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**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 9th March, 2023 at 5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

This meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore, the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the Council website at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

1 To receive apologies for absence.

Pages

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes:-

- 3 Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 21st November 2022. 1 - 4

To receive and consider the following report(s) from the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer: -

- 4 Applications for Financial Assistance. 5 - 12

- 5 Future Operation of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and the Welsh Church Acts Fund. 13 - 28

**Circulation:**

Councillors A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson (Chair), Mrs P. Cook, G. Enright, A. Gair, T. Heron (Vice Chair), D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, D.W.R. Preece, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J. Reed, J.E. Roberts, J. Taylor and W. Williams,

And Appropriate Officers.

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## GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

### MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT 5.00 P.M.

#### PRESENT:

Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson – Chair  
Councillor T. Heron – Vice Chair

#### Councillors:

A. Broughton- Pettit, P. Cook, G. Enright, L. Jeremiah, D.W.R. Preece, J. A. Pritchard, J. Reed, J. E. Roberts, J. Taylor and W. Williams.

#### Together with:

S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), V. Doyle (Policy Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

#### RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Gair, D. Ingram-Jones and J. Rao.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

#### 3. MINUTES – 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022

The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer informed the Panel that an information workshop will be arranged for January 2023, where Members will receive a presentation to explain the current processes, criteria and funding levels for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund. Members were advised that there will also be an opportunity for discussion and for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel to make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

A Member highlighted the urgency and importance of the workshop and sought further clarification on changing the criteria. It was explained that the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel had previously gone through this process and can make recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 10 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 4) be approved as a correct record.

#### **4. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Policy Officer presented the report to inform the Panel of the applications for Financial Assistance received between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the applications for Welsh Church Acts Fund received between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The Panel was also informed of one application received from an individual in relation to the Welsh Church Acts Fund received between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, and a recommendation was sought for approval or otherwise.

Members were advised of the budget allocations for both the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund budget for 2022/23. Details of the applications received and approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 were outlined.

A Member raised concerns regarding the underspend in relation to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund budget and commented on the need to change the procedures to make the process more user friendly to the voluntary sector organisations and to also increase the amount of money awarded for each grant. It was acknowledged that the matters raised can be considered in the information workshop.

In response to a Member's query clarification was provided in relation to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund which offers small grants to community/voluntary sector organisations, and it was explained that the grant scheme is a contribution towards the running costs of the organisation. There are no formal grant criteria and instead grants are allocated according to a set of 'General Criteria'. It was further explained that if an application is outside of the 'General Criteria', they are brought to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel for consideration.

The Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel noted the applications received that met the criteria for Financial Assistance and the Welsh Church Acts Fund, which have already been approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers, and which are reported to the Panel for information.

#### **PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

The Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 and 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **EXEMPT MATTER**

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that recommendation 3.2 be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 10 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

The Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel made a recommendation for approval in relation to an application from an individual under the Welsh Church Acts Fund. This recommendation to be approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDED to the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer:

To approve the application from an individual in relation to the Welsh Church Acts Fund.

The meeting closed at 5.35 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR

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## **GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL – 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**

**SUBJECT: APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Panel of the applications for Financial Assistance received between 1st October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
- 1.2 To inform the Panel of the applications for Welsh Church Acts Fund received between 1st October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report advises Panel members of the budget allocations for both the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund budget for 2022/23. It also provides details of applications received and approved by the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer under delegated powers between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Panel members note the applications received that meet the criteria for Financial Assistance and the Welsh Church Acts Fund, which have already been approved by the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer under delegated powers, and which are reported to the Panel for information.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that the applications received under this report are determined in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation criteria.

## 5. THE REPORT

### 5.1 GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR BUDGET

5.1.1 The Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget for 2022/23 is shown in the table below:

Budget 2022/23	£195,686.00
Less Discretionary Rate Relief (Estimated)	£187,367.00
Remaining Budget	£8,319.00
Carry forward balance from 2021/22	£110,882.67
<b>Total Available Budget 2022/23</b>	<b>£119,201.67</b>
Total 2022/23 Grants awarded previously	£9,120.00
<b>Balance Remaining</b>	<b>£110,081.67</b>

5.1.2 The projected Discretionary Rate Relief for 2022/23 is **£187,367**, which leaves a budget of **£8,319** available for 2022/23. Allowing for the projected spend on Discretionary Rate Relief, the available balance for schemes is **£119,201.67**, which includes carry forward balances.

5.1.3 Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, 16 new General Criteria awards have been made totalling **£2,300**. These have been approved by the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer under delegated powers and are reported to the Panel for information only. The awards are summarised in the table below:

Ref	Name of organisation/ individual	Category	Amount awarded
22-GC048	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC049	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC050	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC051	Oakdale OAP Association	b	£150.00
22-GC052	1st Trinant Brownies	h	£100.00
22-GC053	1st Trinant Rainbows	h	£100.00
22-GC054	Application from an individual	d	£250.00
22-GC055	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC056	Application from an individual	c1	£120.00
22-GC057	Application from an individual	d	£250.00
22-GC058	Bargoed and District Art Society	o	£100.00
22-GC059	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC060	Application from an individual	d	£250.00



Ref	Name of organisation/ individual	Category	Amount awarded
22-GC061	Application from an individual	c	£130.00
22-GC062	Cardiac Fitness Solutions	y	£100.00
22-GC063	Glan-y-Nant Allotments	n	£100.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2,300.00</b>

5.1.4 No applications were received between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 which were outside the General Criteria.

5.1.5 After the awards detailed in the table above have been considered, the amount remaining in the current financial year is **£107,781.67**.

5.1.6 As previously agreed by the Panel, grants awarded during the 2022/23 financial year that exceed the budget allocation will be funded from the brought forward balances.

## 5.2 WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND

5.2.1 The total Welsh Church Acts Fund budget available for 2022/23 is **£247,003.32**. This consists of the annual allocation from Monmouthshire County Council (**£57,760**), unallocated sums from previous years (**£105,175**) plus an additional **£80,836.45** held by Monmouthshire County Council in relation to previous unallocated underspends.

Budget 2022/23	£57,760.00
Carry forward balances from 2021/22	£105,175.00
Underspend held by MCC	£80,836.45
Underspend from previously approved projects	£3,231.87
<b>Total available budget 2022/23</b>	<b>£247,003.32</b>
Total 2022/23 grants awarded previously	£43,008.71
<b>Balance remaining</b>	<b>£203,994.61</b>

5.2.3 Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, eight applications have been received totalling **£27,100.18**. These have been approved by the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer under delegated powers and are reported to the Panel for information only. The awards are summarised in the table below.

Ref	Name of organisation	Description	Amount awarded
ORG22-WCF012	Holy Trinity Church, Ystrad Mynach	Replacement of car park surface at Church Hall	£5,000.00
ORG22-WCF013	Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub	Various equipment for hub	£2,972.24
ORG22-WCF014	St Catwg Church, Gelligaer	Clearance of grass & weeds from paths in churchyard	£2,500.00

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>
ORG22-WCF015	Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Maesycwmmmer	Repair work to flat roof	£5,000.00
ORG22-WCF016	Cefn Fforest Miners Welfare Hall	Provision of infrared heaters in main hall	£4,221.00
ORG22-WCF017	Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Blackwood	Replacement water boiler for kitchen	£1,070.40
ORG22-WCF018	Tuesday Club, Fitzroy Lodge	Various equipment & outdoor items	£1,336.54
ORG22-WCF019	Tabernacle Baptist Church, Newbridge	Replacement doors at front of building	£5,000.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,100.18</b>

5.2.4 No applications were received between 1st October 2022 and 31st January 2023 which were outside the General Criteria.

5.2.5 If the grants awarded in previous years but not yet drawn down spend to the maximum amounts allocated, there will be a balance of **£176,894.43** remaining.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

5.3.1 The report summarises all allocations made under the Grants to the Voluntary Sector and Welsh Church Acts Fund budgets between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 for the 2022/23 financial year.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions as the 2022/23 budget has been confirmed, together with carried forward underspends from previous years.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only a full Integrated Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The financial implications are those set out in the report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses which have not been reflected in this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

### **11.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.**

Author: Vicki Doyle – Policy Officer (doylevm@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Stephen Harris – Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer (harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
Andrew Southcombe – Finance Manager (southak@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
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Rob Tranter – Head of Legal Services (trantrj@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 List of General Criteria

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## Appendix 1 - General Criteria

Category	New Criteria	Value
a	OAP Association with own building	£300
b	OAP Association without own building	£150
c	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales at home	£130
c1	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales Top Up Grant	£120
d	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales abroad	£250
e	Jazz Bands	£100
f	Choirs	£100
g	Junior Sports Club (up to 50 members)	£100
g1	Junior Sports Club (over 50 members)	£200
h	Boys & Girls Clubs/YMCA/Scouts/Cubs/Brownies/Guides/Boys Brigade/Crusaders (up to 50 members)	£100
h1	Boys & Girls Clubs/YMCA/Scouts/Cubs/Brownies/Guides/Boys Brigade/Crusaders (over 50 members)	£200
l	St John Ambulance (up to 50 members):- Cadets/Badgers	£100
j	St John Ambulance (over 50 members):- Cadets/Badgers	£200
m	Brass and Silver Bands	£400
n	Allotments	£100
o	Arts Society	£100
p	Writers Clubs	£100
q	Theatre Groups	£200
r	Community Groups	£100
s	Beekeepers Groups	£100
t	Garden Clubs	£150
u	Tenants & Residents Association	£100
v	Websites - Initial design stage only	£100
w	Pigeon Clubs	£200
x	Clubs run From Churches/Chapels	£200
y	Sports Club (up to 50 members)	£100

z	Sports Club (over 50 members)	£200
aa	Other - up to max	£400

Latest Revision 15/7/15



## GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL – 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023

**SUBJECT: FUTURE OPERATION OF THE GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUND AND THE WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consult with the Grants to the Voluntary Sector (GTVS) Panel on a number of options for the future operation of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector (GTVS) Fund and the Welsh Church Acts Fund (WCAF).
- 1.2 The Panel to make recommendations on their preferred options, to be taken forward for consideration by Cabinet in due course.
- 1.3 The Panel to make a recommendation on whether to disband the GTVS Panel and for all future reports to be taken to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, which will be considered by Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and/or Full Council in due course.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report asks the GTVS Panel to consider a number of options for future operation of the GTVS Fund and the WCAF, and to make recommendations for Cabinet to consider. The report considers each of the grant schemes in turn, and also considers the possible future reporting of grants awarded under both schemes, and whether this should change from the GTVS Panel to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee (VSLC).

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The GTVS Panel are asked to make recommendations in relation to the following issues. The recommendations will be reported to Cabinet for a final decision in due course:
  - a. Should the WCAF provide funding for revenue costs and if so, what would be the criteria for providing revenue funding for projects?

- b. What should the maximum level of future grants under the WCAF be?
  - i. Maintain the status quo i.e. maximum grant of £5,000
  - ii. Increase the maximum grant to £10,000 until the underspend is fully utilised
  - iii. Increase the maximum grant by a smaller amount e.g. a maximum of £7,500 until the underspend is fully utilised
- c. Should the General Criteria amounts for the GTVS Fund be uplifted by 20% from the 2023/24 financial year and then in line with CPI inflation in future years?
- d. Does the list of proposed General Criteria for the GTVS Fund cover all the categories required or are additional categories needed?
- e. Should the GTVS Panel be disbanded and future reports in relation to the GTVS and WCAF be made to the VSLC?
- f. If item (e) is agreed, a recommendation will be needed in relation to applications received which are outside the General Criteria for the GTVS and applications from 'exceptional' individuals in relation to the WCAF. Two options were proposed:
  - i. These applications are discussed with the S151 Officer and Cabinet Member, who agree whether a grant should be awarded.
  - ii. These applications are discuss at the pre-meeting of the VSLC with Councillors on the Committee, which make a recommendation on whether a grant should be awarded in a similar way that the GTVS Panel do currently.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The GTVS Panel have requested that a review take place of the operation of the GTVS Fund and the WCAF. A workshop session took place on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the GTVS Panel and invited voluntary sector representatives were invited to give their views on the current operation of both grant schemes and where possible changes could be made – the options paper following this workshop is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

Officers also took the opportunity to gather the GTVS Panel's views on future reporting arrangements in relation to both grant schemes, and whether this should change from the GTVS Panel to the VSLC in future. The views of the Panel in this regard are also captured in the options paper.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Officers of the Council held a workshop with representatives of the GTVS Panel and invited representatives of the voluntary sector on 18th January 2023, to discuss the view from the voluntary sector that changes were needed to the criteria and operation of the WCAF and the GTVS Fund. During the workshop, Panel members were given a presentation on the current application processes and budgets for both grant schemes, together with current underspends. It was noted that once these underspends have been fully utilised, each grant scheme would only have an annually allocated amount to spend, and further details of this are given in the report at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 Officers also outlined that the only role of the GTVS Panel was to receive details of grants already awarded and approved under delegated powers by the S151 Officer, and to make recommendations in relation to GTVS Fund applications that were outside the General Criteria, and applications from 'exceptional' individuals in relation to the



WCAF. Officers suggested that in future, these reports could be given to the VSLC, which has membership from both Councillors and the wider voluntary sector, and may be a more appropriate Committee to report these grants to.

### **Welsh Church Acts Fund**

- 5.3 The annual allocation from Monmouthshire County Council was outlined, together with details of the historic underspend. A number of issues were raised by Panel members and the voluntary sector representatives, and a number of minor amendments to current processes were agreed. One issue where the Council was out of step with other local authorities was in relation to offering revenue grants under the WCAF, and details of the offer in other areas is noted in the report. Panel members are asked to make a recommendation in relation to the following:

#### **Should the WCAF provide funding for revenue costs and if so, what would be the criteria for providing revenue funding for projects?**

- 5.4 In relation to the historic underspend on the grant scheme, the reasons for this were outlined. Panel members were concerned over the level of the underspend and suggested raising the maximum grant amount to fully utilise the underspend. Panel members are asked to make a recommendation in relation to the following:

#### **What should the maximum level of future grants under the WCAF be?**

- i. Maintain the status quo i.e. maximum grant of £5,000**
  - ii. Increase the maximum grant to £10,000 until the underspend is fully utilised**
  - iii. Increase the maximum grant by a smaller amount e.g. a maximum of £7,500 until the underspend is fully utilised**
- 5.5 Panel members were concerned that potential applicants could not access the application form online, and officers explained the reasons for this. They also felt that applicants having to provide funding up front was problematic, and the S151 Officer agreed to support the recommendation that 50% funding is released on approval, similar to the approach for the Community Empowerment Fund.
- 5.6 Another issue raised was in relation to the need to provide more than one quote, and this was particularly problematic for specialist items. The S151 Officer agreed to support the recommendation that a single quote or a more expensive quote be accepted on a case-by-case basis where appropriate.
- 5.7 Finally, issues were raised in relation to communications around the grant scheme, and some minor amendments to current information were agreed.

### **Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund**

- 5.8 The current funding arrangements for the grant scheme were outlined, together with details of the historic underspend. The S151 Officer agreed that from 2023/24, Discretionary Rate Relief would be split into a separate budget and an annual amount allocated to the GTVS Fund.
- 5.9 Panel members were concerned that the General Criteria amounts had not received an uplift since 2015, and suggested an immediate uplift of 20% for the 2023/24 financial year, and an annual uplift each subsequent financial year in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Therefore, Panel members are asked to make a

recommendation in relation to the following:

**Should the General Criteria amounts for the GTVS Fund be uplifted by 20% from the 2023/24 financial year and then in line with CPI inflation in future years?**

- 5.10 Panel members were concerned regarding the large number of General Criteria categories and suggested that these needed to be simplified. A list of the proposed new General Criteria categories is included in the report at Appendix 1. Panel members are asked to make a recommendation in relation to the following:

**Does the list of proposed General Criteria for the GTVS Fund cover all the categories required or are additional categories needed?**

- 5.11 Panel members agreed that more needed to be done to encourage uptake of the grant scheme and that both the Council and the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations had a role to play in this.

### **GTVS Panel -v- VSLC**

- 5.12 Officers outlined that there were two groups currently in existence – the GTVS Panel and the VSLC – that could potentially report on successful applications to the GTVS Fund and the VSLC. The VSLC has a wider membership in that it includes 15 Elected Members (some also sit on the VSLC) as well as a number of representatives from the wider voluntary sector. Some voluntary sector representatives agreed that there is duplication between the two Committees. Officers suggested disbanding the GTVS Panel and that future reports on awards under the GTVS Fund and WCAF are considered by the VSLC. Panel members are asked to make recommendations in relation to the following:

**Should the GTVS Panel be disbanded and future reports in relation to the GTVS and Welsh Church Act Funds be made to the VSLC?**

**If this is agreed, a recommendation will be needed in relation to applications received which are outside the General Criteria for the GTVS and applications received from 'exceptional' individuals in relation to the WCAF. Two options are proposed:**

- i. **These applications are discussed with the S151 Officer and Cabinet Member, who agree whether a grant should be awarded.**
- ii. **These applications are discussed at the pre-meeting of the VSLC with Councillors on the Committee, which make a recommendation on whether a grant should be awarded in a similar way that the GTVS Panel do currently.**

### **5.13 Conclusion**

This report summarises the workshop session held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and identifies a number of areas where a recommendation is needed from the GTVS Panel. These recommendations will form the basis of a report to Cabinet in due course, after which any changes agreed will be implemented.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 There are no changes to existing budgets as these have already been identified for 2022/23.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report summarises the views of the GTVS Panel and invited voluntary sector representatives to the workshop session held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Any proposed changes are aimed to improve the experience of organisations applying for a GTVS Fund or WCAF grant, so an IIA has not been undertaken.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The financial implications are those set out in the report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses which have not been reflected in this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

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Consultees: Stephen Harris – Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer (harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
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Kathryn Peters – Corporate Policy Manager (peterk@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
Rob Tranter – Head of Legal Services (trantrj@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
Cllr Marina Chacon-Dawson – Chair (chacom@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report on Workshop Session with Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023

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### Report on Workshop Session with Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Officers of the Council held a workshop with representatives of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector (GTVS) Panel and the voluntary sector on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023, to discuss the view from the voluntary sector that changes were needed to the criteria and operation of the Welsh Church Acts Fund (WCAF) and the Grants to the Voluntary Sector (GTVS) Fund. The S151 Officer Stephen Harris (SH) opened the meeting by stating that the role of the GTVS Panel was to make recommendations on possible changes, but these would need to be formally approved or otherwise by Cabinet, before any changes could be introduced. SH also explained that in his role as S151 Officer he has a responsibility for the effective stewardship of public funds and will be mindful of that in recommending any changes.

Vicki Doyle (VD) gave a presentation on the current application processes and budgets for both grant schemes, including historical underspends. It was noted that once these underspends have been utilised, each grant scheme would only have the annual allocation each year to be spent. Opportunity was given to Panel members to discuss the current processes at various stages during the presentation.

Kath Peters (KP) noted that the only role of the Panel was to receive details of grants already awarded and approved under delegated powers by the S151 Officer, and to make recommendations in relation to GTVS Fund applications that were outside the General Criteria, and applications from 'exceptional' individuals in relation to the WCAF. She drew members attention to the fact that the VSLC also exists, which has membership from both Councillors and the wider voluntary sector, and may be a more appropriate Committee to report these grants to.

The rest of this report summarises the agreed actions and identifies options for the Panel to discuss and agree their preferred approach for reporting to Cabinet for a final decision.

#### Welsh Church Acts Fund

VD noted that each year the Council receives an annual allocation from Monmouthshire County Council, the trustee for the Welsh Church Acts Fund (WCAF) in Gwent. The annual budget for this grant scheme is around £60,000, with a confirmed amount of £57,760 for 2022/23. In addition, there currently is an historic underspend on the grant scheme which amounts to £186,011.

Panel members noted their concern over the historic underspend, and wanted to allocate it as quickly as possible. One of the issues raised was the need for two quotes, as this proved problematic for applicants sometimes. VD noted that for items of equipment etc. two quotes could mean two different prices from different companies on the internet. Actual quotes are only needed where a contractor will be carrying out work on behalf of the applicant organisation. The S151 Officer recognised the issues raised and agreed that he would be happy to accept one quote in exceptional cases, and this would be considered and agreed on a case by case basis. It was requested that the application criteria and Council webpage be updated to reflected this. **Action: VD to update.**

Currently the WCAF could only fund capital projects, although it was noted that other local authorities accept applications for revenue projects. Subsequent to the meeting, VD has undertaken further research and grants are available in other authorities for the following revenue purposes:

- Carmarthenshire County Council – for individuals towards a specific activity with the county, apprenticeship, or work placement to a maximum of £150
- Newport City Council – individuals where they are a resident of the City of Newport and can clearly demonstrate that there is no alternative source of funding available for intended purpose. Grants will not be provided to support the day to day running costs of groups and organisations where these are likely to create an ongoing dependency on the Fund for future financial assistance.
- Vale of Glamorgan Council – no funding priority is indicated, but due to the level of resources available, applications are not normally accepted from individuals.
- Flintshire County Council – individuals up to 25 years who are resident in the Flintshire local authority area (not including statutory provision) can apply for a grant of £200. Community groups can apply for funding for core costs for up to 3 years, providing the group can provide accounts for at least the last 12 months and the amount being applied for is less than 50% of annual turnover.
- Powys County Council – revenue grants are awarded to support organisations with projects and activities to benefit the residents of Powys.
- Gwynedd County Council – revenue support is provided in relation to the following types of activity i.e. training costs for volunteers; costs in connection with new activities for older people/pensioners; support studies and research into subjects involving history, topography, literature and Welsh life; interpretation materials for buildings of historic and/or architectural interest. No grants provided for individuals.
- Swansea Council – Other than applications from churches, priority will normally be given to revenue funded schemes. Organisations seeking deficit funding will not normally be eligible and neither will individuals seeking funding for educational purposes, sponsorship or charitable donations.

As can be seen from this information, other local authorities have different approaches to revenue funding, with some only offering grants to individuals and others not offering revenue support at all.

During the discussions, the Panel view was that salaries should not be supported as only part of the costs could be funded, and that revenue costs for organisations should not be funded year on year.

**Panel recommendation needed: Should the WCAF provide funding for revenue costs and if so, what would be the criteria for providing revenue funding for projects?** Note: The Panel already provides funding for ‘exceptional’ individuals of up to £1,500 per year for up to 3 years.

A discussion took place on the level of the historic underspend. VD explained that when she took the grant over from Finance in 2018/19 the underspend had been over £300,000. As a result of concerns the maximum grant was changed to £10,000 for one year, and then back to £5,000 the following year when the balance reduced (it should be noted that when the Fund was managed by Finance the maximum grant was £1,500 for up to a third of project costs). The result of this was that the underspend reduced from over £300,000 to around £100,000 by the end of 2021/22.

However, we were then informed unexpectedly of an additional £86,000 that Monmouthshire County Council were holding on our behalf, which brought the total back to £186,111.

Panel members were concerned over the level of the underspend and suggested raising the maximum grant amount to fully utilise the underspend, although officers noted that once the underspend is fully used there will only be the annual allocation each year. VD noted that the bids received in the current financial year are already higher than the annual allocation, so the historic underspend is already being spent.

**Panel recommendation needed: What should the maximum level of future grants under the WCAF be?**

- 1. Maintain the status quo i.e. maximum grant of £5,000**
- 2. Increase the maximum grant to £10,000 until the underspend is fully utilised**
- 3. Increase the maximum grant by a smaller amount e.g. a maximum of £7,500 until the underspend is fully utilised**

VD noted that even if the maximum amount is increased, not every project requests the maximum amount.

Panel members were concerned that potential applicants could not access the application form online. Officers explained that the reason for this was that it is helpful for officers to understand the proposed project before an application is made, and also to provide any assistance or signposting that the potential applicant may need. Once an initial discussion has taken place and officers are reassured that the project meets the application criteria, an application form is sent. This helps to reduce unnecessary time wasted for both the applicant organisation and officers in assessing the application.

Panel members were also concerned that payments were made in arrears once work had been completed or the funding awarded spent. Officers recognised the problems that this can cause, and the S151 Officer agreed to support the recommendation that 50% of the grant is provided up front, the same as the Community Empowerment Fund. It will be important however to have robust monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that grants are used for the intended purposes.

Panel members raised the issue that we provide funding based on the cheapest quote, and there are certain circumstances where a more expensive quote is a more appropriate option i.e. purchasing specialist items or undertaking specialist works. The S151 Officer agreed to support the recommendation that a more expensive quote be considered, on a case by case basis providing appropriate evidence for the need for this is provided by the applicant.

Some issues were raised in relation to the communications of the grant scheme. It was suggested that more information is provided on the dedicated webpage in relation to where groups can access support if they are just setting up. **Action: VD to update website with contact details for GAVO/Community Cares.**

In addition, it was suggested that communications need to be improved for those groups not able to access information via a website, and a leaflet was suggested that could be given to interested groups. **Action: VD to design a leaflet to support the information available on the webpage.**

## Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund

VD also gave a presentation on the current process for the GTVS Fund. She noted that each year the budget is top sliced to provide funding for Discretionary Rate Relief and the budget allocation each year is relatively small. For 2022/23 the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Budget is £195,686, however £187,367 has been top sliced for Discretionary Rate Relief, leaving a balance of £8,319 for the grant scheme. In addition, £110,883 has been brought forward from historic underspends, giving a total of £119,202 for 2022/23. The S151 Officer agreed that from 2023/24, Discretionary Rate Relief would be split into a separate budget and an annual amount would be allocated to the GTVS Fund. VD noted that the vast majority of applications received for this Fund are automatically approved using the General Criteria (previously agreed by the Panel) via the delegated powers of the S151 Officer and are reported to the Panel for information only.

It was recognised by officers that the General Criteria amounts have not received an uplift since 2015, and therefore agreed that an uplift would be appropriate. Panel members suggested that an immediate uplift of 20% is applied from the 2023/24 financial year, and then an annual uplift each financial year in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate of inflation, which would help to reduce the historic underspend over time.

### **Panel recommendation needed: Should the General Criteria amounts for the GTVS Fund be uplifted by 20% from the 2023/24 financial year and then in line with CPI inflation in future years?**

Panel Members expressed concern regarding the large number of categories that currently exist under the General Criteria, and suggested the need to simplify these. They suggested the revised criteria could be linked to factors such as the number of members and organisation has, whether the organisation operates a building, how often a group meets etc. Officers have considered a revised list of General Criteria and propose the following (a table of existing categories and amounts is included at Annex 1):

Category	Criteria	Amount (£)
A	Organisation or Association owning a building	360
B	Organisation or Association not owning a building	180
C	Sports Club (up to 50 members)	120
D	Sports Club (over 50 members)	240
E	Other membership group e.g. Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Rainbows, St John Ambulance etc. (up to 50 members)	120
F	Other membership group e.g. Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Rainbows, St John Ambulance etc. (over 50 members)	240
G	Brass and Silver Bands	480
H	Arts Groups e.g. Jazz Bands, Choirs, Arts Societies, Writers Clubs, Theatre Groups etc.	120
I	Environment Groups e.g. Allotments, Beekeepers Groups, Gardening Clubs, Tenants & Residents Associations, Pigeon Clubs etc.	120
J	Other Community Groups	120
K	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales within the UK	156
L	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales outside the UK	300
M	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales Top-up Grant	144



This list has been derived by combining some of the existing General Criteria categories, and the amounts listed incorporate the 20% uplift recommended by the Panel.

**Panel recommendation needed: Does the list of proposed General Criteria for the GTVS Fund cover all the categories required or are additional categories needed?**

Officers asked what else could be done to reduce the historic underspend relating to this grant scheme. Panel members suggested that more needs to be done to encourage wider uptake of the grant scheme, and recognised that GAVO had a role to play in this. It was also important for groups to realise that they are able to apply for a grant every year. Some Panel Members thought that groups may not apply due to the small grant amount that they can access, and that this is a disincentive for them. **Action: The Council and GAVO to do more to publicise the availability of the GTVS Fund.**

**GTVS Panel -v- VSLC**

KP outlined that there are currently two groups that reports relating to the WCAF and the GTVS Fund could go to – the GTVS Panel and the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee (VSLC). Both the panel and the committee comprise 15 cross-party elected members, some overlapping (see list in Annex 2). Both groups have been in existence since 1996 and there seemed to be a large degree of duplication involved in their respective roles. KP noted the limited role of the GTVS Panel (i.e. to make recommendations in relation to applications outside the GTVS General Criteria and applications received from ‘exceptional’ individuals in relation to the WCAF), compared with the much wider remit of the VSLC i.e. being consulted on the annual budget proposals and any other Council budget changes, receiving presentations on items of interest, equal status and membership of the sector on the committee etc. KP also noted that the VSLC have requested an update on the outcome of the GTVS Panel workshop at its next meeting. Some invited voluntary sector representatives agreed that there is duplication between the two Committees.

Officers suggested that one option could be to disband the GTVS Panel and provide all future reports in relation to the GTVS and WCAF to the VSLC. A couple of suggestions were made in relation to approving applications outside the GTVS General Criteria and applications received from ‘exceptional’ individuals in relation to the WCAF, should the GTVS Panel be disbanded:

1. These applications are discussed with the S151 Officer and Cabinet Member, who agree whether a grant should be awarded.
2. These applications are discussed at the pre-meeting of the VSLC with Councillors on the Committee, which make a recommendation on whether a grant should be awarded in a similar way that the GTVS Panel do currently.

There was some concern from voluntary sector representatives that if either of these options were pursued then they would be excluded from the process.

**Panel recommendation needed: Should the GTVS Panel be disbanded and future reports in relation to the GTVS and Welsh Church Act Funds be made to the VSLC?**

**Panel recommendation needed: If this is agreed, a recommendation will be needed in relation to applications received which are outside the General Criteria for the GTVS and applications received from ‘exceptional’ individuals in relation to the WCAF. Two options are proposed:**

- i. These applications are discussed with the S151 Officer and Cabinet Member, who agree whether a grant should be awarded.**
- ii. These applications are discussed at the pre-meeting of the VSLC with Councillors on the Committee, which make a recommendation on whether a grant should be awarded in a similar way that the GTVS Panel do currently.**

GAVO representatives noted that they sit on a number of multi-agency funding panels, which could be useful in terms of sharing information on what other funds groups are applying for. Some Panel members were concerned that they would be disadvantaged if the Council were to reduce down to a single Committee covering the work of both Committees. It was also suggested that there may need to increase the number of VSLC meetings to accommodate the extra workload, if the GTVS Panel is disbanded. Currently the GTVS meets 3 times per year and the VSLC meets 4 times per year.

## Existing General Criteria

Category	Criteria	Value
a	OAP Association with own building	£300
b	OAP Association without own building	£150
c	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales at home	£130
c1	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales Top Up Grant	£120
d	Individuals (amateur) representing Wales abroad	£250
e	Jazz Bands	£100
f	Choirs	£100
g	Junior Sports Club (up to 50 members)	£100
g1	Junior Sports Club (over 50 members)	£200
h	Boys & Girls Clubs/YMCA/Scouts/Cubs/Brownies/Guides/Boys Brigade/Crusaders (up to 50 members)	£100
h1	Boys & Girls Clubs/YMCA/Scouts/Cubs/Brownies/Guides/Boys Brigade/Crusaders (over 50 members)	£200
i	St John Ambulance (up to 50 members):- Cadets/Badgers	£100
j	St John Ambulance (over 50 members):- Cadets/Badgers	£200
m	Brass and Silver Bands	£400
n	Allotments	£100
o	Arts Society	£100
p	Writers Clubs	£100
q	Theatre Groups	£200
r	Community Groups	£100
s	Beekeepers Groups	£100
t	Garden Clubs	£150
u	Tenants & Residents Association	£100
v	Websites - Initial design stage only	£100
w	Pigeon Clubs	£200

x	Clubs run From Churches/Chapels	£200
y	Sports Club (up to 50 members)	£100
z	Sports Club (over 50 members)	£200
aa	Other - up to max	£400

Latest Revision 15/7/15

### Summary of Membership of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel and the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee

<b>Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel</b>	<b>Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee</b>
Cllr Anne Broughton-Petit	Cllr Robert Chapman
Cllr Marina Chacon-Dawson (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Patricia Cook
Cllr Mrs Patricia Cook	Cllr Kevin Etheridge
Cllr Gary Enright	Cllr James Fussell
Cllr Ann Gair	Cllr Colin Gordon
Cllr Teresa Heron (Vice Chair)	Cllr Teresa Parry
Cllr Dawn Ingram-Jones	Cllr Denver W R Preece
Cllr Leeroy Jeremiah	Cllr Mrs Dianne Price
Cllr Denver W R Preece	Cllr Haydn Pritchard
Cllr Judith Ann Pritchard	Cllr Jim Sadler
Cllr Jo Rao	Cllr Eluned Stenner
Cllr Janine Rees	Cllr Lindsay Whittle
Cllr John Eryl Roberts	Cllr Shane Williams
Cllr John Taylor	Cllr Walter Williams
Cllr Walter Williams	Cllr Jill Winslade
	Voluntary sector representatives:
	Sam Howells
	Simon Ellington
	Mrs C Williams
	Lisa Tibbs
	Mr S Tiley
	Judith Pritchard
	Ms Katy Stevenson
	Ms Lowri Jones
	Ms Carlie Loring
	Margaret Lippard
	K Sutcliffe
	Roger Evans
	Nyree George-Titley
	Ms M Jones
	Mr J Wade
	Mrs M Wade
	Catherine Gregory
	Ms J Tippins
	Rich Hassett
	Mrs D Lovering
	Community Councillor H Llewellyn
	Mr J Goldsworthy
	Chief Inspector Amanda Thomas

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