

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEEBLES
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Burgh Hall, Chambers Institution
Trust, High Street, Peebles on Wednesday,
11th June, 2025 at 5.00 pm

Present:- Councillors V. Thomson (Chair), M. Douglas, R. Tatler, G. Ramsay (PCC)

Apologies:- Councillors D. Begg, J. Pirone and E. Small, Director Corporate Governance, T. Hill (Estates Surveyor)

In Attendance:- Chief Finance Officer (L. Turner), Property Services Manager (G. Smith) and Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden); J. Falla (Floral Peebles), Members of the Public

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. An additional item in relation to Tweeddale Youth Action was to be discussed in Private Business.

2. **MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 26 February 2025. Councillor Tatler advised that the public consultation on the installation of removable parking bollards in the area adjacent to Victoria Park had been completed and was to be removed from the tracker. A summary of the consultation was to be appended to this minute.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute and updates to Action Tracker.

3. **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2025**

- 3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Director Finance. The Financial Monitoring Report for 12 months to 31 March 2025 and Proposed budget for 2025/26 provided the details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles Common Good Fund for the year to 31 March 2025 against figures previously forecast, the proposed budget for the year to 31 March 2026 and high-level forecast information for the following 2 years. Appendix 1 showed a summary of the total cash income and expenditure for the Common Good fund, the balance of which created the cash balance held with SBC. This showed a deficit balance of £139,635 at 31 March 2025 against the previously forecasted deficit balance of £202,300. The loan approved by SBC was due to be drawn in 2025/26. Appendix 2 provided details of the rental income by property. It showed rent received to 31 March 2025 of £49,577, against the previously forecasted income of £51,605. Appendix 3 provided total property costs. It showed total expenditure to 31 March 2025 of £179,890, against the forecasted amount of £198,289. Appendix 4 related to Property income and expenditure and provided a breakdown of the net income /expenditure position by property at 31 March 2025. It showed a deficit on properties of £18,352 to 31 March 2025 against the forecast deficit of £15,658. Appendix 5 provided information on the approved grants distributed for 2024/25 totalling £17,315. Appendix 6 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund as at 31 March 2025 (£467,260) and investment income of £27,188 received to 31 March 2025 against the forecast income of £23,700. Full Accounts for the Fund were to be presented at the earliest

meeting following the conclusion of the statutory audit and approval of the Scottish Borders Council Accounts.

- 3.2 Chief Finance Officer, Lizzie Turner reported that the loan requested from SBC was £150,000 instead of the previous figure of £190,000 which was welcomed by Members. In response to a question on notional rental, Ms Turner explained that this was a means to recognise the rent reduction applied to two groups as a grant. In relation to Greenside Car Park funds, Ms Turner confirmed an £18k turnover in the last 2 years. Any retrospective monies were held in the Pay Parking fund to which Elected Members had access. Parking income was not included in the financial report as SBC collected pay parking fees centrally. Once operating and maintenance costs were deducted an amount was allocated to the Peebles Pay Parking fund; the current balance was to be carried forward into 2025/26. Further discussion was to be had on the management of Greenside Car Park and its revenue at a future meeting. The Chair confirmed that grants from the Pay Parking Fund were now being paid following a delay to some agreements in 2024/25.

DECISION

AGREED to

- (a) note the actual income and expenditure for 2024/25 and forecast income and expenditure for 2026/27 and 2027/28 within Appendix 1;**
- (b) the proposed budget for 2025/26 as summarised in Appendix 1;**
- (c) borrow from SBC £150,000 which is £40,000 below the amount approved by Council 27th March 2025;**
- (d) note the summary of the property expenditure and net expenditure by property in Appendices 2,3 and 4; and**
- (e) note the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 6.**

4. PROPERTY UPDATE

Gareth Smith, Property Manager, provided a property maintenance report which detailed the expenditure totalling £3880.80 since 25 February 2025 and pending charges of £1109.24. A copy of the report was to be appended to this minute. Mr Smith advised Members that the Gytes allotments were not a Common Good asset as previously thought. Consequently, the remedial work to the plumbing was the responsibility of SBC Property Maintenance and approval for the work had been sought. Following complaints concerning the state of the ramp access to Fotheringham Bridge, quotes for its repair were to be considered in Private Business. An attendee raised the matter of water pooling at Ninian's Haugh and Mr Smith agreed to obtain quotes.

DECISION

NOTED the update

5. ESTATES UPDATE

With the absence of Estate Surveyor Tricia Hall, a summary update was provided via email as follows:

- In terms of Haylodge depot, Heads of Terms have been agreed for a ten-year lease of the property to Peebles and District Men's Shed. The long-term lease was subject to the group obtaining planning permission for a change of use to operate the premises as a Men's Shed.
- In the interim, a short-term lease was to be offered to the Men's Shed to provide access to the property while planning approval was sought. This was to allow the Men's Shed to carry out minor preparatory works in anticipation of the long-term lease.
- The legal team was in the process of drafting the lease documentation.

The Chair requested sight of the architect plans as soon as possible. An ecological survey had been carried out today and plans were to be available on SBC's Planning Portal shortly.

- In relation to the Tweed Fishings, fishing permits were issued by Live Borders from the Gytes Leisure Centre. In the last six months of 2024, two permits were sold. An update on permit sales for the first half of 2025 was expected shortly.

Permit pricing was as follows:

- Resident Permit: £62
- Non-Resident Permit: £130
- 1-Day Pass: £46.50

Permits covered salmon and sea trout fishing, with all catches required to be returned to the river (catch and release).

DECISION

NOTED the update.

6. KINGSMEADOWS TOILETS

Councillor Tatler advised that of the three public toilet facilities in Peebles, East Station continued to be closed due to vandalism and Kingsmeadows was open but subject to continued instances of vandalism. Police Scotland had been asked to review CCTV footage. The facilities at Haylodge Park currently operated on a summer timetable. SBC had committed to fund one facility per large settlement and had been responsible for the operating costs of Kingsmeadows, a Common Good asset, while East Station was closed. There had been public calls for East Station to reopen as soon as possible, with operating costs for Kingsmeadows to revert back to the Common Good Fund thereafter. Chief Finance Officer agreed to provide Kingsmeadows operating costs, and the matter was to be discussed at a future meeting. There followed a brief discussion on possible mitigation by way of vandal-proof fittings, improved directional signage and the reliability of payment mechanisms which were frequently vandalised or out of order. The progress of an SBC 'Comfort Scheme' with retailers was unknown at this time.

DECISION

AGREED to continue consideration of the matter in conjunction with Kingsmeadows public toilets operating costs at a future meeting.

7. TWEED GREEN PAVILION

With reference to paragraph 4 of the minute of 9 January 2025, the Chair advised attendees that since the opening of the Pavilion in May, there had been three instances of vandalism. There followed a brief discussion on whether to reinstate the gates to prevent further damage on completion of necessary repairs and repainting. The installation of anti-vandalism fixtures was also suggested. Members agreed to keep the Pavilion open in the short term, and requested that Property Manager Gareth Smith obtain costs for rehanging the gates and information on the possibility and cost of amending the anchor points to allow for daily opening and closing of gates by relevant SBC staff.

DECISION

AGREED:

(a) to maintain current Pavilion access; and

(b) to Gareth Smith obtaining costs for the rehanging of the gates and for amending gate anchor points to allow for daily opening and closing.

8. WOOD FESTIVAL

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of 26 February 2025, further information had been provided by Jenny Greaves, Scottish Forestry. Members welcomed the return of the festival and agreed to the use of Tweed Green by Tree Fest Scotland. As a not-for-profit organisation, there was to be no charge. The request for funding was denied.

DECISION

AGREED to the siting of the Wood Festival on Tweed Green.

9. **THREE FISHES FOUNTAIN**

On the advice of Director Corporate Governance, the Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended in order for the matter to be discussed. This was agreed by Councillors M. Douglas and Tatler. With reference to paragraph 17 of the Private Minute of 26 February 2025, there had been circulated copies of proposals from John Falla, Floral Peebles to resite the Three Fishes Fountain and from Kirsty Peebles (The Peeblean)/Ruaraig McIver to repair, reinstate and maintain the fountain at its current site by Eastgate Theatre, in conjunction with other individuals. The Chair advised that in the light of the proposal from Ruaraig McIver, Mr Falla had withdrawn his proposal. Members welcomed the proposal from Mr McIver, with a suggestion that a plaque be installed to highlight the community involvement. It was reiterated that there was no Common Good funding available for 2025/26; however alternative funding was to be sourced from Small Schemes or Pay Parking monies. On the matter of water source permissions, risks and liabilities, further discussion was required with Eastgate Theatre; Gareth Smith, SBC Property Manager agreed to liaise with Eastgate staff.

DECISION

AGREED that Gareth Smith contact relevant Eastgate Theatre staff to discuss water supply for the fountain.

10. **INCOME GENERATION**

The Chair asked for suggestions from attendees and the wider public on how to increase the income realised from Common Good assets. To date there had been suggestions that related to the Haylodge Park Icehouse, the Kerfield Park area and solar arrays on Common Good buildings. Any proposals were to be forwarded to the Chair for discussion at future meetings. The Chair was to meet with Clare Malster, SBC Community Empowerment officer to discuss the various mechanisms for taking proposals forward. Attendees were reminded that an asset register had been compiled for review every 5 years and the Financial Reports also contained all asset income and expenditure data. The Chair agreed to raise the matter of updated signage for the Tweed Fishings permits, currently available from the Gytes and for the information to be included on the Live Borders website.

DECISION

AGREED that the Chair raise the matter of updating signage and website information related to Tweed Fishings permits available from Live Borders.

11. **OPEN FORUM**

The Chair reported that no forum questions had been received for this meeting. In response to a question from a member of the public, the Chair explained that charges for the commercial use of Common Good land such as Haylodge Park, Tweed Green and Victoria Park was chargeable as of 1 April 2025 at a rate of £15 per hour. Organisations and vendors were informed of this at the time of booking. In addition, the Common Good Fund Members or Administrator were to be informed of any commercial activity via email. An advertisement in 'Peebles Life' was suggested along with SBC Comms involvement to raise general awareness of Peebles Common Good Assets. A new sign for the Common Good land assets was to be considered as part of a general signage audit in Peebles. It was hoped this audit would include The Retailers Association, Peebles Community Council and other interested groups. In response to a question about income generation from additions to the Asset Register, attendees were reminded that the Register was reviewed every five years and that items of historical value or provenance could be proposed for inclusion. However, no new items were to be proposed or added. While it had been acknowledged that the Three Fishes Fountain should not have been added to the Register at the time it was, it was now accepted as a Common Good Asset. On the matter of financial bequests, attendees were advised that SBC operated Trusts to enable this. Director Corporate Governance was to be asked for a statement of clarity on the matter. In response to a question on the proposed alterations to Haylodge Park wall as part of the Destination Tweed project, an update on the public consultation was to be

obtained from Robert Reid, and the matter was to be included on the next meeting's agenda. In relation to the Destination Tweed project, it was reported that cars had been seen driving along the newly opened section of the multi-use path at the Gytes. The Chair agreed to liaise with Marina Piper at Destination Tweed on the installation of bollards.

DECISION

AGREED

- (a) to liaise with Peebles Community Council and SBC on a signage audit;
- (b) to obtain a statement of clarity on additions to the Common Good Asset Register as a means of income generation;
- (c) to liaise with Marina Piper at Destination Tweed on the installation of bollards at the entrance to the Gytes section of the multi-use path; and
- (d) to add an item on Haylodge Park wall public consultation to the next meeting's agenda.

12. 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 Paragraph 6 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

13. PRIVATE MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

Members agreed the Private Minute and Action Tracker of the meeting held on 26 February 2025.

14. REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE QUOTES

Members discussed a quote for the repairs to Fotheringham Bridge path. The quote for Gytes Allotments plumbing works was not considered in light of confirmation that the land was not owned by the Common Good Fund.

15. URGENT BUSINESS - TWEEDDALE YOUTH ACTION

Members discussed a proposal from Tweeddale Youth Action.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm