

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL HAWICK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the HAWICK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held Via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 16
March 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present:- Councillor G Turnbull (Chairman), W McAteer, D Paterson,
C Ramage, N Richards. Mr J Campbell (Hawick CC) Mr W Fletcher (Burnfoot
CC).
Apologies: Councillor S Marshall.
In Attendance:- Estates Strategy Manager (N Curtis), Managing Solicitor (R Kirk), Pensions
and Investment Manager (K Robb), Property Officer (F Scott), Democratic
Services Officer (J Turnbull).

1. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 20 January 2021.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 for signature by the Chairman.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE

- 2.1 With regard to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 20 January 2021, it was noted that the Cultural Services Manager was preparing a report to update Members on the Earl of Minto portrait. A Special meeting of Hawick Common Good Sub-Committee would be scheduled when the report was available.
- 2.2 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute, Members noted that Hawick Recreation Association had also been awarded funding from the Community Fund and the Hawick Common Good grant had been passed for payment.

DECISION

AGREED to arrange a Special Meeting of Hawick Common Good Sub-Committee to consider a report on the Earl of Minto portrait.

3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Interest Link Borders

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance from Interest Link Borders requesting £3,000.00 for the development of existing work to improve the quality of life of 40 members with learning disabilities who live in Hawick and 50 family carers. The Chair thanked Mr Findlay and Ms Reilly for joining the meeting remotely. Mr Findlay and Ms Reilly gave an overview of the project explaining that Interest Link offered a befriending service for people with learning difficulties. During the pandemic they had delivered a robust distance service for members and carers via Zoom offering cooking session, art groups, beetle drives and talent shows. They had also used local organisations including Alchemy for projects. A private Facebook page has also been set up for carers, parents and members with daily posts. Once restrictions were lifted Interest Link would continue with online activities and offer a blended service. Mr Reilly went on to advise that Interest Link also worked with schools and organised Microsoft Teams sessions for crafts and baking. In response to a question Ms Reilly advised that Interest Link used resources at Hawick High School, Wilton Primary School and Burnfoot

Community Hub. The Sub-Committee unanimously supported the application and congratulated Interest Link in managing to deliver their service during the pandemic.

DECISION

AGREED to award £3,000.00 to Interest Link Borders for the development of existing work to improve the quality of life for members with learning disabilities in Hawick.

4. MONITORING REPORT FOR 9 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2021 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 8 December 2020, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Executive Director Finance & Regulatory providing details of income and expenditure for the Hawick Common Food Fund for the nine months to 31 December 2021, a full year projected out-turn for 2020/21, projected balance sheet values at 31 March 2021 and proposed budget for 2021/22. Appendix 1 to the report provided the projected income and expenditure position for 2020/21. This showed a projected surplus of £252 for the year, which was better than the deficit figure reported at the 8 December meeting mainly due to the improvement on the return of the Aegon Investment Fund. Appendix 2 provided a projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 and showed a projected surplus increase in the reserves to £2,273. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected income for 2020/21 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2020. Appendix 3b showed projected property expenditure for 2020/21 and actual property expenditure to 31 December 2020. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected property valuations at 31 March 2021. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 December 2021. Mrs Robb highlighted that the 4.5% return from Aegon was more than the 2% previously anticipated. Members welcomed information detailed in Appendices 3a and 3b on property portfolio performance. Mrs Robb suggested inclusion of a rolling three year maintenance programme in future reports which would give Members a longer term view. In response to questions Mrs Robb explained that the Pilmuir Farm one-off payment for servitude rights was still being negotiated and was likely to be received in 2021/22. Mrs Robb further advised that £51k of Hawick Common Good grants had been approved this year, it was difficult to predict the amount of funding awarded each year. However, the budget for grants could be adjusted as grant applications were received.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:

- (i) the projected income and expenditure for 2020/21 in Appendix 1 as the revised budget for 2020/21; and**
- (ii) the proposed budget for 2021/22 as shown in Appendix 1.**

(b) NOTED:

- (i) The projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2021 in Appendix 2;**
- (ii) The summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4; and**
- (iii) The current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5.**

5. FACILITY FOR CAMPERVANS AT THE COMMON HAUGH

With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of 20 January, the Estates Strategy Manager, Mr Curtis, gave an update on the sluice facility for campervans at the Common Haugh. Mr Curtis advised that the Council had obtained probable costs from a Quantity Surveyor who had estimated the cost of the work to be around £8k. This included building works to create a

compound area, new manhole to lead to the waste water drain, sluice facility, flushing unit, fencing and coin lock.

Councillor Paterson moved that a report be presented to the Special meeting with detailed costings and charging policy before progressing with the sluice facility but received no seconder.

Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Richards, moved as an amendment that officers progress the establishment of the sluice facility and come back to discuss the charging regime at the next meeting.

Before a vote was taken there was further discussion and following advice from officers Councillor Ramage as an alternative amendment moved that officers progress the sluice facility and come back to the Sub-Committee if the cost increased above £10k. This was seconded by Councillor Turnbull and subsequently accepted by all Members so no vote was required.

DECISION AGREED

- (a) To request officers progress the sluice facility for Campervans at the Common Haugh;**
- (b) That if the cost of the sluice increased above £10k officers to come back to the Sub-Committee; and**
- (c) That the amount to charge for use of the sluice facility be determined at the Special Meeting.**

6. HAWICK MARKET

With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 8 December 2020, the Estates Strategy Manager advised of three options for Hawick Market for the Sub-Committee's consideration:

- (i) Advertise the market to determine if any of the existing stallholders were interested in taking on a lease. However, to date no expressions of interest had been received.
- (ii) The Sub-Committee undertake a feasibility study to explore different types of open area markets and then re-advertise the new opportunity. A disadvantage with this option was that the Sub-Committee was then guiding the outcome.
- (iii) To consider if a community organisation would be interested in taking on the market. SOSE could provide support to a community organisation with community engagement, business planning, market research, financial management, legal requirements and partnership working. SOSE could also access support for a feasibility study from Scottish universities. The advantage of this option was the support that could be obtained from SOSE and that consideration could be given to other locations for the market, which might not be Common Good land.

With reference to Option (i) Councillor Paterson advised that an existing stallholder had indicated he was willing to take on the market, he would forward the stallholder's details to Mr Curtis out with the meeting. Following discussion the Sub-Committee asked that Mr Curtis explore Options (i) and (iii) and come back with proposals.

DECISION AGREED

- (b) To request the Estates Strategy Manager discuss with the existing stallholder his interest in taking forward Hawick Market;**
- (c) To liaise with community engagement colleagues to gauge if any community organisation(s) would be interested in taking on the market; and**
- (d) To bring back to the Sub-Committee further proposals on Options (i) and (iii) as detailed above.**

MEMBER

Councillor Richards left the meeting during consideration of the above report.

7. PROPERTY UPDATE

7.1 Hawick Moor

With reference to paragraph 9.1 of the Minute of 8 December 2020, Mr Scott, Property Officer, advised that the asbestos had now been removed from the toilet block and they would be demolished next week. Mr Scott further advised that there was a problem with moles on the racecourse. The tenant had offered to arrange for their control and would recharge the cost back to the Common Good.

7.2 Hornshole

Hawick Volunteers Group had asked for the Council to purchase some materials such as bollards and flagstones for their works at Hornshole. The Council were then to recharge the Group. Mrs Robb advised that the Common Good could donate the materials which would allow costs to be reduced and ensure materials were the correct quality. The Hawick Volunteer Group could make a donation to Hawick Common Good towards the cost.

7.3 Pilmuir Farm

With reference to paragraph 13.3 of the Minute of 20 December, the roofing works had been delayed because of inclement weather. Works would commence in six weeks' time after lambing.

7.4 Hawick Burgh Woodlands

Drainage repairs and fencing had been undertaken to the track at the Golf Course. Mr Curtis added that replanting works have now been completed and this concluded the timber felling and replanting works.

7.5 Property Inspections

In response to a question Mr Scott advised that only minor maintenance was required to properties. The five year plan required updated as it had slipped because of Covid-19.

DECISION

AGREED

- (a) **The tenant at Pilmuir Farm to arrange for mole control and recharge the Council for the works;**
- (b) **To donate materials to Hawick Recreation Association for their works at Hornshole. Hawick Recreation Association to make a donation to Hawick Common Good towards costs; and**
- (c) **To update the Five Year Plan.**

8. PRIVATE BUSINESS

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

9. PRIVATE MINUTE

Members approved the Private Minute of Hawick Common Good Fund Sub Committee held on 20 January 2021.

10. **PROPERTY UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received updates on matters pertaining to Common Good properties.

The meeting concluded at 5.50 pm