries Group representative, provided a brief verbal update. There had been a meeting with Page\Park architects on 13 June to review progress on the Burgh Hall feasibility study and discuss architectural solutions. A report on this was to be made to both the Beneficiaries Group and the Trustees at their next meetings in September. The Chair confirmed that the Business Planning Group had met and were to provide an update at the next meeting. Sam Coe was to join the Group going forward.

3.2 There had been several events in the Burgh Hall since reopening which had highlighted the poor acoustics. It had been difficult for attendees to hear speakers both with and without the use of the PA system provided by Live Borders. There followed a discussion on mitigations. The stage curtains did not meet fire safety standards and required replacement. Gareth Smith agreed to obtain quotes to replace and rehang the curtains. Any new curtains had to be labelled correctly to comply with fire safety regulations. In addition, the rigging would require testing to ensure that the load bearing was sufficient for the new curtains and lighting fixtures. This was to be discussed further by Gareth Smith and Fiona Colton, Live Borders. The need to darken the hall during presentations was discussed. It was suggested that costs for curtains be obtained and brought to the next meeting. The curtains, to match the replacement stage curtains, were a temporary measure until such time as the funding was in place to install electric window blinds. It was anticipated that the cost of repairing the walls once the curtain rails were removed in future would not be prohibitive. A new induction loop was required and given the size of the hall, only a hard-wired system was suitable. A quotation had been requested from a local company. Fiona Colton had been provided with recommendations for acoustic consultants with experience of historic buildings; consultants were to be engaged only if necessary following mitigations. There was a need for an improved PA system in the

Hall. The unit owned by Live Borders was not suitable for such a large space. Fiona Colton confirmed that some users had been advised to relocate as the acoustics was to have been detrimental to their event. The acquisition of a new PA system could be considered as part of any wider acoustic survey of the Hall. Fiona Colton agreed to investigate the availability of a larger PA system within the Live Borders estate to use at the Peebles In Bloom event on 17 August 2023.

- 3.3 Gareth Smith provided an update on the roof leak in the Burgh Hall vestibule. The area of roof had been re-slatted some years ago and SBC were in possession of the original slates to be re-laid in the future to comply with building regulations. Previously there had been insufficient drainage from the guttering and several overflow pipes had been installed to address the issue. The recent wet weather had caused water ingress under the roof felt. It was anticipated that the roofer would have to remove a row of slate and replace and extend the roof felt. Gareth Smith was to meet the roofer on site on 3 August.

DECISION

AGREED to:

- (a) **consider quotations for new stage and window curtains at the meeting of 27 September 2023;**
- (b) **consider quotations for installation of an induction loop system at the meeting of 27 September 2023.**

4. CONDITION SURVEY UPDATE

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 10 May, Estates were to be contacted along with Page\Park architects in order to obtain a quote for a further condition survey, a dimensional survey and to include environmental conditions for the museum and gallery spaces. Sam Coe agreed to contact Page\Park for guidance on the specification. The Chair undertook to discuss the matter with Estates Manager Ray Cherry. It was anticipated that three quotes for the survey work could be obtained.

DECISION

AGREED to include an item to discuss the issue to the agenda for 27 September 2023.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2023

There had been circulated copies of a report by Director of Finance and Procurement the purpose of which was to provide Members with the details of the income and expenditure for the Chambers Institution Trust for the year 2022/23 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2023, a full year projected out-turn for 2022/23, and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2024. Appendix 1 provided the actual income and expenditure position for 2022/23. This showed a surplus of £83,508 for the year, which was better than the previously reported surplus on 8 June 2022, as a result of the grant received from Place Based Investment Program. Appendix 2 provided a balance sheet value as of 31 March 2023. It showed an actual decrease in reserves of £65,853. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual rental income and net return for 2022/23. Appendix 3b provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property expenditure for 2022/23. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property valuations on 31 March 2023. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund on 31 March 2023.

It was agreed to amend future financial reports to remove reference to the Common Good Funds. It was confirmed that the current cash balance of £118,855 did not reflect the total spend on Burgh Hall renovations to date. Of the £100k awarded through the Place Based Investment Fund, an amount in the region of £52k had been spent to 31 March 2023. It was anticipated that the remaining £48k expenditure was to be reflected in the financial reports for 2023-24. An updated financial position was to be obtained for the next

meeting on 27 September. It was confirmed that the performance of the Aegon Investment Fund was on a par with other funds in the market over the last financial year 2022-23 and indications were of a slightly improving position going forward.

DECISION

AGREED to:

- (a) **note the actual income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1;**
- (b) **the proposed budget for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 1;**
- (c) **note the final balance sheet value as of 31 March 2023 and projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2024 in Appendix 2;**
- (d) **note the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and**
- (e) **note the current position of the investment in the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.**

6. SITING OF PUBLIC BENCH

There had been circulated information relating to the refurbished train station bench and suggested sites for installation. Gareth Smith proposed an area in the Burgh Hall Quadrangle to the left of the War Memorial in between the museum entrance and the information boards, to which Members agreed. The Neighbourhoods Team was to be contacted regarding securing the bench in place. The intention was to relocate the bench alongside the Station House, East Station car park, once it had been restored.

DECISION

AGREED to the secure installation of the station bench in the Quadrangle.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 7.1 With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 10 May 2023, the Chair advised that the John Buchan Museum had been in discussion with Gareth Smith and Planning regarding improvements to the exterior appearance and signage of the museum. An update and proposals were to be provided at the next meeting.
- 7.2 The Chair reported that a local artist Susan Mitchell had loaned an artwork for display. The artwork was a series of concertina panels depicting the North and South sides of Peebles High Street. It was proposed that the artwork be installed on the large wall in the Burgh Hall vestibule once the repairs were complete. This was agreed by the Trustees and was for consideration by the Beneficiaries Group. An alternative site for the relocation of the Boer War Memorial was to be identified.

DECISION

NOTED the update and AGREED to the installation of artwork in the vestibule, once roof repairs were completed.

8. PRIVATE BUSINESS

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.

9. BURGH HALL DECORATION

Members considered a quote for the painting of the vestibule, back hallway and restroom areas. It was agreed that further quotations be obtained for consideration at the meeting on 27 September 2023. Furthermore any painting work was to be carried out once the roof repair was complete.

The meeting concluded at 4.55 pm