

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 18TH JULY 2016 .

Present : Councillor J Criddle (Chair)
Councillor A Farina-Childs (Vice Chair)
Councillors J Weeks & Z Hammond (as an observer)

J O'Callaghan Blackwood Little Theatre

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors P Cook, G Hale, D Davies & W Baber

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point

3. To Meet with Representatives of Blackwood Little Theatre

The Chair introduced Janine O'Callaghan, Chair of the Fund Raising Committee who apologised for the absence of other members of the Committee due to prior commitments.

Janine thanked members on behalf of Blackwood Little Theatre for their generous donation of £1,000 towards their current financial plight, and after some discussion it was agreed that the cheque be presented by the Mayor prior to the Saturday performance of the Vicar of Dibley.

Janine reported that at the beginning of June it became evident that in addition to the £30k grant available from Caerphilly C.B.C. the theatre needed to raise an additional £18k to ensure the roof could be replaced and the theatre remain open. Various fund raising efforts and donations over the past 6 weeks, together with planned additional events will ensure the target will be reached. She paid tribute to the amazing support and the community spirit that has allowed an immediate planned start on the roofing works.

However, additional priority works have come to light over the course of the past months –

The existing heating system became unsafe and had to be de-commissioned, and it appears the whole system is in need of urgent replacement.

If the system is not replaced prior to the planned Christmas Pantomime, much needed revenue from the sell out performances will be lost and cause even more financial problems.

Furthermore, the left hand side of the building has significant water ingress, visible from both inside and outside of the building. This ingress also causes a smell of damp in the auditorium. The wall is in need of hacking off and re-rendering in order to make good, and quotes have been requested, however, as an interim measure repair to guttering has been identified to potentially prevent the issue worsening.

Members thanked Janine for her report, and explained that Town Council whilst having agreed the grant of £1,000 had also asked this Committee to see how else the Council might be able to assist their plight and ensure the Theatre remains at the heart of the community. The Chair stated that he had been approached by several members asking if an interest free loan might be a possibility.

The Clerk stated he was unaware of anything that prevented the Town Council from making such a loan, and given there were sufficient balances available, and that current interest rates were so negligible there would be very little loss of interest to the Council, he considered a loan of £10k could be considered.

Members thought it advisable that the Little Theatre request quotes in respect of heating system replacement and rendering works, and forward same to the Clerk to assist discussion at the next meeting.

Councillor A Farina-Childs promised to pass on contractors details who might be in a position to assist.

After some discussion it was agreed to recommend to Town Council that an interest free loan of £10,000 be made to Blackwood Little Theatre over a 2 or 3 year period.

4. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 25th. May 2016

It was **resolved** the minutes be received

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk circulated his report on applications received since the last meeting.

Each application was considered in some detail, and after some discussion it was **agreed to recommend** to Town Council that the following grants be awarded –

	£
St. Margaret's Church (Flower Festival)	150
KLA Dance Institute (Kristie White)	250
Marie Curie Hospice	100
Blackwood Town Football Club	100
Homestart Caerphilly Borough	250
Valleys Eisteddfod	250

Furthermore, it was **agreed** the following applications be deferred to Town Council –

St. Margaret's Church – request for assistance towards cost of repairs/replacement of items not covered by insurance after horrific vandal attack which has resulted in £'000's worth of expenditure.

It was agreed the Clerk request information on specific items needing replacement not covered by insurance.

Libanus Lifestyle Centre – request for assistance towards removal of overhanging conifer tree
It was agreed the Clerk try to establish the Contractor and whether all necessary permissions / possible road closure etc. have been discussed with Caerphilly C.B.C.

The application from Newbridge Women's Institute was discussed but given the organisation was outside our area, and no apparent benefit could be attributed to Blackwood or its residents, it was **agreed** no award be made.

