



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 2ND DECEMBER 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E. M. Aldworth - Vice Chair (Presiding)

Councillors:

S. Cook, R. W. Gough, D. C. Harse, A. G. Higgs, Mrs T. Parry, Mrs E. Stenner and L. G. Whittle.

Officers:

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), S. Foley (Regional Community Cohesion Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

Together with:

GAVO: S. Tiley (Chief Executive Officer) and A. Palmer (Deputy Chief Executive Officer)

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Care & Repair Cymru, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice, Homestart Cymru, Oakdale Community Centre and The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed.

Compact Partners: Aneurin Bevan UHB.

Also in attendance:

N. Fitzpatrick (Llamau).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here to View.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, A. Collis, K. Etheridge, J. E. Fussell, Mrs D. Price, Mrs J. Stone and W. Williams, together with representatives of GAVO, Menter Caerfilli, Parent Network, SSAFA Gwent, Gwent Police and Natural Resources Wales.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor A. Higgs declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item 6 - Small Grants to the Voluntary Sector (Verbal Update), as he is a representative on the GAVO Executive Committee. Details are also minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 23RD SEPTEMBER 2021

A representative of the Voluntary Sector requested an update on the Community Empowerment Fund and it was agreed that a report would be provided at the next meeting.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 23rd September 2021 be approved as a correct record. By a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 23rd September 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 6) be approved as a correct record.

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (VAWDASV)/WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN (PRESENTATION).

N. Fitzpatrick, the Head of Service for Llamau's Domestic Abuse and Gender Specific Services, attended the meeting and delivered a presentation entitled 'Imagine a World Without Domestic Abuse'. Members of the Committee were provided with an overview and context of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act Wales and the White Ribbon Campaign. In line with the VAWDASV Act the key strategic priorities were outlined to the Committee.

During the course of the ensuing discussion, a concern was expressed by a representative of the Voluntary Sector in relation to older people and abuse. In response, the Head of Service for Llamau's Domestic Abuse and Gender Specific Services addressed the concern by providing examples of the way in which support is provided.

In response to a query from a representative of the Voluntary Sector it was confirmed that, in many cases, financial abuse is linked to domestic abuse and an example was outlined to the Committee. It was agreed that the representative from Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice would arrange a meeting with the Head of Service for Llamau's Domestic Abuse and Gender Specific Services to work together on this particular area. Further discussion took place regarding the reasons for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Chair thanked the Head of Service for Llamau's Domestic Abuse and Gender Specific Services for attending the meeting.

5. TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME (PRESENTATION).

The Senior Policy Officer delivered a presentation on the Tree Planting Programme. He outlined why the tree planting programme has been developed, the work to date and the ongoing work including the planting event in March at Ynys Hywel Farm. The Senior Policy Officer also explained to the Committee how they can get involved in the project.

A representative of GAVO raised a question in relation to tree planting nurseries and sought further information on getting allotment societies and allotment holders involved. In response, the Committee was advised that two sub-groups will be set up, one to ensure that the contracts are in place properly and another to look at volunteering and how to maximise the benefits of volunteers, learning and education.

In response to a query from a representative of the Voluntary Sector, the timeline of the tree planting programme was outlined in relation to decarbonisation and offsetting.

6. SMALL GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR (VERBAL UPDATE).

Councillor A. Higgs declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item 6 - Small Grants to the Voluntary Sector (Verbal Update), as he is a representative on the GAVO Executive Committee, and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer for GAVO asked the Committee to recall that back in December 2019 a report was written outlining a number of issues in relation to small grants to the Voluntary Sector, which was submitted to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel for consideration. Members were advised that a response has been received and it was discussed at the Voluntary Sector Representatives meeting. Further concerns were raised by representatives of the Voluntary Sector, particularly in relation to the publicity of the scheme and the application process. The need to improve publicity in order to increase awareness of the scheme, to ensure it is maximised for the benefit of the smaller third sector organisations, was emphasised. With regard to the application process, the representative of the Voluntary Sector highlighted the need to make the scheme easier to access by making the application form easier to complete and also available online. Comments were made in relation to the amounts remaining in the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget and the amounts that are being dispersed. It was suggested that by increasing the amounts available, at this time, it would help kickstart organisations that have been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the course of the ensuing debate further comments were made in relation to discretionary rate relief and the process, administration and governance of the grants to the voluntary sector.

The Chief Executive Officer for GAVO sought clarification as to how all the concerns raised could be taken forward. In response, Councillor R. Gough, who is also a Member of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel, responded to a number of the points raised. It was agreed that the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for GAVO would send Councillor R. Gough an e-mail outlining all the concerns raised by the Voluntary Sector representatives, which would be forwarded to the Chair of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel and relevant Officers.

7. PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT AND PLAN (VERBAL UPDATE).

The Senior Policy Officer provided a verbal update on the Public Services Board (PSB) Well-being Assessment and Plan. It was noted that the next meeting of the Gwent Public Services Board will be held on 7th December 2021 and the main element of that meeting would be to look at the Well-being Assessment and the draft consultation. It was highlighted that the next Well-being Assessment is due to be published in May 2022 and the timetable for producing the Gwent Well-being Assessment was outlined to the Committee. The Chief Executive Officer for GAVO also provided an update from a third sector point of view.

8. ITEMS OF INTEREST CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FROM COMPACT PARTNERS

There were no items of interest concerning the Voluntary Sector from Compact Partners.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer for GAVO placed on record her thanks to Michelle Jones (Parent Network) and wished her well in her retirement.

The meeting closed at 11.53 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR