

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the INNERLEITHEN
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held on Thursday, 1st June, 2023 at 3.00 pm

Present:- Councillors M. Douglas, J. Pirone and R. Tatler

Also present:- R. McGinn (Memorial Hall User Group)

In Attendance:- Acting Chief Financial Officer, Principal Solicitor (G. Sellar), Estates Surveyor (T. Hill), Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall).

1. **MINUTE**

The Minute of Meeting of the Innerleithen Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 8 March 2023 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

The Action Tracker had been circulated. The Chairman confirmed that items which had been completed could be removed.

DECISION

NOTED the Action Tracker.

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2023 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2023/24**

There had been circulated copies of a report by Acting Chief Financial Officer which provided details of the assets held by the Innerleithen Common Good Fund as at 31 March 2023, a full year revenue out-turn for 2022/23 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2024. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual Income and Expenditure account for the year to 31 March 2023. Appendix 2 to the report provided an actual balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023. It showed a decrease in the reserves of £40,174. The Acting Chief Financial Officer presented the report and highlighted that the depreciation charge was not a cash transaction and was off-set by a corresponding contribution from the Revaluation Reserve at the end of the financial year. As such, the net income/expenditure impact was nil.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to note the actual income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) the proposed budget for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (c) to note 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; and
- (d) to note the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3 to the report.

3. **MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The Chairman invited Mr Ross McGinn of the Memorial User Group to provide an update on the War Memorial Garden. Mr McGinn explained the history of the Memorial and that when custody of the Memorial had been accepted by Provost Mathieson in 1921 he had given a speech stressing the importance of safeguarding its future for all time. The importance of the community in safeguarding and caring for the memorial had been key, and the Community Trust had undertaken responsibility for its maintenance. Work to restore the Memorial Garden to its original condition, with a rock garden representative of the Leithen valley, appropriate planting and removal of shrubs continued to be planned. Funding had been used to acquire drawings of what work was required to restore the garden. Quotations had been sought from 4 different landscaping companies, of which 2 were unwilling to provide a price and one gave no response. Mr McGinn stressed that due to the nature of grant funding, where providers often required multiple quotes before considering an application, it had proved challenging to get the appropriate support for the entire project. Plans were now being put in place to divide the project into smaller phases. The works would involve the use of machinery to excavate and dispose of material, and it was hoped that Scottish Borders Council could assist with the latter element. It was expected that volunteers would be cleaning up the garden ahead of the summer games and again prior to Remembrance Sunday. Members thanked Mr McGinn for his update and all of his tireless work on the Memorial Garden project. Members advised that a release had been sent out by Scottish Borders Council seeking community projects which required funding, and Councillor Tatler undertook to share the details and provide a link via email. In response to a question regarding the original quotation, Mr McGinn explained that the quote was £58,150 plus VAT. Mr McGinn explained that financial assistance from Poppy Scotland was often limited to plaques and plinths, and was unlikely to be applicable to the whole Memorial Garden. Councillor Pirone undertook to contact Poppy Scotland to enquire about potential support. Members expressed hopes that the project would be a success using its current strategy.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) **to note the update; and**
- (b) **that Councillor Pirone would write to Poppy Scotland to enquire about potential support available for the Memorial Garden project.**

4. **WILDFLOWER PLANTING IN COMMON GOOD PARKS**

There had been circulated copies of a report which sought agreement to adopt management principles that aligned with the wider "Pollinators along the Tweed" project for a 10 year period at Damside, Innerleithen. Those included management principles included wildflower planting through seeding, plug plants and bulb planting. Less intensive grass cutting practices would also be used in selected areas where appropriate. Members confirmed that they were happy to adopt the principles in the area which they had authority over.

DECISION

AGREED to

- (a) **adopt and align with the Pollinators along the Tweed Management Principles at Damside; and**
- (b) **enter into the Landowner Agreement outlined in the report.**

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

5.1 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.

5.2 **Energy Efficiency in Common Good Buildings**

Councillor Tatler explained that the Members of the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee had recently agreed to ask officers for an update on the energy efficiency and sustainability of its buildings. Members unanimously agreed to ask that the same process be undertaken for the Memorial Hall, Innerleithen. The Estates Surveyor, Ms Tricia Hill, advised undertook to contact the appropriate officers and request that the work be undertaken. The review would likely take the form of an energy efficiency audit.

DECISION

AGREED to request an update from Scottish Borders Council's Property Department on the energy efficiency and sustainability of Innerleithen Common Good Fund owned buildings.

6. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Members advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Innerleithen Common Good Fund Sub-Committee due to be held on 17 August 2023 at 3pm was not suitable due to other commitments and agreed to hold the meeting one week later.

DECISION

AGREED to reschedule the next Innerleithen Common Good Fund Sub-Committee from 17 August 2023 to 24 August 2023.

The meeting concluded at 3.40 pm