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| Meeting of: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | Thursday, 11 April 2024 |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee: | Corporate Performance and Resources |
| Report Title: | Renewal of Vale of Glamorgan Broadcasting Community Interest Company Deed of Grant |
| Purpose of Report: | To update Members on the activities of Bro Radio and to seek approval for an extension of funding for a further five years. |
| Report Owner: | Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources |
| Responsible Officer: | Director of Corporate Resources |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation: | OM – Corporate Communications, Equalities, Participation and Directorate Development OM – Accountancy |
| Policy Framework: | This is a matter for Executive decision. |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vale of Glamorgan Council has supported the local community radio station Bro Radio since its foundation in 2009. This report seeks approval to extend the existing funding arrangement for a further five years to March 2029. • In addition to the Council's established communications channels and in an unstable media landscape, the award-winning local station has established itself as a vital source of reliable news and information for Vale residents. • The wider work of the station, such as providing employment and volunteering opportunities to young people and support and promotion of local businesses, very effectively complements the work of the Council. | |

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Cabinet note the contents of this report.
2. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the renewal of the Deed of Grant between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Broadcasting Community Interest Company for a further five year period (31st July, 2024 – 31st March, 2029) with a continuation of the allocation of £24k per annum.
3. It is recommended that Cabinet delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Executive Leader and Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer, to prepare and execute the Deed of Grant and related payment processes.
4. It is recommended that Cabinet receives an annual update on the work of Bro Radio over the term of the funding.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the work of Bro Radio.
2. To approve the further funding of Bro Radio for a period of five years.
3. To enable the funding arrangement to be regularised by way of a Deed of Grant and associated payments to be made.
4. To provide Cabinet with an overview of the work of Bro Radio on an annual basis.

1. Background

- 1.1 Bro Radio (trading as Vale of Glamorgan Broadcasting CIC) is an award winning, local community radio station for the Barry, Llantwit Major, Penarth, and surrounding areas, as defined by industry regulator OFCOM. The station is available on 98.1fm in the central Vale, 100.2fm in Llantwit Major and surrounding areas. In 2023 Bro Radio launched on DAB+ across Cardiff and the Eastern Vale.
- 1.2 Bro Radio is a service focused on the Vale of Glamorgan. The station describes its mission as ‘to provide a local radio service, that informs, educates, entertains, and engages with the diverse communities that make up the Vale of Glamorgan. Creating a safe place for residents and young people to be inspired, and build skills, confidence, and communication by participating in volunteering activities, enabling employability, whilst giving them a voice within their community.’
- 1.3 The Vale of Glamorgan Council has supported Bro Radio since 2009. The original Deed of Grant agreed in 2009 enabled the establishment of the community radio station. This was subsequently renewed in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2021. Throughout this time the grant has been set at £24,000 per year, paid in equal monthly instalments.
- 1.4 This report provides an overview of the work of Bro Radio and seeks approval to renew the Deed of Grant for a further five-year period to 31 March 2029. This renewal period will also align the Deed of Grant with the financial year.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** Appendix A provides Cabinet with a report produced by Bro Radio setting out the work undertaken by the station over the last year. The report details the continued growth of the station and how its work supports the Council's participation, volunteering, skills development, economic development, and community resilience objectives.
- 2.2** Bro Radio produced 6,000 hours of original content from its studios in Barry and Llantwit Major in 2023, including regular local news bulletins and online content relevant to its audience.
- 2.3** Bro Radio also produces regular episodes of the podcast Ask the Regulator, working with Shared Regulatory Services worth approximately £2,400 a year. Working with the team at SRS, the podcast creates a new way, to distribute information relevant to businesses, organisations, and more working across the SRS. In 2022, the podcast was shortlisted for a Community Radio Award.
- 2.4** The Council has developed a strong collaborative relationship with Bro Radio. For example, the Council directly benefits from the sharing of Council news releases to a local audience as well as through the on-air promotion of Council services events. The station hosts monthly shows with the Youth Cabinet and Vale Youth Service. The station also often broadcasts live from Council run events in the Vale.
- 2.5** During the Covid-19 pandemic the station regularly featured key public health messages to help keep the population of the Vale safe.
- 2.6** The work of Bro Radio also contributes to the Council's wider objectives, as set out in the Corporate Plan, in a number of ways.
- 2.7** As well as providing an on-air service, Bro Radio exists to provide training, volunteering and work experience opportunities for local residents and students. In recent years, the station has built on its partnership with the University of South Wales to offer work experience and placements to students from the University of South Wales directly, whilst also broadcasting work by students studying journalism at the Cardiff campus. This work experience has helped previous students build up real long-term experiences and opportunities, and in turn enabled them to secure employment in the media industry.
- 2.8** Bro Radio also supports local businesses, offering affordable and free opportunities to promote their services.
- 2.9** In addition to the funding received from the Council, the station generates commercial income through advertising.

- 2.10** The Council's Communications team meet regularly with the Station Manager from Bro Radio to discuss and monitor the relationship between the organisations as part of the Council's editorial process.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** As outlined above, Bro Radio contributes to the achievement of several aspects of the Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Plan. Appendix A details how the station contributes to each of the Council's Wellbeing Objectives.
- 3.2** In addition, the work of Bro Radio enables the Council to reach the station's listenership of over 22,000 residents, some of whom may not receive communication directly from the Council through traditional methods including newspapers and social media.
- 3.3** Bro Radio also provides opportunities for Council departments and partners to promote their services and support, including activities organised by its Sports and Play Development and Health Living Teams.

4. Climate Change and Nature implications

- 4.1** Bro Radio share news and information on much of the Council's work and related volunteering opportunities, many of which will address the climate and nature emergencies.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The current Deed of Grant provides Bro Radio with £2,000 paid monthly totalling £24k per annum, and funding will continue for the next five years at this level. Funding will come from existing grant provision with the Policy budget line.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no employment implications arising directly from this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** The Deed of Grant which governs the award received by the Vale of Glamorgan Broadcasting Community Interest Company requires compliance with set grant conditions throughout the grant period to enable continued funding to be received, including the requirement to produce an annual report for consideration by Cabinet.

6. Background Papers

None.



bro radio

98.1 - 106.1fm | DAB+ | Online

2024

Annual Report

Presented to: **Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Presented by: Nathan Spackman, on behalf of Bro Radio Board of Directors

Bro Radio is a trading name of Vale of Glamorgan Broadcasting CIC
Company number 6071362



bro radio

98.1 - 106.1fm | DAB+ | Online

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Executive Summary

Bro Radio

Mission

To provide a local radio service, that informs, educates, entertains and engages with the diverse communities that make up the Vale of Glamorgan. Creating a safe place for residents and young people to be inspired, and build skills, confidence and communication by participating in volunteering activities, enabling employability, whilst giving them a voice within their community.

Vision

To be the go-to source of local news, information and support for residents living in the Vale of Glamorgan. Connecting people and creating a clear sense of place and community cohesion right across the county.



Bro Radio and our journey to 2024



Bro Radio launched in March 2009

Bro Radio launched in March 2009, delivering a local radio service for Barry, one of the largest towns in Wales.

The station broadcast from studios within YMCA Barry, with a small team of dedicated volunteers.

In 2011, funding from the Barry regeneration scheme saw industry-standard studios built at the centre of the building which the radio station continues to utilise to this day. Created to engage with the local community, inform, educate, entertain, and promote what's going on in addition to providing opportunities for people to develop communication skills through radio broadcasting.

After several years on air, it was clear that there was a need for the service to expand across the wider Vale of Glamorgan.

During 2019/2020 and in the midst of the pandemic, Bro Radio was able to expand its FM coverage into Llantwit Major, continuing to expand into Penarth and St Athan in 2020, bringing its FM service from Llandough to Llandow.

With poor transport links between its current studios in Barry and the rural Vale of Glamorgan, the opportunity arose for Bro Radio to take over space within the CF61 community centre in Llantwit Major, making volunteering opportunities more easily available to local residents.

Funding from Vale of Glamorgan Council Stronger Communities Fund allowed Bro Radio to build two further industry standard studios, to increase opportunities in the rural Vale of Glamorgan.

The studios in Llantwit Major have become home to the stations weekly Radio Club, which provides opportunities to young people to access training opportunities and have a voice within the community. The project is funded until 2025 through the Community Foundation in Wales.

In recent years, the station has been recognised and has received several awards for its work on air and in the community.

These include Gold in the Station of the Year category at the 2020 Community Radio Awards and Silver in the Community Station of the Year category at the 2023 Radio Academy ARIAS, along with several awards for individual shows and presenters since 2019.

Each week Bro Radio creates an average of 90 hours of original content from its studios in Barry and Llantwit Major.



Reflecting on Bro Radio in 2023

Over the last three years, Bro Radio has continued to develop its service, reach new audiences and offer opportunities right across the Vale of Glamorgan.

The station has further improved its FM transmission, increasing output in Barry and St Athan, now covering the vast majority of the county on FM, whilst launching in May 2023 on DAB+ across Cardiff and the Eastern Vale of Glamorgan, improving connectivity between the station and county with the Welsh Capital.

The station team is made up of 60 volunteers of all ages and abilities who create around 6,000 hours of content each year. Funding secured in Q4 2023, will enable radio courses to be run in early 2024 which will see it increase its volunteer numbers by up to 35% - bringing on board more local people to reflect the varying lives, communities and backgrounds which exist in the Vale of Glamorgan.

To serve our audiences as best as we can, Bro Radio continues to operate from four studios, three in Barry and one in Llantwit Major - making volunteering and training opportunities more accessible, to those isolated by living in rural communities, whilst allowing us to better cover the stories and issues which matter to those communities.

Bro Radio prides itself on offering more than just music programming. Our programmes reflect the life of the residents we serve, with a mixture of locally relevant news, events and information during the day, with specialist music and information programming covering key communities including Welsh Language speakers.

Our local news team delivers at least three fresh news bulletins on air each day and writes 100 original news articles each month, read by an average of 44,000 people.

The station passionately supports key local campaigns, our highlight in 2023, was working with the children's hospice Ty Hafan. When the station heard about their When Your World Stops 72-hour fundraising appeal, we knew it was something we had to support. The station created several messages, utilising content gathered by Ty Hafan, which it then circulated with 8 other stations across the region to broadcast for the campaign. The fundraising appeal smashed its £350,000 target, with the charity saying that the partnership was greatly helped by the support of Bro Radio and the wider community radio scene.

Bro Radio expanded its support in 2023 for local music within the region. The station went from one artist being played 12 times a week, dotted around the schedule, to the station embedding local music into every hour of programming. Now, 20 artists share at least 115 spots each week as part of the station's Welsh Music Guarantee.

Throughout the year, over 124 local artists were featured on the playlist, many of whom joined Bro Radio on air for interviews and at events, to perform on stage - including during the two-day Festival of Food, where the station showcased 28 acts, many of whom had never had the opportunity to perform on stage, with highlights from the weekend broadcast on-air to further raise their profiles.

Bro Radio continued to support the local business community, through its annual Love the Vale Day which saw almost 100 businesses and organisations provide 90-second messages to be broadcast on air on 15th November 2023.

It launched its first Business Breakfasts, in partnership with flexible workspace provider Tramshed Tech as it looked to continue to support the local business community. The breakfasts ran monthly, offering members of the local business community to come together, connect, communicate, collaborate and build a sense of community.

Whilst the key aim, was to raise awareness of Bro Radio, those who attended said they felt more positive about the challenges they were facing in business, through the connections and conversations made and attendees exchanged £1,000's of business between them.

The Business Breakfasts were supported by the launch of our Podcast Entrepreneurs Unplugged, which featured local businesspeople sharing their stories, highs, lows and lessons learnt, in detailed conversations, with edited versions played on air.

Key Stats in 2023

- Won Silver in the Community Station of the year category at the Radio Academy ARIAS,
- Launched on DAB+ across Cardiff and the Eastern Vale
- Produced 6,000 hours of original content from studios in Barry and Llantwit Major,
- Created an average of 100 local news articles each month, regularly read by over 44,000 local people,
- Secured funding for a vehicle to better engage with the local communities we serve
- Secured funding to refurb studio one at YMCA Barry, to expand training programme
- Launched a dedicated Bro Radio App
- Promoted over 124 local artists and multiple opportunities to perform at local events,
- Increased Love the Vale Day, to see almost 100 people take part in the annual event

Visible within our local community

One of the key aims for Bro Radio in 2023 was to be more visible in the community and engage more people with the content we create. To support that, the station secured funding to purchase an Outside Broadcast vehicle.

The vehicle, which was sourced and built by local companies, helped the station broadcast from events including the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show, Barry Island Festival of Food, Llantwit Major Arts Festival, GlastonBarry, Christmas Lights Switch on events and more.

The new vehicle, funding via the National Lottery, Tesco and Strong Communities Grant Fund has made us more visible, brought in new listenership and started new conversations with our community about the station and the opportunities we provide.



Investing in volunteers & young people

Bro Radio continues to support young people in our community, with one of its youngest volunteers, Dafydd Furnham shortlisted in Young Person of the Year at the Community Radio Awards and winning Bronze. This came as he secured an apprenticeship at BBC Radio Cymru, where bosses have told us “He’s a breath of fresh air.”

Bro Radio’s ‘Weather Kid’ feature was created to get those under 12 into the radio studio. Whilst it looks to inspire young people excited about radio, it has also proven to be successful in driving new listenership and has helped the station to build links with local schools, developing radio projects which are set to come to life in 2024.

The station continues to run its weekly free youth radio club in Llantwit Major, providing a space for young people in rural communities to come together, learn about the world of radio and create original programmes, creating 25 hours of content broadcast on Bro Radio.

Q4 2023 the station secured funding to trial a Radio Club in Barry with funding to deliver training in radio broadcasting and community journalism with adults, which aims to get more people involved in their local radio station, upskill local people and make it more sustainable, with the ever-changing nature of volunteering post-pandemic.



How does Bro Radio support the Vale of Glamorgan Council?

Advertisement

Through the Deed of Grant, Bro Radio provides spot advertising for key council services, consultations and events, including Adult Placement, Fostering, Social Services, Golden Pass Scheme, Telecare, Recycling and Waste Changes, Christmas Collections, Let's Talk consultation and more.

In 2023, the station broadcast approximately 20 adverts as part of the Deed of Grant, played between 160 and 1,000 a year and worth at least £12,000 in airplay.

Local News

Bro Radio's team of local volunteers produce daily news bulletins and online content, covering life in the Vale of Glamorgan. The station works with local people to give them the training to be journalists in their community, additionally providing regular placements for students from the University of South Wales and Cardiff University, to build their experience within the industry.

The team broadcasts an average of 85 local news bulletins each week, alongside stories covered within its daytime programme and Vale this Week news show.

On its website, the Bro Radio team write approximately 100 local news articles each week, covering stories relevant to our community, many of which include coverage of the council work, its departments and councillors, whilst still holding the council to account on key decisions.

Interviews

Bro Radio is the only local platform to be able to expand on key issues through in-depth interviews and questioning pieces. Bro Radio continues to ask listeners questions to councillors and staff, about the issues which matter most to them throughout the year - particular highlights in 2023, including the annual budget and Barry Waterfront development delays.

Supporting Local Businesses

Like the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Bro Radio believes that businesses play an important part in life in the County. It continues to develop its sister site Love the Vale, which provides free listings to businesses in Vale of Glamorgan.

In 2023, a dedicated volunteer took over management of the Love the Vale site which increased business listings to over 200. The site regularly attracts 20,000 visitors, who are exploring events and businesses in the County.

To continue to engage with the business community, Bro Radio organised its first series of Business Breakfasts - which were attended by the Council's Economic Team. These have become a new way to engage with the local business community, develop relationships and understand the issues impacting them.

Podcasting

Bro Radio continues to produce regular episodes of the Podcast Ask the Regulator, working with Shared Regulatory Services worth approximately £2,400 a year. Working with the team at SRS, the podcast creates a new way, to distribute information relevant to businesses, organisations and more working across the SRS. In 2022, the podcast was nominated for a Community Radio Award, featuring in the top five.

Bro Radio has expanded its podcast offering in 2023, including Entrepreneurs Unplugged, which features long-form conversations with business people about their story to date and ended the year with a round-table discussion about the key issues impacting high-streets and independent businesses across the County.

The station has seen huge success in working with the military community, based in St Athan, through the launch of its Military Spouse in The House Podcast. The podcast gives military spouses the space to share their stories, challenges and the ways they've overcome them, in the hope of helping others in a similar position. The podcast has built a successful following with its first six episodes and hopes to grow in 2024.

Events

The station supports Visit the Vale and key council departments in promoting and attending events throughout the year. Several Vale Council-run events are attended as part of the Deed of Grant including Barry Island Festival of Food and Barry Christmas Lights Switch On, whilst other key events supported by the Council are promoted for free via the stations Lowdown Guide and Love the Vale.

Outside of the Deed, Bro Radio attends some of the largest events in the County including the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show, GlastonBarry and These Three Streams Festival.

Content

Video continues to become a key part of Bro Radio's growth, producing more regular video content from within the studio and out in the community.

Key videos in 2023 include the new Barry recycling centre (20k views), Barry Christmas Lights Switch on (11k views), and Llantwit Major saying goodbye to the RAF (7k views) via Facebook alone. The station continues to develop video via new and growing platforms including Instagram and TikTok.

Supporting Young People

Bro Radio continues to provide opportunities for young people to get involved in local radio, outside of placements for the University of South Wales and Cardiff University.

The station's Llantwit Major Radio Club continues to offer a space for young people in rural Vale to learn about the world of radio and how to create original radio content. Delivered by experienced youth workers and radio presenters, the club welcomes 10 people each week. Moving to a new home in 2024 we will be able to support even more young people in this area. Additionally, following its success in Llantwit Major, the station is working with Vale Youth Service to develop opportunities for young people in Barry in 2024.

At events, the station continues to provide opportunities for young people to "have a go" at being a radio presenter, whilst inviting primary school children into its studios each Friday during term time to be one of its 'Weather Kids'.

Volunteering Opportunities

Bro Radio currently supports 60 local volunteers, continuing to welcome new people from all ages and backgrounds to be part of the service. It offers training and opportunities to help those who are isolated to become part of their community in addition to providing experience to those looking to build a career in the industry, becoming the future of radio and media in South Wales.

On air programming

On air programmes continue to promote stories, issues and events, that matter most to residents through its 'Lowdown' and presenter-led links during regular daytime programming.

Monthly programmes continue to reach key communities through its monthly Pride Cymru Show, 50+ Forum, Welsh Show, GVS Radio Show, History and Wellbeing programme. The monthly shows will expand in Q1 2024 to include a monthly Ask the Council programme, where local residents will be given the opportunity to ask questions to key Councillors and staff.

Regular Communication

Bro Radio is in regular communication with the Vale of Glamorgan Council communications team, providing support and assistance on key campaigns, to assist them in delivering objectives, targets and key audiences.



Supporting the Council's Wellbeing Goals

Bro Radio's partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, helps supports all three of the Council's Well-being objectives, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025

Objective One: To work with and for our communities

Improve how we involve, engage and communicate with others about our work and decisions.

Bro Radio talks directly to residents, who may not traditionally receive communication from the Council directly, through newspapers or social media. These tend to be the most vulnerable and at risk individuals.

Promote equality of opportunity and work with the community to ensure we are responsive to the diverse needs of our customers.

Provides opportunities to those who are socially isolated, not in employment or education. Promotes opportunities directly to those individuals.

Promote the use of the Welsh Language and contribute to the Welsh Government target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. Monthly bilingual Welsh language programming. Regular Welsh language spots etc

Objective Two: To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth. Work with education, training providers, businesses and other agencies to provide advice, support and training opportunities which improve people's skills and readiness.

Promote Vale of Glamorgan Council support and training opportunities, along with employment opportunities.

Support and promote volunteering and community learning, recognising the range of benefits to individuals and the community.

Bro Radio provides training opportunities to local people and groups, regardless of their background, experience or ability. We work closely to support volunteers in developing their skills, improving their prospects and becoming part of their local community.

The station continues to engage with local primary children through its Weather Kid feature, whilst giving opportunities to “have a go” at presenting through local events. Regular school takeovers of the radio station take place in partnership with local school and youth services.

The above work is supported by weekly free radio clubs aimed at 12 - 18 year olds.

Support economic growth through regeneration, improved infrastructure and support for town centres, tourism and industry.

Bro Radio continues to champion the stories and struggles of local businesses, working with traders groups to provide a platform to promote their events, on air, on social media and in video form distributed via its website and social media.

The station works closely with Visit the Vale, to attend and promote events organised by the Council, but also events that have been supported by the Council, to bring them to the attention of residents and visitors.

Objective Three: To support people at home and in their community

Encourage and support people of all ages to have active and healthy lifestyles to improve and maintain their physical and mental well-being.

Promoting services offered by the Council, as well as the work of local sports teams through sports programmes.

Promote leisure, art and cultural activities which meet a diverse range of needs.

Through ‘Lowdown’, Bro Radio provides free promotion for local sports clubs, groups and venues across the Vale of Glamorgan. The free service has recently promoted Arts Central, Memo Arts Centre, Turner House Gallery and St Donats Art Centre, to name just a few.

Work in partnership to develop cohesive communities and promote community safety.

Bro Radio works in partnership with YMCA Barry, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Barry Town Council, Llantwit Major Town Council and works collaboratively with key emergency services, and many third sector organisations to improve and promote services offered in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Plans for the future – our plan to 2029

Bro Radio has secured a renewal of its licence from industry regulator Ofcom until March 2029. As part of the extension, Bro Radio's Board of Directors has set out some key ambitions up to 2029 which include:

- **Increasing our output and opportunities for local people to get involved**
 - In 2023, Bro Radio's team delivered 6,000 hours of locally produced content. As it increases its volunteer numbers, it aims to increase its output by at least 200 hours per year - reaching 7,000 hours, out of a possible 8,760 hours before 2029.
 - The station will continue to seek funding to provide training courses for local people to get involved in its services, working across Barry and Llantwit Major - to increase the diversity of presenters and voices broadcast on the station.
- **Expanding our coverage area**
 - Between 2020 and 2024, Bro Radio has continued to expand its FM, online and most recently DAB+ opportunities to listen. It'll continue to work with the regulator Ofcom and platform providers to improve and expand its coverage, including securing opportunities to broadcast on DAB+ across Bridgend and the Western Vale of Glamorgan in 2024/25.
- **Community Journalism**
 - As the media landscape in Wales continues to change, community journalism remains at the heart of Bro Radio's work. It will continue to work with Universities to provide opportunities for upcoming journalists to build their craft.
 - The station will continue to seek funding to run courses, which empower local people to become community journalists. Giving them the skills, experience and opportunities to tell the stories that matter to their areas. As local newspapers cut back their offerings, it's seen as critical in making sure rural communities have a voice in the media landscape.

- **Increasing staffing numbers**

- As Bro Radio continues to develop its services, coverage area and volunteering opportunities, its critical that its staff numbers increase to cope with the additional work created. The Bro Radio Management has developed a growth plan, which includes securing funding for existing and key roles at the organisations.
- Roles include a fundraising manager, to fund core costs, development and growth, a volunteer co-ordinator to support volunteer development, training and opportunities and a business development manager, to continue its work with and support the local business community.

- **Exploring opportunities for further youth engagement work**

- Experience tells us that there are many opportunities to support young people in radio, media and TV in the Vale of Glamorgan. Working with local schools, education providers, Radio Platform, Vale Youth Service and YMCA Barry, the station will continue to seek funding and partnerships which will develop new opportunities for young people inside and outside of a school environment.





The Vale's Local Radio Station

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