

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

SELKIRK COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the SELKIRK
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chamber, HQ on
Tuesday, 1 December, 2015 at 3.00 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), M. Ballantyne, and V. M. Davidson (from para 2). Community Councillor T Combe

In Attendance:- Solicitor (J Webster), Corporate Finance Manager (L Mirley), Estates Surveyor (J Morison), Democratic Services Officer (F Walling)

One member of public

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.

MEMBER

Councillor Davidson joined the meeting during the following item of business.

2. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the details of the income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the 6 months to 30 September 2015, full year projected out-turn for 2015/16 and projected balance sheet values to 31 March 2016. Appendix I to the report provided detail of income and expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year. The projected net position for the year was a deficit of £3,669. A projected Balance Sheet, shown in Appendix 2, indicated a projected decrease in the reserves of £80,026. Appendix 3 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio which showed actual Income and Expenditure to 30 September 2015. The Corporate Finance Manager gave Members an update with regard to the investment in the Newton Fund. The projections for the Capital Reserves included the unrealised gain for the Newton Fund as at 31 March 2015 but due to the extremely volatile nature of the markets no estimate had been made for the current year's movement. Included in Appendix 4, which detailed the current position in respect of the fund, was a chart indicating the Newton Fund quarterly return performance against the Benchmark and against an equity performance index (MSCI AC World Index). With regard to the Grants and Donations budget, the Corporate Finance Manager circulated copies of the Selkirk Hill Management Group annual accounts 2014/15 which indicated a surplus for the year. The additional information required from the Christmas Illuminations Group had still not been received. Councillor Davidson offered to pursue this issue to ascertain whether the grant was still required. Officers proceeded to answer Members' questions about expenditure linked to certain properties. The Estates Surveyor agreed to look into where responsibility lay for the maintenance of the surface of the Golf Club car park following complaints about its condition. Discussion continued on the estimated actual expenditure on Common Good owned property in relation to the projected Property Expenditure budget of £50,000. The Corporate Finance Manager agreed to liaise with the Estates Surveyor about actual and estimated expenditure on property for the remainder of the year and to come back to the next meeting with a revised projection.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED the projected Income and Expenditure for 2015/16 detailed in Appendix 1:-**
- (b) **NOTED:-**
 - (i) **the projected Balance Sheet value to 31 March 2016 in Appendix 2;**
 - (ii) **the summary of the property portfolio in Appendix 3; and**
 - (iii) **the current position of the investment in the Newton Fund in Appendix 4**
- (c) **AGREED to request that for the next meeting:-**
 - (i) **a revised projected Property Expenditure budget be included in the accounts to more accurately reflect actual spend; and**
 - (ii) **the Estates Surveyor report back on the responsibility for repair of the surface of the Golf Club car park.**

3. HILL MANAGEMENT GROUP

Councillor Edgar gave a report on the Selkirk Hill Management Group. He explained that in 1996, following an agreement with Ettrick and Lauderdale District Council, Selkirk Community Council took over management of Selkirk Hill for the benefit of the people of Selkirk. Copies of the Group's Charter were circulated at the meeting. There were approximately ten members of the Group who met monthly but also held four formal meetings per year. Following a schedule of works, routine ground maintenance, including provision and repair of seats and bridges, was carried out by the Hill Warden with assistance from the Community Justice Team. The Hill supported a wide diversity of plants and wildlife and the Warden was closely involved with its conservation and management. In this respect the Group also received guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage and supported any study of the Hill and its habitat. The right of the Selkirk people to access and use the Hill in a free and unhindered manner was preserved and the Group worked closely with other local organisations who wished to use this facility. Councillor Edgar went on to describe projects that had been carried out and those which would be taken forward once match funding had been approved. In the discussion that followed Councillor Ballantyne referred to some gates which were difficult to negotiate and some which were not passable by horses or cycles. She asked about the access policy to the Hill for different user groups. Councillor Edgar indicated that riders and cyclists were encouraged to use certain areas of the ground although access was not prohibited to any section. It was agreed that it would be useful if a map of routes was displayed to provide information about paths and areas accessible to different user groups. Discussion continued on the need to control secondary growth on the land which was beginning to restrict views from some of the benches. The ground also appeared under-grazed but it was noted that, in accordance with Scottish Natural Heritage guidance there was a restriction on numbers of sheep and grazing periods to protect flora and fauna. Members referred to the Selkirk Hill Management Group annual accounts, which had been circulated, and requested that in future the accounts show where funds had been allocated to projects, to provide further information and protect the Selkirk Common Good and Neighbourhood Services input.

DECISION

NOTED the Selkirk Hill Management Group Annual Report and Accounts.

4. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 1 September 2015.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman

5. **ITEM 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 Paragraph 6 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

6. **MINUTE**

Members approved the private section of the Minute of 1 September.

7. **PROPERTY UPDATE**

Members considered an update by the Estates Surveyor.

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm