

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

14 JULY 2014

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL WEBSITE GRANTS

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Town and Community Council Forum of the progress being made in respect of the grant funding available for the development of Town and Community Councils internet presence.

2. Connection to Corporate Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1 The report relates to the corporate priority of working together to make the best use of our resources by improving the way we communicate and engage with citizens.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013, includes a requirement for Town and Community Councils (TCCs) to make information available electronically to members of the public. It was intended that this would enhance the profile of TCCs and increase the awareness and involvement of constituents in the democratic and decision making processes.
- 3.2 To facilitate this requirement the Welsh Government designated Bridgend County Borough Council as the administrator of grant monies to be made available to TCCs in their area to assist in the development of their websites.
- 3.3 Bridgend County Borough Council prepared an agreement which detailed how the £500 grant available to each TCC can be used and claimed.
- 3.4 A meeting was held on 18 February 2014 to provide all TCCs the opportunity to discuss the grant funding process in more detail.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 Following that meeting two copies of the grant agreement were sent to each TCC with a request to sign and return both copies of the agreement. Once returned they would both be signed by an Authorised Officer from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).
- 4.2 One of the signed copies of the agreement would then returned to the individual TCC with a letter providing them with the opportunity to claim the £500 of available grant funding.
- 4.3 Grant funding can be made available for appropriate expenditure incurred from 1 April 2012 until 31 March 2015. This funding is available until 31 March 2015, however, claims after this date may require further consultation with Welsh Government (WG) before being reimbursed. BCBC have to provide a grant report

to the Welsh Government by 30 April 2015 and any unclaimed funding may need to be returned to the Welsh Government.

4.4 Claims can be submitted for a range of expenditure incurred which may include:

- Equipment - Laptops, Personal computers etc.
- Training - for the development of knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate the web presence requirements of the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013.
- Website facilities - to pay for website software or for the supply of a web hosting service by a 3rd party

4.5 TCCs should complete and submit the claim form to BCBC (with copies of the invoices). BCBC will undertake an assessment of claim for validity and completeness before making payments within 30 days of receipt of valid claim

4.6 To date only the following six grant agreements have been returned to BCBC.

- Cefn Cribbwr Community Council
- Garw Valley Community Council
- Laleston Community Council
- Merthyr Mawr Community Council
- Porthcawl Town Council
- Pyle Community Council

4.7 Claims have successfully been made by two of these TCC's which have been paid by BCBC.

4.8 All Town and Community Councils are requested to ensure that they complete the grant agreement previously circulated and make any appropriate claims as soon as possible.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no direct effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules, as a result of the provisions and recommendations of this report

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications attached to this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The grant funding made available to Town and Community Councils from the Welsh Government totals £10,000 (£500 for each of the 20 TCCs in the BCBC area). The grant funding is for a limited period only and after 31 March 2015 any unclaimed funding will be return to the Welsh Government.

8. Recommendation:

8.1 That the Town & Community Council Forum notes the contents of this report and encourages all Town & Community Councils to complete the grant agreements and claim the appropriate funding for the development of their web presence.

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8 July 2014

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Background documents: None