



## VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY,  
17TH JUNE 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair: Ms M. Jones (Parent Network)  
Vice Chair: Councillor Mrs E. M. Aldworth

Councillors:

A. Collis, Mrs T. Parry, Mrs D. Price, L. G. Whittle and W. Williams.

Together with Representatives of the Voluntary Sector and Compact Partners:

GAVO, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Care & Repair Cymru, Groundwork Wales, Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili, Oakdale Community Centre, Parent Network, Pobl Housing and The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed.

Town and Community Councils Representative.

Also in attendance:

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy), S. Foley (Policy Officer), P. Massey (Policy Officer), S. Isaacs (Rents Manager), T. McMahon (Community Regeneration Manager), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

### RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson 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. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

It was moved and seconded that Ms M. Jones be appointed as Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Ms M. Jones be appointed as Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year.

It was moved and seconded that Councillor E. M. Aldworth be appointed as Vice Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year and by a show of hands this was

unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Councillor E. M. Aldworth be appointed as Vice Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee for the ensuing year.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received during the course of the meeting and also provided to Committee Services.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, S. Cook, K. Etheridge, R.W. Gough, J. Gale, D.C. Harse, A.G. Higgs and Mrs E. Stenner. Apologies for absence were also received from Alison Palmer (GAVO), Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice and SSAFA Gwent Branch.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

J. Pritchard (The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6. Details are minuted with the respective item.

## **4. MINUTES – 18TH MARCH 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 18th March 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 7) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **5. CAERPHILLY CARES – VERBAL UPDATE**

The Community Regeneration Manager provided Members with an overview of Caerphilly Cares. The Committee was informed that since January 2021 the Community Regeneration Team has moved into the Directorate of Social Services as part of the implementation of Caerphilly Cares, which was officially launched in April 2021. Members were advised that the Community Regeneration Team are in the process of undertaking a number of internal department referral pathways and most notably some work has been undertaken with council tax and benefits in relation to people who are currently in debt and in arrears. Members were also advised that collaborative working is being undertaken with the good health and wellbeing action area of the Public Services Board and the Community Regeneration Team are continuing to support the community provision and volunteer support through collaborative work with GAVO. Members were informed that the Community Regeneration Team has developed a briefing session for staff to support their conversations with vulnerable people, making sure all conversations are person centred and, in addition to that, the team has completed the Connect Five Train the Trainer course with the Aneurin Bevan UHB, which is a brief intervention course to support people with mental health issues.

The Rents Manager addressed the Committee and informed Members that 4 staff have been appointed who will look at proactively using information that is held where people are not claiming everything that they are entitled to and reactive for people in crisis. Members were advised that they will be working in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau in relation to debt and benefits. It was highlighted that since this team has been in post and trained, referrals for debt advice has gone up drastically and the number of referrals to the Citizens Advice Bureau has increased. It was highlighted that regular meetings are being held with the Citizens Advice Bureau to increase partnership working and Members were informed of the successes in relation to back dates of benefits and prevention of homelessness.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the update and a number of points were

discussed.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector sought further details on the Train the Trainer course and questioned whether it is available for staff who work in voluntary organisations, in terms of supporting people in the community with low level mental health. In response, the Community Regeneration Manager advised the Committee that it is the intention to promote the training and roll it out as widely as possible.

A Representative of the Voluntary Sector raised a question in relation to the interaction with Social Services and Support Workers and the Committee was advised that the work of the Community Regeneration Team does not duplicate or take on the role of the Support Officers within Social Services. It was highlighted that it is an early intervention provision prior to people needing or hopefully to prevent people from going into statutory services. A further question was raised in relation to day centres and respite care for people with learning difficulties and in response the Representative of the Voluntary Sector was advised to e-mail the question to the Corporate Director for Social Service and Housing.

A discussion took place looking at different opportunities to provide support and giving out key messages across the communities, making sure that everybody is aware of exactly what sort of support is out there depending on their situation. It was agreed that GAVO would set up and facilitate a Task and Finish Group as part of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee to consider the points raised in developing the Caerphilly Cares Service.

## **6. THE CREATION OF A GWENT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD**

J. Pritchard (The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed) declared a personal interest as a Member of the Caerphilly Public Service Board representing Town and Community Councils.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee was reminded that at the last meeting Members were advised that the Gwent 'G10' Leadership Group had been considering the development of a regional Public Services Board (PSB) for some time and confirmed their intention, as the statutory partners, to come together to form a Gwent PSB from September 2021. The Senior Policy Officer presented the report to highlight the steps that have been taken to further the intention to create a Gwent PSB from September 2021. It was noted that the proposed Gwent PSB will replace the existing 5 PSB's that operate within the boundaries of the local authorities in the Gwent region. Members were advised that the Caerphilly PSB voted at its meeting on the 25th March this year to dissolve as a body in favour of the Gwent PSB, with the last meeting of the Caerphilly PSB taking place on the 24th June 2021. The Senior Policy Officer updated Members on the progress, governance of the various organisations and local delivery and also highlighted some of the benefits of moving to a Gwent PSB.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee provided comments on the proposals as a stakeholder representative of the third sector, to inform their development.

A Representative of the Voluntary Sector referred the Committee and Officers to section 5.2 of the report which listed a number of prescribed invited members and it was pointed out that the Caerphilly PSB has extended an invitation to a representative from Community and Town Councils not the Community Council Liaison Committee. In response, the Senior Policy Officer advised the Committee that this would be amended in the report.

In response to a query from a Representative of the Voluntary Sector, clarification and further information were provided on the significant work ongoing at the moment to complete a Gwent level local assessment of well-being in readiness for the next iteration of the well-being plan 2023-2028, in line with the legislative requirements.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector sought further information on the proposal to form Local Delivery Partnerships for each local authority area to support local delivery, and local contribution to regional priorities. A query was raised as to how many voluntary sector

members and how many local residents are on the Local Delivery Partnerships. In response, the Committee was advised that a lot of the delivery groups do have representations from voluntary sector organisations, however it was acknowledged that that are very few local residents which is something that needs to be addressed.

## **7. EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING SCHEME – VERBAL UPDATE**

The Policy Officer outlined the purpose of the Employee Volunteering Scheme. The Committee was informed that the aim is to increase volunteering opportunities for employees by releasing employees from work to support the local community and by offering the opportunity for employees to apply for up to two days leave of absence to commit to long-term volunteering projects, with a commitment of 12 months with regular volunteering and engagement taking place at least once a month.

In response to a query from a Representative of the Voluntary Sector the Policy Officer advised the Committee that consultation is currently being undertaken as to what opportunities will be available on the Employee Volunteering Scheme and the Senior Policy Officer highlighted that it is great opportunity to work more closely with the voluntary sector.

The Committee was advised that if any voluntary organisations or groups has roles for volunteering they can contact the Volunteering Officers at GAVO who will help them put the opportunity on the Volunteering Wales website, which will be available for any Council employees.

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

The Town and Community Councils Representative updated the Committee on Community Council business and meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Members of the Committee also received an update on the restructure of GAVO.

It was noted that the representative of Oakdale Community Centre was having technical difficulties in contributing to the meeting and the Chair advised the Committee that she would contact him after the meeting to address any matters.

The meeting closed at 11.47 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR