

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20TH. MARCH 2023

Present : Cllr. K Williams (Chair)

Cllrs. G Edwards (Mayor), C Erasmus, K Etheridge

Cllrs. A Bradfield & R Mills joined the meeting late

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence, albeit the Clerk informed the meeting Cllr. P Cook had tendered her resignation from Town Council

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

3. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 24th. January 2023

It was noted these had been presented and agreed by Town Council

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5. To Receive Presentations in support of Applications for Financial Assistance & Consider same

The Chair welcomed Ian Smith to the meeting, who gave members a brief update of the HOPE Local Food bank he was running from his home address. He informed members that fruit and Vegetables were available for collection from outside his house and that food parcels were made up and delivered throughout the local area. He assured members many of the deliveries were to addresses in the Blackwood Town Council area. He explained that any financial assistance agreed would be used to purchase more food stock, as numbers of requests for parcels were on the increase.

Mr Smith was thanked for his attendance, and the Chair explained this Committee would now report to Town Council on April 3rd. and that the Clerk would notify him of the decision shortly afterwards.

The Chair then welcomed Vik Yadh to the meeting, who gave members an impassioned presentation on the planned Project at the Library in Blackwood. He outlined his experiences in running a project in Caerphilly, which in turn had led to an approach for something similar in Bargoed Library, that Bargoed Town Council had agreed to finance, and then an approach from Blackwood Library regarding the same for Blackwood.

He explained that the Caerphilly Table-Top & Gamers Society have devised these science, technology, engineering and mathematical based gaming sessions, which encourages children away from screens, computers smart phones and I pads to participate in engaging and chatting in person over games that often have an educational value aimed at improving their maths and communication skills.

He reported that he identifies, contacts and works closely with local schools in the relevant catchment areas to advertise the sessions, and was amazed at the turnout recently at Bargoed Library at the start of heir project.

Members queried who ran the sessions and Vik stated it was entirely volunteer based, with several of the volunteers having previously attended the other projects.

Mr Yadh was thanked for his attendance, and again the Chair explained the process regarding reporting to Town Council and later notification by the Clerk.

After much discussion members agreed to recommend to Town Council that -

In the case of HOPE Food bank, an initial grant of £250 be made, with the request for a receipt of the spend and also a list of all streets that deliveries of food parcels are delivered to. Furthermore, members reconsider an additional payment of £250 in 3 months time.

In the case of Comic Con Project at Blackwood Library, no support be given at this time. Members were concerned that no specific business case or marketing strategy had been prepared/ presented, that 17 schools supposed catchment had been identified (with realistically only 3 being in the Town Council area), whether perhaps too many projects would compromise volunteer availability and that the total £2, 200 funding was expected up front.

The Clerk reported that he had recently received an Application from the Tuesday Club, Fitzroy Lodge for £250 to assist with transport costs to take members on various trips in the summer. As no members currently resided in the Town Council area, he proposed he write apologising the application did not meet our criteria. This was agreed by members.