

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEEBLES
COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Burgh Hall, Chambers Institute, High
Street, Peebles on Wednesday, 21st August,
2024 at 5.00 pm

Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chairman), D. Begg, M. Douglas, J. Pirone, E. Small
and V. Thomson
Apologies:- Councillors Ramsay
In Attendance:- Director Corporate Governance, Statutory Reporting and Treasury Business
Partner (K. Roberston), Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden), M. Bruce
(Peebles & District Men's Shed), M. Milloy (Peebles Bowling Club), M. Davey
(Peeblesshire News) and members of the public.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Tatler formally resigned as Chair and thanked his fellow Councillors and officers for their support over the past seven years. Councillor Thomson was nominated for the role of Chair by Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor Begg. There being no other nominations, Councillor Thomson accepted the role of Chair and expressed gratitude to Councillor Tatler for his stewardship of the Peebles Common Good Fund.

DECISION

AGREED to appoint Councillor Thomson to the role of Chair.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 31 July June 2024. The following amendments and updates were noted: paragraph 3.1 – the exhibition was now due to open on Saturday 7 September; paragraph 3.2 – the exhibition was to run for 2-3 months; and the correct spelling of Mr Welander's surname. Mr Welander confirmed that Principal Solicitor Gillian Sellar had supplied comments and amendments to the Asset Catalogues on the afternoon of 21 August.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute.

3. FINANCIAL REPORTS

3.1 There had been circulated copies of two financial monitoring reports by Director Finance and Procurement. The first report provided the details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles Common Good Fund for the year 2023/24, including balance sheet values as of 31 March 2024, a full year projected out-turn for 2024/25, and projected balance sheet values as of 31 March 2025. Appendix 1 showed the actual income and expenditure position for 2023/24; an actual deficit of £40,983 which was higher than the projected deficit previously reported due to year end adjustments to property income. Appendix 2 provided an actual balance sheet value as of 31 March 2024 with a decrease in reserves of £197,662. Appendix 3a provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual rental income and net return for 2023/24. Appendix 4 provided a breakdown of the property portfolio showing actual property valuations on 31 March 2024. Appendix 5 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to 31 March 2024.

3.2 There followed a brief discussion on the considerations presented in recommendation (e): to reduce the level of grants in 2024/25; or to disinvest from the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund to cover the in-year overspend and forecast overspend for

2024/25. The amount of £75k recommended to disinvest in the report had increased to £91k following first quarter 2024/25 calculations. Members agreed to disinvest £100,000 to address the deficit and retain sufficient funds for grant awards during 2024/25.

DECISION

- (a) NOTED the actual income and expenditure for 2023/24 in Appendix 1;**
- (b) AGREED the proposed budget for 2024/25 as shown in Appendix 1 as the revised budget for 2024/25;**
- (c) NOTED the final balance sheet value as at 31 March 2024, and projected balance sheet value as at 31 March 2025 in Appendix 2;**
- (d) NOTED the summary of the property portfolio in Appendices 3 and 4;**
- (e) NOTED the current position of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund in Appendix 5; and**
- (f) AGREED to disinvest £100,000 to cover the in year overspend and forecast overspend for 2024/25 in light of the recent and anticipated expenditure on property required.**

- 3.3 The second report provided the details of the income and expenditure for the Peebles Common Good Fund for the three months to 30 June 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 Committees, and to allow anticipated future income and expenditure to be considered, alongside the in-year financial position. Appendix 1 showed a summary of the total income and expenditure for the Common Good fund, the balance of which creates the cash balance held with SBC. This shows a deficit of £55,653 at 30 June 2024 increasing to a forecast deficit of £91,184 by 31 March 2025. Appendix 2 provided details of the forecast rental income by property, by year. It showed rent received to 30 June 2024 of £41,642 with a further £19,298 due by 31 March 2025. Appendix 3 provided forecast property costs by year. It showed actual expenditure of £38,378 to 30 June 2024 with an additional £45,122 forecast to be spent by 31 March 2025. Appendix 4 related to Property Income and Expenditure and provided a breakdown of the net income /expenditure position by property, both at 30 June 2024 and 31 March 2025. A projected deficit on properties of £22,560 to 31 March 2025 was forecast. Forecasts for future years were also provided. Appendix 5 provided information on the approved grant budget for 2024/25 with £7,588 still available this financial year. Appendix 6 showed the value of the Aegon Asset Management Investment Fund at 30 June 2024 and investment income of £5,834 received to 30 June 2024 with a further £17,536 estimated to be received before 31 March 2025.

DECISION

AGREED to:

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

4. DESTINATION TWEED PROJECT UPDATE

With reference to paragraph 9.2 of the Minute of 24 May 2023, Marina Piper, Destination Tweed gave an update on progress to the River Tweed Trail element of the wider Destination Tweed Project. The Sustrans funded multi-use path section in Whitestone Park was mostly complete along with wildflower planting as part of the Pollinators Along the Tweed initiative. A feasibility study had been undertaken on the next phase of work: the section between Fotheringham Bridge and Gytes/Whitestone Park. Initial route options had been developed using OS mapping, topographical survey data and historical studies. Routes on the north and south sides of the river were assessed against a scoring methodology along with site constraints and public feedback and Ms Piper gave a summary of the public consultation. Feedback had been sought both in-person and via an online survey from 25 May to 28 June 2024. The 105 responses indicated a preference for the north route with a segregated path and approach ramps to 'The Hump' adjacent to Haylodge Hospital. The section between Priorsford Bridge and the Gytes was shared between both proposed routes and the recommendation was to construct this section initially to provide a direct off-carriageway link with Peebles town centre (Tweed Green) and the Tweed Valley Railway Path. The next steps were to apply for planning permission for the initial section and to undertake both pre-planning consultation with SBC for the section between Fotheringham Bridge and Priorsford Bridge and detailed 3D modelling of the works at 'The Hump' and flood modelling to ascertain the impact on the flood corridor. Ms Piper indicated the possibility of replacement of the section of broken railings alongside the rugby pitches being included in the initial work to come which had an end date of March 2025.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

5. TWEED GREEN PAVILION RAILINGS

Councillor Tatler raised the matter of the removal of the metal gates at the entrance to the Tweed Green Pavilion with a view to opening it as a youth shelter. There followed a brief discussion where attendees agreed that the shelter should be for everyone and that a public consultation was required as it was a Common Good asset. The appropriate community officers were to be approached to arrange the consultation.

DECISION

AGREED to a public consultation on the removal of gates at Tweed Green Pavilion.

6. PARKING IN VICTORIA PARK

There had been circulated copies of a proposed parking bay installation adjacent to Victoria Park and quotes for the purchase of removable parking bollards for Victoria Park. Attendees were advised of an ongoing parking problem in the area and the opening of the playpark necessitated a solution. There followed a brief discussion which concluded that a public consultation was required, particularly to obtain local residents' views and because it was Common Good land. The appropriate community officers were to be approached to arrange the consultation.

DECISION

AGREED to a public consultation on the installation of removal parking bollards in and parking bays adjacent to Victoria Park.

7. TREE AND WILDFLOWER PLANTING

There had been circulated copies of a document by Darren Flint, Parks Development Officer which provided a brief summary of a meeting held at Haylodge Park on 30 July 2024 with the three Tweeddale West Councillors. The document included a location map and proposed work area: a sloped expanse and woodland between Fotheringham Bridge and playpark and the boundary wall along the A72. Several proposals for planting and community/school involvement were detailed and included: partnering with local primary schools to establish a mini tree nursery, tree planting and outdoor and class-based lessons on biodiversity and the 'world on my doorstep'; the creation of a legacy oak wood;

expansion of woodland fringes; enrichment of current woodland areas with native broad leaf trees; a grassland maze; a wildflower area on the slope; and the planting of a tree avenue along the gaps in the top path and a wild cherry avenue on the western edge of the proposed wildflower area. It was noted that the slope was used for sledging in the winter months and that the fording of the Tweed during the Beltane Rideout directed horses alongside the proposed area for the wild cherry avenue and both considerations were to be relayed to Mr Flint. The concept was in its early stages and Councillor Begg was to lead talks with the primary schools following initial email dialogue.

DECISION NOTED.

8. FUNDING APPLICATIONS

- 8.1 With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 17 June 2024, there had been circulated copies of four funding applications and related documents. Members considered an application from Peebles Bowling Club for £10,000 to part fund a planned extension to the club buildings. There had been an agreement in principle on 17 June 2024 with further information requested on when the funds were required. Mr Milloy, Peebles Bowling Club Secretary, confirmed that work was to begin in September 2024 and complete by March/April 2025. Members agreed an award of £5,000 in 2024/25 and a further £5,000 in 2025/26.
- 8.2 Members considered an application from Eastgate Theatre for £2,250 to part fund '1629: The Year of Rope and Flame', a project to create an original drama about 17th century Borders witch hunts and associated performances, scripts, education packs and talks. Attendees noted the relevance of the theme of 'othering' and welcomed the education packs to be produced. Applications to other funding sources were pending and an award from the Common Good Fund was to benefit future funding bids. Though Members supported the application in principle, it was recommended to approach both the Tweeddale and Berwickshire Area Partnerships for funding given the reach of the project. They also asked for clarity on the timeline of the project which officers agreed to ascertain.
- 8.3 Members considered an application from Inspiring Life for £3,450 to part fund the production and composer of ANDYSMANCLUBPLAY, a new musical to raise awareness of peer to peer talking to address the suicide crisis particularly in men aged 18-50. Applications to other funding sources were pending and an award from the Common Good Fund was to benefit future funding bids. Members agreed to award £3,450 to the project.
- 8.4 Members considered an application from Peebles Golf Club for £18,627 to retrospectively fund the installation of an irrigation system through a 5-year rent reduction over 2024-2028. There followed a brief discussion during which Director Corporate Governance confirmed that consideration of rent reduction for Common Good properties was to be based on the factual circumstances of each case and no blanket policy was to be applied. Concern about the irrigation system capacity received from George Ramsay, Peebles Community Council representative, was noted. Councillor Tatler proposed to fund the full amount over a 10-year period. This was seconded by Councillor Pirone and there being no further proposals, it was agreed to award £18,627 over a 10-year period.
- 8.5 In response to a question about the criteria for applications, attendees were advised that this could be found on the application form, to be obtained from the Sub-Committee secretary via email at lynne.cuerden@scotborders.gov.uk.

DECISION

AGREED to:

- (a) an award of £5,000 in 2024/25 and a further £5,000 in 2025/26 to Peebles Bowling Club;

- (b) an award of £3,450 to Inspiring Life; and
- (c) an award of £18,627 over a 10-year period to Peebles Golf Club.

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

There had been circulated copies of questions from the Peebles Common Good Forum facebook page. Members and officers had provided answers where possible, a copy of which was to be appended to this minute. The Chair undertook to answer future forum questions where possible and to liaise with the administrator of the facebook page. Consideration was to be given to trialling 2 open questions from the public in online meetings. It was reiterated that the offer of a Peebles Common Good website out with SBC was not possible. On the matter of River Tweed fishing rights on Common good land, Director Corporate Governance agreed to investigate the matter.

10. **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.

11. **HAYLODGE DEPOT**

Members considered a report by Estates Surveyor in respect of the lease for Haylodge Depot, for which there had been three applications. Applicants in attendance spoke in private and answered questions from Members. Members decided to award the lease to Peebles & District Men's Shed.

The meeting concluded at 7.15 pm