



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Mrs D. Price
Vice Chair – Mrs L. Jones (Menter Caerfilli)

Councillors:

R. Chapman, P. Cook, K. Etheridge, J. E. Fussell, C. Gordon, Mrs T. Parry, D. W. R. Preece, H. Pritchard, J. Sadler, Mrs E. Stenner, L. G. Whittle, S. Williams and W. Williams.

Also in attendance:

H. Delonnette (Senior Policy Officer), P. Massey (Policy Officer), S. Foley (Policy Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

Together with:

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: GAVO (S. Tiley, A. Palmer, G. Jones and K. Dawson), Oakdale Community Centre (R. Evans), Parent Network (S. Northey), The Youth Centre, Cefn Hengoed (J. Pritchard) and Vanguard Caerphilly (M. Wade).

Compact Partners: Town and Community Councils Representative (H. Llewellyn).

Also in attendance:

K. Hughes (Trustee, Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community) and J. Ollman (Service Support and Development Officer, Green and Transport Services).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via a show of hands.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Winslade, together with representatives from Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Citizens Advice, The United Reformed Church and Gwent Police.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 23RD JUNE 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting held on 23rd June 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on 23rd June 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 10) be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Clarification was sought regarding the Council's Financial Regulations, as to whether they are devised by Welsh Government or the local authority. It was noted that a response to this question was to be circulated to Members of the Committee following the meeting held on 23rd June 2023. The Policy Officer advised the Committee that the response would be followed up and circulated with a copy of the Council's Financial Regulations. Further clarification was sought as to whether the Financial Regulations apply to all the Council's grant schemes and the Committee was advised that this information would also be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.

A representative of the Voluntary Sector informed the Committee that at the last Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel meeting the principle of establishing a Task and Finish Group, to review the criteria and processes for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and Welsh Church Acts Fund, was to be recommended to the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer.

5. CAERPHILLY MINERS CENTRE FOR THE COMMUNITY: UPDATE OF PROJECT PROGRESS TO DATE - PRESENTATION

K. Hughes (Trustee, Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community) delivered a presentation to provide the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee with an update of the project progress to date, particularly in relation to the climate change garden and environmental projects. The Committee was presented with an introduction to the Caerphilly Miners Centre, a potted history and a summary of project activity.

Members of the Committee heard about the gardening projects and also the building of a climate change garden for the future with a pond, an area of reflection, raised beds for edible plants, a wildflower meadow, a composting area and water harvesting. Members were shown a variety of photographs of the gardening projects, the climate change garden, members of the team and other external spaces at the Caerphilly Miners Centre. In addition, the Committee was informed of the development and implementation of a Sustainable Development Plan and grant funding.

Following the presentation, Members of the Committee expressed how inspired they were by the presentation and placed on record their thanks and appreciation to K. Hughes (Trustee, Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community) and to all the volunteers for their hard work and dedication. A request was made for the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend a future event at Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community to thank all the volunteers for their commitment and hard work.

A Voluntary Sector representative raised a number of queries in relation to grant funding. K. Hughes explained that most of the grants applied for allowed them to vary from the cheapest quote, however it was at their own expense. It was further explained that part of the criteria is to fulfil a quality threshold, so a contractor can be rejected if they do not have the necessary skills and experience. The Committee was informed that a lot of the funding has been on the basis of quotes, some of which have had to be re-tendered for a number of reasons including COVID-19 and increased costs.

K. Hughes and her team at the Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community were commended for their commitment to developing Welsh medium activities at the Caerphilly Miners Centre and for recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers, which has supported the work of Menter Iaith immensely.

In conclusion the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee reiterated their praise for K. Hughes and her team at the Caerphilly Miners Centre and thanked her for the presentation, which was noted.

6. GWENT WELL-BEING PLAN CONSULTATION - PRESENTATION

The Senior Policy Officer delivered a presentation to provide the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee with a brief update on the Draft Gwent Well-being Plan. Members were informed that the draft Gwent Well-being Plan will be presented to the Gwent Public Services Board for approval and consultation at their meeting on 29th September 2022. In line with Section 43 of the Well-being of Futures (Wales) Act 2015, the consultation period will run from 1st October 2022 and end on 31st December 2022. It was agreed that a copy of the Gwent Well-being Plan Consultation and a copy of the Draft Gwent Well-being Plan presentation would be circulated to Members of the Committee following the meeting.

Clarification and further information were sought regarding local activity through the local delivery groups and local subgroups. It was explained that each of the five local authorities will have a local delivery group to look at how the Gwent Well-being Objectives are delivered at a local level and to address any local issues arising from the Gwent Well-being Assessment. Further clarification was sought in terms of representation from members of the public and voluntary sector representatives. In response, the Senior Policy Officer advised the Committee that enquires would be made following the meeting. During the course of discussion, the Chief Executive Officer for GAVO advised the Committee that he would liaise with voluntary sector representatives to see how they can be best represented through local delivery groups and local subgroups.

A discussion took place regarding the consultation period and a suggestion was made for a representative from the PSB Board to attend the December meeting to provide feedback on the consultation.

With regards to the Draft Gwent Well-being Plan objectives, a Member raised concerns in relation to Objective 2 – creating a Gwent that has friendly, safe and confident communities and highlighted the need to involve all partners including health authorities, Police and other stakeholders.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

7. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER: SPORT AND LEISURE - PRESENTATION

The Service Support and Development Officer, Green and Transport Services delivered a presentation to outline the principles of Community Asset Transfer (Playing Fields). It was explained that Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local authority) to a community organisation for 'less than best consideration' – i.e. less than the highest obtainable or estimated market

value. The discount is based upon a presumption of long-term local social, economic or environmental benefit.

Members of the Committee raised a number of points including condition surveys, running costs and maintenance. The Officer explained that it is an expensive process, however an organisational due diligence health check is undertaken to ensure that the community groups can take on board all aspects that a Community Asset Transfer may include.

During the course of discussion, a Councillor R. Chapman sought further details on the number of facilities in the local authority, the number of Community Asset Transfer applications that have been received or in discussion and the number of Community Asset Transfers that have been received or in discussion in relation to bowling greens. It was agreed for the Service Support and Development Officer, Green and Transport Services to provide this information to the Member following the meeting. In response to a further question the Committee was advised that since 2019, when the Community Asset Transfer Principles were approved by Cabinet, no Community Asset Transfers have been completed to date, however there are two projects close to completion.

The Representative of Oakdale Community Centre enquired as to whether the Council has researched all the restrictive covenants that apply to premises, grounds etc. that were donated by individuals and charities long ago, with the specific purpose of restricting their handing over to private individuals and it was agreed for the Service Support and Development Officer, Green and Transport Services to provide a response to the Member subsequent to the meeting.

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee noted the presentation.

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

There were no items of interest concerning the voluntary sector from Compact Partners.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR