

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 on
Wednesday 7 June 2023 at 15.00 pm.

Present:- Councillors C. Cochrane (Chair), L Douglas and E. Thornton-Nicol and
Community Councillor I. King
In Attendance:- Acting Chief Financial Officer, Estates Surveyor (T. Hill), Property Officer (G.
Smith), Solicitor (J. Webster), Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall).

1. **MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER**

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 15 February 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

1.2 **Action Tracker**

The action tracker had been circulated. Items which were completed would be removed from the tracker once they had been reported. Regarding the issue of insurance, raised at the 15 June 2022 meeting, the Solicitor explained that the former Principal Solicitor, who had since left Scottish Borders Council, had been investigating the situation and that she was not aware of the outcome of any research. The Solicitor undertook to investigate matters and report back. Community Councillor King expressed his gratitude for a response regarding the legal ownership of Common Good Funds and acknowledged that further discussions regarding the administration and ownership of the Common Good could be a topic for further discussion.

DECISION

NOTED the action tracker.

2. **MONITORING REPORT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH 2023**

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Acting Chief Financial Officer which provided details of income and expenditure for the Selkirk Common Good Fund for the year 2022/23 including balance sheet values as at 31 March 2023, a full year projected out-turn for 2023/24 and projected balance sheet values as at 31 March 2024. Appendix 1 to the report provided the actual income and expenditure position for 2022/23. That showed a projected surplus of £46,456 for the year, which was better than the previously reported surplus on 13 February 2023 because of an increase in income due to the payment from Scottish Water for temporary occupation at South Common Farm. The projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 was provided in Appendix 2 to the report, which showed a projected decrease in reserves of £124,750. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual rental income and projected net return for 2022/23 was provided in Appendix 3a, and a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property expenditure for 2022/23 was provided in Appendix 3b. A breakdown of the property portfolio showing projected property valuations at 31 March 2023 was provided in Appendix 4 to the report. Appendix 5 showed to the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 December 2023. The Acting Chief Financial Officer, Mrs Suzy Douglas, presented the report and highlighted that a budget of £20,650 had been set for grants, of which £16,845 had been paid out. Mrs Douglas confirmed that the revaluation charge was not a cash transaction and represented an accounting adjustment. In response to a question regarding whether the income from

South Common related to Scottish Water would be received annually, the Solicitor explained that some land had been sold and the Estates Surveyor explained that the money had been received by the Common Good due to Common Good owned land being occupied whilst works were carried out. In response to a question regarding the lack of listed values for movable assets, Mrs Douglas undertook to investigate whether it would be possible to have items valued and those values included in the accounts. Members highlighted that it was important to know the value of the assets in case of insurance claims. In response to a question regarding fluctuations to predicted values, especially of farms, Mrs Douglas undertook to investigate the presentation of the accounts and provide an update via email.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:-

- (i) the projected income and expenditure for 2023/24 in Appendix 1 to the report as the revised budget for 2023/24, subject to the Acting Chief Financial Officer providing an explanation of the presentation of the figures; and**
- (ii) that the Acting Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor would explore the valuation and insurance of moveable assets.**

(b) NOTED:-

- (i) the actual income and expenditure for 2022/23 in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (ii) the projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2023 in Appendix 2 to the report; and**
- (iii) the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3a, 3b and 4; and**
- (iv) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5 to the report**

3. PROPERTY

- 3.1** The Chair invited the Property Officer, Mr Gareth Smith, to provide an update on property matters. The external joinery work and painting had been completed at the Court House Coffee Shop. The joinery work at the Smedheugh Conservatory had been completed, with paperwork expected in the next few weeks. The shed at Smedheugh was nearing completion, with indications that it would be completed within one week. It was expected that tree felling would take place at Lingle farm where the fence was expected to be located shortly. Regarding the South Common guttering and roofing, works were still outstanding. The tap at Victoria Hall had been fitted.
- 3.2** Regarding recent expenditure, Mr Smith explained that there had been slight damage to the wall at the gateway into Victoria Park. Repairs had been instructed under the minor repair budget, and the cost was not expected to be greater than £150-200. Mr Smith had instructed the Fletcher Memorial to be cleaned and waxed in advance of the Selkirk Common Riding. It was expected that future works would be required to the monument, which would need to be decided at a later date.
- 3.3** A conservation masonry specialist had been asked to examine the Walter Scott Memorial, which needed repair. Older photographs of the Monument had been examined and had confirmed that it had not originally been painted. The masonry specialist had provided a

quote of £25,650 to undertake the work to remove the paint, carry out the works to the stone and repaint. The state of the Monument meant that a long-term plan for its restoration was important, and Mr Smith highlighted that seeking grant funding could assist with the cost of the works. Members highlighted that the importance of safeguarding the Monument. The Monuments referred to were both listed properties, and whilst maintenance works were acceptable, suitable permissions needed to be secured prior to any major works. Mr Smith confirmed that discussions would be held with Scottish Borders Council's Heritage and Design Officer before any works were undertaken, and that he would await instruction from the Sub-Committee before proceeding with any activity. Members highlighted that Historic Environment Scotland's Small Grant Scheme had the potential to match funding up to £25k, and that plans to restore the Monument to its original condition could prove the best course of action. Mr Smith was happy for the Committee to be involved in a site visit to the Monument with the Heritage and Design Officer.

DECISION

(a) **AGREED that the Property Officer would hold discussions with the Heritage and Design Officer regarding the Walter Scott Memorial; and**

(b) **NOTED the update.**

4. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

4.1 There had been circulated copies of applications for financial assistance from the Selkirk Silver Band and Selkirk Royal Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Association with the agenda.

4.2 Selkirk Silver Band

The application from the Selkirk Silver Band was for £1500 to help fund their trip to compete in the National Brass Band Championships in Cheltenham in September 2023. The Band were the only Scottish Borders band represented at the finals. They had estimated that the total cost for the Band to compete would be £9k, which comprised of £4.5k for accommodation, £2k for transport, a £375 entry fee, £280 for bandsmen tickets for entry to the venue, £500 for a training day and £1.5k for conductor's fees. The application form explained that the Band had undertaken various fundraising efforts. Members discussed the application, agreed to grant the funding, and wished the group success. It was highlighted that evaluation forms were not being presented following grants being awarded, and Members requested that evaluations were requested from successful applicants and completed in a timely manner.

DECISION

AGREED to approve a grant of £1500 to Selkirk Silver Band.

4.3 Selkirk Royal Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Association

Selkirk Royal Burgh Ex Standard Bearers Association had applied for £1000 as part of their Selkirk Young Souters Association. The grant would be used to provide horse hire for the Young souters, with 3 rides for younger riders, and 6 in total at £40 per lesson. A beach ride for 20 members would also be undertaken, at a cost of £80/100 per rider, including a minibus. An Open Day and Barbecue had also been held. Members discussed the application, in particular whether the grant would provide sufficient benefit to the people of Selkirk. Following extensive and detailed discussions it was unanimously agreed not to grant funding.

AGREED not to approve the grant to Selkirk Royal Burgh Ex-Standard Bearers Association.

5. PRIVATE BUSINESS 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 the paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

6. PRIVATE MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

The Private section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 15 February 2023 was approved for signature by the Chair.

7. PROPERTY

The Sub-Committee received an update on private matters relating to Common Good owned property.

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm.