

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the HAWICK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday,
22 November 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors C. Ramage (Chair), J. Cox, N. Richards, and A. Smart.

Apologies:- Councillor S. Marshall and W. McAteer.

In Attendance:- Director of Corporate Governance, Chief Officer Financial and Procurement Services (L. Turner), Estates Strategy Manager (J. Stewart), Estates Survey (T. Hill), Property Officer (S. Drummond), Ecology Officer (M. Ginns) and Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 August 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.

2. **MONITORING REPORT FOR 6 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

There had been circulated copies of a report by Director Finance and Procurement which provided the details of the income and expenditure for the Hawick Common Good Fund for the six months to 30 September 2023, a full year projected out-turn for 2023-24, and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2024. Appendix 1 of the report provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2023-24 which showed a projected deficit of £1,799 for the year, which was less than the previously reported surplus on 15th August 2023, due to the amendment of Pilmuir servitude income, which had paid in full the increase in the repairs and maintenance budget. Appendix 2 of the report provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2024 which showed a projected decrease in reserves of £82,177. Appendix 3a of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected rental income and projected net return for 2023-24 and actual property income to 30 September 2023. Appendix 3b of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected property expenditure for 2023-24 and actual property expenditure to 30 September 2023. Appendix 4 of the report provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed projected property valuations at 31 March 2024. Appendix 5 of the report showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 30 September 2023. The Chief Officer Financial and Procurement Services summarised the report and answered members questions.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) **the actual income and expenditure for 2023-24 in Appendix 1 of the report and the revised budget for 2023-24;**
- (b) **the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2024 in Appendix 2 of the report;**

- (c) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report; and
- (d) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5 of the report.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 BORDERS GREEN TEAM ENTERPRISES

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Borders Green Team Enterprises in the sum of £20,000 to fund core running costs which included investment in their workplace, buying new machinery and equipment, improving professional development for staff and promoting learning and innovation to ensure the Green Team was a safe place for service users. Mr George Sprott of Borders Green Team presented the application to Members and explained that although the costs were not broken down in the paper, was able to provide a verbal explanation of what funding would be used for. A break-in at the Borders Green Team premises resulted in insurers insisting on upgrades to security and entrance doors. The theft of a van resulted in a claim of £5,800 being awarded from insurers, however the cost of a van up to £10,000 resulted in a £4,200 loss. Two new mowers had been purchased, but were stolen and the insurance award was not enough to cover the cost of adequate replacements which added a loss of £10,850. The remainder of the application was to cover running costs and wages. After discussion, Members agreed to award a grant of £15,000 to cover the cost of the replacement van and mowers, however they advised that a breakdown of costs should be provided if a further application was made to cover core costs of the organisation.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to award Borders Green Team a grant of £15,000 to address the costs associated with a replacement van and mowers; and
- (b) to advise the applicant that a further application for funding to support core organisation expenses would require to include a breakdown of costs.

3.2 HAWICK REIVERS ASSOCIATION

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Hawick Reivers Association for £4,000 to fund running costs of the Hawick Reivers Festival. Catherine Elliot-Walker of Hawick Reivers Association presented the report and advised that the festival aimed to ensure events were free to access and that insurance costs were approximately £800.

DECISION

AGREED to award Hawick Reivers Association a grant of £4,000.

4. APPLICATION FOR USE OF COMMON HAUGH

There had been circulated copies of an application from Kenny Stuart Family Fun Fair for use of the Common Haugh for a funfair from 17 March – 31 March 2024. Members discussed the application and raised concerns regarding the increasing amount of space being taken up by the Funfair and the impact on the Campervan parking. There had also been issues with large amounts of rubbish being left. It was noted that the funfair would be in situ during the Hawick Reivers Festival and over the Easter weekend and there required to be a balance between the needs of the residents and visitors to the Town.

Members were supportive of the application and requested that the Property Officer liaise with the applicant to make him aware of the campervan parking space, car parking availability for residents and which area would be available for the funfair. Members further requested confirmation of the date the funfair would finish, as Easter Monday would be the preferred day. It was acknowledged that there was no way of forecasting the number of campervans requiring parking at any one time.

DECISION

AGREED to grant permission to the funfair for the use of the Common Haugh between 17 March and 1 April 2024, subject to the applicant providing appropriate details on the rides and following discussions with the Property Officer on the space required for the Funfair and confirmation of the finish date.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Smart declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the Chamber during the discussion.

5. SILVERBUTHALL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 22 November 2022, the Chair invited Andy Maybury of Silverbuthall Community Development Trust to present an update on progress of their project. Mr Maybury advised that the grant award was a significant step in delivering a community poll into use of the former Wilton South and St Margaret's Church site. The organisation needed to resolve charitable status registration and the establishment of a bank account before receiving the grant award. The feedback from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) were challenging for the trust and lengthy conversations were taking place. Health issues with trust officers were causing a delay to a bank account being established. Furthermore, as the organisation was a community development trust, only those that lived in the community could be full members which restricted board membership. The Chair thanked Mr Maybury for the update.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

MEMBER

Councillor Smart rejoined the meeting.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Cox declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5

6. HAWICK ROTARY CLUB – PLANT A TREE

There had been circulated copies of a proposal from Hawick Rotary Club for tree planting to take place on the Hawick Moor. The Chair invited Ron Smith of Hawick Rotary Club to present the proposal. The proposal included the planting of 150-200 trees in Hawick Moor at no cost to the Common Good. Hawick Rotary Club sought agreement in principle for the project. The Estates Surveyor advised that the land where tree planting was proposed was leased and that the tenant farmer would need to be consulted. The Ecology Officer advised that the ground may need assessment to ensure it wasn't groundwater dependent as that would restrict planting. Members agreed that a site visit be arranged to assess the proposal.

DECISION

AGREED to defer the application in order that a site visit be arranged.

MEMBER

Councillor Cox rejoined the meeting.

7. PROPERTY UPDATE – MOTORHOME PARKING

There had been circulated copies of a briefing note from the Estates Surveyor that advised members on issues related to motorhome parking bookings. Following previous bookings of the campervan parking site, the Estates Surveyor advised that complaints had been received about other vehicles moving barriers, parking too close to the campervan site, overflowing bins and Officers not being available to discuss issues with campervan parking users. For effective barriers to be in place, Heras fencing would require to be used which would cost an estimated £250. Officers considered that managing exclusive bookings of the motorhome area of the Common Haugh was not feasible and it was recommended that exclusive bookings should not be allowed for the motorhome area within the Common Haugh.

DECISION

AGREED that exclusive booking of the motorhome parking area would not be accommodated.

8. EVALUATION OF COMMON GOOD FUND GRANT AWARDS

With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 August 2023, there had been circulated copies of a proposed evaluation form for organisations that had received grant funding from the Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee. In providing feedback on the form, Members requested that it be made explicit that the form was for evaluation of projects that funding had been received for and that the evaluation form should reflect the application form including on anticipated benefits to the community, how money was used, and what money had not been used over the course of a project.

DECISION

AGREED that a further draft of the evaluation form be submitted to the Sub-Committee for approval.

9. 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 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

10. MINUTE

Members considered the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 August 2023.

11. PILMUIR FARM

Members considered the update from the Estates Surveyor.

12. PROPERTY UPDATE

Members considered an update on Common good property from the Estates Surveyor.

The meeting concluded at 12.37 pm