



GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH MARCH 2020 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Oliver – Chair

Councillors:

Mrs C. Andrews, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, D.T. Hardacre, A. Higgs, D.W. Preece, J. Roberts, R. Saralis, J. Taylor and A. Whitcombe.

Together with:

V. Doyle (Policy Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors M. Davies, R.W. Gough (Vice Chair), L. Jeremiah and Mrs A. Leonard.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Andrews declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4 Applications for Financial Assistance – General Criteria Awards as a previous member of St John Cymru (Rhydney Division), know 2 employees of Helping Hands, A friend is on the Committee of Valley Daffodils and will be one of the chosen charities as Mayor and Bargoed Male Voice Choir is based within her ward.

In respect of additional applications at 5.2.3 of the report, Caerphilly Male Voice Choir have offered their services for a charity concert when appointed Mayor. As these applications have been granted and were provided for information, the Member declared a personal interest and took part in the meeting.

Councillor D. Hardacre declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4 Applications for Financial Assistance – General Criteria Awards in relation to St Marys and St Andrews Church, Pentwyn as he provided advice and assistance in the completion of the application. As the application has been granted and was provided for information, the Member declared a personal interest and took part in the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 19TH DECEMBER 2019

Subject to an amendment to Minute 5 – Review of Criteria Grants, paragraph 5 and thereafter, referring to a submission from a local resident, which should refer to a submission from the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, the minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 19th December 2019 (minute nos. 1 – 5) were received and approved as a correct

record.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The report informed the Panel of the applications for financial assistance received between 1st October 2019 and 31st January 2020.

The report advised the Panel of the budget allocations for both the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund and provided details of applications approved between 1st October 2019 and 31st January 2020.

Members noted the budget available for 2019-20 is £141,161.77, which included the estimated reduction for Discretionary Rate Relief (£171,428.22) and budget carried forward from 2018-2019 (£128,952.99). The Panel noted that the available balance following the last Panel meeting was £129,211.77, which includes the carry forward balances.

It was noted that since the last meeting, a total of 28 new applications had been approved totalling £4,600.00. These grants were awarded by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers. Following the award of these grants, the amount remaining for the current financial year is £124,611.77.

The Panel had an in-depth discussion on the award criteria and application process, as a Member raised concerns that applicants are not required to supply financial information i.e. accounts. Whilst it was noted that the awards are usually small sums, concerns were raised that schemes with potentially large financial balances are also eligible to apply for funding, but no checks were made in relation to the amount of balances they have available. Officers explained that the process of requesting and analysing financial information could be an onerous, especially as the many of the awards are relatively small. In addition, it was felt that, provided the criteria are met, all applicants should be treated equally; some organisations may not have extensive financial records to provide.

The Panel noted that the total Welsh Church Acts Fund budget available for 2019/20 is £183,641.74, which consists of the annual allocation from Monmouthshire County Council (£64,751.00), unallocated sums from previous years (£108,232.86), and underspends on completed projects (£4,888.04).

The Panel were also asked to note that two grants have been withdrawn as they exceeded the 18 month time limit to claim the grant awarded, resulting in a clawback amount of £5,769.84.

It was noted that a total of 3 additional applications have been received totalling £10,085 since the last Panel meeting, which have been approved by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers.

The Panel noted that, should all the grants awarded in 2019/20 (but not yet drawn down) spend to the maximum amounts allocated, there will be a balance of £129,897.35 remaining.

EXEMPT MATTER

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, and it was moved and seconded that the public interest test be accepted and the meeting move into exempt session.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(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 identified in paragraph 14 of Part 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Panel were asked to consider the application from an individual for the sum of £1,500, make a recommendation on whether to approve the application and, if so, the level of grant to be awarded.

Following consideration and discussion, the Panel recommended that the application be supported and awarded £1,500. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed. This recommendation will be approved or otherwise under the delegated powers of the Head of Corporate Finance.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:-

- i) 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 Corporate Finance under delegated powers) are noted;
- ii) The application from an individual under the Welsh Church Acts Fund be recommended to the Head of Corporate Finance for approval in full;
- iii) The withdrawal of grants from 2 organisations for exceeding the 18 month time limit for spending the grants awarded be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.46 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2020, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR