



TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2018 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

T. Williams, K. Etheridge, N. Dix, A. Farina-Childs, S. Morgan

Together with:

Mr J Hold (Blackwood Town Council Clerk), Mr H Edwards (Chamber of trade), Mr L Pask (Pontllanfraith & District Local History Society), Mr John Steven (FCFM)

Also:

A Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), D Smith (Principal Engineer), S Wolf-Williams (Health Challenge Wales Co-ordinator), T Evans (Policy Officer), A. Jones (Clerk)

1. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO BLACKWOOD TOWN – BLACKWOOD MARKET PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE

With the approval of the Town Centre Management Group it was agreed that this item on the agenda be brought forward. Mr Highway introduced Mr Stevens to the group. Mr Highway advised the group that Mr Stevens had been invited to provide an update on the Artisan Market which will be subject to a future Planning Application.

Councillor Morgan reminded members of the group that if they wanted to declare an interest they should leave the meeting.

Mr Highway and Mr Dallimore both declared an interest and left the meeting.

Mr Stevens introduced himself to the group and provided a presentation on the proposed plans for the Artisan Market which was also included in the agenda pack and advised the group that this would be subject to planning consent being granted by the Council.

The group discussed the proposals and Mr Stevens answered questions.

Councillor Morgan thanked Mr Stevens.

2. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Mr Highway opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chair. Councillor Dix nominated Councillor Williams. Councillors voted and the vote was 3 in favour 1 against. Councillor Williams accepted the position of Chair.

Councillor Williams asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Councillor Dix nominated Councillor Farina-Childs, Councillors voted and the vote was 3 in favour 1 against. Councillor Farina-Childs accepted the position.

3. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D T Davies, Mr D Davies (Moose Fraternity), R Kyte (Head of Regeneration & Planning), P Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), C Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made other than those at the beginning there were no further declarations during the course of the meeting.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 20TH MARCH 2018

The minutes were taken as read.

6. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO TOWN

Mr Highway introduced the report which provided an update on matters relating to Blackwood town centre.

The first item to be presented was Civil Parking. A paper copy of a PowerPoint Presentation by the officer was provided to members as part of the minutes pack.

Mr Smith introduced himself to the group and presented a detailed report on Civil Parking.

The group were advised that the Council will be taking over parking enforcement from Gwent Police on the 8th April 2019.

Councillors expressed concern about there being no enforcement for the months up until the Council takes up the role.

Mr Smith advised that these concerns have been raised with the Chief Constable & Police Commissioner and they will have further discussions to renegotiate possibly extending the deadline.

Councillor Dix asked if there would be an officer in the town every day.

Mr Smith confirmed that enforcement will be primarily focused on the town centres, schools and then other areas. The group were informed that there will be 10 Civil Parking Enforcement Officers who will cover the whole of the Borough on a rota which has not been developed yet. Therefore, there is no guarantee that an officer will be in a particular area on a daily basis as the whole Borough needs to be covered.

Councillor Morgan reiterated what Mr Smith had advised and assured the group that the officers will enforce parking in the town centres and across the County Borough.

The group discussed dangerous parking within the town centre and clarified what the Council will be able to enforce and what the Police will still need to enforce.

The Chair thanked Mr Smith for his report.

The second item to be presented was Local Toilet Strategy. A paper copy of a PowerPoint Presentation by the officer was provided to members as part of the minutes pack.

Ms S Wolf-Williams introduced herself to the group and presented her report. The group were advised that the Council has a statutory duty under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 to prepare and publish a local toilet strategy.

The group discussed the report in detail and expressed their concerns over the proposed closure of the toilets in town centres under the medium term financial plan. The group were advised by Ms S Wolf-Williams that all Council owned buildings would be making their toilets accessible to the public and were told that a draft strategy report would be going out for consultation shortly (ending 8th of March 2019).

Ms Wolf-Williams urged members of the group to view the draft strategy report and to provide comments and feedback.

The Chair thanked Ms Wolf-Williams.

The third item to be presented was Electric Vehicle Charging. A paper copy of a PowerPoint Presentation by the officer was provided to members as part of the minutes pack.

Ms Evans introduced herself to the group and presented her report.

The group discussed the introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging points within the car parks in Blackwood.

Mr Dallimore pointed out to that the PowerPoint contained a reference to funding and advised that the Council can submit a bid for regional funding from Welsh Government.

The Chair thanked Ms Evans for her update.

The fourth item to be presented was Bicentenary Event.

Mr Pask had provided a written update and this was circulated to the group with the agenda pack.

Mr Pask briefed the group on his background within the Pontllanfraith & District Local History Society. The group discussed the objectives and the current position. Mr Pask advised that he has been trying to gather interest from a number of groups including schools to embrace the history of Blackwood Town particularly the Chartist movement.

Councillor Etheridge requested that Councillor Morgan and Allan Dallimore speak with tourism to drive the project forward.

Councillor Morgan said he would be happy to support this and Mr Dallimore confirmed that he would speak with communications and Paul Hudson.

Mr Pask advised that a number of people would like to get involved but at this time there are no firm plans in place. Mr Hold confirmed that the Town Council will be meeting in the New Year and he will raise it at the meeting.

Mr Dallimore asked Mr Hold to communicate with Granville Hague who was also working to commemorate the bicentenary of the town.

Mr Hold advised that the event will be either Jun or July 2020 but will confirm as soon as possible. The group were in support of the event.

The Chair thanked Mr Pask.

The Fifth item to be presented was High Street Heroes.

Mr Highway advised the group that Mr Wilcox has moved on to a new post with Business Support and would like to record thanks for his work in Town Centre Management.

Mr Highway advised that the voucher booklet will not be offered this year due to resources constraints and introduced his presentation on High Street Heroes and explained how this will help to support retailers on the High Street.

Mr Highway advised the group that retailers are nominated by the public and was pleased to confirm that Tidal Stores will be awarded their certificate today.

Councillors congratulated Mr Edwards on receiving the nomination.

In respect of Business Rates, Mr Highway confirmed that he has met with the retailers in Blackwood town centre together with Councillor Morgan and the local AM's representative. Following this meeting Councillor Morgan has written to the Cabinet Secretary at Welsh Government expressing his concern over business rates on behalf of retailers

The group were also advised that the Leader of the Council has supported a reduction in business rates for small businesses and sent a letter to Welsh Government.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway.

7. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Mr Highway presented the report and the following items were raised.

Poundstretcher site – The group were advised that the site has been marketed as a clean site for full redevelopment.

Red Lion site – The demolition is complete, there were issues with drainage which have been resolved therefore works will restart soon.

Street name plate at Gravel Lane – The name plate has now been installed.

Travelling circus posters – It has been requested that these are removed.

Preachers Bar – Mr Highway confirmed that suitable advice has been given to the owners.

Artwork maintenance – Mr Dallimore confirmed that he has instructed Parks to clean areas and the stolen artwork is to be replaced. There will be periodic checking of the site.

Councillor Etheridge thanked Mr Highway for relocating the benches by ASDA.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed at 13:42

CHAIR