

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL LAUDER COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the LAUDER
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in the Convener's Office, Council
Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on
Wednesday, 19 June 2019 at 9.00 am

Present:- Councillors D. Parker (Chairman), K. Drum, T. Miers and Community
Councillor A. Smith

In Attendance:- Pension & Investment Manager (K Robb), Principal Solicitor (H Macleod),
Estates Officer (A Scott), Democratic Services Officer (F Walling).

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 19 February 2019.

DECISION

NOTED for signature by the Chairman.

2. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2019**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer, detailing income and expenditure for the year 2018/19 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2019 and the proposed budget for 2019/20. Ms Robb highlighted the main points of the report and appendices. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual income and expenditure for 2018/19. This showed a surplus of £10,810 for the year, which was ahead of the projected surplus figure reported at 19 February 2019 mainly due to an underspend in anticipated property costs. Ms Robb also explained that a grant to Lauder Community Leisure Centre approved within 2018/19 had not yet been paid due to the lease agreement not being concluded. Appendix 2 to the report provided balance sheet values as at 31 March 2019. This showed an actual increase in reserves of £1,845. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing the actual rental income for 2018/19 and actual property expenditure to 31 March 2019 was shown in Appendix 3. Appendix 4 provided details of the value of the Kames Capital Investment Fund to 31 March 2019. The fund had a 3.86% unrealised gain in market value since investment, largely due to continued volatility in investment markets. Overall, however taking account of the income received the fund had achieved a return of +9.41% since investment in February 2018. Members discussed the report and received answers from Ms Robb to their questions.

DECISION

(a) AGREED the proposed budget for 2019/20 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report.

(b) NOTED in the appendices to the report:-

(i) the actual income and expenditure for 2018/19 in Appendix 1;

(i) the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2019 in Appendix 2;

- (ii) **the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
- (iii) **the current position of the investment in the Kames Capital Investment Fund in Appendix 4.**

3. **APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM LAUDER GOLF CLUB**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Lauder Golf Club for a contribution of £5,700 towards the purchase of a replacement cutting machine, the total cost of which was £34,200. Copies of a quote for the purchase were circulated at the meeting. The application explained that the Club provided and maintained a golf course for members and for visitors. The Club promoted the game, organised competitions and provided the opportunity to learn the game of golf through coaching with a professional and the ClubGolf scheme for juniors. The Club had a growing membership and a Junior Section for Under 16s. There was a need to replace the cutting machine that was required to maintain the semi-rough. The current machine was 28 years old and was now a constant financial drain on the Club's funds. Its replacement would ensure relatively trouble free use for at least the next 15 years. The balance of £28,500 for the purchase was being provided from Club funds. Members discussed the application and agreed to grant the full amount requested.

DECISION

AGREED that a sum of £5,700 be granted to Lauder Golf Club as a contribution towards the purchase of a replacement cutting machine.

4. **LAUDER GRAZINGS AMENITY WOODLAND**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure seeking consent to allow a grant application to be made on behalf of Lauder Common Good Fund for the planting of trees at Lauder Grazings and approval of the plan showing the location of the proposed planting. Estates Surveyor, Annabelle Scott, explained that the fencing adjacent to the Lauder Burn was in a state of disrepair and some erosion had occurred to the stream banking. In order to comply with SEPA regulations and improve grazing conditions, new fencing and water troughs were required. These improvements should also provide for an improved income from grazing in the long term. An initial site meeting was carried out by SBC and SAC consulting, identifying suitable areas for some amenity planting to improve the visual impact of the Lauder Burn. Public consultation was carried out through the Lauder Community Council and at the Community Council meeting on 15 April 2019. The feedback from this was positive. The proposed planting design was shown in Appendix 1 to the report. The fencing had been provisionally noted as a 3-line wire fence but this may be enhanced to ensure it would be strong enough to contain the horses. The tree planting and associated works would be funded under the Penmanshiel Compensatory Replacement Grant scheme through a twenty year contract. A forecast of the income and establishment costs over the next five years was provided in the report. Any surplus would be reserved for maintenance costs. Once the woodland had been planted the Lauder Common Good Fund would be responsible for future maintenance although this would be monitored for the first ten years by SAC consulting. Members discussed the report and were supportive of the project. In response to a question about maintenance of the woodland after 10 years, Ms Scott confirmed that the Common Good would be responsible but maintenance at that stage would be expected to be minimal. Mr Smith referred to weed control methods and suggested the use of carpet cover, adding that the Community Council were keen to avoid using chemical weedkiller if possible.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the planting of trees as shown on the plan attached to the report with SAC Consulting acting as agent and the Council's Penmanshiel Compensatory grant scheme as funder.

5. **LAUDER COMMON WOODLAND**

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Private Minute of 19 February 2019, Ms Scott gave a verbal update regarding proposed tree planting on Lauder Common. She explained that there still had not been a response from the agent for the tenant of the parcel of land at the south of the Common, where agreement was still to be reached. Ms Scott confirmed that the proposals had been discussed at a meeting of Lauderdale Community Council. Members stressed the need to move on with this project and it was agreed to bring forward the date of the next meeting of the Sub Committee to receive a report.

**DECISION
NOTED**

6. URGENT BUSINESS.

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 following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to make an early decision.

6.1 FLAG FLYING POLICY

The Chairman explained that a request had been made by a Lauder resident for permission to fly the Rainbow Flag above the Town Hall, Lauder from 21 – 24 June 2019 to coincide with the Pride Edinburgh event. It was noted that when this flag had been flown last year complaints had been received on the basis that no other flag was flown in Lauder apart from the Union Flag and Saltire. However Members clarified that there were other flags flown on the Town Hall for other events including for the Tour de Lauder, Armed Forces Day and at Lauder Common Riding. The Chairman referred to the Scottish Borders Council protocol on flying flags, which was in line with National Flag Protocol and felt there was justification to adopt the same protocol for flag flying above Lauder Town Hall. Mr Smith advised that there had been some discussion on the subject by the new Lauder Community Council and that it was also on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. After a lengthy discussion which included a diversity of views, Members agreed to ask the Community Council to agree principles of flag flying in general and that these views be taken into account alongside Council policy in determining a future protocol for Lauder. In the meantime, until such time a protocol was in place, it was agreed to give permission for the Rainbow Flag to be flown this year from 21 – 24 June.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to give consent for the Rainbow Flag to be flown above Lauder Town Hall from 21 – 24 June 2019; and**
- (b) that a protocol for flag flying above Lauder Town Hall be discussed at the next meeting, taking into account the views of Lauder Community Council along with the Flag Flying protocol adopted by Scottish Borders Council.**

7. 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 Paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

8. MINUTE

The private section of the Minute of 19 February 2019 was noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.50 am