



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Carter – Chair

Councillors:

Ms. L. Ackerman, P. J. Bevan, R. W. Gough, Mrs. P Griffiths, K. James, J. A. Pritchard,
R. Woodyatt

Together with:

Abertridwr Community Church	-	Mr. L. Clay
Bargoed YMCA	-	Ms. J. Price
Caerphilly 50+ Forum	-	Mr. D. Morgan
Caerphilly People First	-	Mr. C. Luke
Disability Can Do Organisation	-	Mrs. H. Williams
GAVO – Assistant Chief Executive	-	Mrs. E. Forbes
GAVO (Vice-Chair)	-	Mr. R. H. Cooke
Groundwork Wales	-	Mrs. K. Stevenson
Menter Iaith	-	Mrs. L. Jones
Right From The Start	-	Ms. C. Loring
SYDIC	-	Mr. M. Bridgman
The Parent Network	-	Ms. M. Jones
The Vanguard Centre	-	Mrs. M. Wade

Also present:

J. Dix (CCBC Policy & Research Manager), J. Elliott (CCBC Senior Research Officer),
Mrs. M. Chapman (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Mrs. D. Crossman
(South Wales Fire & Rescue Service), Alison Palmer (CCBC/GAVO), Mr. B. Dando
(Groundwork Wales), Mrs. C. Vernalls (Van Road United Reformed Church), Richard Davies
(GAVO – Community Asset Transfer Support Consultant), Cllr. Julian Simmonds (Observing)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. E. M. Aldworth, J. Bevan, Mrs. P. Cook,
C. Hawker, G. Johnston, A. Lewis, D.W.R. Preece.

Also from, Ms. P. Jones (Caerphilly Care & Repair), Mrs. B. Helps (Caerphilly Parents &
Carers Forum), Mr. A. Read (Cancercareline), Mrs. C. Williams (CRUSE Bereavement Care),
Ms. A. Jones (Homestart Caerphilly Borough), Mr. D. Brunton (VOLUME), Insp. C. Haire &
Sgt. A. O'Keefe (Gwent Police), Mrs. D. Lovering (Caerphilly Business Forum
Representative), Ms. S. Crane & Ms. C. Gregory (ABUHB), Mr. J. Wade (Van Road United
Reformed Church), Mr. H. Llewellyn (Town & Community Council Representative)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the three new Voluntary Sector Representatives joining the Committee from September (Mr R Jones (Abbeyfield), Ms L Jones (Menter Iaith) and Ms C Loring (Right from the Start), and also the newly elected councillor for Crosskeys Cllr. Julian Simmonds, sitting in on the meeting as an observer.

The Chair requested for a letter of thanks to be sent to Mr. Peter Jones, from the Abbeyfield Society thanking him for his valuable contribution to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee over his many years of sitting on the Committee.

The Chair went through the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee 17th June 2015 for accuracy and matters arising.

On agenda item 8 within the minutes, relating to the Voluntary Sector Representatives question on offering third sector solutions to support service delivery with the New Leisure Strategy, a Voluntary Sector Representative asked for it to be added to the minutes “that the question on community centres was misunderstood by the Officer.” It was requested through the Chair for the Community Centres Service Manager who provided the information to attend the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting in December, for a discussion on community centres and how the voluntary sector can be involved.

The accuracy of the minutes of 17th June 2015 was then agreed.

4. STANDING ITEM:- WELSH GOVERNMENT OPTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION – CLLR KEITH REYNOLDS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, AND CHRIS BURNS, INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Unfortunately both Cllr Reynolds and Chris Burns sent their apologies for this meeting as they had been called to an urgent meeting at short notice. However, they will attend the December Committee meeting where they will update on both local government re-organisation and the Council’s budget setting. The Chair noted at this moment in time there was no further news around local government re-organisation.

5. COMMUNITIES ASSET TRANSFER PRESENTATION – RICHARD DAVIES, COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER CONSULTANT

Richard Davies gave a presentation on the principles of Community Asset Transfer (CAT). He explained that his post with GAVO is funded by the Welsh Government for one year. He described his job as to advise and assist public bodies in producing a policy, procedure and process for CATs and developing a strong business case, in line with the Welsh Government National Asset Working Document:

Community Asset Transfers in Wales – A Best Practice Guide

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/community-asset-transfer/?lang=en>

CATs are a means by which the Voluntary and Community Sector can secure an interest in the use of public owned assets (buildings, land or services) through ownership, lease or licence, to enable them to deliver local services. The main benefit of CAT is it’s empowerment of the local community in forging its own destiny.

Richard outlined the following criteria for CATs:

- Primary purpose must be regeneration of profits where profit is returned to the organisation or the community
- A strong business plan and finances
- Good governance fully incorporated and constituted for social benefit
- Equality of Access policy that excludes 'Single use' operations
- Skills and capacity to effectively deliver services/have the potential to develop those capacities within their organisation.

There are the following property implications for CAT's, as properties are 'sold as seen', and care needs to be taken regarding maintenance costs and where this funding will come from:

- Condition of the property
- Maintenance of the property
- Existing employees / The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE)
- Long term planning for the future of the property.

The Chair thanked Richard Davies for his presentation, and asked if there were any questions from the Committee. Cllr. Rob Gough stated that voluntary sector organisations need some expertise in the field of consideration of possible redundancy of existing staff at some properties, and knowledge of redundancy payments / TUPE regulations. Cllr. Gough also advised that GAVO has considerable expertise when it comes to searching for funding for projects.

Groundwork Wales informed that they have specific services available to assist any organisations with their CAT.

A Voluntary Sector Representative commented he was aware of some community organisations where the management committee 'Old Guard' do not take kindly to change and new initiatives. Richard replied that this is a common situation and organisations should all implement a Succession Management Plan, to cover committee posts and maintain the function of the organisation. It may be that there are retired volunteers available for an organisation, with the necessary business acumen for CAT's.

Richard noted he was happy for organisations to contact him directly on CATs and gave his contact details as follows:

Mobile: 0772 007 2580

Telephone: 01443 229 587

Email: richard.davies@gavowales.org.uk

6. VOLUNTARY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES QUESTION: BUDGETS AND CONSULTATION WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Several Elected Members explained that the financial allocations from the UK Government to the Welsh Government are not known at present. In the normal course of events more would be known on budgets by the second week of December, but this year a Spending Review is being undertaken by the Chancellor through October and November which will delay the traditional timescales. It may be the case that firm information will not be forthcoming until January 2016. The Chair agreed to call a special meeting of the committee when the budget is known.

It was also agreed through the Chair for an early meeting to be arranged with Martin Featherstone (CEO, GAVO) and his Deputy Emily Forbes, together with Chris Burns and the Leader on setting the Council budget, and how the voluntary Sector can help CCBC with the financial pressures.

7. STANDING ITEM: BUDGETS – INTERIM REPORT PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS ACROSS GWENT LOCAL AUTHORITIES (VERBAL UPDATE) – EMILY FORBES, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GAVO

Emily Forbes described work being undertaken by GAVO to gather information on public sector grant cuts to voluntary organisations across Gwent. On a Wales wide level Emily handed out the latest information from the Wales Council of Voluntary Organisations 'State of the Nation Report'.

At the GAVO AGM on the 12th November in Newport, GAVO will be undertaking a survey from the membership on the effects of budgetary pressures.

Emily agreed to come back to a future meeting of the Committee to present a full report.

8. OPEN DISCUSSION: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COUNTY BOROUGH (AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL COMPACT PARTNERS AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES TO RAISE KEY ISSUES)

Emily Forbes said that the Voluntary Sector Awards Ceremony held recently at Blackwood Miners Institute was well attended and well received by the audience and the award winners.

A question was asked as to how many organisations benefit from rate relief. Cllr Rob Gough replied that this information is available from the Council's Corporate Finance Section.

9. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT PARTNERS (ONE QUESTION ONLY FOR EACH REPORT – UP TO 15 MINS)

a) Update from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)

A written report was provided with the committee papers. Cllr. Phil Bevan wondered from the report how volunteers will be utilised in improving access and quality of services through the Caerphilly County Borough Neighbourhood Care Networks, and what training they would receive. This query to be followed up through Catherine Gregory, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

b) Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

A written report was provided with the committee papers. Cllr Lynne Ackerman praised GAVO's funding success, notably assisting Newbridge Tabernacle Church. Cllr Ackerman requested for GAVO to provide comparative yearly data for their funding and other statistics.

Mike Bridgman commented how impressed he was at the good work of GAVO, in spite of the financial situation and reduced budgets. He said that in this respect the Caerphilly County Borough would appear better than other areas of Gwent.

c) Digest of Caerphilly County Borough Council Committee Reports

A written report was provided with the committee papers. Following a question on the canal report Cllr Ken James, explained the reference to the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. In former years plans were discussed to have the canal navigable at Risca town centre to link with Cwmcarn Forest Drive. Ultimately the plan envisaged opening the whole of the section to join with the canal in the Newport and Torfaen sections. There are however, major financial implications affecting the canal on the Risca to Fourteen Locks stretch. The canal over the years has been culverted at a number of locations to allow road access to estates for example Ty Sign, and this bridging would cost vast amounts of money to adjust to make the canal navigable again.

Mike Bridgman noted that there was a large amount of monies carried over from the Welsh Church Act Fund, and there may be scope here for raising the amount of money awarded per successful grant application. Cllr Rob Gough said that there was concern about the low number of grant applications being received, and noted if the grant allocation is not spent that the total allocation for the following year may be reduced.

d) South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

A written report was provided with the committee papers. There were no questions raised on this report.

e) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent –

A written report was provided with the committee papers. Maria Chapman updated the Committee on a few points contained in her report. She noted that the Women's Pathfinder Scheme is now operating, which provides a whole system approach including support for women as an alternative to charging, during bail and pre-sentence and during resettlement from custody. Also the Gwent PCC in partnership with Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations have funded a Third Sector Development Officer for 12 months to map the third sector that provide services aligned to the PCC's police and crime priorities. The officer will also assist in mapping areas of Gwent where people from a number of ethnic minority communities have settled. This will assist in helping those communities gain appropriate council and other agency services. Other activities would look to raise third sector awareness around the emerging commissioning landscape as existing grant funds are diminishing. With this in mind an OPCC Provider's Fair will be hosted in Christchurch Centre, Malpas, Newport on 13th October 15.

The HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) Report – the Peel Report has described Gwent Police as now doing well, as opposed to an earlier report previously undertaken last year.

Maria apologised for the PCC event, planned in the council chamber, having to be cancelled at short notice. This was because there had been a significant lack of response to the invitations sent out, for the meeting on the 15th September.

10. COMMUNITY PLANNING QUARTERLY BRIEFING:– JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015

To receive and note the following information items attached.

11. DECISION & ACTION SUMMARY

SUBJECT	DECISION	ACTION
1. Letter of thanks	To Peter Jones Abbeyfield (Caerphilly) Society Ltd	Letter to be sent from the Chair
2. Voluntary Sector Representatives Question	Chair requested for the Community Centres Service Manager to attend the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting in December, for a discussion on community centres and how the voluntary sector can be involved	Community Centres Service Manager to attend December Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee

3. Budget	It was agreed through the Chair for an early meeting to be arranged with Martin Featherstone (CEO, GAVO) and his Deputy Emily Forbes, together with Chris Burns and the Leader on setting the budget, and how the voluntary Sector can help CCBC with the financial pressures	Meeting organised for 10 th November 2015
4. CCBC budget	It was agreed for a special meeting of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee to be called once the CCBC budget is known	Anticipated for February – March 2016
5. GAVO to gather information on public sector grant cuts to voluntary organisations across Gwent	Interim report presented, with full report to come back to the Committee	To come back to a future committee meeting to give a full report
6. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board information report	Cllr. P. Bevan wondered from the report how volunteers will be utilised in improving access and quality of services through the Caerphilly County Borough Neighbourhood Care Networks, and what training they would receive	Jackie Dix followed up through Catherine Gregory, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, with Catherine clarifying matters with Cllr. P. Bevan
7. GAVO information report	Cllr Ackerman requested for GAVO to provide comparative yearly data for their funding and other statistics	Emily Forbes to address in future reports

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

2nd December 2015 at 10.30am in the Sirhowy Room, Penallta House.

Meeting ended 12.06 pm.