



GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK
ON WEDNESDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 2014 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor R. Gough - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Ms L. Ackerman, Mrs A. Blackman, C. Cuss, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A. Higgs, A. Lewis and K. Lloyd.

Together with:

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), D. Roberts (Principal Group Accountant - Financial Advice and Support), G. Elliot (Communities First Finance Assistant) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs G. Oliver, M. Prew, R. Saralis, Mrs E. Stenner and Mrs J. Summers.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

D. Roberts, Councillors A. Higgs and K. Lloyd declared an interest in Appendix 2 – General Criteria Awards. Councillors L. Ackerman and K. Lloyd declared an interest in Appendix 5 – Welsh Church Fund Grants Withdrawn. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 16TH JULY 2014

The Panel received and approved the minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 16th July 2014 (minute nos. 1 - 7).

The Panel were asked to note that the Parent Network had not responded to the Panel's queries.

4. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Mr S. Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance, provided the Panel with an update on the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

The Council is able to assist a wide range of voluntary and sporting organisations by granting rate relief. Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, applications for discretionary rate relief submitted to the Council are determined by the Council's Head of Corporate Finance. The determination is exercised following consideration of the Council's Policy on discretionary rate relief supplemented by guidance from Welsh Government and Central Government.

Mr Harris explained that the current Policy is being reviewed and that a report will be presented to the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in January 2015, prior to consideration by Cabinet in February 2015. Due to the need to serve notice, any agreed changes to the Policy would be effective from April 2016. The Panel were assured that they would be consulted throughout the process.

The draft savings proposals for 2015/16 agreed by Cabinet on the 29th October 2014 include a proposed £30,000 reduction in the GTVS budget. As any savings arising from the change in the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy will not be realised until April 2016, Mr Harris proposed that grants awarded by the Panel during the 2015/16 financial year should be funded from previous years underspends.

The Panel were in agreement with the proposal and thanked the officer for the update.

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

5. Statement of Expenditure

Members noted the available budget for 2014-2015 together with the total amounts requested, as detailed within the report.

6. Welsh Church Act Fund

Councillor L. Ackerman and K. Lloyd declared a personal interest in Appendix 5 - Friends of the Navigation, due to having involvement with the organisation.

The report highlighted that Caerphilly County Borough Council has received written confirmation that the 2014/2015 budget allocation is £40,084.00. Monmouthshire County Council have confirmed that the underspends from previous years of £132,720.00 can be carried forward, resulting in a total available budget for the current year of £172,804.00. Members noted that it has been highlighted that due to the present economic climate, allocations in the future could be reduced considerably due to declining returns on investments.

Members noted the Welsh Church Act Fund applications received and approved by officers since the last meeting in accordance with the agreed criteria as set out in Appendix 3. The total allocated amounts to £4,000.00.

Members' attention was directed to Appendix 5, which provided a breakdown of applications that have exceeded the 18-month time limit to claim funding as set out in the terms and conditions. Members noted this amount totalled £4,400.00 and that the applicants have received notification that the grant has now been withdrawn. Officers highlighted that the Friends of the Navigation have requested a new application for this fund.

Members noted the process and the information contained within the report.

7. Applications for Financial Assistance: Panel Awards

Members were asked to consider the applications listed in Appendix 1 to the report and to make appropriate recommendations to the Interim Head of Corporate Finance for approval.

RECOMMENDED that the following applications for financial assistance be referred to the Interim Head of Corporate Finance for approval under delegated powers: -

	£
(a) Music in Hospitals	£250.00
(b) Helping Hands (Rhydney Cancer Self Help Group)	£250.00
(c) Kids Cancer Charity T/A Christian Lewis Trust	£500.00
(d) Pontllanfraith Children's Contact Centre *	£500.00

* The £500 grant for Pontllanfraith Children's Contact Centre was agreed subject to the Interim Head of Corporate Finance discussing the award with the Council's Head of Children's Services

RECOMMENDED that for the reasons outlined at the meeting, the following application for financial assistance be deferred, pending the receipt of further information: -

(e) Cylch Meithrin Coed Duon

8. Applications for Financial Assistance: General Criteria Awards

D. Roberts declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC078 - Nelson Cavaliers Football Club - a close family member plays for the club.

Councillor A. Higgs declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC04 - CLURV, as a previous employee and 14/GC062 - Gwent Cadets, as the Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion.

Councillor K Lloyd declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC063 - Pentwyn and District Allotments, as a plot holder.

Members noted the applications received since the last meeting, as listed in Appendix 2, which are in accordance with the agreed criteria and to be processed by officers.

The meeting closed at 5.36 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.

CHAIR