



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON FRIDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2016 AT 2:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: D. T Davies (Consultee), N. Dix, K. James, T. Williams

Together with:

C. Erasmus (Town Councillor), Z. Hammond (Town Councillor), Mr J Hold (Clerk), Mr H Edwards (Blackwood Retail Partnership)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal & Conservation), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), P. Wallen (Community Safety Warden), C. Edwards (Environmental Health Manager), A. Jones (Complaints Officer - Clerk)

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Cook, Inspector Jason White, Kath Peters, Lyndon Ross

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor Dix invited the group to observe a minute's silence to remember Town Councillor Glyn Erasmus.

Mr Hold paid his respects to Councillor Erasmus and stated that his loss will leave a void which will be difficult to fill.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 16TH OCTOBER 2015

The previous minutes were taken as read.

4. BUSINESS REPORT BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

The group discussed the possibility of relocating the footfall cameras to obtain a true footfall figure count. Mr Highway advised that a location for an additional camera had already been identified outside The Maxime Cinema on High Street, budgetary options were now been considered.

Mr Highway was thanked for the report.

5. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET 2015 – ANALYSIS REPORT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

Mr Highway and Councillor Dix wished to note thanks to the council's Graphics Design team for all of their work designing this year's voucher booklet, the Maxime Cinema for holding the event to launch the scheme, the Community Safety Wardens for helping to deliver the booklets and to Steve Wilcox for his work on the scheme.

Mr Edwards asked if in future schemes booklets could be left down at the Blackwood Gate Retail Park. Mr Highway will approach Aldi's management later in the year.

Mr Highway was thanked for the report.

6. GO2 MY TOWN WEBSITE REPORT

Mr Wilcox presented the report to the group

The report was discussed and Mr Wilcox advised the group as to how they could access the website and view the information available on the site.

Mr Wilcox was thanked for the report.

7. UPDATE ON WESLEY ROAD STEPS

Mr Dallimore informed the group that there are still a number of issues with the site and he is waiting for an update from NCS as to when the works can take place. The handrails need repainting, a new guard rail will have to be installed and repointing works completed.

The estimated cost of the works is £7,000. Mr Dallimore agreed to report back when he has more information.

Councillor James confirmed that the Area Forum money has been committed to the steps even if the works are not completed in this financial year.

The group voted that if there was any money left over from the project it would be used towards a defibrillator.

The group voted on this and 6 were in favour.

8. UPDATE ON DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr Hold confirmed that there is a defibrillator in the Miners' Institute and one in Asda. The Maxime cinema will be installing one in the future and the Town Council would like to place one in the library, or ideally in an outside location like the bus station.

Town Councillor Hammond advised that through contacts in the British Heart Foundation the Maxime cinema owners are installing a defibrillator in each of their cinemas across the UK at a reduced cost (approximately £750). Suppliers have also agreed to offer free training on how to operate the equipment.

Mr Highway suggested that Huw Morgan in Engineers would be the officer to contact with regards to finding an ideal location in the bus station vicinity.

9. UPDATE ON DRINKING AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Ms Edwards introduced herself to the group as the Environmental Health Manager. Ms Edwards informed the group that there have been changes in the council structure and Community Safety Wardens now come under Environmental Health and that Kath Peters has changed jobs. The CCTV control Room now comes under Jacqui Morgan in Trading Standards.

Ms Edwards informed the group that the Community Safety Wardens will report to Lyndon Ross.

Mr Wallen introduced himself and explained to the group the work the Community Safety Wardens do in the towns.

Mr Wallen advised that the Community Safety Wardens ran an operation between the 18th and the 24th January from 9:00 – 21:00 which covered issues about litter, alcohol related offences, anti-social behaviour and the new Public Spaces Protection Order.

Mr Wallen provided the figures from this operation which were:

Advice given for litter 7, alcohol confiscated 5, words of advice 2, verbal warning for drinking 1, advice given for smoking 4, anti-social behaviour, people moved on 17, words of advice 20, verbal warning 6, PSPO order – verbal warning 3, words of advice 22.

The group were advised that £100 fixed penalty notices can be issued to individuals under the new Public Spaces Protection Order. If the fine is paid within 7 days the fine is reduced to £75.

Initially individuals will be given a warning and then if caught a second time the fines will be issued

Councillor Dix raised concern over bus drivers discarding cigarettes and suggested that they should have a designated area. Mr Highway advised Mr Wallen to discuss this issue with Huw Morgan.

Town Councillor Hammond queried the SOS response time. Mr Wallen confirmed that once the SOS button has activated there is an instant response and any serious issues get referred to the police, when the button is pressed cameras operators zoom into the area. The tannoy is also used to issue warnings to individuals.

Town Councillor Hammond requested a report for the Town Council on the response times. Mr Wallen advised overall issues with drinking have gone down and that a few issues around

mess / bottles in toilets have been reported back.

10. UPDATE ON TOILET BLOCK

Mr Dallimore advised that it is difficult to see further progress as the former toilet block is privately owned. The area is treated as a grot spot and a Cleansing team go in regularly to clean it up.

Mr Dallimore advised the group that he will discuss the issue with Tim Stephens and ask him to write to the owner. If he does not respond there may be consideration of a notice under Section 215 of Planning Act.

Mr Hold advised this area is unsightly like the Red Lion building and asked if there was any update on this building.

Mr Highway advised that no response has been received, the next stage would be to consider proceeding under Section 215 Planning Act. The item will be listed on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr Dallimore will take views back to planning and will report back to the group with update.

11. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – AUGUST 2015

Mr Highway advised the group that there has been a restructure in Gwent Police and Blackwood has a new sector Inspector Jason White who sent apologies for today. PS Mark Thomas has expressed his thanks to the group for their support as he leaves for a new post.

In response the group extended their best wishes to PS Thomas in his new role and thanked him for his hard work in the town centre.

Mr Highway informed the group that the owner of the former Pound Stretchers site has been contacted but no decisions have been made on its future.

Thanks were passed to Paul Hudson and his team for the Christmas Event. Thanks were also extended to Mr Edwards and staff at Tidal Stores for providing the grotto at the event.

Thanks to be passed to Gavin Barry and his team for the repainting of hand-railing on the High Street.

Mr Hudson advised that there is an event at the Dragon Circle on St David's Day. It was noted that the power unit is broken.

Mr Hold advised that the closure of the civic centre will now mean that the Blackwood Carnival can no longer take place in its existing format and that he is looking to work with the Council to possibly merge the carnival with the beach event.

Mr Hold informed the group that invitations will be sent to launch a children's literature festival run by Velvet Coal Mine on 29th April 2016 at Blackwood Miners' Institute.

The meeting closed 15:17.

CHAIR