



GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK
ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH MARCH 2015 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs G.D. Oliver - Chair
Councillor R.W. Gough - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Ms L. Ackerman, Mrs A. Blackman, A.G. Higgs, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, M.J. Prew, R. Saralis,
Mrs E. Stenner and Mrs J. Summers.

Together with:

D. Roberts (Principal Group Accountant - Financial Advice and Support), G. Elliot
(Communities First Finance Assistant) and E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D.G. Carter, C. Cuss, C. Hawker
and D. Havard and Mr S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, A.G. Higgs, R.W.
Gough and G.D. Oliver in relation to Appendix 2, Applications for Financial Assistance -
General Criteria Awards. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 26TH NOVEMBER 2015

The minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 26th November 2014 (minute
nos. 1 - 8) were received and approved as a correct record.

4. UPDATE ON DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Mr D. Roberts (Principal Group Assistant – Financial Advice and Support) updated the Panel
on the progress of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy had been presented to the Policy and Resources
Scrutiny Committee in January 2015 for consideration and then recommended to Cabinet on
the 4th February 2015. The Officer confirmed that the only change to the policy presented to
the Panel on the 26th November 2015 was to Top-Up Discretionary Relief. Cabinet had
resolved that this be removed where an organisation occupies one or more rating

assessments properties within the Authority's area, which cumulatively amount to a total rateable value exceeding £100,000. It was noted that two organisations, Ystrad Mynach College and College Gwent, would be affected and both had been informed of the change. The Panel were informed that this would generate £90,000 of savings for financial year 2016/17.

The Panel noted the update on the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

5. UPDATE ON 2015/16 BUDGET AND FUTURE YEAR ALLOCATIONS

Mr D. Roberts (Principal Group Assistant – Financial Advice and Support) updated the Panel on current allocations, the 2015/16 budget and future year allocations.

The updated forecast for Discretionary Rate Relief for 2014-15 was estimated as £223,095.00. This left a projected budget allocation of £32,125.00 for Grants to the Voluntary Sector, which combined with the carry forward from previous years of £83,258.00 gave a total allocation of £155,383.00. The Officer confirmed that to date, grant awards for 2014/15 total £15,035.00 with a budget of £100,348.00 remaining for allocation.

The Panel were advised that the indicative budget allocation for 2015/16 had been agreed at £229,048.00 of which the projected Discretionary Rate Relief was £228,592.00. This left a projected budget allocation of £456.00. As previously agreed by the Panel the grants awarded during the 2015/16 financial year will be funded from the brought forward balances.

With regard to the Welsh Church Fund Act Fund, the Officer confirmed that written confirmation had now been received from Monmouthshire County Council. The 2014/15 budget allocation will be £40,084.00 and that 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. Confirmation had also been received that the provisional allocation for 2015-16 will be £49,334.00 which is an increase of 9,286.00 on this year's allocation and the carry forward of unspent allocations will be allowed.

The Panel noted the amounts awarded and discussed how to raise awareness of the grants to encourage a greater number of applications. The Officer confirmed that the grants administration could be looked at and although there was no flexibility for change in the award process, there would be for the award amounts. Officer's agreed to look at the award process in other authorities and provide feedback to Members.

During the course of debate reference was made to the best way to signpost prospective applicants to the different grants available. The Chair and Vice Chair reminded Panel Members to be mindful of the code of conduct when discussing grant award amounts with individuals. Members discussed the information available to applicants and were advised that full details could be found on the Caerphilly website. It was noted that a grants booklet could also be obtained from Mr John Elliott in the Policy Unit or Members could refer applicants directly to Officers in the Finance Advice and Support Unit.

Clarification was sought as to how many applications could be submitted by an applicant when representing Wales at both home and away events. Officers confirmed that only one grant allocation would be awarded to an applicant per financial year.

The Panel noted the update on the 2016/16 budget and future year allocations.

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

6. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: PANEL AWARDS

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

Having fully considered the applications and for the reason given at the meeting it was moved and seconded that grant applications for Pontllanfraith Children's Contact Centre and Caerphilly Causeway Prospect be awarded and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

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

(i)	Pontllanfraith Children's Contact Centre	£500.00
(ii)	Caerphilly Causeway Prospects	£ 160.00

Having fully considered the application and for the reasons given at the meeting it was moved and seconded that application 14/P019, We Can All Be An Einstein be referred to the Business Enterprise Unit and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that application 14/P019, We Can All Be An Einstein be referred to the Business Enterprise Unit.

7. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: DEFERRED AT THE LAST MEETING

In relation to the application 14/P016, Cych Meithrin Coed Dunon, it was noted that the Panel had deferred the award at its last meeting pending further information. Officers confirmed that the applicant had failed to provide the additional information requested and as such no award had been made.

8. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: GENERAL CRITERIA AWARDS

Councillor A.G. Higgs declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC082, in that Lewis Edwards the applicant is known to him.

Councillor Mrs A. Blackman declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC083, 2nd Nelson Brownies, in that a member of the 2nd Nelson Brownies is known to her.

Councillor R.W. Gough declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC083, 2nd Nelson Brownies, in that his daughter is involved in the Brownie Association.

Councillor Mrs G.D. Oliver declared a personal interest in Appendix 2, 14/GC101, Pontlottyn OAP Association in that the Association is well known to her.

The Panel 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.

8. PANEL AWARDS WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND

The Panel noted the Welsh Church Fund applications received and approved by Officers since the last meeting in accordance with the agreed criteria as set out in Appendix 3 of the report. The total allocation amounts to £6,000.00.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

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

CHAIR