

MINUTES of MEETING of the BLINKBONNY SUB-COMMITTEE held in the Committee Room, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 3.00pm.

Present:- Councillors Rosie (Chair) and Baxter.

Apology for Absence:- Councillor Coventry.

1 Minutes of Meeting

The Sub-Committee approved the Minutes of Meeting of 13 April 2006.

2 Declaration of Interest

Councillor Baxter declared a non – pecuniary interest in Item 3(c) below as his wife was a Teacher at the Primary School.

3 Update

There was submitted report, dated 3 December 2013, by the Director, Resources, providing an up-date in relation to the Funds.

Appended to the report was a statement showing commitments and the remaining balances.

In his report, the Director confirmed inter alia that:-

(a) coaling had ceased;

(b) the Sub-Committee's terms of reference included (i) the Trust Fund arising from the extension to the Blinkbonny opencast coal site; (ii) the Monteith Houses Fund; and (iii) the fund created for job creation projects (including Mayfield) arising from the proposed (and failed) reopening of the Trust Mine at Blinkbonny;

(c) the Blinkbonny and Monteith Houses Funds were to be used for the "benefit of the environment of the communities in the areas in the vicinity of Easthouses Opencast coal site at Blinkbonny and Monteith Houses, Gorebridge and the Coal Haulage Route to/from the Opencast site and the A1(T) road", subject to the approval of the Coaling Company;

(d) the Coaling Company; (Faldane Limited's successors, Onyx Land Technologies Limited) had agreed that the Council act as sole arbiter in relation to the closure of the Funds;

(e) when the Sub Committee had last met, the outcome of the Mayfield Town Centre project was still being finalised;

(f) the Sub Committee's recommendations had been approved by the General Purposes Committee, most of which were still outstanding; and

(g) in the meantime, (i) the 14th Midlothian Scout Group had abandoned their project; and (ii) the owner of the ground at Dewarton had indicated that she did not wish to sell it.

Decision

To note the report.

4 Requests for Disbursements

There was submitted report, dated 9 December 2013, by the Director, Resources, concerning the requests for financial assistance, as described below.

Appended to the report were a plan showing the proposed footway and a list of detailed costs in respect of Items (b) and (d) below.

With reference to sub paragraph (d) below, there were tabled letter, dated 16 October 2013, to Councillor Beattie, from Mrs I van Millingen, 5 Newlandrig; and relative plan of the road between Mossend and the entrance to Vogrie Country Park.

In his report, the Director confirmed:-

(a) that, with reference to paragraph 2(f) above, the 14th Midlothian Scout Group had indicated some time ago that, instead, they wished assistance towards the cost of repairs to their Hut at Borthwick which was some way distant to the opencast / drift mine sites;

(b) that, (i) on 27 August 2013 a suggestion had been made that consideration be given to the provision of funding for the laying of a pavement between 130 and 160, Barleyknowe Road, Gorebridge, which ran along the edge of the former open cast site, to assist children who lived in the new Taylor Wimpey site to obtain a safer walking route to the St Andrews Primary School to provide a complete link for other pedestrians and benefit the residents who lived close by the open cast during the period when it was in operation; (ii) information had been requested as regards the benefits, specifications, costings, timescale, etc, etc and the ability of the Council to fund the project out of existing or future budgets; and (iii) the estimate for the works was £29,898 for a two metre wide bituminous footway. The Head of Commercial Operations was heard in amplification of the report, when it was noted that (1) the works had been completed and funded through the Council's Capital budget at a cost of £29,898; and (2) a further two phases were planned to provide footpaths, namely, from 80, Barleyknowe Road to the junction with Barleyknowe Crescent, at a cost of £43,821; and from the Junction of Barleyknowe Crescent to 36, Barleyknowe Road, Gorebridge, at a cost of £16,432, subject to the availability of funding ie on the basis that the latter be completed by trainees as a way of improving their skills towards eventual qualification and future employment;

(c) that (i) on 6 December 2013, a suggestion had been made that consideration be given to the provision of funding for the erection of Bin Stores in Bogwood Road, Mayfield Place and Blackcot, 1, 2 and 3, at a cost of about £12,000, all as described in the Appendix to the report; (ii) in response to a request for information about the ownership of the properties, etc, the Acting Community Safety and Estates Manager had advised that (1) all three sites were Council flat blocks; (2) these works would improve the communal areas for storing bins; (3) in two sites, a single bin would be provided instead of the current communal ones; (4) there may be some flats in private ownership in the blocks, but there was still a need for a safe bin storage; (5) the proposal was designed to address residents' concerns about the (poor state of the) areas, lack of communal storage and lack of storage capacity of the bins; and (6) this had been an ongoing issue for several years; and (iii) the Head of Commercial Operations supported the proposal to allow this, a long-standing environmental issue, to be addressed; and had confirmed that there was no funding within waste budgets for this type of facility; and

(d) that (i) on 4 December 2013, a letter to Councillor Beattie, from Mrs I van Millingen had been received, suggesting, *inter alia*, that consideration be given to resurfacing the footpath on the B6372 from Mossend to the entrance to Vogrie Country Park, on the basis that the proposal may also attract Wind Farm Development Gain and include provision for facilitating the installation of mains gas to houses in that location; and (ii) the Head of Commercial Operations had confirmed that the proposal would involve the reconstruction of approximately 2km of footpath including the replacement of the front kerb, installation of new rear edging and resurfacing, at an estimated cost of approximately £250,000; and, in terms of the current works programme, as this was a rural location and in many respects similar to a number of other locations, it did not appear on the current five year programme.

Decision

(i) to note and take no further action on the request by the Scouts that the funding be diverted to the Hut at Borthwick, in view of its distant location;

(ii) to recommend that £16,432 be disbursed for the pavement provision from the junction of Barleyknowe Crescent to 36, Barleyknowe Road, Gorebridge with a view to (1) supporting healthy, caring and diverse communities where local needs were met by maintaining Midlothian as a safe place to live, work and visit by providing suitable infrastructure for the efficient and effective delivery of services to meet the full range of community needs; and (2) providing job creation;

(iii) to recommend that £12,178 be disbursed in respect of the Bin Stores in Mayfield with a view to (1) supporting healthy, caring and diverse communities where local needs were met by maintaining Midlothian as a safe place to live, work and visit by working with communities to reduce anti-social behaviour and offending and promote positive social development and working with partners to protect vulnerable people; and (2) improving Opportunities for People in Midlothian by promoting social and financial inclusion in Midlothian; and (3) providing job creation

(iv) to note and take no action on the request for funding for the footpath between Mossend and the entrance to Vogrie Country Park as it was beyond scope;

(v) to recommend that any residual funding remaining in the Fund be devoted to the formation of the footpath between 80, Barleyknowe Road and the junction with Barleyknowe Crescent, Gorebridge with a view to (1) supporting healthy, caring and diverse communities where local needs were met by maintaining Midlothian as a safe place to live, work and visit by providing suitable infrastructure for the efficient and effective delivery of services to meet the full range of community needs; and (2) providing job creation and

(vi) to note that following completion of the projects and payment of disbursements, as all of the Funds would be exhausted, they would be wound up.

(Action – (i) – (vi) - Director, Resources)

The meeting terminated at 3.35pm.