



CABINET AS TRUSTEES OF BLACKWOOD MINERS INSTITUTE – 17TH OCTOBER 2018

SUBJECT: BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To advise Cabinet as Trustees of the Blackwood Miners' Institute on progress of the operational activities for the financial year ahead 2018/2019.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Blackwood Miners' Institute was conveyed as a charitable trust to Islwyn Borough Council, (and subsequently to Caerphilly County Borough Council) and was registered as a charity on 13th November 1990.
- 2.2 The local authority, acting as sole corporate trustee has a legal duty to operate the charity in accordance with the governing document and has a legal obligation to account for the charity's finances in accordance with the Charity Act 2011.
- 2.3 At the July meeting of the Trustees it was agreed that more frequent meetings should be held to update the Trustees on a number of operational activities and proposals intended to improve the sustainability of Blackwood Miners Institute as a venue.
- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners' Institute on the proposals discussed in the July meeting.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to act as Trustee of the Blackwood Miners' Institute and in that capacity to consider all matters in connection with the management, use and development of the Institute in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed.
- 3.2 The Arts Council for Wales' vision is a creative Wales where the Arts are central to the life of our nation.
- 3.3 Culture and Arts are key elements in the Council's Regeneration Strategy in regenerating communities and raising aspirations and contribute to key objectives / goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- 3.4 Increasing visitor numbers to the County Borough contributes to the Council's well-being and corporate plans.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 As part of the Council's ongoing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) there is pressure to continue to reduce the annual subsidy that the Authority provides to Blackwood Miners' Institute and staff are working towards identifying how this can be achieved.

4.2 The Arts Council of Wales has included Blackwood Miners' Institute as part of its Portfolio of Revenue Funded Organisations since 2016/17, providing an annual grant of £129,375 to allow the development of an artistic programme in areas of challenge such as 'drama, dance and non-commercial music' and to support local artist opportunities through co-production work.

4.3 TICKET SYSTEM & WEBSITE

The Council's Head of Procurement has recently signed off the business case for a new cloud based box office system which can now proceed to award stage and project implementation.

Online ticket sales form a low percentage in terms of BMI's overall ticket sales and the upgrade is necessary in order to increase the percentage of bookings undertaken online and to allow the potential for efficiency savings from the current box office arrangements.

A brief is currently with IT to progress an updated website with the aim of launching a new website that will incorporate the new ticketing system.

4.4 BAR AREA

Following a visit to Blackwood Miners' Institute by the Conservation Officer, the Development Control Manager and the Building Control Team Leader, a number of options were looked at in relation to improving the customer experience in and around the bar area along with improving signage at the front of the building and the following have been agreed:

Doors between foyer and bar (first floor): with the installation of magnetic door locks linked to the fire alarm system, it would be possible to hold these doors in an open position when the public are using the bar which would help to increase circulation.

The Lounge (first floor): the doors can be reversed so that they open into the room and held open with magnetic door locks as above and would help with circulation. Details of the alterations associated with points 1 and 2 will be needed by the Planning Department to assess whether they need listed building consent and whether they will be satisfactory from a Building Regulations point of view.

4.5 ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

Theatre advertisement on opposite side of road (or elsewhere in the town): this is being considered by the Development Control Manager. This work would require advertisement consent and a licence from the highway authority and the setting of the listed building would have to be considered.

Signs on the front of the building: the possibility of installing hanging banners on the front of the building is being investigated that would advertise the venue (as opposed to specific shows) and would be located within the existing plain pilasters at first and second floor. This work would require listed building consent, but not advertisement consent.

Existing brass letters spelling out Blackwood Miners' Institute on either side of the building: The possibility of illuminating this signage is being investigated by the Development Control Manager along with the pruning of trees in front of the southern side of the building along with the relocation of the adjacent hoarding. The means of illumination will need listed building consent.

Signs on the front railings: the Development Control Manager is investigating the possibility of having banners fixed to the front railings with Highways.

Advertisement on hoardings around new housing development to be erected adjacent to Blackwood Miners' Institute: this possibility is being investigated with the developers.

Adverts on rear fence at the rear of the Blackwood Miners' Institute building: these would benefit from the same rights as set out above but the impact on the visual amenity of the area would need to be assessed in relation to the size of the proposed panels.

4.6 EVENTS OVERVIEW

A flavour of some of the forthcoming events being held at Blackwood Miners' Institute includes live boxing, 'Public Service Broadcasting' (sold out), the 'Dreamboys', 'Cosi fan Tutte', 'Classic Rock Show' and a number of shows that aim to maximise the secondary spend from near capacity audiences.

Some thought should be given to 2020 and the bi-Centenary of Blackwood's formation as a town and what part BMI can play in any future celebrations.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report is being considered by Cabinet acting as corporate trustee and not in its capacity as the Local Authority.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIA process does not need to be applied.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current level of financial subsidy provision from the Council of £324,362 has been set in line with the agreed Council provision for wage and consumer inflation.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications from this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The comments from consultees have been included in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners' Institute note the information set out in the report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The report is an information item and no recommendations are being made for consideration.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Charities Act 2011 and Local Government Act 1972

Author: Giles Ballisat, Theatre and Arts Service Manager

Consultees:

Cllr S Morgan	Cabinet Member – Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing and Future Generations Champion
Mark S Williams	Interim Corporate Director Communities
Rhian Kyte	Head of Regeneration & Planning
Tim Stephens	Development Control Manager
Nicole Scammell	Head of Corporate Finance and S151 Officer
Steve Harris	Interim Head of Business Improvement Services
Lisa Lane	Interim Monitoring Officer
Paul Hudson	Destination & Events Manager
Mike Eedy	Finance Manager