

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET (POLICY AND RESOURCES) SUB COMMITTEE**

29th AUGUST 2023

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
– HUW JONES**

Matters for Decision

Wards Affected: ALL

Report Title – Miscellaneous Grant Fund Application (The Showmen’s Guild South Wales and Northern Ireland)

Purpose of the Report

To seek Member approval in relation to a grant application received.

Background and Financial Impacts

The Council has a Miscellaneous Grants Scheme to support individual applications for grants in line with the criteria set out below:-

Existing Policy Statement

- Each application will be considered on its merits.

- The Committee will only approve applications for financial assistance from voluntary or charitable organisations which are manifestly committed to voluntary endeavours of a local nature. This will not preclude the consideration of applications where the disposal of funds is outside the area but still provides significant benefits for

the people from the Neath Port Talbot area.

- No applications will be considered from religious bodies except relating to church halls and other premises where there is significant community use of the property for non-religious activities.
- No applications will be considered from other public funded bodies such as community councils, hospital trusts, etc. or where the benefit may be in lieu of their contributions such as appeals for hospital equipment.
- Applications from individuals may be considered where both the person and the community derive a benefit.
- No grants will be made to any individual or organisation whose prime purpose is to distribute their funds to other charitable bodies.

Details of application

Following discussions with officers in the Environment Directorate a grant application has been received from the Showmen's Guild South Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Council have been approached again by the Showman's Guild to allow them to stage the Neath September Fair this year between the 12th September 2023 to the 16th September 2023. However, in order to stage the event will be required to close off Milland Road Car Park between the 10th September – 17th September 2023 to allow the Showman's Guild of Great Britain to safety set up and close down the event.

In order to facilitate the above the Estates department of the Council charges the Showmen's Guild a rent/fee which is contractually increased each year in line with the Retail Price Index. The charge for this year's fair in line with this contractual arrangement is £31k.

The rent/fee charged by the Council is then used to offset the Council costs not only in respect of the Fun Fair itself but also for running and operating the September Street Fair as well.

The Showmen's Guild have indicated that for the reasons set out below they cannot meet the cost of £31k and have applied for a miscellaneous grant of £11k. They have indicated that if the grant application is not successful then the funfair and street fair will not go ahead this year.

Basis of application

The Showmen's Guild have applied for assistance to support the upcoming Neath September Fair. In particular, the soaring costs of renting spaces at the fairgrounds has made it exceedingly difficult for the showmen to operate profitably.

The fair has long been an integral part of the local community, providing not only entertainment but also a platform for market traders to showcase their goods and services. Unfortunately, recent austerity measures and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have placed an enormous strain on the showmen community. Many showmen are struggling to make ends meet as they face decreased revenue and increased operational costs due to health and safety requirements.

The showmen community has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only disrupted their livelihoods but also caused significant financial hardships. Coupled with declining footfall, rising living costs, and austerity measures, these challenges have had a profound effect on the ability of showmen to make a sustainable living. Unlike some other organisations, the Showmen did not receive grants during the pandemic, making their situation even more challenging.

It is proposed that Members consider approving the grant application

of £11k on a one-off basis with further work to be undertaken regarding events in general across the County Borough where the Council is asked to make a financial commitment to.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There are no impacts in respect of the obligations to the Council under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No 1) Regulations 2015, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and support via this grant provides generally a positive impact in respect of the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Applications for grant are available to voluntary and charitable organisations across the county borough.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts.

Legal Impacts

Grants are provided in line with the approved scheme criteria.

Risk Management Impacts

All grant applications are considered on their own merit and in line with the approved scheme criteria.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the one off application for grant assistance in the amount of £11,000 to the Showmen's Guild South Wales and Northern Ireland.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To decide on the amount of financial support in respect of the grant application received.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is an urgent one for immediate implementation, subject to the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Chair and is therefore not subject to the call-in procedure

List of Background Papers

Grant Application

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