



CABINET SITTING AS TRUSTEES OF BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 29TH JANUARY 2020 AT 11.20A.M.

PRESENT

Councillor P. Marsden – Chair

Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Well Being), N. George (Environment and Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), Mrs B. Jones (Education and Achievement) S. Morgan (Regeneration, Transportation and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes, Places and Tourism) and E. Stenner (Finance, Performance and Planning).

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Interim Chief Executive).

Also in attendance:

A. Bolter (Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), M. Eedy (Finance Manager) S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services and Acting S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director – Communities), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. CABINET AS TRUSTEES OF BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE MINUTES – 10TH JULY 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2019 (minute nos. 1 - 4) be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018/2019

The report advised Cabinet as Trustees of the Blackwood Miners' Institute (BMI) of the operational activities and financial position of Blackwood Miners' Institute for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

It was noted that 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.

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.

A report to Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners' Institute was considered on the 27th July 2016 advising Members of the statutory requirement relating to the charitable status of Blackwood Miners' Institute, including a set of recommendations to ensure compliance with charity law in relation to the submission of annual reports and financial statements, the ongoing management of the Blackwood Miners' Institute and the Council's and Cabinet's responsibilities as Trustees.

The annual report and audited statement of accounts for 2018/2019 are included as an appendix to this report.

Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners' Institute are required to consider the accounts prior to the annual report and accounts being submitted to the Charity Commission as part of the annual report, in compliance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011.

Officers provided Cabinet with a detailed update of the Accounts, including savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan and outlined the purposes of the charity as set out in the Trust Deed, along with a detailed update on the work undertaken to achieve this. For example, it was noted that work has been undertaken to promote, improve, develop, maintain and advance public awareness and participation in, and encourage an appreciate of the art and science of, music, dance, drama, literature and the visual arts. It was noted that a full programme of entertainment has been scheduled, including Horrible Histories and Welsh Wrestling. The Box Office has now been made entirely electronic and bookings can be undertaken online, and improving communications is being considered. In addition, it was noted that a staff engagement event has been undertaken in which staff were encouraged to provide management with feedback, from which a number of ideas have been taken back for consideration.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members noted the recent staff changes and were pleased to note the changes that have been undertaken to date, and were reassured by the enthusiasm of the lead officer, and hope staff are also on board. Officers explained that it is work in progress, but that customer focus remains paramount, as well as ensuring staff are happy, which will ultimately provide better customer experiences at the good quality entertainment planned.

Discussions took place around the workshop with staff working at each of the tourism venues, which was undertaken on 27th January 2020, which provided an opportunity to staff to provide comments and feedback for business improvement, which can be utilised as part of a strategic review of the business plan and look to improve the service provided. It was noted that some interesting ideas, comments and feedback were provided at the workshop, which will be utilised where possible.

A Cabinet Member queried the subsidy provided to BMI and whether this has been reduced. Officers explained that whilst savings have been made, the requirement to provide an inflationary

budgetary growth has resulted in the subsidy reduction being smaller than anticipated as a result of inflationary growth.

Discussions took place around the Communications Strategy for BMI, and a Member queried whether local businesses in Blackwood have been approached about advertising shows for customers, and email circulations etc. being utilised. Officers agreed that there is a requirement to improve the marketing for BMI, online marketing has been undertaken, however more is required.

A Member explained that they use the venue regularly, and whilst access is excellent at the venue, often prefers refreshments prior to the show and during intermission and a requirement for a lounge. Officers explained that a trial is being undertaken at an upcoming show in which customers can pre-order drinks on arrival, which will be delivered during intermission, and new chairs have also been ordered for the bar area.

Discussions took place around a reduction on ticket prices for Caerphilly County Borough Council Staff, in which it was felt that this introduction could increase visitors to the venue. Officers explained that this is something under consideration, however it is not possible to provide the reduction to every show, as some dictate ticket prices. Cabinet were assured though that this is something under consideration.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that, the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers Report the content of the Annual Report and audited Statement of Accounts for Blackwood Miners' Institute for financial year 2018/2019 be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 11.46am.

CHAIR