

Public Document Pack

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams Live
Event on Thursday, 2 July at 10.00 am

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

In Attendance:- Treasury Business Partner (S. Halliday), Solicitor (J. Webster), Estates
Surveyor (T. Hill), Property Officer (F. Scott), Democratic Services Officer (F.
Walling).

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Members of Selkirk Common Good Fund Sub Committee and members of the public to the Scottish Borders Council's open on-line meeting. The meeting was being held remotely in order to adhere to guidance on public meetings and social distancing currently in place, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. MINUTE

1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 19 February 2020.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

1.2 With regard to paragraph 7.6 of the Minute the Chairman drew attention to a naming error, in that the place referred to was the Pant Well. This would be corrected in the Minute.

DECISION

NOTED

2. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2020

2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory providing the details of income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the year 2019/20, including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2020 and proposed budget for 2020/21. Treasury Business Partner, Sara Halliday, highlighted the main points of the report. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual income and expenditure position for 2019/20. This showed a surplus of £41,230 for the year, which was an increase from the projected surplus figure reported at the 19 February 2020 meeting, due to the sale of a piece of land at South Common Farm. Included in the final outturn were dividends from the Common Good Funds investment in Kames Capital amounting to £11,313 which was less than the overall 5% target and the monthly distribution profile projections provided by Kames. This was as a result of the market value dropping due to the impact of the COVID-19. As the full economic impact of COVID-19 was not yet known the dividend budget had been reduced to reflect 2.5% compared to the target of 5%. Ms Halliday also drew attention to the proposed property repair budget within the proposed budget for 2020/21 shown in Appendix 1. Following advice provided from Property Services, it was proposed to increase the property repair budget by £77,125 which was mainly to allow for the planned maintenance on Smedheugh Farm £34,000 and Linglie Farm £29,000. A list of recipients was included within the report who were in receipt of grants and donations from the Fund, the total amount being £28,037 which was over the budget of £23,000 due to an increase in the number of applications approved. An actual

balance sheet was provided in Appendix 2 of the report, showing an increase in the reserves of £863,606 due to the revaluation of properties offset slightly by unrealised loss on the Kames Investment Fund. Appendix 3 to the report showed a breakdown of the property portfolio, showing the effect of the revaluation. The value of the Kames Capital Investment Fund to 31 March 2020 was shown in Appendix 4 to the report. The fund had a 5.98% unrealised loss 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 -4.83% since investment in February 2018. As a result of the COVID-19 global markets across most asset classes had seen a drop, resulting in an overall negative return for 2019/20. Markets had however seen a bounce back during April and May which had resulted in some of the unrealised loss being negated.

- 2.2 In a discussion of the report, attention was drawn to a mathematical error in the revaluation figures in Appendix 3 to the report, which was issued with the agenda, although this did not affect the final balances. Ms Halliday confirmed that this would be corrected and an amended appendix circulated. In response to a question about the whereabouts of moveable assets, owned by Selkirk Common Good, previously housed in the Town Hall, Solicitor Jane Webster confirmed that, under the terms of the Community Empowerment Act, a list of moveable assets was currently being prepared by legal services. The Chairman agreed to pass on any information he had about these assets which may be helpful in compiling this list.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED within the appendices to the report the:-**
- (i) **actual income and expenditure for 2019/20 in Appendix 1;**
 - (ii) **final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2020 in Appendix 2;**
 - (iii) **summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
 - (iv) **current position of the investment in the Kames Capital investment Fund in Appendix 4.**
- (b) **AGREED the proposed budget for 2020/21 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report.**

Note: with reference to paragraph 2.2 above, an amended version of Appendix 3 to the Monitoring Report is attached to this Minute.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

MEMBERS

All three elected Members of the Sub-Committee declared an interest in the funding application considered in 3.1 below, in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of Scottish Borders Council of 30 January 2020, it was noted that, as the Sub Committee would otherwise be inquorate, the Members could consider the application but that their decision would be in the form of a recommendation to Council, where the application would be finally determined.

3.1 Selkirk Common Riding Trust

There had been circulated copies of an application on behalf of Selkirk Common Riding Trust for financial assistance towards the cost of a new platform system at the Victoria Hall. In the application it was explained that the platform would accommodate the annual ceremony of "Bussin" the Royal Burgh Flag on Common Riding Morning. The new system would, in the long term, save the Common Riding Trustees a considerable amount of money and serve to perpetuate the Common Riding tradition. In a discussion of the

application a question was asked as to where the platform would be stored. After further consideration, Members agreed to recommend that the full amount requested of £2,250 be granted, subject to the arrangements and cost of storage being the responsibility of the Trust.

DECISION

- * **AGREED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL approval of a grant of £2,250 to Selkirk Common Riding Trust, towards the cost of a new platform system at the Victoria Hall subject to the following:-**

- (a) **that the arrangements and cost of storage of the platform be the responsibility of the Trust; and**
- (b) **the work associated with the construction of the platform be carried out in accordance with current guidelines relating to the Covid-19 restrictions.**

3.2 Ettrick Forest Bowling Club

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance on behalf of Ettrick Forest Bowling Club. The application was for £2,540.00 to replace an existing wooden fence, which was rotting, and to replace an ageing hedge with a new fence, thereby enhancing the club's boundary and surroundings. Whilst Members did note from the application papers that the club had a positive bank balance they also recognised that in the current exceptional circumstances the club would not be receiving any income. Members agreed to grant the full amount requested.

DECISION

AGREED to grant funding of £2,540 to Ettrick Forest Bowling Club for the replacement of an existing fence and an ageing hedge, subject to the work being carried out in accordance with current guidelines relating to the Covid-19 restrictions.

3.3 Selkirk Musical Theatre Company

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance on behalf of Selkirk Musical Theatre Company. The application was for £1,500 to part offset the cost of hiring rehearsal and performance space in preparation for a production in February 2021. A total of £2,000 had so far been raised by the organisation's own efforts. However, the application referred to the situation in the light of the pandemic and it was noted that as there were still many conditions with regard to lockdown easing the fund-raising opportunities were very much diminished. Members were very supportive of the value of the Musical Theatre Company to the community of Selkirk, but were concerned that ongoing restrictions may prevent the annual production in February 2021 from going ahead. After further discussion they agreed in principle to grant the full amount requested but that payment should be deferred until it was confirmed that the production would go ahead.

DECISION

AGREED in principle to grant funding of £1,500 to Selkirk Musical Theatre Company towards the cost of the February 2021 production, payment being subject to this production going ahead.

3.4 Girlguiding trip to Canada

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from a young resident of Selkirk, who was a Ranger/Young Leader and had been selected for a Girlguiding trip to Canada in July 2021. The request was for £1,800 towards the total estimated cost of £2,500. In the application it was emphasised that the experience of the trip would benefit not only the young person concerned, but would be shared with other guiding units and the wider community. The application was supported by a letter from the District Commissioner of Girlguiding Scotland, who also referred to the restrictions around

the Covid-19 lockdown which prevented access to usual methods of fundraising. Members recognised the value of the opportunity of this trip for the young person concerned and accepted the wider potential benefits. However there was some discomfort expressed about the application, it being pointed out that the purpose of the Common Good Fund was to benefit the whole community where possible, rather than to support individual residents. Although opinion was divided, the conclusion of the discussion was not to give a grant in this case. It was noted that the applicant had been referred to a more appropriate source of funding.

DECISION

AGREED not to provide a grant towards the applicant's participation in a Girlguiding trip to Canada.

MEMBER

Councillor Cochrane declared an interest in the following application in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and did not take part in the discussion.

3.5 Blooming Selkirk

There had been circulated copies of an application on behalf of Blooming Selkirk for a sum of £750 towards the cost of planted hanging baskets and bedding plants for Selkirk town centre. It was explained that Blooming Selkirk, a sub-group of Selkirk Community Council, was set up initially to supply and distribute hanging baskets for the town centre. The group's current aim was to create a pleasant environment for residents and visitors to the town once travel restrictions were relaxed. A total of £600 had been raised by the group's own efforts but further fundraising had been interrupted by the Covid-19 lockdown. Members were very supportive of the project and agreed to grant in full the amount requested.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £750 to Blooming Selkirk towards the cost of hanging baskets and bedding plants for the town centre, subject to the work being carried out in accordance with current guidelines relating to the Covid-19 restrictions.

4. PROPERTY

The Estates Surveyor, Tricia Hill, was joined at the meeting by Frank Scott who had taken over from Tom Holmes as Property Officer for Selkirk Common Good. With reference to paragraph 7.3 and 7.8 of the Minute of 19 February 2020, Mr Scott gave the following update:

4.1 Green Shed

A quote of £3,500 had been received to carry out the required work on the roof and gutters of the Green Shed, which was well within the maximum £6,000 approved by Councillors at the last meeting. The implementation of this work had therefore been instructed. Mr Scott had also been in touch with a locksmith and the locks on both doors would be changed within the next week. It was noted that Mr Combe would need a set of keys for access by Scott's Selkirk but the others should be held by the Council and a record kept of any that are handed out.

DECISION

NOTED

4.2 Victoria Hall

Mr Scott explained that he and the previous Property Officer had met with a builder to discuss carrying out an assessment of the external condition of the Victoria Hall. Mr Scott recommended that a cherry picker be hired for a week to enable a full assessment to be made. This was likely to cost between £2-3k. The Estates Surveyor confirmed that a sum of £12k had been included in the 2020/21 budget for inspection and remedial works relating to the hall.

DECISION

AGREED to allocate a cost of up to £3k for an assessment of the external condition of the Victoria Hall.

4.3 Smedheugh Farm

Mr Scott advised that he and Ms Hill had visited Smedheugh Farm and had been concerned at the extent of building repairs which were required. In particular Mr Scott showed a photograph of a lintel within a traditional building which was rotten and in need of urgent repair. Members were shocked to see the condition of this structure and expressed disappointment that this had not been previously brought to their attention. They agreed this work be carried out as a matter of urgency.

DECISION

AGREED to approve up to £5k for emergency repair of lintel at Smedheugh Farm

4.4 Farms

In a general discussion about the farms, Members expressed concern that they were not aware of the state of repair of some of the buildings. They referred to regular inspections of properties owned by the Common Good which used to be carried out by Members and asked that these be resumed. Officers confirmed that this could be arranged. Ms Hill added that Property Services had been preparing a 5 year repair plan for all 3 farms and that this would be brought to the next meeting. As advised in the financial report above, Ms Halliday confirmed that the property repair budget for 2020/21 had been increased to cover planned maintenance of the farm properties. Ms Hill also referred to the recent Farm Amnesty on Tenant's Improvements agreed for South Common Farm, which was brought to the attention of Members. She advised that a similar Amnesty document had been requested for Linglie Farm.

DECISION

(a) NOTED that a 5 year repair plan for all 3 farm properties would be brought to the next meeting.

(b) AGREED:-

(i) that officers arrange inspections of Common Good properties by Sub Committee Members;

(ii) to request that property updates to future meetings of the Sub Committee be in writing rather than in verbal form.

5. DRAFT REVISED APPLICATION FORM FOR FUNDING

There had been circulated copies of a draft revised application form, for funding from all the Council's Common Good Funds, which had been re-designed to a format similar to the form used for applications to the Community Fund. The draft form was being presented to all Common Good Fund Sub Committees for comment. Councillor Thornton-Nicol referred to the order of the questions, commenting that 'What does your organisation do and who does it support?' should be the first question asked on the form. She also corrected a point of terminology. There was a further query raised by the Chairman regarding the description of the Royal Burgh which would be checked.

DECISION

APPROVED the revised application form for funding from the Council's Common Good Funds subject to the above amendments.

6. ITEMS LIKELY TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE 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 Paragraphs 6 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

7. **PROPERTY**

Members considered a matter relating to rental payments for properties in the Market Place.

8. **URGENT ITEM: SMEDHEUGH FARM ELECTRICAL WORKS**

Members considered an urgent report by the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure relating to electrical works at Smedheugh Farm and a further urgent matter relating to property.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 am

**SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND
PROPERTY PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE FOR 2019/20
(Actual Income and Expenditure to 31 March 2020)**

Fixed Assets – Land & Buildings	Net Book Value at 31/03/19	Revaluatn Adjust as at 01/04/19	Depn Charge 2019/20	Net Book Value at 31/03/20	Actual Rental Income 2019/20	Actual Property Expenditure at 31/03/20				
						Repairs	Rates, Water & Power	Ins	Other	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
The Green Hut	4,800	28,200	29,700	3,300	1,175	1,065	0	0	0	1,065
Town Hall Clock	0	0	0	0	0	348	0	0	68	416
Pant Well Monument	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria Hall Caretakers Flat	41,975	18,026	53,671	6,330	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria Hall	661,039	254,036	3,857	911,218	0	3,485	0	0	0	3,485
Pringle Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria Park Pavilion site	2,000	2,000	0	4,000	200	0	0	0	39	39
Pringle Park Play Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selkirk Golf Course	78,500	73,500	0	152,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Common Farm	445,570	(571)	6,463	438,536	8,862	1,915	0	0	217	2,132
Smedheugh Farm	770,800	329,200	19,750	1,080,250	23,546	191	0	0	49	240
Selkirk Hill Grazings	35,000	1,000	0	36,000	820	0	0	0	0	0
Linglie Farm	611,665	108,333	6,800	713,198	0	719	0	0	49	768
Victoria Park & Caravan Site	0	0	0	0	7,284	0	0	0	0	0
26 Market Place	21,835	13,067	3,160	31,742	0	1,725	0	0	0	1,686
28 Market Place	29,300	14,100	4,000	39,400	4,160	241	0	(39)	0	138
Selkirk Town Hall	105,065	49,933	12,380	142,618	3,16	5,567	0	(103)	260	5,827
South Common Plantations	3,500	5,500	0	9,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smedheugh Farm Shootings	4,000	(3,000)	0	1,000	200	0	0	0	0	0
Smedheugh Plantations	9,500	25,500	0	35,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linglie Plantations	16,000	6,500	0	22,500	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linglie Farm Shootings	8,000	(4,750)	0	3,250	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linglie Mast Site	87,000	1,000	0	88,000	10,311	0	0	0	0	0
South Common Farm Shoot	0	1,000	0	1,000	200	0	0	0	0	0
Selkirk Hill Management Fee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	10,000
Bog Park Recreation Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Minute Item 2

Fixed Assets – Land & Buildings	Net Book Value at 31/03/19	Revalutn Adjust as at 1/04/19	Depn Charge 2019/20	Net Book Value at 31/03/20	Actual Rental Income 2019/20	Actual Property Expenditure at 31/03/20				
						Repairs	Rates Water & Power	Ins	Other	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Shawburn Amenity Ground	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shawburn Toll Embankment	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bog Park Playground	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria Park Play Area	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civic Amenity Site	70,800	39,000	0	109,800	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosebank Quarry Former Tip Site	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosebank Quarry Play Area	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shawpark Road Development Site	35,000	(3,000)	0	32,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
River Ettrick Salmon Fishing Right	700	50	0	750	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sir Walter Scott	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Property Expenditure - General	0		0	0	0	71	0	0	0	71
Total	3,042,049	998,624	139,781	3,900,892	60,674	15,327	0	(142)	10,682	25,867

Fixed Assets – Moveable Assets	Net Book Value at 31/03/20
	£
Provosts Badge & Chain	0
Treasurer's Badge & Chain	0
Baillies Badges & Chains	0
Burgess Cup	0
Burgess Roll	0
Silver Arrow Display Case	1,500
Haining Painting	0
Total	1,500

This page is intentionally left blank