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SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEEBLES COMMON GOOD FUND SUB-COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 17th June, 2024 at 4.00 pm

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

Apologies:- Estates Surveyor (T. Hill), S. Pender (Peebles Golf Club).

In Attendance:- Principal Solicitor, Statutory Reporting and Treasury Business Partner (K. Roberston), G. Thomson, Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden) and Trainee Democratic Services Officer.

1. **PEEBLES COMMON GOOD EXHIBITION UPDATE**

With reference to paragraph 9 of the minute of 28 February 2024, the Chair provided a summary of the meeting held on 12 June with Richard Wellander, a representative of the group engaged in the process of producing a public exhibition on the Common Good Fund. Draft content for the five pull up banners was shared. The exhibition in the Burgh Hall was to be opened on 31 August with a press preview and run for 2-3 weeks, moving to the Eastgate Theatre thereafter. An asset catalogue was in production and was to include an image and description for each. The draft catalogue was to be shared with Elected Members by the end of the week beginning 22 July with content and banner text to be agreed with SBC legal officers. The Chair agreed to ascertain if the map used on the information boards made previously could be used. The exhibition materials were to be used at an event in October/November with Andy Wightman.

DECISION
NOTED the update.

2. **FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of a funding application and associated documents from Peebles Bowling Club for £10,000 to part fund a planned extension to the club buildings. Members supported the application in principle, however clarity was needed on exactly when the funding was required. Concern was expressed at the limitations imposed by the £14k budget on the Common Good grant awards for 2024/25. Further discussion was required on the disinvestment of Common Good Funds to address the current deficit.

2.2 There had been circulated copies of a funding application and associated documents from Dance for Parkinsons for £4,740 which aimed to deliver weekly movement and voice classes for people living with Parkinson's, their families, friends and carers. Funding of £12,307 had already been secured with the amount applied for being the remainder of costs. Members agreed to award £4,740.

2.3 There had been circulated copies of a funding applications and associated documents from the Eastgate Theatre and Inspiring Life for funding towards two drama projects. Members agreed to defer consideration of both applications until 21 August 2024.

2.4 There had been circulated copies of a funding applications and associated documents 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 concerns were raised over the retrospective application and the financial position of Peebles Golf Club. Stuart Pender, Secretary Peebles Golf Club had been unable to join the meeting due to IT issues. Members agreed to defer consideration of the application until 21 August 2024 and under guidance from relevant officers. Questions raised by Members were later addressed via email, the content of which was to be appended to this minute.

DECISION
AGREED to:
(a) award £4740 to Dance for Parkinsons; and
(b) to defer consideration of applications from Peebles Bowling Club, Eastgate Theatre, Inspiring Life and Peebles Golf Club to 21 August 2024.

3. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
Councillor Tatler informed attendees that after seven years, he was to step down as Chair and a new Chair was to be appointed at the meeting on 21 August. On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Begg expressed thanks for his good stewardship of the Common Good Fund.

The meeting concluded at 4.40 pm

George Ramsay – Questioned the approach of fitting a new tank, thought it was incorrect, and that tackling the water supply to the tanks should be the issue,

Answer from PGC

Peebles Golf Club carried out a feasibility study into the Irrigation issues, involving various stakeholders, including a geologist, and found that installing a new 50,000 litre tank was the correct way forward. The water supply to the course is from a natural spring from the hill above Jedderfield farm. The water pipe is an alcathene pipe, 50mm in size and fed into the 2x12,000 litre tanks that then allowed the course to be watered. When these were used in extremely dry conditions the green staff had to follow the following schedule as the capacity was not enough

i. 2 days at 5 hours per day (Mon-Tues)
ii. Wed off watering to allow tanks to stock up.
iii. Thu, tanks haven't filled up to maximum level. 15k L to use between Thu and Fri.
iv. No watering over the weekend to allow full 24k L for Mon.
v. Power of existing pump 1.1kw proposed upgrade to 2.2kw.
vi. Larger pump increases water flow rate allowing us to apply larger water volume per green.

So, by increasing the capacity of stored water from 24,000 litres to 74,000 litres we can protect the course and common good asset as the tanks are always refilling and the extra reserve capacity allows constant watering if required.

Councillor Douglas– Questioned the Financial Control at PGC, due to the reported losses on the submitted form.

Answer from PGC

I contacted our Financial Auditor, Braidwood Graham, for an independent explanation of the reported loss during 22/23 and proposed loss for 23/24. You will see the explanation below confirming notional depreciation adjustments as the reason for the "losses", and that the club was actually in surplus for 22/23 and planning the same for 23/24.

Letter from Braidwood Graham (attached also)

Common Good Fund
Peebles
24 June 2024

Dear Sirs
Peebles Golf Club Limited

The Financial Statements for the year to 30 November 2023 show a deficit of £20,884.
This deficit is after a notional charge for depreciation of £47,226 has been deducted.
This is an accounting treatment for the adjustment in value of assets during the year and ensures that the balance sheet shows an anticipated replacement value of assets.
This is not an actual spend of funds by the company.
When this notional amount is adjusted for, the company made an actual surplus of £21,549.
The company has budgeted, for the following 12 months on the same basis, a surplus of £44,362 after a notional charge for depreciation has been adjusted for.

It is my opinion, as the company accountant, that the Peebles Golf Club Limited does not have poor financial management.

Your faithfully
Jennifer Redfern

There was an additional question on the amount of rent paid by PGC, this is £15,490 per year.

I understand that funding is extremely tight, and there is not a massive pot of money to help everyone. Our application was based on a possible rent reduction, spread over a number of years. We feel that we have enhanced the Common Good asset by installing a new tank, and that this tank will protect the asset for years to come.

Kind regards
Stuart Pender