



GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL – 17TH JANUARY 2018

SUBJECT: WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Panel with background information on the Welsh Church Act Fund and to seek views on revising the level of grants currently awarded.
- 1.2 To make appropriate recommendations for Cabinet consideration.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report advises the Panel of the current criteria for awarding grants from the Welsh Church Act Fund and asks Members whether consideration should be given to revising the level of grants awarded.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Voluntary and community sector organisations make an important contribution to services to the public across the borough and are key participants in the Compact Agreement between the public and third sector.
- 3.2 This report links to the following Well-Being Goals within the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: –

- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A prosperous Wales
- A healthier Wales

4. REPORT

4.1 WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND (WCAF)

4.1.1 Background

The Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund was established on the 1st April 1996 from the former Gwent Fund and part of the former Mid Glamorgan Fund. The Fund covers the administrative areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen and Monmouthshire, with Monmouthshire being designated as the lead Authority.

- 4.1.2 At previous meetings of the Panel it was decided that for Caerphilly CBC the following criteria

would apply when considering applications for assistance from the Welsh Church Act Fund: -

- (i) A grant of no more than £2,000 to be given to partly fund projects of £6,000 and over.
- (ii) Smaller projects less than £6,000 be grant aided up to a third of the total cost.
- (iii) All organisations receiving grants produce the necessary financial records to show the expenditure has been incurred.
- (iv) No organisation is allowed to apply in consecutive years.

4.1.3 At it's meeting on the 13th July 2009 the Panel agreed that in future, Officers would approve grant applications meeting the Welsh Church Act Fund criteria, using delegated powers. Such decisions would then be reported to the Panel for information, where Members could ask for further information if required.

4.1.4 Monmouthshire CC have confirmed that there is no individual limit on WCAF award so the Panel may wish to consider revising the level of grant awarded to make better use of the funds available. We cannot change the criteria listed in Appendix 1. The funding available for 2017/18 is £280,168.33 (inclusive of brought forward balances unspent in previous years).

4.1.5 The following Information has been obtained from other Local Authorities showing the level of funding they provided from their WCAF grants in 2017/18: -

- **Monmouthshire CC**

- No prescribed upper limits but awards are usually up to a maximum of £2,500 due to limited funding. Individuals are limited to £500.

- **Torfaen CBC**

- Awards are only now made to support hardship.
- Previously Torfaen CBC made awards up to £350 for one off project costs, £500 for equipment to enhance a project, with churches allocated up to £1,000

- **Newport CC**

- During the last two years the grants awarded have been an average of 60% of the sums requested. In 2015/16 grants were awarded up to 90% to reduce carried forward balances. The maximum award available £10k.

- **Blaenau Gwent CBC**

- Grants are only awarded once a year in October to ensure that all applications can be considered together and awards made fairly. Churches/Chapels/Museums are given higher allocations (ranging from £300 to £862) with other organisations only awarded £250 due to the low level of funding available.

4.1.6 Members are asked to consider whether the current limits set out in paragraph 4.1.2 of the report should be reviewed and if so, to discuss options and make appropriate recommendations for Cabinet consideration. Below are some suggested options, although this is not an exhaustive list: -

4.1.6.1 **Option 1**

- Applications of up to £2,500 to be fully grant funded with applications above £2,500 to be subject to a grant rate of 50% on the sum in excess of £2,500 e.g. an application requesting £4,000 that meets the criteria would receive £3,250 (£2,500 plus 50% of £1,500). Members may wish to consider a maximum grant award..

4.3.6.2 **Option 2**

- Award all applications that meet the WCAF criteria at 50% with a maximum award of £10,000.

4.3.6.3 **Option 3**

- Award grants of up to 90% with a maximum award of £10,000

4.3.6.4 Option 4

- Applications of up to £5,000 to be fully grant funded with applications above £5,000 to be subject to a grant rate of 75% on the sum in excess £5,000 e.g. an application requesting £8,000 that meets the criteria would receive £7,250 (£5,000 plus 75% of £3,000). Members may wish to consider a maximum grant award.

4.3.6.5 Option 5

- Keep grant awards as they currently stand.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 Grants awarded from the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Fund contribute to the following Well-Being goals: -

- A Wales of cohesive communities – Through financially supporting community groups.
- A prosperous Wales – By helping organisations to be financially resilient.
- A healthier Wales – Through encouraging participation in sports.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct equalities implications to this report and so no Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The financial implications are those set out in the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications

9. CONSULTATIONS.

9.1 There are no consultation responses, which have not been reflected in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Members consider the content of this report and determine whether a recommendation should be made to Cabinet that grant levels should be reviewed.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To ensure that grant limits are appropriate.

12. STATURORY POWER

12.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2003 and the Councils Financial Regulations.

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A Southcombe – Finance Manager

Appendices:

Appendix A (i) – Welsh Church Act Fund Criteria