

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

PEEBLES COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEEBLES
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday,
26th February, 2025 at 5.00 pm

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

In Attendance:- Director Corporate Governance, Statutory Reporting and Treasury Business
Partner (K. Roberston), Design Team Leader (R. Reid) and Democratic
Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

1. MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER

- 1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 9 January 2025.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.

- 1.2 There had been circulated copies of the Peebles Common Good Fund action tracker. It was agreed to remove the actions related to Tree and Wildflower Planting, and Trading from Haylodge Park from the Meeting held on 9 January 2025.

DECISION

NOTED the action tracker.

2. FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Director of Finance that provided the details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles Common Good Fund for the nine months to 31 December 2024, a full year projected out-turn for 2024-25 and high-level forecast information for the following 2 years. Future year forecasts had been provided to support the decision-making of the Common Good Committee, to allow anticipated future income and expenditure to be considered, alongside the in-year financial position. Appendix 1 of the report showed a summary of the total income and expenditure for the Common Good fund, the balance of which created the cash balance held with SBC which showed a deficit of £172,862 at 31 December 2024 increasing to a larger forecast deficit of £202,300 by 31 March 2025. Appendix 2 of the report provided details of the forecast rental income by property, by year which showed rent received to 31 December 2024 of £47,755 with £3,850 due by 31 March 2025. Appendix 3 of the report provided forecast property costs by year which showed actual expenditure of £167,551 to 31 December 2024 with a total of £198,289 forecast at 31 March 2025. Appendix 4 of the report related to Property Income and Expenditure and provided a breakdown of the net income/expenditure position by property, both at 31 December 2024 and 31 March 2025. A projected deficit on properties of £146,684 to 31 March 2025 was forecast. Forecasts for future years were also provided. Appendix 5 of the report provided information on the approved grant budget for 2024-25 with £3,347 overspend projected to 31 March 2025. Appendix 6 of the report showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund at 31 December 2024 and investment income of £19,201 received to 31 December 2024 with a further £4,169 estimated to be received before 31 March 2025.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) the actual income and expenditure forecast for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 within Appendix 1 of the report;**
- (b) the summary of the property income, expenditure and net income and expenditure by property in Appendices 2,3 and 4 of the report;**
- (c) the grant budget available in year and future years within Appendix 5 of the report; and,**
- (d) the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 6 of the report.**

2.2 LOAN FINANCING

There had been circulated copies of a report by Director of Finance that confirmed the estimated, forecast property costs over the next 5 years and detailed a proposal to bring the fund back into balance over the medium term. Appendix 1 of the report showed a projected deficit of £202,328 at 31 March 2025. It was proposed that the Council provide the Common Good fund with a loan of £190,000 in 2025-26 which would be repaid with interest over a 7-year period. This action coupled with reductions in expenditure on grants and property maintenance will lead to a projected surplus of £73,452 by 31 March 2034. This position assumed that an application to Council for this loan was approved which could not be guaranteed. Appendix 2 of the report provided forecast property costs by year which showed estimated expenditure of £207,000 of known required spend over the 10-year period with a priority indicator assigned to each piece of work. Appendix 3 of the report provided detailed information on the breakdown of the grant budget for 2024-25 and the future 10 years.

- 2.3 The Statutory Reporting and Treasury Business Partner summarised the report and answered Members' questions. The report contained estimates on maintenance work following a review of all properties. These estimates may reduce over time and the loan proposal set values to help with the creation of a budget. It was noted that a range of factors led to the creation of the loan proposal which included upgrading of properties and rent reduction. Decisions taken by the Common Good Fund for community benefit following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic was noted including committed funding for the Men's Shed, Tweeddale Youth Action and Peebles Golf Club, and works to Jedderfield and other essential maintenance. Alongside recommendations made in the report, Members agreed that no new grants for financial assistance would be made until the loan application has been determined. Members noted that an SBC fees and charges structure was passed by Scottish Borders Council which applied to Peebles Common Good Fund assets.

DECISION

(a) AGREED

- (i) to apply for a loan of £190,000 from SBC under the terms contained in the report;**
- (ii) to pause the funding of applications for financial assistance while the loan application is determined;**

(b) NOTED:

(i) the income and expenditure forecast for the period to 31 March 2035 in Appendix 1 of the report;

(ii) forecast property expenditure detailed in Appendix 2 of the report;

(iii) the grant budget available in year and future years within Appendix 3 of the report

(iv) the Scottish Borders Council fees and charges structure applied to Peebles Common Good Fund assets.

3. PROPERTY UPDATE

There had been circulated copies of an update of Common Good property maintenance work by the Property Officer.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

4. DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

The Chair introduced Bob Reid, Design Team Leader, to provide an update on the Haylodge Park Section of the Destination Tweed project. Destination Tweed Project aimed to install a long-distance trail from Moffat to Berwick following the course of the Tweed. Works that had taken place in Peebles included Eshiels Tunnel lighting, Peebles Hydro link path A72 crossing, Whitestone ramp and the Gytes Leisure Centre to Priorford Bridge. Information on the Priorsford Bridge to Fotheringham Bridge route consultation was shared. The conclusion of the feasibility study was to recommend a route to the north of the River Tweed. Current proposals on an east-west riverside path at Haylodge Park was presented. It was noted that plans for the path required planning approval and works were funded by Sustrans. A consultation was to take place on the proposed travel link from 6 March to 23 March 2025 at the Go Tweed Valley information centre. Members noted the presentation and urged residents to participate in the consultation.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

5. TREE WORKS

There had been circulated copies of an update that advised Members that trees were pollarded every ten years and the last occasion was around 2012. Lack of pollarding was regarded as being unlikely to cause a health and safety issue and where trees were healthy and branches were causing low-level sightline issues, this could be addressed. Any delays to pollarding would be unlikely to damage trees but may increase costs in future due to tree growth.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

6. **FISHING RIGHTS ON THE RIVER TWEED**

The Chair advised that work was ongoing and officers would bring information to a future meeting.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

7. **PERMISSION TO TRADE - HAYLODGE PARK**

With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 9 January 2025, there had been circulated copies of correspondence from Mr Mackie regarding proposals to trade within Haylodge Park. The Chair advised that a discussion had taken place over the location of trading in relation to benches within Haylodge Park. It was further noted that a decision to not allow traders within Haylodge Park had been taken by the Sub-Committee in 2021. The Director Corporate Governance advised that there was principles of consistency and transparency regarding how local authorities take decisions, and that the Sub-Committee could change their decision on allowing trading within parks which should be cognisant of previous positions taken. Members noted the advice and determined that applications should be treated on a case-by-case basis where applicants detail their trading location so that environmental sensitivities associated with trading location can be considered. Members agreed to approve the application to trade within Haylodge Park and asked officers determine location of trading and to share this with Members.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) That the Sub-Committee shouldn't grant trading permission within green spaces of Common Good assets however the Sub-Committee would be open to consider applications to do so on a case-by-case basis alongside a business case which detailed appropriate setting;**
- (b) To allow the applicant to trade at Haylodge Park;**
- (c) To inform the applicant of the fee structure for trading; and,**
- (d) That officers will confirm location of the applicant's trading position with Members.**

8. **WOOD FESTIVAL**

There had been circulated copies of correspondence from Jenny Greaves, Scottish Forestry, which sought permission to hold an event on Tweed Green. Members discussed whether Scottish Forestry would be liable to be charged for the use of Tweed Green. The Director Corporate Governance advised that the SBC fees and charges structure referred to commercial and non-commercial organisations. It was advised that more information on the organisation should be sought including what the organisation did with profits, planned community benefit of the event, and for information on what should be regarded as a commercial organisation. Members agreed to defer making a decision to seek further information.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) To defer on a decision to allow the event; and,**

- (b) To request officers to write to the applicant to request more information on the event.

MEMBER

Cllr Pirone left the meeting at 6.20 pm.

9. **FUNDING APPLICATION - PERFECT HARMONY**

There had been circulated copies of an application for financial assistance of £2,400 from Perfect Harmony to fund music concerts in care facilities. Members noted that following the decision to pause funding of applications for financial assistance, the application would not be approved for funding.

DECISION

AGREED not to approve the application for funding.

10. **PEEBLES COMMON GOOD FORUM QUESTIONS**

Questions from the Peebles Common Good Forum were submitted to the Chair. Members agreed that questions and responses would be circulated amongst Members. The Chair advised that she agreed to publish minutes of the Sub-Committee alongside Peebles Community Council minutes. The possibility of the creation of a Peebles Common Good Fund annual report was raised. The Chair advised that it was not desired that this be actioned to officers to produce and that a trial shall take place where the finance report and summary will be used as a report. The Chair also agreed to submit quarterly updates to the Peeblesshire News.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

11. **ANDY'S MANCLUB - FEEDBACK**

There had been circulated copies of a document from Andy's Man Club which detailed feedback on work supported by Peebles Common Good Fund on awareness of suicide prevention. Members noted the information provided.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

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 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

13. **PRIVATE MINUTE AND ACTION TRACKER**

Members agreed the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 9 January 2025.

Members noted the Private Section of the Peebles Common Good Fund action tracker.

14. **THREE FISHES FOUNTAIN**

Members considered an update on the Three Fishes Fountain by the Property Officer.

15. **PARISH CHURCH CLOCK REPAIRS**

Members considered a quote for repairs to the Parish Church Clock.

16. **FUNDING APPLICATION**

Members considered the application for financial assistance from Tweeddale Youth Action.

The meeting concluded at 6.47 pm