



## NORTH MERTHYR CLUSTER COMMUNITIES FIRST PROGRAMME

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### 3Gs Development Trust Response to the 'Stop Forsythia Closing' Petition

#### (P-05-742)

I write in response to your letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

Firstly I think it may be useful to clarify the position of the 3Gs Development Trust with regard to the above Petition.

The opening statement in the letter says that 'The National Assembly for Wales's Petitions Committee has been considering the following petition from the 'Forsythia Youth Centre'.

The 3Gs Development Trust would respectfully like to inform the Committee that although it is responsible for the Forsythia Youth Centre and the Youth Workers therein, the Trust did not sanction the petition, or was even aware of its existence until receipt of your letter. Therefore, the irony is not lost with the Trust's Board of Directors in having to respond to the National Assembly on a matter connected directly to a Welsh Government decision to end the Communities First Programme.

The Forsythia Youth Centre is one of many exceptional projects that the 3Gs Development Trust has been delivering in the local community supported through the Communities First Programme. Each project is of value to The Trust, and even more so to local people of all ages and backgrounds that rely on the continuation of such projects. You may have seen recent media coverage of just one of these projects, the '3Gs Men's Project', which has been awarded the 'Community Group of the Year' Award at the recent 'National Inspire Awards' Ceremony in Cardiff. The 3Gs has a history of such successes.

The first impact of the Welsh Government's decision to phase-out the Communities First Programme took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> June when 17 of the 3Gs Development Trust's Communities First Staff (out of a total of 20 CF Staff) were made redundant. With much reduced resources, the Trust's Board of Directors have also had to make very difficult decisions on which remaining priorities and projects should be supported through this final year of the Communities First Programme.

However, the Trust's Board have agreed that the focus of the remaining resources be allocated to **children and young people (including immediate families) projects**. Whilst the Trust cannot guarantee that any project will not be negatively impacted upon by the Welsh Government's decision to end Communities First, the Trust has agreed that a significant amount of these remaining resources will be allocated to the **continuation of the Forsythia Youth Centre**.

In arriving at these decisions the 3Gs Development Trust has worked very closely with Merthyr Tydfil County Council who, in their role of Local Delivery Body, has agreed these priorities and projects in our area for 2017-18.

In conclusion, the 3Gs Development Trust would respectfully ask the Petitions Committee to acknowledge that very many excellent projects will now cease over the coming weeks, leaving many people and groups behind. The fall-out from this will involve a lot of anger, frustration and desperation within the community, and which will present itself at 'ground-level'.

It is the 3Gs Development Trust that will be focal point for this - not Government.

Regards

Aeronwen Sneddon

Chairperson

3Gs Development Trust