

SAFEGUARD YOUR COMMON GOOD ASSETS

YOUR COMMUNITY ASSETS ARE DISAPPEARING!

Last year, three Petitions demanding better protection for Scotland's wealth of common good assets (land, buildings, collections, rentals, etc, etc) were piloted through Parliament by Mary E. Mackenzie (PE875), David Harvie (PE896) and Sally Richardson (PE961). These matters are still active in the new Parliament. Meanwhile, all councils have been officially reminded of their existing responsibilities accurately to record and separately audit Scotland's huge wealth of property in direct community ownership. It is now accepted that for many years this wealth has been under-reported and mismanaged; this has led in many cases to your property being improperly sold or otherwise disposed of.

Concerned individuals and community organisations are now in a position to begin a fight back! You are urged to write to the Chief Executive of your local council asking for accurate, up-to-date information on common good assets held on your behalf by your local authority. See the list at the end of this document to obtain the name and address of the relevant chief executive; below are skeleton sample letters and further information and advice.

SAMPLE LETTER ONE:

The Chief Executive Date:

[name & address from link above]

Dear Sir,

I wish to see the Council's current list of common good assets (heritable and moveable) on the current common good register, and the audited accounts of these assets.

Please reply to me at the address below indicating where and when this information is available.

Yours sincerely,

[your signature]

[your name, address and postcode]

A local authority, if refusing information for any reason, must inform you how to use its review procedure. If there has been no reply within twenty working days (4 weeks) or an unhelpful reply, write again:

SAMPLE LETTER TWO:

The Chief Executive Date:

[name & address from link above]

Dear Sir,

I regret your decision not to respond to my request of [date of first letter] and ask that you review your adverse decision on inspection of the Council's common good assets register etc.

Please reply to me at the address below indicating where and when this information is to be made available.

Yours sincerely,

[your signature]

[your name, address and postcode]

KEEP COPIES OF ALL LETTERS, SENT AND RECEIVED.

If there is no reply to your second letter within twenty working days (4 weeks) or if the response is unhelpful, contact the Scottish Information Commissioner for advice on making a request under Freedom of Information legislation:

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St. Andrews
Fife KY16 9DS

Tel: 01334 464611

IF VISITING YOUR COUNCIL OFFICES:

Ask for relevant photocopies, or take detailed notes of, for example, the number of heritable items listed, eg properties, shops, houses, streets, harbours, town halls, museums, galleries, parks, golf courses, swimming pools, etc (or rentals accrued from them); also, the total value of these assets as listed (see audited accounts, where they should be separately listed).

Ask for relevant photocopies, or take detailed notes of moveable items listed, eg, burgh regalia, paintings, furnishings, artefacts, gifts from visitors or residents, silverware, books, etc, etc. Also note the total value of these assets as listed (see audited accounts, where they should be separately listed).

Below are summarised a number of aspects of existing guidance given by the Scottish Executive as reminders to all Scottish councils in March 2007:

To Chief Executives:

1. Councils are the stewards of common good assets, responsible both for managing these assets and for ensuring that they are properly recorded and ensured.
2. Common good accounts are required to be shown separately.
3. "To discharge their stewardship responsibilities, councils need to maintain accurate asset registers which identify common good assets as such, distinct from the general body of assets under council control."
4. There may be a range of formats, eg ordnance survey plans, GIS (Geographical Information System) computerised records.
5. Inalienable land may not be sold.

To Directors of Finance:

1. On 1st April 1996 any common good property should transfer to the authority covering the Burgh whose common good that property formed part on 15th May 1975.
2. Councils are responsible for common good funds within their area and for ensuring that, for example, assets are properly recorded and insured, and that these are audited councils need to maintain accurate asset registers which identify common good assets as such, distinct from the general body of assets under council control.
3. It would appear evident that for councils to fully maximise the potential of their assets, they must hold accurate records.

Activists are encouraged to be rigorous in their enquiries and should not be deterred by the possibility that some councils will – either through unwillingness, or through their own ignorance of the true position – offer information that will quickly be seen to be either inaccurate, incomplete, or both. It is in the interests of all of us – councils included – that common good records are brought into the 21st century in a condition that benefits the whole of Scotland.

Aberdeen City Council

Chief Executive: Douglas Paterson
Council Leader: Councillor Kate Dean
Civic Head: Councillor Peter Stephen

Town House, Broad Street
ABERDEEN
AB10 1FY
Tel: 01224 522000
Fax: 01224-644346

City of Edinburgh Council

Chief Executive: Tom Aitchison
Council Leader: Councillor Jenny Dawe
Civic Head: Councillor George Grubb

City Chambers, High Street
EDINBURGH
EH1 1YJ
Tel: 0131 200 2000
Fax: 0131 469 3010

Aberdeenshire Council

Chief Executive: Alan Campbell
Council Leader: Councillor Anne Robertson
Civic Head: Councillor Bill Howatson

Woodhill House, Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB
Tel: 0845 606 7000
Fax: 01224-665444

Clackmannanshire Council

Chief Executive: Dave Jones
Council Leader: Councillor Janet Cadenhead
Civic Head: Councillor Derek Stewart

Greenfield
ALLOA
FK10 2AD
Tel: 01259-450000
Fax: 01259-452230

Angus Council

Chief Executive: David Sawers
Council Leader: Councillor Bob Myles
Civic Head: Councillor Ruth Leslie-Melville

7 The Cross
FORFAR
DD8 1BX
Tel: 01307 461460
Fax: 01307-461874

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Chief Executive: Malcolm Burr
Council Leader: Councillor Alex MacDonald
Civic Head: Councillor Alex MacDonald

Council Offices, Sandwick Road
STORNOWAY, Isle of Lewis
HS1 2BW
Tel: 01851-703773
Fax: 01851-705349

Argyll & Bute Council

Chief Executive: James McLellan
Council Leader: Councillor Dick Walsh
Civic Head: Councillor Billy Petrie

Headquarters, Kilmory
LOCHGILPHEAD
PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127
Fax: 01546-604349

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Chief Executive: Philip Jones
Council Leader: Councillor Ivor Hyslop
Civic Head: Councillor Patsy Gilroy

Council Offices, English Street
DUMFRIES
DG1 2DD
Tel: 01387 260000
Fax: 01387-260034

Dundee City Council

Chief Executive: Alex Stephen
Council Leader: Councillor Kevin Keenan
Civic Head: Councillor John Letford

City Chambers, 21 City Square
DUNDEE
DD1 3BY
Tel: 01382 434 000
Fax: 01382 434 104

East Ayrshire Council

Chief Executive: Fiona Lees
Council Leader: Councillor Douglas Reid
Civic Head: Councillor Stephanie Young

Council Headquarters, London Road
KILMARNOCK
KA3 7BU
Tel: 01563-576000
Fax: 01563-576200

East Dunbartonshire Council

Chief Executive: Sue Bruce
Council Leader: Councillor Rhondda Geekie
Civic Head: Councillor Alex Hannah

Tom Johnston House, Civic Way
KIRKINTILLOCH
G66 4TJ
Tel: 0141-578-8000
Fax: 0141-578-8330

East Lothian Council

Chief Executive: Alex McCrorie
Council Leader: Councillor David Berry
Civic Head: Councillor Sheena Richardson

John Muir House
HADDINGTON
EH41 3HA
Tel: 01620-827827
Fax: 01620-827888

East Renfrewshire Council

Chief Executive: David Dippie
Council Leader: Councillor Jim Fletcher
Civic Head: Councillor Alex Mackie

Council Offices, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen
Road
GIFFNOCK
G46 6UG
Tel: 0141 577 3000
Fax: 0141-638-8969

Falkirk Council

Chief Executive: Mary Pitcaithly
Council Leader: Councillor Linda Gow
Civic Head: Councillor Pat Reid

Municipal Buildings
FALKIRK
FK1 5RS
Tel: 01324-506070
Fax: 01324-506061

Fife Council

Chief Executive: Ronnie Hinds
Council Leader: Councillor Peter Grant
Civic Head: Councillor Frances Melville

Fife House, North Street
GLENROTHES
KY7 5LT
Tel: 08451 550 000
Fax: 01592-413939

Glasgow City Council

Chief Executive: George Black
Council Leader: Councillor Steven Purcell
Civic Head: Councillor Robert Winter

City Chambers, George Square
GLASGOW
G2 1DU
Tel: 0141-287-2000
Fax: 0141-287-5666

Highland Council

Chief Executive: Arthur McCourt
Council Leader: Councillor Sandy Park
Civic Head: Councillor Sandy Park

Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road
INVERNESS
IV3 5NX
Tel: 01463-702000
Fax: 01463-702830

North Ayrshire Council

Chief Executive: Ian Snodgrass OBE
Council Leader: Councillor David O'Neill
Civic Head: Councillor Bobby Rae

Cunninghame House
IRVINE
KA12 8EE
Tel: 0845 603 0590
Fax: 01294-3241

Inverclyde Council

Chief Executive: John Mundell
Council Leader: Councillor Stephen McCabe
Civic Head: Councillor Michael McCormick

Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LY
Tel: 01475-717171
Fax: 01475-712010

North Lanarkshire Council

Chief Executive: Gavin Whitefield
Council Leader: Councillor Jim McCabe
Civic Head: Councillor Tom Curley

PO Box 14, Civic Centre
MOTHERWELL
ML1 1TW
Tel: 01698-302222
Fax: 01698-275125

Midlothian Council

Chief Executive: Trevor Muir
Council Leader: Councillor Derek Milligan
Civic Head: Councillor Adam Montgomery

Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street
DALKEITH
EH22 1DJ
Tel: 0131-270-7500
Fax: 0131-271-3050

Orkney Islands Council

Chief Executive: Alistair Buchan
Council Leader: Councillor Stephen Hagan
Civic Head: Councillor Stephen Hagan

Council Offices, School Place
KIRKWALL
KW15 1NY
Tel: 01856-873535
Fax: 01856-874615

Moray Council

Chief Executive: Alastair Keddie
Council Leader: Councillor George McIntyre
Civic Head: Councillor George McIntyre

Council Offices, High Street
ELGIN
IV30 1BX
Tel: 01343-543451
Fax: 01343-540183

Perth & Kinross Council

Chief Executive: Bernadette Malone
Council Leader: Councillor Ian Miller
Civic Head: Councillor John Hulbert

Council Buildings, 2 High Street
PERTH
PH1 5PH
Tel: 01738-475000
Fax: 01738-475710

Renfrewshire Council

Chief Executive: David Martin
Council Leader: Councillor Derek Mackay
Civic Head: Councillor Celia Lawson

Council HQ, North Building, Cotton Street,
PAISLEY
PA1 1TR
Tel: 0141-842-5000
Fax: 0141-840-3335

South Lanarkshire Council

Chief Executive: Archie Strang
Council Leader: Councillor Eddie McAvoy
Civic Head: Councillor Russell Clearie MBE

Council Offices, Almada Street
HAMILTON
ML3 0AA
Tel: 01698-454444
Fax: 01698-454275

Scottish Borders Council

Chief Executive: David Hume
Council Leader: Councillor David Parker
Civic Head: Councillor Alasdair Hutton

Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells
MELROSE
TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835-824000
Fax: 01835-825001

Stirling Council

Chief Executive: Keith Yates
Council Leader: Councillor Corrie McChord
Civic Head: Councillor Margaret Brisley

Council Offices, Viewforth
STIRLING
FK8 2ET
Tel: 0845 277 7000
Fax: 01786-443078

Shetland Islands Council

Chief Executive: Morgan Goodlad
Council Leader: Councillor Sandy Cluness
Civic Head: Councillor Sandy Cluness

Town Hall
LERWICK
ZE1 0HB
Tel: 01595-693535
Fax: 01595-744509

West Dunbartonshire Council

Chief Executive: David McMillan
Council Leader: Councillor Iain Robertson
Civic Head: Councillor Denis Agnew

Council Offices, Garshake Road
Dumbarton
G82 3PU
Tel: 01389-737000
Fax: 01389-737582

South Ayrshire Council

Chief Executive: Tom Cairns
Council Leader: Councillor Hugh Hunter
Civic Head: Councillor Winifred Sloan

County Buildings, Wellington Square
AYR
KA7 1DR
Tel: 01292-612000
Fax: 01292-612143

West Lothian Council

Chief Executive: Alex Linkston
Council Leader: Councillor Peter Johnston
Civic Head: Councillor Tom Kerr

West Lothian House, Almondvale
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6QG
Tel: 01506-777000
Fax: 01506-777102