

Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee
15 March 2012

STEVENSTON, 15 March 2012 - At a Meeting of the Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Anthony Gurney, William Gibson, John Hunter, Ronnie McNicol and Jim Montgomerie.

In Attendance

A. Sutton, Head of Servis (Community and Culture), J. McHarg, Assistant Manager (Community Services) and B. Anderson, Performance/Grants Information Officer (Education and Skills); A. Kirk, Manager (Design and Property) and K. Macdonald, Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure); J. Cumming, Project Officer (Economic Development), and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Inspector B. Skimming, Strathclyde Police.

Chair

Councillor Gurney in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Margie Currie and Alan Munro.

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Montgomerie, in his capacity as a fundraiser for Fe-Fe's School of Dance and MACKAN Tenants and Residents Association, declared an interest in Agenda Items 9.2 (Saltcoats Common Good Fund: Applications for Finance Assistance) and 10.2 (Stevenston Common Good Fund: Applications for Financial Assistance), and took no part in the determination of the groups' applications for funding.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous special meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2012 were signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Strathclyde Police

Inspector Skimming provided information on the following:-

- action plans in place in response to incidents of youth disorder within Saltcoats and Ardrossan over the recent Christmas/New Year period;
- the investigation of complaints from a small number of local residents about youth disorder at the playpark, Allan Gardens, Saltcoats;
- a serious assault in February 2012 at one of the licensed premises participating in the Pubwatch initiative;
- joint work with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue on recent incidents of willful fire-raising at an industrial estate in Stevenston; and
- a planned Multi-Agency Problem Solving initiative in the Hayocks area during April/May 2012.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the effectiveness and operation of the Pubwatch scheme being run by local publicans.

Noted.

4. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue on activity from 19 January to 12 February 2012.

The report provided details of deliberate and accidental fires at a number of locations in the Committee's area, as well as incidents relating to accidental vehicle fires, refuse fires, unwanted fire alarm signals and road traffic collisions, and a number of other special services. The continued availability of free Home Fire Safety Visits was also highlighted in the report, which indicated that 20 visits were carried out across the Committee's area during the reporting period. Community initiatives, such as Arran Avoids Accidents, were also reported.

Noted.

5. Ardrossan Castle

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the progress made in relation to determining the costs of stabilising Ardrossan Castle and in seeking to floodlight the ruins.

Ardrossan Castle has suffered as a result of severe weather conditions over the last few years and further damage has been caused to the ruins through vandalism. The castle was surveyed in detail in late September by Robert Potter and Partners, Architectural Consultants, accredited by Historic Scotland, as part of a 'watching brief' to review the condition of the castle ruin and monitor deterioration.

Infrastructure and Design Services have now received a report, as set out at Appendix 1, from Armour Construction Consultants, which provides further information on the costs of carrying out remedial works to make the castle safe. All of the costs were identified as high priority to avoid further deterioration or partial loss of the historic fabric (either through cumulative minor impacts or catastrophic failure of unstable areas) and to protect the public from risk of injury. A fenced boundary is proposed to three sides of the remains to prevent access to the castle both to safeguard the public and avoid further deterioration through vandalism. The estimated cost for this is £12,500.

Education and Skills have also received a report, commissioned by Irvine Bay Regeneration Company, outlining proposals to floodlight the existing castle ruins. Two schemes have been costed, namely £5,000-£6,000 for the floodlit approach, which provides a strong long distance presence, and an integrated approach, which would cost £10,000-£12,000 and provide more local interest and detail.

The report proposed that funding should be sought to address the identified priorities in order to mitigate the health and safety risks associated with the current condition of the castle, and to preserve the existing structure for future generations. It was also recommended that fencing be erected to protect the public and break the anti-social behaviour patterns currently associated with the castle. In addition, it was suggested that officers explore more creative and ambitious options for exploiting the historic and cultural significance of the castles in North Ayrshire.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the proposals relating to Kerelaw Castle, Stevenston, and its status as a Stevenston Common Good property;
- the purpose of the Council's Major Repairs Fund;
- the background to the lower than expected cost of fencing off Ardrossan Castle;
- the condition of, and ownership issues surrounding, walkways in the vicinity of Ardrossan Castle;
- the potential for creating a small visitor centre at Ardrossan Civic Centre;
- the preference for an integrated floodlighting approach for Ardrossan Castle and possible funding sources; and
- the ownership status of Eglinton Castle.

Members expressed their appreciation of the proposals within the report to explore creative and ambitious options for exploiting the cultural significance of Ardrossan and Kerelaw Castles.

The Committee agreed that (a) the Head of Service (Community and Culture)(Education and Skills), in consultation with the Manager (Design and Property)(Finance and Infrastructure), pursue funding options to carry out remedial work to Ardrossan Castle; (c) the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) submit a report to the Executive exploring the potential of building on the strong cultural identity provided by the castles in North Ayrshire and their role in terms of the regeneration of communities; and (d) the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) submit a further report to a future meeting of the Area Committee on (i) proposals for Kerelaw Castle in Stevenston; and (ii) the potential for public access improvements to privately owned land at the bowling club adjacent to Castle Hill in Ardrossan.

6. Community Benefit Fund: Applications for Grant Aid

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications for grant received in respect of the Community Benefit Fund.

The Project Officer (Economic Development) referred to the circulation to Members of feedback provided by the 1st Stevenston Boys Brigade on the expenditure of an award granted by the Area Committee at its meeting on 15 August 2011.

The Committee agreed to (a) make the following awards:-

| Organisation | Award |
|---|--------------|
| Ardrossan Wednesday Old Age Pensioners Club | £1,200.00 |
| Ardrossan Christmas Decorations Committee | £4,000.00 |
| Ardrossan Scouts | £4,000.00 |
| James McFarlane School | £1,775.00 |
| Dykesmains PS Eco Group | £1,660.96 |
| Evolution Skate Park | £1,500.00 |

and (b) refuse the application from 1st Stevenston Boys Brigade on the grounds that the Saltcoats/Stevenston funding allocation for 2011/12 had been exhausted.

7. Community Development Grants Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund 2011/12: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on applications for financial assistance under the Council's Community Development Grants Scheme and Local Youth Action Fund.

The Committee agreed to make the following awards:-

Community Development Grants Scheme

Organisation

Ardeer Rifle & Pistol Club

1st Stevenston Boys Brigade

Mayfield PS Parent Council

Church of the Nazarene

1st Ardrossan 15th Ayrshire Cub Scouts

Award

£2,000.00, subject to confirmation by the Council's Estates section on the conditions of the group's lease

£1,135.24

£1,000.00

£1,500.00

£1,212.50

Local Youth Action Fund

Organisation

1st Stevenston Boys Brigade

Award

£626.60

8. Ardrossan Common Good Fund: Financial Position

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the projected revenue account for the year to 31 March 2012, and proposing a budget for 2012/13 including the level of grant available for disbursement.

The appendix to the report presented the Ardrossan Common Good Fund budget and the projected revenue transactions within the Fund for 2011/12. The accumulated revenue account balance at 1 April 2011 of £44,687, together with the projected surplus for the year of £462, results in an estimated final balance of £45,149. The capital balance remains unchanged at £32,210 giving an overall projected fund balance of £77,359 at 31 March 2012.

Budgeted net income for 2012/13 is £462. To reflect the impact of inflation and protect the purchasing power of the fund a retention of 4% would normally be applied. However this would represent £3,094 and leave nothing available for grant disbursement. In order to be consistent with the previous year, £42 is retained leaving £420 as the proposed amount left available for disbursement. Grant disbursements greater than the proposed amount would result in the fund balances being eroded over time.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the potential for achieving greater levels of interest on Common Good Funds and the planned review by Finance and Infrastructure; and
- any mechanism which might exist to allow Common Good Funds to access further funding.

The Committee agreed (a) given the current financial position of the Ardrossan Common Good Fund, not to make any awards from the Fund during 2012/13; and (b) that the Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) investigate whether any mechanism exists which would allow Common Good Funds to access further funding and report to a future meeting of the Area Committee on the outcome.

9. Saltcoats Common Good Fund

9.1 Financial Position

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the projected revenue account for the year to 31 March 2012, and proposing a budget for 2012/13 including the level of grant available for disbursement.

The appendix to the report presented the Saltcoats Common Good Fund budget and the projected revenue transactions within the Fund for 2011/12. The accumulated revenue account balance at 1 April 2011 of £17,447, together with the projected surplus for the year of £962, results in an estimated final balance of £18,409. There are no capital balances held by the Saltcoats Common Good Fund.

Budgeted net income for 2012/13 is £962. To reflect the impact of inflation and protect the purchasing power of the fund a retention of 4% would normally be applied. However, this would represent £736 and leave very little available for grant disbursement. In order to be consistent with the previous year, £74 is retained leaving £888 as the proposed amount left available for disbursement. Grant disbursements greater than the proposed amount would result in the fund balances being eroded over time.

The Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) provided a verbal update to the report, indicating that there was now uncertainty about anticipated income £900 in TV relay royalties being achieved for 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Chair expressed his concern at the appropriateness of agreeing a level of funding for disbursement in 2012/13 pending clarification of this matter.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve a budget for disbursement of £962 in 2012/13; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) submit an update report be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee on the position with regard to income from the TV relay royalties.

9.2 Application for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application for financial assistance from the Saltcoats Common Good Fund.

The Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) and Committee Services Officer reported verbally on comments submitted by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) and Corporate Director (Education and Skills), respectively, on the application.

The Committee agreed to award £700.00 to MACKAN Tenants and Residents Association, Saltcoats.

10. Stevenston Common Good Fund

10.1 Financial Position

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Finance and Infrastructure) on the projected revenue account for the year to 31 March 2012, and proposing a budget for 2012/13 including the level of grant available for disbursement.

The appendix to the report presented the budget and the projected revenue transactions within the Stevenston Common Good Fund for 2011/12. The accumulated revenue account balance at 1 April 2011 of £132,968, together with the projected surplus for the year of £7,514, results in an estimated final balance of £140,482. The capital balance remains unchanged at £15,000 giving an overall projected fund balance of £155,482 at 31 March 2012.

Budgeted net income for 2012/13 is £13,200. To reflect the impact of inflation and protect the purchasing power of the fund a retention of 4% would normally be applied. However, this would represent £6,219 and leave a far smaller amount available for grant disbursement. In order to be consistent with the previous year £1,200 is retained leaving £12,000 as the proposed amount left available for disbursement. Grant disbursements greater than the proposed amount would result in the fund balances being eroded over time.

Members asked questions on the rental income associated with premises at New Street, Stevenston.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve a budget for disbursement of £12,000 in 2012/13; and (b) that the Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure) provide information to Members on the period of time remaining in respect of the lease to Social Services and Health of the premises owned by the Common Good Fund at New Street, Stevenston.

10.2 Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on applications for financial assistance from the Stevenston Common Good Fund.

The Committee agreed (a) to make the following awards:-

Organisation

The Cronies

Award

£1,000.00 in the form of an underwrite, on the basis that the application would benefit the community as a whole by promoting a sense of community spirit and friendship

(b) to refuse the applications from 1st Stevenston Boys Brigade and Fe-Fe's School of Dance on the grounds that the applications did not meet the Common Good funding criteria of being of benefit to the whole community; and (c) that the Assistant Manager (Community Services) (Education and Skills) liaise with Fe-Fe's School of Dance on the submission of an application to the Local Youth Action Fund, pending clarification of the transfer of the group's accounts from its former officer bearers.

11. Urgent Item

The Chair agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency.

11.1 Stevenston: Kerelaw Castle

Members discussed the following:-

- Stevenston Common Good Fund's ownership of Kerelaw Castle in Stevenston and the understanding that funds arising from the sale of land to Glasgow Corporation should have been made available to the Fund for the upkeep of the castle;
- funds which would have arisen from the sale of land at Kerelaw Estate to facilitate the construction of the A78 trunk road; and
- a risk identified within Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan 2011/12 associated with accounting for assets held by common good funds.

The Committee agreed that the Solicitor to the Council submit a report to a future meeting of the Area Committee on (i) the position with regard to funds which would have arisen from the historical sale of land by Stevenston Common Good Fund; and (ii) the position with regard to the risk identified by Audit Scotland in relation to accounting for assets held by common good funds.

The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.