

**OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS MADE BY OBAN COMMON GOOD FUND**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide a short update to the Trustees of the Oban Common Good Fund on the development work which has been undertaken during the term of their trusteeship of the Fund.

The Committee is asked to note the detail in the report.

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Trustees of the Oban Common Good Fund with a short update on the development work undertaken by the fund during the term of their Trusteeship of the Fund.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- 2.1.1 Note the development work which has been undertaken by the current Trustees of the Common Good Fund

**3. DETAIL**

- 3.1 The current Trustees of the Oban Common Good Fund have been in place since June 2012, having been appointed by Argyll and Bute Council following the local government elections held in May 2012. Changes to the Trustees were made in 2014 following the resignation of Cllr Fred Hall, at which time Councillor Neil MacIntyre was appointed as a Trustee, and in 2016 when Cllr Kieron Green was appointed as a Trustee following the resignation of Cllr Iain A MacDonald. Cllrs Elaine Robertson and Alistair MacDougall have been Trustees continually since 2012, with Cllr Robertson chairing the Common Good Fund throughout this period.
- 3.2 The incoming Trustees in 2012 were keen to look at the operation of the Fund and see what developments they could undertake to make the fund as accessible as possible for applicants, and to ensure openness and transparency in all of the decision making process. To that end a number of significant developments have been put in place;
- (a) At the very first meeting of the Fund it was decided that background information on the fund should be made available on the Council's website, and the application forms should be available online. This was put in place in the summer of 2012, and has enhanced considerably the ease with which applications can be submitted.
- (b) In November 2012 the Committee discussed options to widen Trustee membership and/or invite observers to the meeting to ensure greater visibility to the community of the application of the fund. It was agreed to invite observers to attend, one from the community council and one representing the religious community in Oban. They would not have voting rights but would be invited to offer views on the business of the fund. This process has been in place at all meetings of the Fund which have taken place since that decision was made, with a representative from Oban Community Council, and one from the religious community, playing a full and very useful role in consideration of all applications to the Common Good Fund.

- (c) Early in 2013 the Criteria and Distribution Policy for the Common Good Fund were reviewed, with a change being made to be clear that the requirement for the Fund to be the Fund of last resort would no longer apply if the amount requested was less than £500. This has enabled groups who might otherwise have been precluded from applying or being awarded support being able to make applications and have a successful outcome. The Distribution Criteria are available on the website in order that potential applicants can be fully aware of what is required to be submitted, and the criteria which must be met.
- (d) As part of the development review in 2013 it was also agreed that a process of End of Project Monitoring would be put in place, in order that the Common Good Fund could be assured and have evidence provided that awards had been used specifically for the purpose for which they were given. All successful recipients of Common Good Fund support are now required to submit this end of project information, in order that Trustees can be satisfied that common good funding is being used appropriately and for the purpose for which it was awarded. In the event that no end of project information is returned future requests from the same applicant would be not be agreed by the Fund.
- (e) The Common Good Fund have had a number of structured workshops/development discussions, most recently in May 2015, at which time they agreed that the Oban Common Good Fund is an alternative to mainstream Council Grants Schemes and that normally applications to the Fund will only be considered once other sources of funding (where applicable) have been applied for and determined. At the same time they agreed that a model template completed application form and the End of Project Monitoring report and application be developed for issue to new applicants to assist them with understanding what is required. It was also agreed at that time that the logo for the Common Good Fund should be updated, and this work has resulted in the development of pull up banners which will be available for applicants to use when publicising the support they have received from the Fund.

3.3 The changes which have been made in the administration of the Oban Common Good Fund since 2012 have resulted in an increased degree of transparency in the way the meetings are administered, availability of information on how to apply and the outcome of meetings (agendas and minutes are available online) and a wider, better understanding of the propose of the fund. The Trustees have been able to support 67 applications in the period 2012 to date, to the value of £156,077.42, and have administered the fund in such a way that there are no long term or outstanding commitments and the fund has kept within available budget provision.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The current Trustees of Oban Common Good Fund have made a number of development changes to the operation and administration of the Fund in the period since 2012 which have resulted in improved transparency and public awareness of the use of the Fund to the benefit of the residents of Oban. These improvements are for noting and building upon as the Fund moves forward.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

5.1	Policy	None
5.2	Financial	None
5.3	Legal	Ongoing review of the operation of the Common Good Fund enables Trustees to continue to work within the legislative framework covering such Funds.
5.4	HR	None
5.5	Equalities	None
5.6	Risk	None
5.7	Customer Service	None

### **DOUGLAS HENDRY**

**Executive Director, Customer Services**

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