

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of Meeting of the HAWICK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Lesser Hall, Town Hall, Hawick on
Tuesday, 21 February 2016 at 4.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G Turnbull (Chairman), A Cranston, W McAteer, S Marshall, D Paterson, R Smith, Mrs A Knight, Mr J Little.

In Attendance:- Chief Financial Officer (Items 1-6), Chief Legal Officer (Items 1-6), Cultural Services Advisor (Items 1-4) Managing Solicitor (R Kirk), Estates Surveyor (N Curtis) Senior Finance Officer (J Yallop), Property Officer (F Scott), Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

Members of the Public

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman 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. RECORDING OF MEETINGS

In response to a query regarding the recording of meetings by the press, the Chief Legal Officer advised that there was no legal prohibition and it was at the Chairman's discretion whether he permitted recording of meetings.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

3. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 15 November 2016.

**DECISION
APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.**

4. URGENT ITEM

Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the paragraph below should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

5. MOVEABLE ASSET INVENTORY

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 21 February, Mr Ian Brown, Cultural Services Advisor was in attendance. Mr Brown advised that prior to the Sub-Committee meeting he, Ms Hannah MacLeod, Principal Solicitor and Ms Shona Sinclair, Area Curator, Live Borders, had met with Hawick Councillors and representatives from Hawick community groups to review and agree the inventory for Hawick Common Good Moveable Assets Register. At that meeting, the Register produced by the Museum Service, had been agreed. However, following discussion, it has also been agreed to include two additional paintings. The Area Curator would also investigate the inclusion of another two paintings that had been suggested and a number of Common Riding flags. The final Register would be presented to the next meeting of Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee. Mr Brown reminded Members that once the Sub-Committee took on the ownership of the moveable assets, it also assumed the financial responsibility for these assets including insurance, conservation and treatment. Mr Brown further advised that at the earlier meeting there had been other suggestions of items located within the Town Hall, that could be considered for inclusion on the Register. Members had agreed to

commission a researcher to undertake the investigation of these further items; Mr Brown would prepare a job description to assist with the appointment. Mr Brown went on to explain that Live Borders Museum Service had effectively completed its search. However, if, in the future, there was evidence of any other items that should be included on the Register, details would be forwarded to the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee thanked Mr Brown and staff for their work in producing the updated Hawick Common Good Moveable Assets Register which would be of benefit to the town.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (i) **To request that an updated Hawick Common Good Moveable Assets Register be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee for approval: and**
- (ii) **To request that the Cultural Services Advisor prepares a job description to assist with the appointment of a researcher to undertake the investigation of possible further items within the Town Hall that could be included on Hawick Common Good Moveable Assets Register.**

6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Sub-Committee considered applications for financial assistance from the following:-

6.1 (a) Heads Together

It was noted that this application had been withdrawn.

DECISION

NOTED.

6.2 (b) Hawick Congregational Community Church

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Hawick Congregational Community Church Reaching Out Community Project. The Project requested £2,624.38 for 50 chairs and two stacking trolleys. The chairs would be used to support their ongoing community project, especially to accommodate increasing numbers of customers attending their volunteer led activity, Soupalunch. The chairs would also be used by local voluntary and community groups who used their facilities.

DECISION

AGREED to award a grant of £2,624.38 to Hawick Congregational Church – Reaching Out Community Project to purchase 50 chairs and two stacking trolleys.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Smith declared an interest in the above item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting during the discussion.

6.3 (c) Nature Unlimited

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Nature Unlimited requesting £9,375.00 to cover the cost of sessional workers, basic equipment and volunteer expenses. Ms Barr from Nature Unlimited was in attendance at the meeting, and advised that the project held activities for children across the Scottish Borders which nurtured well-being, resilience and community through teamwork and nature connection activities in woodlands. They ran sessions which ranged from long term employability programmes, family and community projects, mental health and wellbeing sessions as well as one-off events such as team building days and taster sessions.

- 6.4 Following discussion Councillor Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Paterson moved that a grant of £4,688.00 be awarded to Nature Unlimited.

Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Marshall moved as an amendment that a grant of £2,000 be awarded.

VOTE

On a show of hands Members votes as follows

Motion - 2 votes

Amendment 4 votes

The amendment was accordingly carried.

DECISION

AGREED to award a grant of £2,000.00 to Nature Unlimited to cover the costs of sessional workers, basic equipment and volunteer expenses.

6.5 (d) Hawick Community Pump Track

There had been circulated copies of an application from Hawick Community Pump Track requesting £4,200.00 to be used for full planning design and drawings for the Pump Track project. Three representatives from the project, including Mr Wilson secretary, were present at the meeting. In answer to questions by Members, they explained that the pump track would be an asset to the town and bring in revenue. The track would accommodate skateboards, scooters, inline skates and bikes; the track would also be wheelchair accessible. The facility would be open daily, during daylight hours. There was no similar large scale facility in the area, the nearest being Inverness. Once they acquired the design drawings and the feasibility study was in place, they would apply to potential funders. They had been granted a 20 year lease from Scottish Borders Council (SBC) for the site located on the disused tennis courts in Wilton Lodge Park. Velosolutions UK would design the track; works would be carried out using local tradesmen. Ongoing maintenance of the track would be funded by coaching sessions and events. Members supported the project and advised that major sponsors, such as the Big Lottery Fund should be considered for funding the project. It was also suggested that they contact the SBC's Grants Co-ordinator for advice on possible funders.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £4,200.00 to Hawick Community Pump Track to be used for full planning design and diagrams for the project.

6.6 (e) Hawick Scout Pipe Band

There had been circulated copies of an application from Hawick Scout Pipe Band for £2,500.00 to provide a free afternoon's entertainment on Hawick High Street on 23 September and to celebrate the Band's centenary. Mr McLaren was present at the meeting and explained that £1,250.00 was required for transport, catering and entertainment for other pipe bands also performing at the event. The remaining £1,250.00 would be used for advertising costs. Members unanimously supported the project and congratulated the Band on reaching their centenary.

DECISION

AGREED to award a grant of £2,500.00 towards the cost of provision of a free afternoon's entertainment on Hawick High Street on 23 September and for advertising costs for the event.

7. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr David Robertson, Chief Financial Officer and Ms Nuala McKinley, Chief Legal Officer, were present at the meeting at the request of Councillor McAteer, to advise the Sub-Committee on financial and governance arrangements. Councillor McAteer advised that he was satisfied with the information provided to the Sub-Committee from officers. However, good governance should detail the Sub-Committee's expected spend over a

five year period. This would ensure that potential maintenance for Common Good properties was programmed and the Sub-Committee could project spend over a five year period. He suggested that all Common Good assets should be surveyed to assess their condition and this would enable a meaningful five and ten year projection to be prepared. The Chairman referred to the Action Sheet, from the meeting of 16 August 2016 and advised that a condition survey for Hawick Common Good assets would commence August/September 2017 with a view to completion by March 2018. Planned maintenance for a five year programme could then be prepared for consideration by the Sub-Committee.

DECISION

AGREED that a report be presented to the Sub-Committee once the condition survey had been completed and include details of the suggested planned maintenance for Hawick Common Good Fund's assets over a five year period.

8. MONITORING REPORT FOR NINE MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2016

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 15 November 2016 there had been circulated a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing details of the income and expenditure for the Hawick Common Good Fund for the nine months to 31 December 2016 and full year projected out-turn for 2016/17 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2017. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual income and expenditure. This showed a projected surplus of £13,326.00 for the year. Appendix 2 provided a balance sheet value to 31 March 2017. It showed a projected decrease in the reserves of £26,267.00 Appendix 3 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected rental for 2016/17 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2016. Appendix 4 showed the value of the Newton Fund to 31 December 2016. Mr Yallop, Senior Finance Officer, was in attendance and advised that the outturn report to be presented to the June meeting would include the grant payments agreed above. He highlighted that the rental income, shown in Appendices 1 and 3 of the report, was greater than the budgeted projection due to the receipt of income relating to the 2017/18 financial year. Mr Yallop went on to discuss the Newton Fund which was estimated to deliver a negative return of 4.8% against its benchmark of +1.1%. He explained that the fund was a diversified growth fund investing in safe sectors such health care and corporate bonds which had performed poorly due to uncertainty over Brexit and the USA Presidential Election. As a result of the poor performance, KPMG had been commissioned by SBC to assess the Fund's performance against its peers. KPMG's report showed that the fund's performance was poor in comparison with their peers over the previous quarter. However, the Fund had performed well over the longer term against its peers. Given the nature of the fund, it was over the longer term that it should be measured. In answer to a question, Mr Yallop advised that he was not aware of investor migration, but if poor performance continued over the next year, this would be the trigger to consider the future of the Fund. For example a particular trigger would be if the market value of the investments fell below the amount invested, given the capital preservation ethos of the Fund.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:-

(i) The projected income and expenditure for 2016/17 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report;

(b) NOTED:-

(i) The actual projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2017 in Appendix 2 to the report;

(ii) The summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3 to the report; and

(iii) The current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4

9. HAWICK WOODLOT

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 16 August 2016, the Estates Surveyor, Mr Curtis, advised that feedback from the Woodlot Association was that they considered the Burgh Woodlands to be too large and mature for their woodland operation. It was also too small to be viable for commercial operators. However, Mr Curtis had received an enquiry from an operator interested in the woodlot, which he would pursue. He would also contact a tree surgeon to discuss options for the woodlot and report back to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. Members also requested that maintenance of Willestruther Wood be explored and Mr Curtis confirmed he would investigate.

DECISION

AGREED to request a report on the Burgh Woodlot for the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 20 June 2017.

11. 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 the Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

12. PRIVATE MINUTE

Members approved the private section of the Minute of 15 November 2016.

13. ACTION SHEETS

The Sub-Committee considered actions from Minutes and Private Minutes and referred any outstanding items to the 2017/18 Hawick Common Good Fund Sub-Committee.

14. HAWICK HORSE RACING ASSOCIATION

The Sub-Committee considered a letter from Hawick Horse Racing Association and made recommendations.

15. HAWICK MARKET

The Sub-Committee considered an update from the Estates Surveyor and agreed a course of action.

16. HORNSHOLE

The Sub-Committee noted an update from the Managing Solicitor.

17. PROPERTY UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered, noted and agreed updates from the Property Officer and Estates Surveyor.

The meeting concluded at 5.50 pm.