



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON FRIDAY, 16TH MAY 2014 AT 12.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: P. Cook, N. Dix, K. James, C. Hawker, P. Leonard, A. Rees

Together with:

C. Erasmus (Town Councillor), Z. Hammond (Town Councillor), Inspector M Smith (Gwent Police)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager),
A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), A. Jones (Clerk)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Mr. Highway opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chairman. Councillor Dix was nominated and seconded and all agreed, Councillor Dix accepted the position and continued with the meeting

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Dix asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. Councillor Rees was nominated and seconded and all agreed, Councillor Rees accepted the position

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: T. Williams, D. T. Davies (Consultee), E. Aldworth (Consultee), Bob Campbell (traffic management).

5. WELCOME INTRODUCTION FOR NEW MEMBER COUNCILLOR ALAN REES

Councillor Dix introduced Councillor Rees to the group and the group introduced themselves to Councillor Rees

6. TO NOTE THE PREVIOUS MINUTES (7TH FEBRUARY 2014 MIN NO'S 1-3, PAGE NO'S 1-3)

The previous minutes were taken as read

7. 'A' FRAMES PROTOCOL

Mr Highway advised the group that there were no officers available to attend the meeting however the report was for information as this report has been brought to the group previously. If there were any concerns over the report they were to be made to Mr Highway for him to take up with the service area.

8. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET

Mr Highway presented his report, which informed the group that since the Christmas campaign feedback was brought to the group. Town Centre Management has been working on a number of platforms to raise consumer choice throughout the towns.

The aim of the campaign is to increase importance of supporting local retailers by promoting their businesses and raise awareness of consumer choice.

As part of the advertising, 250 bags have been handed out from the Customer First office in Blackwood, all members were provided with a bag. Information will be going out to all businesses and local banks have been contacted and provided with leaflets to provide to potential new businesses.

Advertising will continue in a number of ways such as banners, billboards, twitter, facebook and youtube.

Councillor Hawker stated that the billboard design is very good and really stands out. Mr. Highway confirmed that this was designed in house and it is a credit to our organisation that we have officers who can do these things.

Councillor Dix added that this was excellent work and is a really good initiatives, he hopes that this will boost trade in the towns and that Blackwood will remain robust with trade. He thanked Mr Highway for his hard work and report.

9. CINEMA UPDATE

Mr Highway confirmed that he is in regular contact with the cinema operator and advised that the cinema was due to open in June but unfortunately this has now been delayed until the end of July. It was confirmed that there will be five screens and they will be showing current blockbuster movies.

Mr Dallimore advised the group that there are workmen on site continuing to work to get the cinema opened as soon as possible.

Mr Hold advised that the Town Council has been in talks with Blackwood Rotary Club to hold a premier film event in the Maxim cinema with possible dates of the 17th or 24th July. All

monies would be donated to charity and are in discussions with the operator.

Mr. Highway has met with Beverley Edwards from Tidal's store with regards to trying to find a suitable location for the opening event and this is still ongoing. Councillor Dix confirmed that the Mayor has been invited to open the event.

Councillor Leonard asked how would the cinema be promoted.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the Town Centre Management team are going to work with the operator to help promote the cinema.

Mr. Highway advised that the Town Centre Gazette would be used to advertise the opening of the cinema promoting that it has five screens showing latest releases

Choose the High Street will also be a good marketing tool for the promotion of the cinema

10. CHANGING OF DISABLED PARKING BAYS IN HIGH STREET

Mr. Highway advised that Bob Campbell was not able to be at the meeting.

Town Councillor Z. Hammond and Mr. Hold highlighted that there has been a lot of work with regards to improving the high street which should have been carried out after the disabled bays were put in place not before.

Mr. Highway requested that all queries be sent to him and he will contact Traffic Management.

11. TOWN CENTRE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that due to budget cuts, improvements and maintenance for all five towns has been reduced to £20,000. This will have a big impact on what repairs and maintenance will be undertaken throughout the towns.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the Council will continue to work hard to secure additional external funding and will look to work with the Town Council to achieve this.

Councillor Dix agreed that more focus and smarter thinking in looking to acquire funding externally is the way forward.

Councillor Hawker asked for clarification as to where the external funding would come from and could the Heritage Lottery be used for older buildings like the cinema.

Mr. Dallimore advised that there are a number of possible routes some of them being Welsh Government grants, European and Lottery monies. With regards to the cinema, the developer decided to go alone without any external funding.

12. AREA FORUM BUDGET

Mr. Dallimore advised the group that there is £7,657 in the area forum budget, which in the past has been used for events.

Councillor Dix requested that the group and Mr. Highway look at possible ideas where this money could be used within the town.

Possible suggestions were that the old toilet block has a mural on it. Mr. Dallimore would look to work with the owners of the toilet block to see if an arrangement could be made for a mural

to be painted and the owner maintains afterwards. Mr Dallimore would look into possible designs and costs. Improve the steps, which lead from Wesley Road or replace old bins were other ideas.

Councillor Dix invited the group to vote on exploring the mural on the toilet block with the owner. This was put to the group and the votes were unanimous to take this option forward.

13. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Councillor Dix informed the group that Colours is under new ownership and they are looking to turn the premises into a wine bar and make improvements to reduce the noise volume by fitting an internal door. Anyone under the age of 16 will have to leave by a certain time.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the studs outside Argos are not having the impact to stop parking. Arrangements have been made to go and look at the area again with NCS to see alternative solutions.

Mr. Highway has made enquiries with the owners of Poundstretcher who have advised that the matter is with the Insurance Company.

The number of Homeless people in Blackwood has reduced and Kath Peters is meeting with the police to discuss this matter.

Mr. Dallimore advised that the planning application for former junior school has been discussed with planning and it is only an outline application so it will be brought back to the audit once a full application has been submitted.

Councillor Dix raised concerns over the safety of the structure and that people are gaining access to the premises. Mr Dallimore requested that these concerns be passed to him so that they can be referred to Planning and Property Services.

Defective step could not be identified more information has been requested to be able to refer this back to Highways.

The Manager of Asda was grateful that the potholes on Cliff Road are to be repaired.

The group were advised that Inspector Mark Smith will no longer be covering the Blackwood area and will be replaced by Inspector Mark Thomas. Councillor Dix on behalf of the group thanked the Inspector Smith for all of his support and hard work over the years and wished him well in his new role.

Inspector Smith thanked the group and stated that he had enjoyed his time working with the group.

The meeting closed at 1.31 p.m.

CHAIRMAN