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Date: 13th March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Blackwood Town Centre Management Group** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Friday, 20th March, 2015** at **1.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

Chris Burns
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

- | | Pages |
|---|-------|
| 1 To receive apologies for absence. | |
| 2 Declarations of interest.
Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers. | |
| To receive and note the following minutes: - | |
| 3 Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting minutes held on 17th October 2014. | 1 - 4 |
| To receive and note the following updates: - | |

A greener place Man gwyrddach



4	Update on footpath from Blackwood Gate Retail Park.	
5	Update on floral provision from Town Council.	
6	Business Report - Blackwood 2014.	5 - 8
7	Choose the High Street @ Christmas Analysis Report.	9 - 16
8	Choose the High Street Past & Present.	17 - 20
9	Parking in Town Enforcement Update from Gwent Police.	
10	Blackwood Town Centre Audit February 2015.	21 - 26

Circulation:

Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs P. Cook, D.T. Davies, N. Dix (Chair), C. Hawker, K. James, A. Rees (Vice Chair) and T.J. Williams

Town Councillors Ms C. Erasmus, Ms Z. Hammond and Mr J. Hold (Clerk)

Other Organisations

Inspector M. Thomas, Gwent Police

Mr C. Cook, (Caerphilly Access Group)

Mr H.T. Edwards, (Blackwood Retail Partnership)

Mr A. Oldman, (Blackwood Shopping Precinct)

The Manager, (Asda Blackwood)

The Manager, (Blackwood Library)



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH OCTOBER 2014 AT 1.30 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors N. Dix, K. James, C. Hawker, A. Rees, T. Williams

Together with:

Councillor C. Erasmus (Town Councillor), Z. Hammond (Town Councillor)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager),
A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), P. Hudson (Marketing and
Events Manager), A. Jones (Complaints Officer - Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: D.T. Davies, P. Cook
Ian MacVicar

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES OF MEETING

Mr. J. Hold was present but not noted in the minutes as attendee.

The previous minutes were taken as read, subject to the amendment above.

4. AREA FORUM BUDGET BALANCE

Mr Highway advised the group that the current balance in the Area Forum budget is £7,657.
The group were advised that the Area Forum Budget is available for the maintenance and
upkeep of the town or other things that the group felt were appropriate to fund.

Councillor James confirmed that each town will hold onto their current balance but the total annual budget of £72,000 may not be available but no decision has yet been made.

Mr. Hold advised that the Town Council would be looking for support with funding of the hanging baskets. Mr. Highway advised that this could be brought to a future meeting and a report presented to the group.

The group decided to vote to contribute £2,000 from the area forum budget towards the hanging basket displays.

The votes were 6 in favour with no abstentions

Mr. Dallimore will discuss the most economical options in relation to supply and watering of the baskets with Park Services.

5. BLACKWOOD CHRISTMAS MARKET 2014

Mr. Hudson discussed the previous success of the Christmas Market, but wanted to add more vibrancy to this year's event.

The group were advised that although the event is now well known, an extensive promotional campaign would be used again this year. To this end, a request for funding of £2,000 from the Area Forum Budget was made to pay for a regional radio campaign specifically for the event.

Members unanimously agreed to the £2,000 of funding, all were in favour. There were no abstentions.

Councillor Rees asked if Facebook would be considered to advertise the event. Mr. Hudson advised that corporate Facebook accounts would be publicising the Christmas events programme.

6. COUNCILLOR DIX PROPOSAL AREA FORUM BUDGET BALANCE TO BE RETAINED FOR MAINTENANCE FOR TOWN CENTRE

This item was covered when discussing item number 4.

7. CONSULTATION ON NEW BMI LOGO

Mr. Highway informed the group that the new logo was not as yet finalised but it was hoped that this item could be brought to a future meeting

8. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CAMPAIGN PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr. Highway informed the group that the Portas Review (2011) identified several threats to town centres. The "Choose the High Street" (CTHS) campaign aimed to promote the county borough's principal town centres to the public and businesses alike. Starting in the summer of 2014, the CTHS initiative used several platforms to highlight the brand and town centres; these included: free cotton shopping bags bearing the logo, billboards in the town centres, balloons and leaflets distributed at summer events and a series of YouTube videos.

The number of new businesses and potential business enquiries were summarised in the report, along with feedback from business and public surveys, which gave differing perceptions of the campaign. However, it was noted that there was a very small number of business surveys received.

The campaign is intended to be long-term, aiming to make people change their attitudes and shopping habits to support local businesses. Mr. Highway stated that it would continue as long as budgetary commitments allowed, bearing in mind the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Authority.

9. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS'

Mr. Highway provided an overview of the "Choose the High Street @ Christmas" campaign, which aims to link in with the existing, ongoing campaign, but also continue the Christmas discount scheme that has been run since 2012.

Following feedback from previous years, it was decided that the format for 2014 would be slightly different. During the last two years, any offers submitted by businesses were listed on a website. To redeem the relevant offer, the consumer would present a discount card at the time of sale. This was deemed to be too complicated by businesses and was supported by the fact that transactional use of the card was low, despite 30,000 cards being distributed across the County Borough.

The Christmas 2014 format is based around a voucher booklet. To redeem an offer, the relevant voucher is cut out from the booklet and presented at the time of sale. Businesses were sent a letter, sign-up form and prepaid return envelope with the Town Centre Gazette and this simpler format has proved popular, resulting in 92 offers being received – the highest to date.

Voucher booklets will be available in Libraries and Customer First centres in the town centres, as well as at some of the visitor attractions. Publicity of the scheme, which goes live on 1st December 2014, will be via Heart FM, The South Wales Advertiser, Caerphilly Observer, Newline, CCBC's website and social media.

A second element of the Christmas campaign is the launch of a "Pop-Up Shop Guide" that outlines the steps that need to be undertaken in order to establish a short-term use of a property. This is particularly useful for budding entrepreneurs who want to try a business model during the key pre-Christmas trading period. The guide is available in both hard and electronic copy.

Members thanked Mr. Highway and Mr. Wilcox for their report

10. FOOTPATH FROM BLACKWOOD GATE RETAIL PARK

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that the footpath was a temporary path with steps which are not in the best condition. This will be referred to the relevant officers to deal with.

Councillor Rees raised concern of hazardous situations, where members of the public have to step onto the road to go to the Bumble Bee, as there is no footpath.

Mr. Dallimore will take this matter up with the Engineering division.

11. 'MAXIME' CINEMA UPDATE

Mr. Highway confirmed that the cinema is a huge success. Discussions with the operator have confirmed that the operator is so pleased with the success he is going to use the 'Maxime' cinema as his flagship cinema. Within the first few weeks the operator recorded 35,000 visitors.

Other retailers have noticed a difference and have confirmed that it is very good for the town.

This is likely to encourage new businesses to the town.

The Chairman did highlight a few incidents where groups were congregating outside and damage had been reported. Police Officers have made regular visits to the cinema's foyer area to liaise with staff. The area will be monitored especially on the build up to Christmas.

Councillor Hammond advised the group that the partnership is working really well and the cinema has put on special events such as a Billy Elliott event.

12. PROPOSAL FOR THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM CRT SERVICES

Mr. Highway confirmed that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

13. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Councillor Williams is going to liaise with traffic management regarding the signs for the new disabled parking bay.

Mr. Dallimore confirmed that the monies have been approved and the works will be proceeding as soon as possible on the installation of posts and road studs on crossing outside Argos.

Poundstretcher site. Mr. Highway advised that there is still an issue with the insurers and that it is not known if Poundstretchers are obligated to return to the high street when the property is rebuilt.

Homeless People. The Chairman confirmed that he attended a meeting on the 16th October regarding the issue of homeless people. There is an increase and the police have been very proactive as well as other charitable groups. In addition a Homeless Officer has been appointed for 6 months.

Hopefully this will be resolved and the Chairman and Mr. Highway will keep the group informed.

Rat problem by Asda. Mr. Highway confirmed that the Council have been and placed bait down and shrubbery has been cut back. The Manager of the store is very pleased with the response from the Council.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed 2.39 pm.

CHAIRMAN



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP - 20TH MARCH 2015

**SUBJECT: BUSINESS REPORT BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE 2014 - FOR
INFORMATION**

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the number of businesses opened and closed in Blackwood town centre throughout 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report gives a retail overview of Blackwood town centre over the past year and details every retail business opening and closing within the town during 2014. In addition, it also provides an assessment of the annual footfall data collated in the town centre using the Experian Footfall electronic pedestrian counting system. Finally, the report sets out details of a number of initiatives that were developed to support and promote existing businesses and attract new ones to the town centre.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Businesses and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 "Prosperous Caerphilly" is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's "Single Integrated Plan". The Implementation of the *Unique Places* model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Blackwood Retail Overview 2014

- 4.1.1 The town's retail offer reflects how high streets across the UK are changing. The established family businesses, which for so long provided Blackwood with its distinctiveness, have been replaced by more transient independent businesses. Whilst the loss of long standing independent retailers undoubtedly affects the quality of the shopping offer, the fact that new business see Blackwood as an opportunity is a cause for optimism and ensures that the vacancy rates compare favourably with other similar towns in South East Wales. The nationwide growth in the number of charity shops opening is reflected in Blackwood with *Barnardos*, *British Red Cross*, *YMCA* and *Greyhound Rescue Wales* all opening new shops.

These charities have all spent money on the building fabric in order to open their shops and in so doing are investing in the future of the town centre.

4.1.2 The opening of the new five screen *Maxime Cinema* has had a very positive effect on footfall numbers and is drawing people from a wide demographic area into the town. Some businesses have noticed an uplift in their sales due to people visiting specifically for the cinema in the late afternoon. In addition, the opening of *Preachers Lounge Bar* in Hall Street has added further value to the towns nigh time economy.

4.1.3 Looking ahead to 2015, the concern remains that multiple retailers and service providers, such as banks, will continue to cut operating costs by rationalising their assets in town centre locations across the UK. The susceptibility of town centres to strategic decisions by national businesses reinforces the importance to the local economy of independent retailers. However, many small businesses are now finding the high street a difficult place in which to trade with the continued fall in consumer spending.

4.2 Retail Property Directory

4.2.1 The *Retail Property Directory*, provided through Town Centre Management, enables people to start looking online for retail properties to rent or buy across the five managed town centres. This initiative actively encourages people to open a business in one of the County Borough's town centres.

4.3 Choose the High Street

4.3.1 During the summer period a new promotional campaign was unveiled, which aimed to raise awareness of the importance of shopping locally. Using the strap line 'Choose the High Street' it encouraged people to favour using their local high street for at least part of their weekly shop and highlighted that customers have a choice in where they shop. To convey the message a variety of marketing platforms were utilised. The initiative also encouraged new businesses to open in the town centres by proactively engaging with local banks, enterprise agencies and grant providers.

4.4 Choose the High Street @ Christmas

4.4.1 Over the last two years, in the lead up to Christmas the 'Unique Places Discount Card' scheme has run as a way to help retailers generate sales. In 2012 a total of 60 offers were submitted and in 2013 that number rose to 80. After assessing the feedback provided by retailers, it was decided to take a different approach for Christmas 2014. Instead of using a discount card, a printed voucher booklet was produced. Retailers in the five managed town centres were invited to submit an offer for inclusion in the booklet with the level of discount being set by the retailer. In total 92 offers were received, a total of 27 of these were from retailers in Blackwood town centre.

4.5 Pop Up Shops

4.5.1 In October 2014, a 'Pop-Up Shop Guide' was launched to encourage people to explore opening a Pop-Up shop or community project on the high street. The guide provides an explanation of what a Pop-Up shop is and explains the process for setting one up.

4.6 Events

4.6.1 The town centre events staged by the Council's Events Team provide a chance for retailers to engage with a wider customer base due to the increase in footfall numbers they attract.

4.7 Business Comparison

4.7.1 The Town Centre Management Team compiled these figures during weekly town centre visits

over the course of a 12-month period. It should be noted that they are as accurate as possible given the method of data collection.

Blackwood Business Comparison			
	2014	2013	LFL Comparison
Businesses Opened	19	7	12 more businesses opened
Businesses Closed	14	14	Level

4.8 Blackwood Footfall

4.8.1 Footfall in the town centre is measured outside *Boots* on High Street.

Blackwood Town Centre Footfall Comparison			
	2014	2013	Difference
Highest Number	47,444 (15/12/14)	49,519 (16/12/13)	-2,075
Lowest Number	25,745 (05/05/14)	22,735 (29/04/13)	+3,010
Average Footfall	32,455	34,546	-2,091

4.8.2 The Town Centre Management Team continues to support retailers by producing regular *Town Centre Gazettes*, which are bespoke to each town centre. In addition, a summary of FootFall data is made available electronically on a weekly basis.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. As such, there is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personal implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 No there are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report for information.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager
 Consultees: Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning
 Allan Dallimore, Urban Renewal Team Leader
 Paul Hudson, Marketing and Events Manager

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BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP - 20TH MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS – ANALYSIS REPORT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' Voucher Booklet Scheme, which ran across the County Borough's five principal town centres in the three weeks leading up to Christmas 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the 'Choose the High Street @ Christmas' Voucher Booklet Scheme, which the Town Centre Management Team ran over Christmas 2014. Included in the report are details of how the scheme was operated, the numbers of retailers participating, marketing platforms used, along with feedback from questionnaires sent out to participating businesses and an online public survey.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Businesses and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 "Prosperous Caerphilly" is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's "Single Integrated Plan". The Implementation of the *Unique Places* model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Over the last two years, in the lead up to Christmas the 'Unique Places Discount Card' scheme has been run in the principal town centres with the aim of assisting retailers to generate sales. In 2012, a total of 60 offers were submitted and in 2013 that number rose to 80. After assessing the feedback provided by retailers, it was decided that a different approach would be taken for Christmas 2014. Instead of using a discount card and website which retailers said was too complicated, a printed voucher booklet was produced. Retailers in the five managed town centres were invited to submit an offer for inclusion in the booklet, with the level of discount being set at their discretion. Participation in the voucher booklet scheme generated greater interest from retailers than the discount card, with a total of 90 offers being received.

4.2 The booklet was designed by the Council's Graphic Design Team, originally in a raffle ticket style book. However, as the volume of offers submitted by retailers was higher than expected, it was necessary to change the design into a booklet format to accommodate them all. A total of 40,000 Voucher Booklets were produced and distributed by the Community Safety Wardens to the following locations:

- Caerphilly: Library / Customer First Centre / Visitor Centre / Cadwaladers / Grazing Ground / Whetherspoons - The Malcolm Uphill;
- Blackwood: Library / Customer First Centre / Blackwood Miners Institute / Tidal Stores / Maxime Cinema;
- Bargoed: Library / Customer First Centre / Comfort Zone;
- Risca: Library / Customer First Centre;
- Ystrad Mynach: Library.

4.3 In addition, every school in the County Borough was offered a supply of Voucher booklets. In total, 28 schools requested booklets for their pupils and staff, these were delivered using the Council's courier service.

Marketing Platforms

4.4 A number of different marketing platforms were used to promote the scheme, including:

- Newspaper adverts – *Cardiff & South Wales Advertiser / Caerphilly Observer / The Campaign*;
- *Heart FM* radio advertisement;
- Social media engagement on the Council's *Facebook / Twitter* accounts;
- A *YouTube* video was produced by Council's Communications Team;
- Article in the Council's *Newsline* which was delivered to every household in the County Borough;
- Inclusion on the CCBC corporate website.

Retailer Participation

4.5 The table shows the number of retailers taking part in the scheme compared to those in the previous two years.

Town Centre	Number of Offers in 2014	Number of Offers in 2013	Number of Offers in 2012
Caerphilly	29	26	24
Blackwood	26	24	20
Bargoed	23	21	14
Risca	6	4	5
Ystrad Mynach	2	4	N/A
Offers in other towns	4	1	1
Total	90	80	64

Retail Engagement

4.6 The Town Centre Management team made visits to retailers in the five town centres explaining the scheme and encouraging participation. Once again a number of businesses from outside the managed town centres expressed an interest in joining the scheme and were accommodated in the 'Offers in Other Towns' section of the booklet.

Retailer Survey

- 4.7 A survey was sent out to all retailers who participated in the scheme and the results are shown in the table below. A total of 90 surveys were sent out and 44 returned, giving a response rate of 49%, which was the highest number of returns from retailers in the three years that a Christmas scheme has been run. A summary of the responses can be found below:

Question			
1. Was the Choose the High Street @ Christmas voucher booklet beneficial to your business?	Yes 43%	No 57%	
2. Did the voucher booklet bring new customers?	Yes 38%	No 62%	
3. Did the voucher booklet work better than the discount card used in 2012/13	Yes 47%	No 53%	
4. Did you feel that the scheme was well-publicised?	Yes 63%	No 57%	
5. Would you consider taking part in a discount scheme in the future?	Yes 91%	No 9%	
6. Would you prefer a summer or Christmas discount scheme?	Summer 5%	Christmas 33%	Both 62%

- 4.8 The take up of offers in individual businesses varied considerably. Although 41% of participants had no vouchers redeemed, those businesses where customers did use the vouchers reported that they had seen between 1-150 vouchers redeemed. The huge disparity in the number of vouchers redeemed suggests that strength of the offer was a key factor in whether customers used a voucher or not.
- 4.9 It is positive to note that despite the varying success of the offers amongst participating businesses, 91% of respondents would consider taking part in the scheme if it were run again. This high volume suggests that retailers see not only the transactional value, but also the free promotional benefit of being part of the scheme.

Public Survey

- 4.10 To supplement the retailers' survey, an online survey was also conducted asking members of the public for their views on the Voucher Booklet and the campaign to promote it.
- 4.11 The responses were gained through a combination of electronic media (social media and email), and despite a low number of responses (39), the survey did provide a useful insight into any possible emerging trends in terms of the public's perception of the scheme.
- 4.12 Encouragingly, 69% of respondents were aware of the scheme, with all avenues of publicity and promotion (newspaper, CCBC Newslines, CCBC social media, CCBC website, radio advert and event stewards) being acknowledged. 35% of respondents felt that the voucher booklet encouraged them to shop locally last Christmas, with 28% saying that they spent money in the County Borough that they would otherwise have spent elsewhere, which would have boosted the local economy and assisted local businesses in the crucial pre-Christmas trading period.
- 4.13 An open question was included at the end of the survey that asked people how they felt the scheme could be improved in the future, which provided some very useful comments – generally, people felt that the offers needed to be better for them to participate and that the booklets should be distributed to every household in the Borough. A full list of the comments can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Conclusion

- 4.14 This year's scheme took a different approach than previous years with a move away from website based offers to vouchers printed in a booklet. However, this presented substantial design and logistical challenges which were overcome showing the strength of corporate working across divisions and the commitment of staff at libraries and Customer First centres to enthusiastically promote the initiative to customers.
- 4.15 The take up from the retailers was key to the success of this year's scheme and the number of offers and positive response show that a physical offer contained in a booklet, rather than one on a web site is more effective in driving sales. Therefore, future campaigns will concentrate on evolving and refining the voucher booklet approach.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the council's EqIa process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The campaign was funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 No there are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 This report is for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees: Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development
Ian MacVicar, Group Manager Operations
Allan Dallimore, Team Leader Urban Renewal
Paul Hudson, Marketing & Events Manager
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager

Dave Titley, Customer Service Manager
Gareth Evans, Senior Libraries Manager
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Manager
Paul Wallon, Community Safety Warden Supervisor
Gareth Chapman, Web Designer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Public Survey Comments

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Public survey comments on how the scheme could be improved

- “I think the offers could be a lot more enticing. Didn’t use any if them. Didn’t seem worth it”
- “Better offers”
- “Never heard of it”
- “More shops participating”
- “Include Newbridge”
- “Yes send it out to every house. We didn’t get one! Could of saved loads”
- “Being advertised better would help”
- “I was not aware of this”
- “Give out more booklets!! I had to go hunting for mine, but it was a brilliant idea. Also loved the Christmas market in Caerphilly – spent a fortune, well done”
- “Longer expiry dates”
- “Big improvements needed because in Bargoed we were never made aware of it”
- “Let people know about it”
- “I think it was a great idea. Disappointed that I forgot about it. Hope you do it again next year – or maybe have offers through the year, not just at Christmas”
- “The actual offers in the voucher scheme could be improved I believe, but I think that it is an excellent scheme in principle”
- “Better offers from the companies next time but the booklet is a good idea”
- “Better offers – more related to gifts”
- “Definitely, in part by the lousy offers in the booklet by the company’s e.g. spectators offered a free eye test which most are entitled to anyway but those who are not could get a free eye test without the booklet as the offer runs quite frequently without need of a voucher”
- “Better advertised, maybe put one in the Newslines? Better and more offers”
- “Wider variety of shops, not so many cafes”
- “More publicity”
- “Increased offers maybe a higher percentage on discounts to make it worthwhile to visit the town”
- “Perhaps better offers although the offers this Christmas were better than the offers last time round”

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BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 20TH MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET – PAST & PRESENT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the latest element of the 'Choose the High Street' campaign run by the Council's Town Centre Management Team.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This year, the Council's Town Centre Management Team will launch a new initiative, which will once again utilise the 'Choose the High Street' brand. Entitled 'Choose the High Street - Past & Present' the campaign will aim to reconnect people with their local town centres.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Businesses and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".
- 3.2 "Prosperous Caerphilly" is identified as one of the key outcomes in the Council's "Single Integrated Plan". The Implementation of the *Unique Places* model of Town Centre Management in the County Borough's principal town centres is one of the actions identified to achieve this outcome.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The 'Choose the High Street Past & Present' campaign is scheduled to begin in April and will focus on two parts. Firstly, the 'past' element will use old photographs to evoke memories and re-establish people's connection to a particular place. Secondly, through asking people to think about why they choose the high street, it is hoped that they will appreciate and value their town centre. Ultimately, the aim is to encourage people to invest economically, socially and emotionally in the future of their town centres.
- 4.2 In addition, it is hoped that the initiative may inspire people to start new businesses by looking back at what has been lost from the high street. An example of this is the opening of the *Maxime Cinema* in Blackwood, which has demonstrated that a business from the past can successfully be adapted for the present.

PAST

- 4.3 The first part of 'Choose the High Street Past & Present' will begin in April and involves showing old photos of each of the County Borough's five principal town centres using the Council's social media platforms. The photographs will be sourced from the Council archive at the Winding House Museum in New Tredegar. During the summer road shows will be held in each town centre library, these will comprise of archive photos, schools' artwork and retailer stories and pictures of their business history.

PRESENT

- 4.4 The second part of the initiative will begin in June and will focus on the 'present' and take the form of a competition run through local libraries to win shopping vouchers. Shoppers will be invited to call into their local library and fill out an entry form, each entrant will receive a free car sticker, which they are asked to display on their vehicle in order to promote local high streets. The winners of the shopping vouchers will drawn from the entry boxes at random. One winner will be chosen for each town centre in July and another in August.
- 4.5 On the entry form people will also be asked to complete the sentence – "I choose the high street because...". The final part of the 'Choose the High Street Past & Present' initiative in September will see some of these sentences to used to further promote the town centres.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.6 The overall aims of the scheme are:
- a. To maintain town centre footfall over the summer period;
 - b. Improve people's sense of connection with their local town;
 - c. Generate renewed interest in town centres as a location for business;
 - d. Encourage retailers to participate in the life of the town centre;
 - e. Increase footfall in town centre libraries;
 - f. Engage with local schools.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Eqla process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The campaign is funded through the Town Centre Management core budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 No there are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 This report is for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Andrew Highway, Town Centre Development Manager
Consultees: Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration & Planning
Cllr. K. James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable
Development
Ian MacVicar, Group Manager Operations
Allan Dallimore, Team Leader Urban Renewal
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer
Steve Wilcox, Assistant Town Centre Manager

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BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – FEBRUARY 2015

DATE	ISSUE	DEPARTMENT	PROGRESS UPDATE
03/05/13	<p><u>Installation of Posts & Road Studs on Crossing O/S Argos, High Street</u> Cllr. Dix has requested the installation of posts and road studs on the crossing point outside Argos to compliment the defensive street furniture on the opposite side of the road and make the crossing safer.</p>	<p>Urban Renewal <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p> <p>Highways <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>6/10 The work has yet to be carried out. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 Work has been completed. Issue Closed 8/12</p>
02/10/13	<p><u>Poundstretcher Site High Street</u> Officers continue to work with Poundstretchers in an attempt to rebuild the store and enable the retailer to return to the town centre.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>6/10 The insurance claim remains unsettled. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 An update could not be obtained from the property's agent.</p>
17/04/14	<p><u>Car Cruisers ASDA Car Park, Cliff Road</u> ASDA management has noticed an increase in the number of car cruisers congregating in the car park during the evenings. This is leading to an increase in litter and anti social behaviour.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>4/8 The situation appears to be under control, but will continue to be monitored. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 The road closure could not be enforced for 3-4 weeks due to problems with the signage. However, no increase was seen. Police Officers have offered to assist ASDA in issuing Banning Orders.</p>

06/05/14	<p><u>Removal of High Kerb Junction of High Street/Pentwyn Road</u> Cllr. Dix asked Officers to consider the removal of the high kerb at this location, to make the area safer and more accessible for pedestrians. There are dropped kerbs on either side of the area.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>2/6 Works are ongoing. 4/8 No update was available. 8/12 Cllr. Dix acknowledged why works could not be carried out. Issue Closed 8/12</p>
16/05/14	<p><u>Toilet Block Enhancement High Street</u> At the TCMG, it was agreed that proposals would be developed to try and improve the appearance of the disused toilet block on High Street. Should the proposals be approved, the Area Forum Budget may fund the scheme.</p>	<p>Urban Renewal <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>6/10 Officers will look at options when budget and capacity allows. 8/12 As the toilet block is on private land, works are hindered. However, a funding bid will be looked at.</p>
19/05/14	<p><u>Choose the High Street Campaign Town Centre</u> Town Centre Management will be launching a summer campaign across the five managed towns, encouraging consumers to “Choose the High Street”. The scheme will run over the summer period and use several forms of media.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>6/10 Initial feedback to the scheme has been positive, with the Christmas campaign element of the scheme starting shortly. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 Updates to the TCMG are ongoing. The project is aimed to be long-term, with more initiatives launching in 2015.</p>
21/07/14	<p><u>Raised Paving Slabs Blackwood Retail Park</u> Some paving slabs on the boundary of Blackwood Retail Park have become significantly raised, which poses a trip hazard.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Marcus Lloyd</i></p>	<p>4/8 Highways Inspectors are assessing whether this land is owned by the Authority. 6/10 The work is understood to have been done, but has not been confirmed. 8/12 Work has been completed. Issue Closed 8/12</p>

20/08/14	<p><u>Damage to Maxime Cinema Signage High Street</u> The lighting on the signage at the front of the Maxime Cinema has been damaged. The situation needs to be monitored to prevent further damage.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>6/10 Monitoring of the area is ongoing. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 Police Officers are closely monitoring the area on a Friday and Saturday night. No further issues have been reported. Issue Closed 8/12</p>
28/08/14	<p><u>Youth Annoyance & Damage O/S New Look, High Street</u> The manager of the New Look store has complained of instances of youth annoyance in and around the store since the cinema opening. There have also been some damage to the rear of the store.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>6/10 Incidents are being dealt with as they arise and monitoring is ongoing. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 Only one report was received. Issue Closed 8/12</p>
03/09/14	<p><u>Christmas Event Town Centre</u> Planning is underway for a Christmas event in the town centre, which is scheduled to take place on 6th & 7th December 2014.</p>	<p>Business Enterprise Support Team <i>Paul Hudson</i></p>	<p>6/10 Planning for the event continues. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 The event was well-received and an update will be provided to the TCMG.</p>
03/09/14	<p><u>“Choose The High Street @ Christmas” Campaign Town Centre</u> The “Choose the High Street” campaign is being extended to the Christmas period to encourage people to shop locally this Christmas. The scheme will involve a voucher scheme that all retailers will have the opportunity to sign up to.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>6/10 A Christmas voucher booklet is being produced for the five managed towns. Retailers are currently being invited to submit offers. 17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 40,000 voucher booklets have been distributed across the Borough. A supporting YouTube video is launching on 8/12.</p>

04/09/14	<p><u>Rat Problem</u> <u>ASDA, Cliff Road</u> The ASDA store manager has complained of a rat infestation on the Council-owned steps leading from the Miners' Institute to the retail park.</p>	<p>Environmental Health <i>Lyndon Ross</i></p> <p>Parks Services <i>Derek Price</i></p>	<p>PLEASE SEE PREVIOUS AUDITS FOR A FULL HISTORY OF THIS ISSUE</p> <p>17/10 An update was provided to the TCMG. 8/12 Monitoring and baiting is ongoing.</p>
09/10/14	<p><u>Disabled Bay Regulations</u> <u>High Street</u> A complaint has been received from a retailer at the Northern end of High Street in relation to the newly installed disabled parking bay. Non-blue blue holders are regularly using the bay.</p>	<p>Police <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>8/12 The signage has been installed and enforcement is ongoing. Issue Closed 8/12</p>
16/10/14	<p><u>Installation of Christmas Illuminations</u> <u>Town Centre</u> The lamp post banners are due to be removed for the Christmas period to make way for the festive illuminations that will be placed on lighting columns throughout the town centre.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	<p>8/12 The illuminations have been installed and no issues have been raised.</p>
17/10/14	<p><u>Road Closed Signage</u> <u>High Street/Pentwyn Road</u> The "road closed" signage that activates on a Thursday night appears to be malfunctioning and is remaining illuminated when the road closure is no longer in force.</p>	<p>Transportation <i>Clive Campbell</i></p>	<p>8/12 A new radio unit is required, which has been ordered via the signage manufacturer.</p>
17/10/14	<p><u>Antisocial Behaviour</u> <u>Interchange Bus Station</u> A number of instances of antisocial behaviour have been recorded in and around the bus station. The Community Safety Unit run a multi-agency group, which includes the Police, and will monitor the situation as part of its ongoing work.</p>	<p>Community Safety <i>Kath Peters</i></p> <p>Police <i>Ins Thomas</i></p>	<p>8/12 The next problem-solving group meeting is being held on 10/12. The toilets will be swabbed to confirm reports of drug use.</p>

05/12/14	<p><u>Paving Repairs</u> <u>Hall Street</u> Repairs are required to the paving in the area where the recycling unit was once housed. The pavements were damaged during the unit's removal.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	
05/12/14	<p><u>Reinstatement of Bollard</u> <u>Hall Street</u> A vehicle has struck a bollard in Hall Street, which now requires re-setting.</p>	<p>Highways <i>Gavin Barry</i></p>	
23/01/15	<p><u>Choose the High Street – Past & Present</u> <u>Town Centre</u> The next phase of the Choose the High Street campaign will start in 2015. Entitled 'Choose the High Street - Past & Present' the campaign will aim to reconnect people with their local town centre.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	
23/01/15	<p><u>Banner Changeovers</u> <u>Town Centre</u> The banners on the street lighting columns will be installed during February throughout the town centre.</p>	<p>Town Centre Management <i>Andrew Highway</i></p>	
28/01/15	<p><u>Broken Artwork</u> <u>Gordon Road / High Street</u> Following a road traffic accident the artwork railing at the location has been severely damaged in the impact of the crash.</p>	<p>Urban Renewal <i>Allan Dallimore</i></p>	

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