



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH MARCH 2015 AT 1.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: N. Dix, K. James, T. Williams

Together with:

Councillor C. Erasmus (Town Councillor), Z. Hammond (Town Councillor), Mr J Hold (Clerk),
Inspector M Thomas (Gwent Police)

Also:

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

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: D.T. Davies, C. Hawker.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES OF MEETING (17TH OCTOBER 2014)

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. PAKING IN TOWN ENFORCEMENT UPDATE FROM GWENT POLICE

This item was moved up the agenda. Inspector Thomas confirmed that he has increased the number of CSOs in the town centre over the last three months and 60 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued on the High Street and immediate streets off High Street. In addition to this a number of drivers were given advice and requested to move on.

CSOs are out daily but it was noted that this is only one of their responsibilities.

The group were advised that there are two long-term options for parking issues. Firstly, the Council could take on enforcement & issuing of tickets and secondly, physical changes to the High Street, which is unlikely due to a lack of funding schemes.

Inspector Thomas confirmed that there have been very few complaints received in relation to parking and can only confirm two, which were not in relation to the High Street.

The group discussed parking on “zigzag” lines and Inspector Thomas confirmed that anyone parked on these “zigzags” would receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Mr Highway discussed with the group that it should be recognised the improvements that Traffic Orders have made to improve parking in the town. He thanked the Inspector and his CSOs for their work.

Inspector Thomas discussed the Thursday night road closure and wished to consult with the group as to whether or not the road closure was still required.

The group discussed whether or not to stop the road closure and all agreed that there was concern over stopping it fully in case there is a re-occurrence of cruisers and they may need to close it again.

Cllr. Dix and Cllr. James both expressed concerns in relation to ending the road closure and questioned whether it could be reinstated easily if the problem of car cruisers started again. Inspector Thomas noted that the Traffic Regulation Order is now in place, which means that the closures can commence again immediately if required. The situation will be monitored if the road closure ceases and will be reinstated if problems arise.

The group were advised that there is a meeting on the 14th April at 2pm in Blackwood Police Station where a number of people have been invited including Bob Campbell from Traffic Management, this matter will be discussed at that meeting.

5. UPDATE ON FOOTPATH FROM BLACKWOOD GATE RETAIL PARK

Mr Dallimore updated the group on the steps to the Blackwood Gate Retail Park and confirmed that the works are due to start on the 23rd March 2015 and will take approximately 5 weeks to complete.

There will be new concrete kerbs and galvanised painted handrails installed and a red brick wall built. The group were advised that there will be some disturbance but this will be kept as minimal as possible.

The Chair thanked Mr Dallimore for the update and also those involved in the project.

6. UPDATE ON FLORAL PROVISION FROM TOWN COUNCIL

It was agreed to continue with floral baskets throughout the town. The Town Council is waiting to receive revised figures from Parks Services in relation to the costs of using plastic baskets instead of the wired baskets and the costs of watering the plants.

The Group agreed that once the revised figures were received it would be discussed further.

7. BUSINESS REPORT – BLACKWOOD 2014

Mr Highway presented the report to the group and provided an overview on how the town has performed during 2014. Mr Highway wished to thank Mr Hudson and his team for the events staged in the town. Football figures were discussed and all agreed that there has been a large increase since the Maxime Cinema opened in July.

The Chair confirmed that there is a change in the town since the cinema and will see more changes once Costa coffee opens giving more of a family feel to the town. The Chair thanked Mr Highway, Mr Wilcox and Mr Dallimore for all of their hard work.

8. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS ANALYSIS REPORT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group and discussed how the voucher scheme was a success for both retailers and the public.

The group were advised that throughout the five towns 90 offers were made and hopefully this will increase in future. Looking through the survey carried out, 91% of retailers stated that they would consider taking part in a future scheme.

From the feedback provided by the public, it is apparent that the key to a retailer's voucher being used was in the strength of the offer. Members were advised of comments listed in the appendix of the report.

Mr Highway and Mr Wilcox were thanked for the report and all their hard work.

9. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PAST & PRESENT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group and advised that this new initiative aims to re-connect people with their local town centre.

This new scheme was discussed with the group and members were asked if they had any old photographs, which could be used in a library exhibition.

The initiative will include an exhibition of archive photos held at the library in each town centre, as part of this there will be a competition where people will have the opportunity to win two £50 "Love to Shopping" vouchers. On the entry form people will be asked to complete the sentence – "I choose the high street because..." It is hoped to use some of these sentences in the future to further promote the town centres.

10. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT FEBRUARY 2015

Mr Highway confirmed that with regards to the former Poundstretchers building the Council is in talks with the agent to establish another use for the site as Poundstretchers do not wish to return to the site.

The group discussed the toilet block and Mr Dallimore confirmed that there is no further news other than the area is being monitored to ensure safety and tidiness.

Mr Highway informed the group that the issue of rat problem at ASDA has been resolved and the ASDA Manager wished to pass his gratitude to Mr Lyndon Ross and his team for dealing with the issue.

Mr Highway confirmed that antisocial behaviour in the bus station is being monitored and the café owner is working with the Council. The Chair confirmed action will be taken and hopefully we can continue to work well with the café owner.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the damaged artwork railings have been repaired by NCS and has been paid for by Urban Renewal budgets.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed 14:52 p.m.

CHAIR