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## SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHAMBERS INSTITUTION TRUST held via MICROSOFT TEAMS on Wednesday, 29th November, 2023 at 5.00 pm

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Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chair), D. Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone, E. Small and V. Thomson

Apologies:- G. Smith, K. Harrow, F. Colton

In Attendance:- Director Corporate Governance, S. Coe (Beneficiaries Group), J. Dyer, Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden)

### 1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meetings held on 27 September 2023.

### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the Minutes for signature by the Chair.**

### 2. **BENEFICIARIES GROUP UPDATE**

- 2.1 The Chair shared the main points from the meeting of the Beneficiaries Group on 28 November 2023. An award of £4.1m from the Levelling up Fund had been made, with a tight deadline for a proposal to be presented to the UK Government. It was proposed that the Chair, Councillor Pirone and Sam Coe, as a Project Group, take this proposal forward and Members agreed. Jason Dyer was then introduced to Members. Mr Dyer had previously worked with the Trimontium Trust, Abbotsford House restoration, Thirlestane Castle and Melrose RFC. A biography of his work was to be circulated. The Chair proposed that Mr Dyer be engaged by Trustees to bring together a business plan, information from the feasibility study and consultations for the Chambers Institution Trust over an anticipated 10 day period. Members agreed to the appointment of Mr Dyer subject to the standard procedures. Crick Carleton was to provide materials on the Place Making process that related to Peebles. In relation to the Burgh Hall, it was reported that the stage curtains were to be fitted next week. The acoustics consultant had made a site visit and reported that the addition of stage and window curtains was to improve the acoustics and that panels would be required. The Beneficiaries Group had no objections to costs of no more £8,500 for panel installation. Members agreed to the cost of the supply and installation of acoustic panels. Sanne Roberts, Heritage Officer was to be consulted also. Sam Coe reported the support of Peebles Civic Society and Peebles and District Community Council for the proposed acoustic improvement works. The Chair sought approval for the costs of the supply and installation of window curtains and the required scaffolding and associated joinery work, at a cost of up to £16.5k. Members agreed to approve the costs. There was to be an additional cost in the region of £2k following repairs to the roof leak in the hallway. No decision was made on this by Members. Gareth Smith Property Officer was to coordinate the remaining works and liaise with the artist Susan Mitchell on the installation of her artwork in the hallway. There had been a request from the Trimontium Trust for several Roman artefacts in the possession of the Chambers Institution Trust to be loaned for display. Director Corporate Governance agreed to establish ownership of the artefacts in consultation with Live Borders for the next meeting of the Trustees. Councillor Pirone reported that the progress on the business plan so far was to be shared with Council officers and Mr Dyer.

- 2.2 Sam Coe presented an update of the building condition survey. There were no accurate scale plans of the buildings at present. A condition survey and a dimensional survey were required and options for their procurement were under consideration. It was confirmed that a full procurement exercise was to be undertaken.
- 2.3 The Chair reported that the John Buchan Museum had formally written to Trustees to request that consideration be given to improvements to the exterior of the museum building. The Chair proposed that the matter be taken up with Planning in the first instance, to which Members agreed. Further discussion was to be had at the next meeting. A copy of the letter was to be appended to this minute.
- 2.4 The Chair reported that Bonnie Peebles had requested permission to install plants in the sites where the Remembrance sculptures were installed annually, once commemorations were complete. Members agreed to this.
- 2.5 The Chair confirmed that he was to liaise with the tenants of the Chambers Institution Trust buildings to apprise them of all developments going forward. Members shared their appreciation for the collegiate approach being taken with the ongoing project.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the update and;**

**AGREED TO:**

- (a) **the appointment of the Chair, Councillor Pirone and Sam Coe to the Project Group;**
- (b) **the appointment of Jason Dyer to the role of coordinator of the proposal to the Levelling Up Fund, subject to the proper procedure;**
- (c) **the cost of supply and installation of acoustic panels;**
- (d) **the cost of supply and installation of window curtains;**
- (e) **Director Corporate Governance establishing ownership of Roman artefacts in the museum**
- (f) **Bonnie Peebles installation of plants in place of Remembrance sculptures once commemorations were complete.**

#### **3. 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.

#### **4. PRIVATE MINUTE**

Members considered the Private Minutes of 27 September 2023.

#### **5. DAYLIGHT PROJECTOR**

Members considered a quotation for the supply and installation of a daylight projector. The matter was to be further discussed at the next meeting.

#### **6. BURGH HALL CURTAINS**

Members considered quotations and agreed the costs for the supply and installation of window curtains and the supply and installation of scaffolding.

#### **7. PAGE\PARK**

Members discussed the conclusion of business arrangements related to Page\Park Architects.

#### **8. BURGH HALL ACOUSTICS REPORT**

Members considered a quotation and agreed the costs for the supply and installation of acoustic panels.

***The meeting concluded at 6.05pm.***

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### Chambers Institute Beneficiaries

#### Meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on MS Teams

##### Present:

Cllr Robin Tatler, SBC (Chair)  
Lorna McCullough, Borders Community Action (Minutes)  
Cllr Marshall Douglas  
Cllr Drummond Begg  
Cllr Viv Thomson  
Cllr Julie Perone  
Cllr Eric Small  
Sam Coe, Peebles Civic Society  
Frank Drummond, Tweeddale Access Panel  
Laura Scott, Peebles Pensioners  
Jim Boyd, CAB  
Debbie Smith, Eastgate Theatre  
Helen Lewis, Eastgate Theatre  
Geoffrey Hamilton  
Gareth Smith, SBC  
Peter Maudsley, PCC  
Ian Buckingham, JBSM  
Crick Carleton, PCT

#### 1. Welcome, introductions

Introductions to be made as attendees speak.

#### 2. Apologies - Fiona Colton, Live Borders

#### 3. Notes from meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September

Action – Robin & Lorna to work out how to share documents all can access.

#### 4. UK Government Levelling up funding award success

£4.1M investment, government deadline 4 weeks time for further information needed to secure it, to define the project and costs demonstrating the community response. The project that the funding will support will require to be delivered by end of March 2026. Consultation carried out earlier this year will support this. Sam Coe, Cllr Robin Tatler and Cllr Julie Perone will form the project team.

Trimontium Chair recommended Jason Dyer who has vast experience in leading other similar projects in the Borders (Trimontium £3M, Abbotsford House £12M) and currently working with Edinburgh University. Robin has met with Jason and he is very enthusiastic about the project. Daily rate is £250, proposed to hire Jason for initial 10 day pulling together business plan to date into format needed with financial forecasting, projects aims and public consultation and benefit to assist in securing the funding from UK Government. Agreed – will be put to trustees meeting to approve. Assuming Jason is appointed, he will be asked to attend the next meeting and provide a brief presentation on the initial piece of work.

Crick Carleton offered to provide data and information gathered during the Place Making process that PCT in support of the bid for the Levelling Up Funding. This will be very helpful and the project will form an integral part of the Place Making process.

## **5. Burgh Hall**

### **Acoustics and lighting**

- Stage curtains being fitted next week.
- Mark Neal (acoustics consultant) has completed a report, in summary it confirms stage curtains and curtains on side windows will make a huge difference, also side acoustic panels on the rear and side walls, can be painted to blend into the walls.
- Trustees to approve £8500 budget tomorrow for side panels, meeting agreed. Sani in SBC to approve.
- Side window curtains quote £16500 in total, includes install scaffolding, curtain plates & painting etc.
- Gareth will program all work to be installed together. Caretaker has provided Gareth with hall calendar and he will work around this, timescales likely to be in January 2024.

### **Burgh hall Lobby**

- Gutter is holding, no further leaking.
- Painting work due to start next week, will be scheduled around the hall calendar.
- Lights to be replaced internal and external, quote £1632+508 cost to be approved at trustees meeting tomorrow, meeting approved.
- Heating, fans need to be on with the heating to push the heat back down after it rises, don't appear to be getting used. Gareth has visited the hall to switch to manual and will check again in the morning. Mark Neal (acoustics consultant) to consider with and without fans on and impact on acoustics.

### **Artwork**

Gareth needs information on how the artwork is to be displayed in order to get quotes for shelving and/or casing. Agreed to put Gareth directly in touch with artist Susan Mitchell to discuss requirements e.g. UV glass, measurements. Aim to provide update/quotes for next meeting.

## **6. Discussion with John Reid of Trimontium**

National Lottery Heritage fund application. Status of the trust, suggested looking at Tullie House in Carlisle, Ian Buckingham knows it and is happy to visit to find out how they are set up and funded.

There are items the Chambers Institute has that the Trimontium would like to display while not being displayed here currently. Meeting agreed to arrange via Live Borders but will want them back once regeneration complete. Elgin marbles issue could be used as a media hook in future!

## **7. Page/Park – update on Burgh Hall Mezzanine Study**

Still no update on feasibility study, to be discussed at trustees meeting tomorrow.

## **8. Business Planning Group – update**

Information gathered scoring board used and looking at public consultation. Vision outlined and being developed. This will be handed onto project team and Jason Dyer to develop in order to secure UK Government funding bid.

Draft place plan includes public views to review public indoor spaces and buildings in Peebles, open to contribute to business plan. Consultants will be working on final plan over next 4 months and carrying out further public consultation on the results to ensure it's focussed on the right things. Crick to pass to Kenny Harrow in SBC for inclusion.

Will be meeting with current tenants separately and liaising with Live Borders with user groups to ensure fully involved.

## **9. John Buchan Museum**

Needs to made more attractive as a tourist attraction. Visit Scotland rated it as 4\* and commented externally it could be improved, particularly signage. Suggested moving street furniture around, permanent signage instead of temporary banners and boards, clean windows etc. Need to consider what can and what cannot be done due to it being a listed building. Large picture windows not in use, these could be used with signs. To be discussed at trustees meeting to consider options.

All signage to be reviewed including in the archway, particularly the tenants to direct visitors clearly to individual services. Suggested including in the first phase of the project as this falls under accessibility.

## **10. Building Condition Survey**

Building surveys needed quickly. Possible to get from community benefits through Peebles High School build/BAM.

## **11. Bonnie Peebles, slabs in memorial garden**

Can slabs that Tommies are sitting on be removed to carry out planting, will be replaced in time for Remembrance Day next year. Agreed.

## **12. Summary of actions**

- Robin, Sam & Julie to form project group
- Jason Dyer to be hired on draft business plan and consultation
- Approved spend on acoustic panels
- Approved spend on curtains
- Obtain report on art work display – Peter Maudsley and Gareth Smith
- Agreed letter from JBSM to trustees to consider how to improve external look
- Building survey to be funded by BAM
- Slabs to be removed by contractor when Tommies removed after Remembrance week and replaced when Tommies are back to allow for planting.
- Meeting with tenants to discuss plans - Robin
- Crick to liaise on place planning to business plan
- SBC Heritage officer to approve curtain work and acoustic panels installation.

**13. AOB - None**

**14. Date of next meeting – January 2024 tbc**





# The John Buchan Heritage Museum Trust

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation No SC042519

President: The Lord Tweedsmuir

Vice President & Chairman: The Lady Stewartby

Robin Tatler, Chairman, Chambers Institution Trust

23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2023

Dear Robin,

Further to our discussion concerning the frontage of the Chambers Institution near the Buchan Museum, we have some thoughts for possible future development and improvement.

The John Buchan Museum has now been in Peebles for 10 years and is an important & widely recognised tourist attraction in the town. Pre-Covid, we saw almost 4,000 visitors come into the Museum – local people, UK tourists and a good number from overseas too. Sadly, due to a lack of volunteers, we have reduced our opening hours, but we are still a good Museum offering a great visitor experience. Our season is from April until the end of October and this year we have seen over 2,000 people come through our front door, which is very satisfying.

Whilst the inside of the Museum continues to develop, we are somewhat frustrated by the frontage onto the High Street to encourage visitors into the building. We recognise the constraints of this historic place, but our signage and the look of the frontage, we believe does require some attention.

So here are some thoughts from our committee regarding the future:

1. We currently only have a 'temporary' sign fixed to the railings, partly hidden by an unattractive bench. It would be ideal to remove that bench and raise up some larger signage of a more permanent nature.
2. We have signage attached to the inside of the small windows, some will be replaced next year to make a more appealing display. However, the iron railings on these windows make it difficult to keep the windows clean and the paintwork in good order. Any thoughts on removing this ironwork or at least ensuring regular maintenance?
3. Too much 'street furniture' on the frontage – not just for us, but looks ugly for the building. This includes large BT(?) boxes; brown bin for the café next door; an ugly black litter bin; unattractive bench etc
4. The Tweeddale Museum/library and ourselves all have a mix of different signage, both fixed to the railings and wheeled out into the street, so maybe long term, a more coordinated signage approach would be better.
5. The noticeboards down the alley into the Quadrangle have improved somewhat and we appreciate are 'owned' by different groups. However, sometimes they look messy and not always maintained. The signage to the various areas in the building are also confusing – we often get people into the Museum asking where various places are.

In conclusion, these are just some of the thoughts from the Buchan Museum re the future look of the frontage. We hear a lot of comments from visitors and locals, so hopefully some of this will assist in the future development of this wonderful building.

Kind regards

Ian Buckingham (on behalf of the Museum Committee)

[www.johnbuchanstory.co.uk](http://www.johnbuchanstory.co.uk)

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The John Buchan Story, The Chambers Institution, High Street, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 8AG

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