

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the CHAMBERS
INSTITUTION TRUST held via Microsoft
Teams on Wednesday, 15th March, 2023 at
4.00 pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chair), D. Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone and E. Small

Apologies:- Councillor V. Thomson

In Attendance:- Chief Legal Officer, Property Officer (G. Smith), F. Colton (Live Borders),
Localities Development Co-Ordinator (K. Harrow), S. Coe, Trainee
Democratic Services Officer

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 AND ACTION TRACKER

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 22 February 2023 and the Action Tracker.

DECISION

(a) **APPROVED the tracker and the Minute for signature by the Chair.**

3. BENEFICIARIES GROUP UPDATE

There had been circulated copies of the Note of the Beneficiaries Group meeting held on 14 March. The Chair provided a brief summary of the meeting, reported that attendance was considerably lower for this in-person meeting and handed over to Gareth Smith, Property Officer. The walls were framed and boarded where necessary and the window arches had been formed and plastered. Ornamental plasterwork was now in place around the windows with work to begin on the top central band soon. It was estimated that 50% of the cornice work had been completed. The proposed date for the dropping of the scaffold, the week ending 31 March, was considered as being too soon as other trades still had work outstanding that required high level access. Electrical cabling was now complete along with smoke detection preparation by Border Safeguard. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 25 January 2023, Mr Smith confirmed that the header tank and pipework removal and boiler work had proved more costly than anticipated and that the cost was to be met from the Property Maintenance budget. With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 25 January it was also confirmed that the cost of the installation of Wi-Fi (£4408.38 +VAT) was to be met by Live Borders. The project had five weeks to completion and it was anticipated that the next two to three weeks would see good progress once the ornamental plasterwork was complete. Light fittings were to be installed once the scaffold was removed to safeguard against damage. Most paint colours had been agreed and paint sample boards had been produced for the high level work. The roof timber colour required further investigation and samples to be prepared and Councillor Pirone, Fiona Colton and Sam Coe agreed to attend the Burgh Hall on Friday 17 March to help with colour selection. It had been agreed with Sanne Roberts, Heritage Officer that wall fans that required rewiring were to be removed. White wall lights had been selected with the proviso that the finish was to match the pendant light. It had been

agreed to temporarily apply a plain decal to a number of windows to hide the view of the rain gutter and pigeon nesting site, with further discussions to follow on Friday following an inspection of the windows. The radiator covers were to be clad with a timber grill and painted to match the timber panelling. With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute of January 25 it was agreed that the estimated cost of £58k rendered the installation of automated window blinds too costly during this first phase of work. It was agreed to postpone this particular project to a later phase along with insulation and acoustics when additional funding had been identified. It was agreed that it was important to convey to the public that the work undertaken on the Burgh Hall was the first phase in a longer term programme of work.

DECISION:
NOTED the update.

4. BURGH HALL BUDGET AND COSTS

- 4.1 With reference to paragraph 2.1 of the Minute of the meeting 22 February 2023, there had been circulated a spreadsheet of costs of the Burgh Hall renovations. The Chair reiterated that the Wi-Fi and header tank costs were not to be met from the Burgh Hall budget and the spend to date was just under £130k. Mr Smith confirmed that there would be some additional costs associated with reinstating the stage lights and stage curtains. The funding for the Burgh Hall work was as follows: £100k from Place Based Investment Program and £29k from the Chambers Institution Trust. Fiona Colton (Live Borders) confirmed that further discussion was to be had to determine the funding of the Wi-Fi wiring installation and the 2 year maintenance contract. The cost of the maintenance contract was to be considered as part of the Service Level Agreement between Live Borders and the Chambers Institution Trust with the cost to be recovered from the income generated by the Burgh Hall for Live Borders.
- 4.2 Gareth Smith confirmed that the Burgh Hall was to be handed back to Live Borders on 21 April 2023.
- 4.3 With reference to paragraph 3.8 of the Minute of 25 January 2023, Localities Development Coordinator Kenny Harrow had proposed that the appointment of a facilitator became part of Peebles 'Place Making Plan' process which allowed access to the facilitators appointed to Scottish Borders Council's approved list. Mr Harrow agreed to prepare a proposal as part of a wider Peebles Place Making Plan to the next meeting on 10 May 2023.
- 4.4 With reference to paragraph 2.2 of the minute of 22 February 2023, Sam Coe reported there was to be a workshop on 24 March that involved Page\Park Architects, Live Borders and the Beneficiaries Group to discuss the core uses and possibilities for the Burgh Hall and to prioritise its competing use and needs. Photographs of the interior of St Andrew's Church, Blackadder were shared by way of illustration of the space afforded by the installation of a complete first floor – one of the proposals to be considered with Page\Park. The Church was of a similar size to the Burgh Hall with a vaulted ceiling and large stained glass windows on the gable ends and side walls.
- 4.5 The Chair reported that the Beneficiaries Group had discussed the formation of a sub group to prepare a business plan for the Chambers Institution Trust going forward. Currently there was a Service Level Agreement between Live Borders and Chambers Institution Trust that facilitated the running of the Burgh Hall. The Chair sought approval for the formation of the sub group which was agreed.

DECISION:

- (a) **NOTED the update and AGREED to postpone the installation of automated window blinds to a later phase of work once additional funding had been identified.**
- (b) **NOTED the briefing paper and that the Burgh Hall was to be handed back to Live Borders on 21 April 2023.**

- (c) **AGREED to consider a proposal from the Localities Development Coordinator to contract an SBC approved facilitator as part of a wider Peebles Place Making Plan at the next meeting on 10 May 2023.**
- (d) **AGREED to the formation of a sub group of the Beneficiaries Group to prepare a business plan for the Chambers Institution Trust.**

5. **140TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

With reference to paragraph 2.9 of the Minute of the meeting on 14 December 2022, there followed a discussion on a proposed event to mark the 140th anniversary of the death of William Chambers. Fiona Colton reported that the museum and library service was to hold a function on Thursday 17 and Friday 18 May 2023. It was agreed that an invitation only opening event be held on 18 May that catered for all parties and individuals involved in the Burgh Hall project so far. The Chair undertook to liaise with Fiona Colton to produce a guest list. There was another proposal that a volunteer fair be held on Saturday 24th June 2023 that incorporated the Citizens Advice Bureau, Live Borders library and museum service, Peebles Common Good Fund and the John Buchan Museum among others. The date was unanimously agreed and the apologies of the Chair and Mr Coe were noted for the volunteer fair.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) **to host an invitation only event on Friday 18 May 2023 to mark the 140th anniversary of William Chamber's death and the reopening of the Burgh Hall; and**
- (b) **to hold a volunteer fair in the Burgh Hall on Saturday 24 June with interested stakeholders**

6. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

The Chair reported that at a recent meeting of stakeholders of the Chambers Institution Trust buildings, Ian Buckingham of the John Buchan Museum had requested that the committee considered making improvements to the museum windows and signage. There followed a short discussion on the exterior appearance of the building that faced onto the High Street. Its Grade A listed status required consultation regarding the possible re-siting of benches, the removal of railings, window replacements and the erection of temporary signage. Gareth Smith undertook to liaise with Estates and Planning.

DECISION

NOTED.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Chambers Institution Trust was scheduled for 10 May 2023 at 4pm via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm