

**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
21ST JULY 2009**

SUBJECT: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

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 ALZHEIMERS SOCIETY

- 4.1.1 The applicants are a registered charity who have therefore been awarded 80% mandatory charitable rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions. The application is in respect of the society's office and premises at Blackwood Road, Pontllanfraith which is a dual administrative office and meeting place.
- 4.1.2 The objectives of the society are stated as "to provide day care, home care, befriending and advocacy services" to persons suffering from dementia. The organisation also provides a carer support service to the carers of persons diagnosed with dementia.
- 4.1.3 The society's services are provided free of charge to any person within the Caerphilly County Borough requiring them by its 8 professional staff and 7 trained volunteers.
- 4.1.4 The society works in conjunction with the Authority's Social Services Department who also provides its funding by means of a quarterly mental healthcare grant.

- 4.1.5 The current annual rate liability of the society's premises is £3765 and the cost to the Authority of awarding the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief at present levels would be £564 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remaining £189.

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

4.2 HAFODRYNYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

- 4.2.1 The applicants are a registered charity who have therefore been awarded 80% mandatory charitable rate relief in accordance with statutory provisions.
- 4.2.2 The application is in respect of the Village Hall at Pontbren Road, Hafodrynys which is used as a community centre. The main objectives of the organisation are stated as "to advance education and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Hafodrynys village and its neighbourhood by the provision of social recreational and leisure facilities".
- 4.2.3 In order to achieve its aims the hall provides various activities and clubs free of charge. These include mother and toddler club, dancing classes, coffee mornings, games evenings (pool, skittles and table tennis). In addition the premises are used periodically as a meeting place by GAVO for which a flat rate charge of £30 per time is made for the hire of the hall and provision of refreshments. The hall is also available for local residents parties and a flat rate charge of £30 is made for adults parties and a reduced charge of £20 is applied for children's parties.
- 4.2.4 The hall is run by volunteers from the local community and funding is obtained entirely by self aid which includes fees for hire of hall and provision of refreshments, weekly quiz night fees, raffles and car boot sales.
- 4.2.5 The current annual rate liability of the hall is £1149 and the cost to the Authority of awarding the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief at present levels would be £172 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £58.
- 4.4.1 The Authority currently awards discretionary rate relief to similar community centres providing benefit to members of the local community. These include Hollybush Residents Association, Cwmfelinfach Community Centre and Britannia Community Association.

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

4.3 CAERPHILLY WORKMENS HALL AND INSTITUTE

- 4.3.1 The applicants are a registered charity who are currently being awarded 80% mandatory rate by the Authority due to their charitable status.
- 4.3.2 The application is in respect of the Caerphilly Workmen's Hall and Institute building at Castle Street, Caerphilly which is controlled by a management committee and operates as a community centre for the benefit of the residents of Caerphilly and its surrounding neighbourhood.
- 4.3.3 In order to provide benefit the hall is available and used free of charge for a number of purposes. These include twice weekly meetings of the Caerphilly North Ward Pensioners Association, local school concerts and plays and meetings held by local residents and the National Union of Mineworkers.
- 4.3.4 As the operation of the hall is entirely self funded it is also available for hire to:-
- Local residents for parties and functions for a fee of £30 per hour or £100 a day, with the exception of children's parties which are free of charge.

- Adult concerts, theatrical performances, business meetings for which a charge of £35 per hour or £100 for half a day is made.

4.3.5 Additionally the building is used once a week by the learning for life charity for which a monthly rental charge of £120 per month is made and 3 times a week for charity bingo for which an entrance fee of 60p is payable.

4.3.6 The current annual rate liability of the hall is £9046 and the cost to the Authority of awarding the top up of 20% discretionary rate relief at present levels would be £1356 with the Welsh Assembly Government Pool bearing the remainder of £453.

4.3.7 It is currently the Authority's policy to award discretionary top up relief on similar such buildings provided by C.I.S.W.O (the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation). These include Blackwood Miners Hall and Institute in High Street, Blackwood and the Celynen Colliery Workmen's Hall and Institute in High Street, Newbridge.

Decision: That the top up of 20% 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