

**The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-Committee** held in the 1st Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Wednesday 4 September 2013 at 9.30 am.

Present:

Mrs H Carmichael
Mr A Christie
Mr A Graham
Mrs E McAllister

Mr T Prag
Mr G Ross
Mrs J Slater

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager/Clerk
Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Business Support
Mr C Stephen, Ward Manager – Item 5
Mr S Taylor, Civic Officer – Item 5
Mrs A Swanson, Provost/City Leader Secretary – Item 5

Also Present

Mr J Duncan, Highland Buildings Preservation Trust – Part Item 4

Mr A Christie in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr R Laird and Mrs G Sinclair

2. Declarations of Interest

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 4 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)
Item 4 – Mr T Prag (non-financial)
Item 5(4) – Mrs E McAllister (non-financial)

3. Exclusion of the Public

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 and 9 of Part 1 of schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Requests for Financial Assistance 2012/13

There had been circulated Report No. GSC 11/13 dated 27 August 2013 by the Inverness City Manager detailing the application by the Highland Buildings Preservation Trust (HBPT) for £9.9K towards the provision of a Feasibility Study into prospects of restoring the derelict building known as Viewhill House.

The City Manager gave a summary of the report and application explaining that the applicants had reduced the amount they were applying for to £9,999 as they had secured additional funding from the Inverness City Heritage Trust. The application had been deferred twice by the Grants Sub Committee for clarification from HBPT of the plans in hand for the Feasibility Study and the plans to action the results. He also explained that discussions had taken place with the Director of Planning and Development and the Head of Legal, to ensure consistency in support across the Council for HBPT. Noting the progress made by HBPT it was considered that the application was competent to go forward for consideration.

Mr Duncan was then asked to join the meeting to give a presentation in support of the application. He had circulated a note prior to the meeting which contained the presentation

Mr Duncan explained that HBPT is a Charitable Trust which is dependent on Grants. Mr Duncan admitted the Trust is working hard to develop a sustainable future. .

The owners of Viewhill House are keen to work with HBPT and there are no developers wishing to develop the building as it stands. If the Options Appraisal shows no future for the building it will be up to the owners to ask for demolition approval as they will then have a prime asset for selling.

Inverness City Heritage Trust have approved £13,431 to the HBPT. A further £10,000 has been awarded by the Architectural Heritage Fund who have received three extensions to this grant but have been advised that they have till January 2014 to complete the Options Appraisal.

Mr Duncan completed his presentation clarifying that a vision for the building would be become apparent after the Options Appraisal is completed.

Mrs Carmichael questioned the viability of the owners of Viewhill House contracting to agree the future use of the building and land and asked if it was theirs to hand over. Mr Duncan confirmed that he had been assured that it was.

On being asked by Mrs Carmichael, Mr Duncan confirmed the Trust was financially sustainable, noting the recent changes made to the HBPT's operating arrangements.

Mr Duncan then left the room and there followed a discussion by Members on the application.

Members agreed that HBPT is the best option, in the circumstances, for allowing a detailed Feasibility Study to be undertaken which would allow a decision to be taken regarding the future of this notable building in the City. The project was therefore deemed appropriate to support on the basis that the funding sources identified by the applicants also paid the contributions referred to above.

Mrs Carmichael remained concerned that the applicants had not provided a thoroughly robust Business Plan and so had doubts although on balance decided not to move for refusal.

Following further consideration of the application submitted, the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to **APPROVE £9,999** subject to attaching additional conditions of grant being drafted by Officials to address the issues detailed within the report.

Mr Prag left the meeting and Mr C Stephen, Mr S Taylor and Mrs A Swanson joined.

5. Civic Hospitality Requests

There had been circulated Report No. GSC 12/13 dated 28 August 2013 by the Inverness City Manager.

The Sub Committee **NOTED** the Financial Monitoring information contained in Appendix 1.

Following consideration of the applications submitted, the Sub-Committee **AGREED** to make the decisions regarding, disbursement of funds from the Civic Hospitality Budget within the City of Inverness Common Good Fund Revenue Budget for 2013/14 as detailed in the attached schedule.

Mr Stephen updated the Sub Committee on the achievements of the Inverness Harriers at the Games in Gothenburg. Forty-eight Highland athletes attended the three day event which is the largest European athletic event as between 5000 and 6000 athletes competed. They achieved the following:

- 50 personal bests
- Silver Medal for the Long Jump
- Silver Medal for the Shot Putt
- Bronze Medal for Hurdles
- Bronze Medal for Pole Vault

The Club have since gone on to produce at least 6 Scottish Champions at different levels and a Silver Medal winner in Discus at the British Championships, all attributable to the benefits of competing at Gothenburg.

Mr Ross also updated that the Highland Disability Sports Team won 22 Gold, 17 Silver and 21 Bronze Medals at the Special Olympics held in Bath in August. This was a fantastic achievement by athletes and coaches alike and their participation was helped made possible by financial contributions from all the Ward Discretionary Budgets.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting will take place on Monday 30 September 2013 at 9.15am.

The meeting ended at 10.30am.