

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
held in Committee Room 2, Council
Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6
0SA on Wednesday, 19 February 2020 at
2.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), C. Penman (from para 6), E. Thornton-Nicol
and Community Councillor T. Combe

In Attendance:- Pensions & Investments Manager, Solicitor (J. Webster), Estates Surveyors
(N. Curtis and T. Hill), Democratic Services Officer (F. Walling).

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. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 18 December 2019.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

3. ST JOHN'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

There had been circulated copies of an application on behalf of St John's Scottish Episcopal Church, for financial assistance towards the project to make the church building more useful to members of the Church and to the community of Selkirk. The project included improvements to heating and toilets and flexible seating arrangements to make the building a more attractive venue for small groups. As part of the overall project it was suggested in the application that the Common Good Fund might fund the purchase of 30 chairs at a price of £85 per chair, or alternatively fund the purchase of an electronic organ, at £1700, which would help with services and widen the potential usage of the building. Mr Roy Owen, from the Re-Ordering Team, was present at the meeting to support the application and answer questions. Mr Owen explained that the chairs would be placed in the chancel at the far end of the building and that this area could then be used for small meetings or services. In response to a question about the relatively high price of the chairs, he explained that the proposed purpose-built wooden chairs were more comfortable and included pockets for hymn books. These moveable chairs, which would be far more versatile than the traditional pews presently in place, also meant that the building could be used as a resilience centre if necessary. Members were supportive of the aims of the improvement project and, after discussion, agreed to grant a total of £4,250 to fund the purchase of the electronic organ in addition to the 30 chairs. In thanking the Members, Mr Owen added that they would erect plaques to indicate those items paid for by the Common Good Fund on behalf of the town.

DECISION

AGREED to grant funding of £4,250 to St John's Scottish Episcopal Church.

4. RIVERSIDE BUSINESS PROMOTION PROJECT

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Mr Bryan Hoggan, on behalf of businesses located on The Riverside, Selkirk. Mr Hoggan proposed producing flyers for distribution from shops in Selkirk High Street to promote and link the Riverside area with the town. He had been working with the Project Manager for Selkirk Means Business and this was a new venture to keep the town and the Riverside areas connected. It was felt by himself, as an owner of a business on the Riverside, and other businesses in that area, that with all the work being carried out in the Market Place, directions and more information about the businesses by the river was required. The request was for a total of £395 to pay for the design and printing costs of the flyer. Mr Hoggan provided a rough draft of the proposed flyer and quotes for the costs of design and printing. Members were very supportive of this project and agreed to grant the full amount requested.

DECISION

AGREED to grant funding of £395 for the production of flyers to promote businesses in the Riverside area of Selkirk and to request receipts for payments made.

5. SELKIRK BIDS

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Selkirk BIDS (Business Improvement District) for a contribution of £9,995 towards the replacement of the town centre's existing CCTV cameras. The total estimated cost was £20,000 with £10,005 being contributed from BIDS levy payers. In the application it was noted that Scottish Borders Council had indicated that the current system would not be replaced but explained that a public poll on Facebook showed 95% support for new cameras. Mr David Anderson, a Director of Selkirk Means Business Ltd, was in attendance at the meeting to support the application. Mr Anderson explained that the current system was not fit for purpose and that local businesses wanted to take action soon, being already two years into the five year BIDS period. He confirmed that the local Police Scotland Community Beat Officer had been involved in discussions and analysis. Mr Anderson recognised that communities needed to do things for themselves but they also needed support from the Council to do so. Members were supportive of the proposal but there were many unanswered questions such as detailed costs of the package, installation, power supply, responsibility for the CCTV system in terms of managing and ongoing maintenance and the role of Police Scotland in the proposals. After further discussion, Members agreed in principle to the grant requested of £9,995 subject to the provision of further information to satisfactorily address their concerns.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) in principle to grant funding of £9,995 to Selkirk BIDS as a contribution towards the replacement of the town's CCTV system, subject to the provision in writing of further information to satisfactorily address the concerns and questions raised; and**
- (b) to defer a final decision on the application to the next meeting.**

MEMBER

Councillor Penman joined the meeting.

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 9 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2019

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the details of income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the nine months to 31 December 2019, full year projected out-turn for 2019/20 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2020. Pensions and Investments Manager, Kirsty Robb, highlighted the main points of the report. Appendix 1 to the report provided a projected income and expenditure position. This showed a projected surplus of £10,530 for the year. The projected outturn position showed an amount of £350 relating to interest

receivable on cash held by SBC. Also included were dividends from the Common Good Funds investment in Kames Capital amounting to £14,850 which was in line with the overall 5% target and the monthly distribution profile projections provided by Kames. Ms Robb referred to the proposed grants budget 2019/20 of £23,000, the current unallocated budget of £1,958 and additional grants agreed. She suggested that the grants budget could be increased to £26,000 in the forthcoming financial year. With regard to the arrangement with Scott's Selkirk whereby a rent was paid for use of the Green Shed and a grant was provided from the Common Good Fund to cover the cost, it was noted that applications for the grant had not been received for the past two years. Invoices for the rent had not been sent. Unless a grant application was received invoices would need to be raised and the rent would be collected. It was agreed the organisation should be asked again to send in an application so that the financial arrangement could be formalised. Appendix 2 provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2020, showing a projected decrease in the reserves of £58,782. A breakdown of the property portfolio, showing projected rental income for 2019/20 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2020 was shown in Appendix 3. The value of the Kames Capital Investment Fund to 31 December 2019 was shown in Appendix 4 to the report. The fund has a +5.90% 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 +16.05% since investment in February 2018. Members discussed the report and received further information from Ms Robb where requested.

DECISION

(a) NOTED within the appendices to the report:-

- (i) the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2020 in Appendix 2;**
- (ii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
- (iii) the current position of the Kames Capital investment Fund in Appendix 4.**

(b) AGREED the projected income and expenditure for 2019/20 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2019/20.

7. PROPERTY

The Estates Surveyor, Norrie Curtis, introduced Tricia Hill, who had recently joined the Council and would be the member of the Estates team providing support to Selkirk Common Good at future meetings.

7.1 Shawburn Toll and Embankment

Mr Curtis, gave further information following the public consultation, for ideas to tidy up the area around Shawburn Toll and Embankment. There had been approximately 250 responses to the consultation. 82.4% of respondents lived in Selkirk and all were from individuals rather than from organisations. 93.6% thought that there should be changes to Shawburn Toll Embankment and 56.8% of respondents indicated that they would like to take part in future discussions about possible options. There had been around 240 comments/ideas about what should be done. Mr Curtis had collated these by theme as follows: 55.6% wanted the embankment turned back into a viewing point primarily for the Common Riding; 12% wanted the ground and shrubbery tidied up; 16.8% wanted it tidied up and/or returned to its original condition; 6% said keep in its current condition; and 8% of comments were unspecific. In summary Mr Curtis said there was an obvious desire from the community for something to be done with the embankment. Members asked for a note of the comments to be circulated and for this to be discussed again at the next meeting. With reference to paragraph 4.1 of the Minute of 18 December 2019 and the question about the alienability of the piece of Common Good-owned amenity ground at the bottom of Shawburn Road, solicitor Ms Webster, advised that there was no Common

Good dedication in the title deed. If the land was not used by the public it may be alienable. Mr Curtis confirmed that the piece of land was fenced off, was maintained by Neighbourhood Services and did contain benches. Members agreed that more investigation should be carried out about use of this piece of ground.

DECISION

AGREED:-

- (a) to continue discussion at the next meeting about options for the embankment; and**
- (b) to investigate usage of the piece of amenity ground at the bottom of Shawburn Road.**

7.2 Mr Curtis advised that Neighbourhood Services had been contacted by the owner of Shawpark House about the boundary fence, between his land and Common Good-owned Pringle Park, and the need for its replacement. The disposition of the land to the Burgh was silent about responsibility for the boundary fence so in these cases maintenance would be assumed on a 50:50 basis. Mr Curtis confirmed that the boundary was in woodland and was not a stock fence. After discussion Members agreed that it was appropriate for the Common Good Fund to contribute 50% of the cost of a basic post and wire fence and asked Mr Curtis to obtain quotes for this. Should the adjoining owner require a different and more expensive type of fence he would be expected to cover the difference in cost.

DECISION

AGREED that the Estates Surveyor obtain quotes for a basic post and wire fence to replace the boundary fence between Shawpark House and Pringle Park and that the Common Good Fund would pay for 50% of the cost of that type of fence.

7.3 **Green Shed**

With reference to paragraph 4.3 of the Minute of 18 December 2019, Mr Curtis had obtained a quote of just under £6k for the work required on the roof, gutters and down pipes at the Green Shed. Members asked for a second quote to be obtained but gave approval for a maximum of £6k for the work and asked for this to be carried out as soon as possible. Further to the request to change the lock on the building to increase security, it was agreed that 3 keys be provided for each door and that a new access agreement with the tenant be drafted.

DECISION

AGREED

- (a) to approve a cost of up to £6k for the work required on the Green Shed and that this be carried out as soon as possible; and**
- (b) that new security locks be fitted and a new access agreement drafted to accompany new keys provided to an agreed representative of the tenant.**

OTHER PROPERTY MATTERS

7.4 **Farms**

Mr Curtis explained that the tenant had replaced a drain across the yard at South Common at a cost of around £3,500 and was asking to be reimbursed. The Common Good, as landlord, was responsible for this and Members agreed to reimburse the cost in full. Ms Hill would be visiting all three farms in the near future to carry out inspections of the properties and prepare maintenance plans.

DECISION

AGREED to reimburse the tenant of South Common Farm for the cost of replacement of a drain.

7.5 Faw Side Wind Farm

Ms Hill had met with an agent from Community Windpower for initial discussion about road access for transport wind turbine sections to the proposed Faw Side Wind Farm and possible construction of a new road across Common Good-owned land.

7.6 Plant Well – Market Place

Following a request from Councillor Penman, Members agreed that a raised floor could be constructed in the Plant Well in the Market Place, where tables for the Farmers' Market were stored.

7.7 Town Hall Clock

It was noted that the Town Hall Clock had stopped working. Mr Curtis agreed to report this to the Property Officer.

7.8 Victoria Hall

Councillor Edgar asked for a full assessment of the external condition of the Victoria Hall for the next meeting.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the updates above.

(b) AGREED to request a full assessment of the external condition of the Victoria Hall for the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm