

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Duncraig Trust Scheme Sub Committee held in Committee Room No 5, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 26 August 2009 at 11.00 am.

PRESENT

Mr W Fernie
Mrs J Urquhart
Dr A Sinclair

Mr A M Millar
Mrs I Campbell

Officials in attendance:

Mrs M Grigor, Finance Manager (Central Services), Finance Service
Mrs J Graham, External Funding Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Miss L Burgess, Senior Clerical Assistant, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
Miss C Maragh, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Office

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr R Greene.

2. DUNCRAIG EDUCATIONAL TRUST SCHEME – FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Mrs M Grigor provided a verbal report on the overall financial position of the Duncraig Education Trust Scheme and a copy of the 2008/09 Unaudited Accounts was tabled.

It was explained that the Trust, at the end of financial year 2008/09, stood at £858,459, comprising £65,110 in the revenue fund and £793,349 in the capital fund. This had enabled £25,000 to be used to fund grants in 2009, similar to the total awarded in 2008. A breakdown of the costs incurred by the Trust was also provided, including the element relating to the central support charge.

In response to questions from Members, it was explained that the financial information relating to the Duncraig Trust was included in the Council's overall accounts together with other Trust Funds. However, the difficulties in keeping Members informed of all Trusts in existence were recognised and work was underway to address this. Members also were of the view that it would be beneficial for the Sub Committee to receive a breakdown of the Duncraig Education Trust on an annual basis so that they were aware of its financial detail.

Thereafter, the Sub Committee **AGREED** that the Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Duncraig Endowment Trust be circulated annually, for information, to the Members of the Sub Committee.

3. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Sub Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) 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 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs I Campbell declared non financial interests in relation to this item as President of Kinlochsheil Shinty Club but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraph 5.18 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

Introduction

There had been circulated Report No DTS1/09 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport providing information about applications for financial assistance under the Duncraig Educational Trust Scheme. Background information had also been forwarded to Members. In this regard, it was pointed out that additional time would have been beneficial to analyse the supplementary information provided. However, given the timescales involved and the start date for a number of courses, a meeting of the Sub Committee had been required at the end of August/start of September. It would though, in refining the provisions of the Scheme, be possible to start the process at an earlier stage of the year and thus avoid delays in receiving references from schools over the summer vacation. Further refinements were also explored, including introducing stricter criteria and, in reinforcing the decision made at the last meeting of the Sub Committee, that funding would only be awarded on a one year basis. These refinements were required to avoid setting unsustainable precedents and thus reducing the amount of funding available to elite athletes and/or talented artists etc.

Discussion also took place in relation to the commemoration of the contribution made by the Hamilton family who had originally bequeathed Duncraig Castle to the Council. The sale of the castle had enabled the Trust to be established and it was felt important that there was some form of recognition.

In relation to general points arising from discussion leading up the award of grants, it was recognised that for the majority of sports elite athlete development pathways existed which clearly identified individuals who excelled in them and at what level. For a small number of sports, however, this was more problematic in that elite athlete pathways were not clearly defined, were still in development or there were issues about the standard of national/international competition. Disappointment was expressed that shinty, seen by many as the cultural sport of the Highlands, had not featured prominently in the awards but the Trust was in place to provide support for the most talented individuals rather than providing support for specific sports, artforms or disciplines. It was hoped that, through discussion with the Camanachd Association, criteria to identify elite players who could meet the funding criteria for the Trust could be established.

The Sub Committee **AGREED:-**

- i.** in recognition of the need for tighter criteria, further refinements to the operation of the Scheme be made;
- ii.** that the criteria clarify that applications for standard IT equipment, mainstream music and academic courses were not eligible;
- iii.** that clarification be sought from officers regarding the provision of a project at

- Plockton High School commemorating the contribution made by the Hamilton family; and
- iv. a further meeting of the Sub Committee be held to inform them of the revisions made to the criteria for funding.

Applications

Turning to determination of specific awards, Members were reminded that awards were made from two categories, namely Sports and Arts, Language, Heritage, Science and Environment. In total, 79 applications for funding had been received, 24 of which had been ineligible. Recommendations on the amount and levels of support had been provided following assessment of the submissions by specialist staff and with advice from independent specialist organisations. After detailed deliberation of the merits of specific applications under both categories the Sub Committee **AGREED:-**

- i. the awards, as detailed in Groups 1 and 2 of the Arts, Language, Heritage, Science and Environment Category with the exception of application DT/A/23/09, totalling £11,700; and
- ii. the awards, as detailed in Group 1 of the Sports Category, subject to applications DT/S/13, 15, 22 and 23/09 being revised with an awarded of £1,750 being divided equally on the basis that the revised award did not exceed 75% of the applicants' eligible costs;

The meeting ended at 12.55 p.m.