



**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
3RD MARCH 2009**

**SUBJECT: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The following applications for rate relief have been determined by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers (Scheme of Delegation Item 5.2(t) refers).
- 1.2 In arriving at her determination the Head of Corporate Finance has been guided by Council policy laid down by the former Finance Committee on 14 February 1996 and 30 April 1996, together with Welsh Office criteria for considering such applications.

**2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council is able to assist a wide range of voluntary and sporting organisations by granting rate relief. This report deals with recent applications.

**3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The granting of rate relief is a very cost effective way in which the Council can pursue its Regeneration objective by giving financial assistance to local organisations.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1 YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROJECT LTD**

- 4.1.1 The applicants are a non profit making organisation whose application is in respect of their "Local Community Radio Station" which is operated from premises on the Bowen Industrial Estate, Aberbargoed.
- 4.1.2 The station is promoted by Gwent Police and this operation is co-ordinated by one of its officers who is assisted by volunteers.
- 4.1.3 The radio station operates 24 hours a day and is directed mainly at issues affecting young people and persons with physical and mental disabilities by offering advice, information and support on issues affecting them such as health, employment, training, drugs etc. In addition the radio station offers:-
  - 1. Low cost advertising airtime to local businesses.
  - 2. Provides general information to the public on traffic travel, the weather, crime prevention and local community issues.

3. Local schools – the opportunity to broadcast their own programme on issues affecting their school and its pupils i.e. Lewis School Pengam has its own weekly magazine programme.
4. Provides young persons interested in pursuing a career in the field with training in broadcasting and media work.

4.1.4 The organisation is mainly funded by the Community Plan key fund. Some additional income being derived from fees charged for advertising.

4.1.5 The current annual rate liability of the organisation's premises is £873 (net of 25% small business rate relief awarded). Should the Authority decide to award the top up of 75% discretionary rate relief it would be required to meet the total cost of £873.

**Decision: That the top up of 75% discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

#### 4.2 **SAMYE FOUNDATION WALES**

4.2.1 The applicants are a registered charity who have therefore been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions.

4.2.2 This application relates to the organisation's first floor offices at 2/4 Cardiff Road, Caerphilly which are used as a health and well being centre and also for exhibiting local art. The organisation's main objectives are stated to be:-

1. The relief of sickness and the prevention and protection of health by promoting and developing the use of meditation.
2. To advance the education of the public in particular in the Tibetan culture and its contribution in promoting tolerance, compassion "respect and peace".

4.2.3 To achieve its purpose the foundation runs meditation sessions and classes aimed at helping relieve persons from the stress which they are suffering in their lives both at home and in the workplace. In addition for those requiring it counselling is available on a "one to one talk basis". It also encourages children from local schools to attend its session with the aim of helping them feel more calm in facing examinations etc. The organisation is run by volunteers who are trained psychotherapists.

4.2.4 The organisation offers its services free of charge to people on low income or unemployed who reside in the Caerphilly County Borough area. Otherwise a £25 annual membership charge is applied. The foundation is a member of the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. As this is a relatively new organisation it is at present being funded through donations and membership fees.

4.2.5 The current annual rate liability on the foundation's premises is £2283 and the cost to the Authority of awarding the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief would be £342 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £115.

**Decision: That the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

#### 4.3 **THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICES**

4.3.1 The applicants are a registered charity who have therefore been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions.

4.3.2 This application is in respect of the organisation's offices on the Swanbridge Court Industrial Estate in Bedwas which is used as an administrative office for case co-ordination.

4.3.3 NYAS is a national organisation whose objectives are stated to be:

1. To relieve children who are in need of care or protection by the provision of advise, representation, assistance, legal and other services which would otherwise not be available to them due to their own circumstances or because of the poverty of their parents, guardians, foster parents etc.
2. To advance the education of the public in all aspects of child care law and social work practice.
3. To initiate, promote, carry out and evaluate research into the upbringing, education, care and protection of children.
4. Development of accredited training for young people to enable them to participate in staff recruitment and selection.
5. A review of arrangements to ensure effective feedback from the children and young people who use the services.
6. Increase the number of young people offering support, advocacy and separate legal representation.

4.3.4 The organisation's work load is comprised of cases referred from Caerphilly County Borough Council's Social Services Department and direct contact made by young people through help lines and other agencies.

4.3.5 NYAS obtains its funding mainly through grants from Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Legal Services Commission. Additional income is obtained from private donations etc.

4.3.6 The current annual rate liability on the organisation's premises is £1701 and the cost to the Authority of awarding the additional top up of 20% discretionary rate relief would be £255 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £85.

**Decision: That the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

4.4 For information with regard to the above organisations it has previously been the policy of the Authority to award discretionary rate relief to such similar organisations offering advice, information, support and counselling services to the local community. These include:-

- Can Llaw On Line Cyf which has a website providing advise and information for young people requiring it on issues such as health, the environment, employment, training, their legal rights.
- DRUGAID SWAPA which provides free confidential information, advice and counselling to persons with drug and alcohol related problems.
- CRUSE Caerphilly which offers advice, information, support and counselling to the bereaved.

**4.5 TRECENYDD COMMUNITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

4.5.1 The applicants are a non profit making body who became responsible for the management of the community centre at Second Avenue, Trecenydd, Caerphilly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 under a lease from the Authority. The main objectives of the organisation are stated as:-

1. To provide social, educational, informative and recreational activities for the residents of the local community with the objects of improving the quality of life for the said inhabitants of the area of benefit.
2. To maintain and manage the centre in furtherance of these objects.
3. To promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

4.5.2 To achieve its aims the organisation provides numerous activities and clubs which include Taekwondo, kick boxing, karate, indoor bowls, dance practice and a twice weekly OAP club. The hall is also available for hire for residents parties. A flat rate charge of £5 per hour is made for all activities with the exception of the OAP club which is free of charge. In addition

the premises are used for 4 hours a day by GAVO who are charged a rent of £35 per week. GAVO offer advice to the members of the community regarding grants that they may be entitled to apply for and assist them in their applications.

- 4.5.3 The centre is run by volunteers from the local community and is funded mainly through fees charges for by the hire of the hall. They also receive an annual grant from Caerphilly CBC to cover the caretakers wages.
- 4.5.4 The current annual rate liability of the hall is £5126 and the cost to the Authority of awarding 100% discretionary rate relief at current levels would be £512 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £4614.
- 4.5.5 It is currently the Authority's policy to award 100% rate relief to such leased community centres providing benefit to residents of the local community, for example; Bargoed Community Centre Management Committee at Park View, Bargoed and Cwmfelinfach Community Centre Management Committee on their premises at High Street, Ynysddu.

**Decision: That 100% discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

## **5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **6. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Members note the decisions taken under delegated powers.

## **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 To assist local voluntary organisations.

## **9. STATUTORY POWER**

- 9.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

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Background Papers:  
Rate Relief Application Forms