

Minutes of a Meeting of the Events & Community Projects Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on 19 October 2015

Present Councillor M Day (in the Chair), Councillors SJ Brooks, LJ Chaney, D Daniels, S Evans, WM Howell, M Johnston, R Jones, TA Matthews and J Rees.

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council) & Clare Rowles (Administrative Officer), Simon Thompson (Playschemes Manager) and Ben Samuel (Assistant Playschemes Manager)

Also J Davenne (Play Service Manager, Torfaen County Borough Council)

ENT15/022 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from WJ Walker (illness)

ENT15/023 Members' Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have and sign the Interests Sheet to give details of the nature of the interest.

ENT15/024 Summer Playschemes 2015

Members considered a detailed report and presentation from Simon Thompson (Playschemes Manager) about the 2015 Summer Playschemes. Members also considered a presentation, which provided an overview of the report, highlighting issues such as costs, entertainment and the impact of changes introduced to the Playschemes in 2015.

The committee also considered the results of a parental survey, feedback from site visits undertaken by members and comments submitted by social media. Members noted the increased interest in the council's social media pages whilst the Playschemes were in operation.

The Clerk reported that anticipated expenditure on the 2015 Playschemes currently stood at £94,212.89. Income was £6,290. He also advised that overall attendance at this year's Playschemes was down on 2014. A total of 734 children had registered to attend the 2015 Playschemes, compared to 1,023 in 2014. 192 children aged 5-7 had registered to attend this year, compared with 485 the previous year.

Members paid tribute to the success of the Playscheme staff in delivering high quality play provision, but expressed concerns at the reduced numbers of children attending this year and the reduced income arising from this. Members discussed the underlying causes for this, with particular reference to the decision taken to only offer the service to children aged under 8 for 2 hours. Members were also disappointed to note that the Playscheme at Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbran had only been delivered to 25 children this year, following notification from the school about building works at the school.

Members noted that some parents would be prepared to pay more for children to attend the Playschemes.

Other issues raised by members included:

- the successful security measures put in place at each site.
- the high quality and rich variety of activities provided for the children.
- concerns over the number of staff who had “dropped out” of the Playscheme after being appointed.
- details of the number of children who had received specialist 1:1 support (11), provided by Torfaen County Borough Council.
- concerns over the low number of children at some sites in the afternoon, when children aged under 8 year of age were not present.
- the scope to indicate average, daily attendance at each site.
- concerns over the high costs of DBS checks this year, including the scope to ask staff to pay the costs up front and claim the fee back only on full completion of their contract.
- the potential to provide a service for children aged under 8 at a single site, with the possibility of using a different site later in the day.
- uncertainty about the future requirements of the CSSIW in relation to the Playschemes in the light of changes to registration of childcare announced by the Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty.

The Clerk reported that, following consultation with the Leader of the Majority Group, he had requested a meeting with representatives of CSSIW to help understand the implications of the forthcoming changes to registration of childcare on the future of the Council’s Playschemes. Under current guidance in relation to the extension of childcare regulations the Council would be required to register the Playschemes for 2016, based on the service delivered in 2015.

Members emphasised that the focus of any future delivery of this service must be on the children. The Playschemes did not exist as a cheap alternative to childcare or as a “baby sitting” service, but were designed to provide stimulating, play-based activity for Cwmbran children during the summer holidays.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the above information is noted.
- (2) the action of the Clerk in seeking early clarification about the implications of changes to the registration of childcare on the Council’s Playschemes is endorsed.

ENT15/025 Forthcoming Events

Members considered progress in relation to forthcoming events, as follows:

- (a) Remembrance Sunday 8 November 2015.

Arrangements were well in hand for this event, which would largely follow the format of previous years.

- (b) Senior Schools Choral Festival 12 November at 6.30 pm at Croesyceiliog High School.

Members noted that, due to the unavailability this year of Cwmbran High School, Our Lady of the Angels RC Primary School had accepted an invitation to participate in the 2015 Festival.

(c) Christmas Entertainment 2015

Members noted that a programme of activities would take place over a series of dates, as previously agreed. Discussions were taking place with Torfaen County Borough Council in relation to helping with transporting the Christmas trees donated by Blaen Bran Community Woodland. It was likely that there would be a charge for this support.

The Clerk encouraged as many members as possible to support the above events.

It was **recommended** that the above information be noted.

Signed

(Chair, Cwmbran Community Council)