

# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHAMBERS  
INSTITUTION TRUST held via Microsoft  
Teams on Wednesday, 25th January, 2023  
at 4.00 pm

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- Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), D. Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone and E. Small
- Apologies:- Councillor V. Thomson
- In Attendance:- Chief Legal Officer, Estates Strategy Manager, Property Officer (G. Smith), Projects Manager (S. Renwick), S. Milne (Live Borders), F. Colton (Live Borders), Localities Development Co-Ordinator (K. Harrow), Community Engagement Officer (H. Lacon), K. Nugent (Page\Park Architects), Democratic Services Team Leader, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

## CHAIR'S REMARKS

Sam Coe was welcomed to the Meeting as the newly appointed observer member of the Beneficiaries Group.

### 1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair 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. Item 7 was to be discussed in general terms in light of the commercial sensitivities. Item 11 was not to be considered in private and was to be discussed in general terms in light of the commercial sensitivities. Detailed fee proposals had been distributed in the private agenda pack.

### 2. MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 14 December 2022 and the Action Tracker.

## DECISION

**APPROVED the tracker and the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

### 3. BENEFICIARIES GROUP FEEDBACK

- 3.1 The Chair provided an update from the meeting on 24 January 2023. Lorna McCulloch had produced minutes which the Chair shared. The recent application for Levelling up funding had been unsuccessful. Feedback was to follow from civil servants and alternative funding sources were to be sought by the Beneficiaries Group.

The renovation of the Burgh Hall was underway; the floor had been protected, the suspended ceiling and light fittings had been removed. Scaffolding was in the process of being installed. Gareth Smith reported that following a visit by the Health and Safety Advisor, there was a need for the erection of further scaffolding to allow safe access to the high ceiling. A total of three linked scaffolding platforms was now required; one each along the lengths of the hall and a higher platform down the centre of the hall. Consequently the price had increased from £5,900 to £19,200. The Chair sought approval from the Committee for the £13,300 increase in funding. This was agreed.

- 3.2 On the matter of the blinds to be installed, there was further research to be done on suppliers and costings. Sam Coe had suggested that a standard horizontal blind fitted below the curve of the arched windows would not be appropriate in a Grade A listed

building; a blind that ascended from the bottom of the window up into the curve was more suitable. Gareth Smith had been given contact details of potential suppliers. The Chair acknowledged that the blinds may be an issue that could be considered later if the costs were to be prohibitive. Gareth Smith recommended that electrical cabling was installed to the windows during the current work, irrespective of when the blinds were to be fitted and sought approval to obtain a quotation from the electrician for this. Mr Smith undertook to obtain a quote.

- 3.3 Councillor Pirone provided an update on the consultation process. A communications and engagement strategy was approved by the Beneficiaries Group. There were to be three main phases: the first, stakeholder mapping, had been completed by the Chair, Lorna McCulloch and Hannah Lacon with an email sent on 25 January to those identified; the second phase was to be the facilitation brief that the Chair and Sam Coe had been working on; the third phase was to be further public engagement sessions via online and paper surveys with a poster/leaflet campaign signposting the public and Tweeddale residents to further information. The nature and subsequent results of the public consultation were to be shared with Page\Park architects by Councillor Pirone.
- 3.4 With reference to the Fee Proposal supplied by Page\Park architects, there followed a discussion on the proposal for a mezzanine floor. Karen Nugent, architect with Page\Park reported that a site visit was required to carry out basic dimensional survey measurements. Thereafter an initial sketch proposal was to be completed by around 17 February 2023, to be used in the public consultation exercise. Accessibility to a mezzanine floor could be gained via the lift proposed in the wider refurbishment of the Chambers Institution and would be included in that main feasibility plan to be drawn up in due course. With reference to Item 1.0 of the Fee Proposal, The Chair sought approval for funding of the Burgh Hall feasibility sketch study; £5280 + VAT= £6,336. This was agreed.
- 3.5 With reference to Item 2.0 of the Fee Proposal, Ms Nugent indicated that preparation of roof and window drawings would begin once a visual survey and photography of the roof voids had been completed. It was important to ensure appropriate ventilation when insulating old buildings and improving energy performance. A date of mid-April 2023 for completion of this exercise was noted.
- 3.6 In response to a question about a fabric condition survey of the Chambers Institution buildings, Norrie Curtis suggested that a survey of only the Burgh Hall initially was a piece of work that might be undertaken by Page\Park. Ms Nugent indicated that access to carry out this survey was problematic. In order to ascertain the state of roof slates and flashing and identify areas of obvious deterioration, a mobile elevated platform would likely be required to conduct a comprehensive survey. Fiona Colton (Live Borders) suggested a basic quantification of environmental conditions be carried out in tandem with a fabric conditions survey. Hanwell environmental data loggers were already in use in the library and the acquisition of a further monitor for the proposed area of the mezzanine floor of the Burgh Hall might have given useable data. Ms Nugent confirmed that an architect's summary could be done to advise on how best to obtain data on ventilation, lighting, temperature and relative humidity. It was agreed that collectively Fiona Colton, Karen Nugent and Norrie Curtis produced a proposal before the next meeting of the Beneficiaries Group.
- 3.7 With reference to Item 2.0 of the Fee Proposal, the Chair sought approval for funding of Burgh Hall: Insulation and secondary glazing strategy; approximately £1500. This was agreed.
- 3.8 With reference to paragraph 2.2 of the Note of the meeting on 14 December 2022, the Chair provided an update on the appointment of a facilitator. There had been agreement

on how the facilitator was to be appointed and Scottish Borders Council had advised the Beneficiaries Group to use the same procurement framework as the recently appointed place making consultants. A list of consultants was to be compiled to whom a copy of the brief was to be sent. Thereafter a short list of three consultants was to be brought to the Beneficiaries Group from which a final selection was to be made.

- 3.9 The Chair reported that on 20 December 2022 the John Buchan Museum had suffered flood damage from three burst pipes following the cold weather. Mr Smith reported that there had been surprisingly little damage which could potentially be remedied by installation of a dehumidifier. Clarity was sought on the insurance position as there had been some damage to the flooring after the ingress of 3-4 inches of water. Mr Curtis confirmed that the liability lay with Scottish Borders Council's buildings insurance. It was agreed to allow more time for the floor to dry out and to be surveyed before a claim was lodged. Mr Smith pointed out that SBC routinely turned off and drained down water systems at this time of year and advised that the John Buchan Museum adopted this practice also. To this end Mr Smith had instructed the plumber to install a Borthwicks valve to allow the water to be turned off where it entered the Museum.
- 3.10 Gareth Smith reported that a meeting to finalise paint colours had been arranged on 27 January for the sub-group, the electrician and the Heritage Officer Sanni Roberts to attend. Low level paint scrapes that had been carried out identified that seven layers of paint had been applied over the years and sample boards of matching paints had been produced. High level paint scrapes were to be carried out in due course and it was anticipated that there were fewer paint layers to be identified there. Advice was also to be sought on window blinds and approval for lighting fixtures.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the update and AGREED to:**

- (a) to fund an increase of £13,000 for additional scaffolding platforms;**
- (b) obtain an electrician's quote for cabling up to the windows**
- (c) to fund Item 1.0 of the Fee Proposal: the Burgh Hall feasibility sketch study to be carried out by Page\Park; £5280 + VAT= £6,336;**
- (d) to present a proposal to measure environmental conditions of the mezzanine floor to the next meeting for consideration at the next Beneficiaries Group meeting on 21 February**
- (e) to fund Item 2.0 of the Fee Proposal: Burgh Hall Insulation and secondary glazing strategy; approximately £1500.**

#### **4. PROPERTY UPDATE**

Gareth Smith provided information on the removal of header tank in the corner of the Burgh Hall. Mr Smith had been in consultation with Gary Kennaway, the Council's heating specialist who indicated a cost of around £2k to pressurise the heating system and install a new unit. Alternatively the tank could be boxed in and painted to match the walls. The Property Maintenance Budget was suggested as the potential source of funding for this work.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the update.**

#### **5. ADDITIONAL WI-FI ACCESS POINTS**

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Note of the meeting of 14 December 2022, a revised quote had been submitted by GB Technologies. Sheena Milne Live Borders IT manager reported that the quote detailed Wi-Fi coverage to the Registrar's Office and into the exterior quadrangle in addition to the Burgh Hall. The one-off cost of the installation was to be £4404.38 + VAT. Attention was drawn to the £354 + VAT annual licence fee for

Connectify web filtering and splash pages and the monthly broadband cost of £32.50 + VAT. Mr Smith recommended an engineer attended on site as soon as possible to program the installation in tandem with current works and undertook to make contact with GB Technologies and thereafter proceed with the requisitioning. The Chair stated for the Committee that this piece of work was separate to the rest of the Burgh Hall renovations.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve:**

- (a) the one-off cost of Wi-Fi installation into the Burgh Hall, Registrar's Office and Quadrangle at a cost of £4404.38 + VAT;**
- (b) the annual fee of Connectify web filtering and splash page at a cost of £354 + VAT**
- (c) the monthly broadband fee of £32.50 + VAT**

#### **6. BURGH HALL FEE PROPOSAL AND SCOPE OF WORK**

This was discussed under paragraph 3 above.

***The meeting concluded at 5.05 pm***