



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE INNOVATION CENTRE, TREDOMEN ON
WEDNESDAY, 17TH JANUARY 2007 AT 2.30 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.Carter - Chairman
Councillor Mrs D.Price - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

D.T. Davies and A.G. Higgs

Together with:

Messrs I. Hill, P. Collins and M. Barry (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), Mr J. Cooper (Local Resident), Messrs I. Hughes and L. Harding (Bargoed Town Council) and Inspector Doidge (Gwent Police).

B. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), B. Morgan (Project Officer- Urban Renewal), L. O'Connor (Project Officer, Heads of the Valleys Initiative), I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), A.Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), R. Murphy (Communities First Co-ordinator), J. Elliot (Research Officer), D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K.V. Reynolds and H.A. Andrews, D. Collins (Bargoed Town Council), D. Churchward (Principal Engineer) and J. Ridgewell (Business Manager – Development Parks).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the start of the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 4TH OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 4th October 2006 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Pengam Lights (Minute no 7)

Mr Campbell reported that although officers had prepared sketches of possible highway improvements in the vicinity of Pengam lights, the benefits of investing in this area must be considered in the light of the new Angel Way Relief Road.

Members of the Group expressed concern at the delay in progressing this issue and it was agreed that a Special Bargoed Town Centre Management Group be convened with local members from Bargoed, Pengam and Gilfach and appropriate officers to discuss the item in more detail. Consideration also be given to including the item on the Town Centre Improvement Group Audit.

4. Use of Old Court Building, Hanbury Road (Minute no 13)

Inspector Doidge reported that following discussion with his estates department they had informed him that following recent investment works to the first floor the building was now fully operational and would definitely remain within the ownership of the Police.

5. MINUTES - 6TH NOVEMBER 2006

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 6th November 2006 were received and noted.

Mr Morgan (Project Officer – Urban Renewal) reported that he expected the work at 45 Hanbury Road to commence in the next few weeks and completed by the end of the financial year.

6. PRESENTATION – ANGEL WAY

Mr John Coles, Liaison Coordinator for Hochtief Griffiths, was attending the meeting to give a presentation on Angel Way. He explained that he would be attending the Management Group meeting on a regular basis to keep members fully informed of progress. The funding for the scheme is provided by WAG/DEIN and designed and project managed by Capita Symonds. Mr Coles explained the programme of works and showed illustrated pictures of the new structures of the scheme. Mr Coles explained that community liaison will be very important throughout the scheme and a number of initiatives to involve and inform the local residents had already been planned e.g.

- A customer care database – where complaints or complements can be sent.
- An information letter drop.
- A public exhibition
- An information centre in the High Street
- School Visits – to include Health and Safety issues
- An information web site.

Finally Mr Coles reported that the completion date for all works is set as 3rd May 2009.

Mr Hill asked if the presentation could be given give to the Bargoed Chamber of Trade and Mr Coles confirmed that he would be pleased to attend a meeting with them. The Chairman thanked Mr Coles for attending and giving the informative presentation. He would look forward to him attending future meetings of the Management Group to give further progress reports.

7. PRESENTATION – DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Mr Matt White was attending the meeting to give a presentation on Digital Storytelling. Mr White explained that a digital story is a small filmed 'snippet' of a person's life which is made and narrated by that person. It can be about any subject and can be light hearted or sad. It is sometimes a voice from the past which is looking forward. A number of examples were played to the Management Group and Mr White explained that approximately 50 would shortly be made from a wide age range of people. They will be brief and refer to a local area in Bargoed. It is then envisaged that plaques will be erected at a number of locations around Bargoed giving a telephone number/web address for members of the public to obtain a digital story relating to that location. The Chairman thanked Mr White for attending the meeting and wished the project every success.

8. PRESENTATION – GREENER TIDY BUSINESS CAMPAIGN

Messrs Rhodri Lloyd and Lyndon Ross were attending the meeting to outline new initiatives to cleanse the town of Bargoed and to explain how the new environmental law can be enforced.

Mr Lloyd gave a presentation on a Cleaner and Greener Bargoed which is to engage more pride in our community and encourage ownership of our streets and open spaces. He referred to what has been done and what measures still need to be progressed. The following initiatives were outlined for Bargoed:-

- To spruce up the recycling facility in the South Car Park.
- To clean up a particularly bad area of the town centre (off High Street).
- To arrange a 'clearing the backs of shops amnesty'.
- To sign up businesses to a Fast Food Code of Practice.
- To tie in with Tidy Wales Week in June ('The Big Sweep'- where there will be a lot of activity to clean the town centre).

Mr Ross then referred to the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 which provides local authorities with new powers to discourage litter problems. It will reinforce the message that environmental crime will not be tolerated. He explained the new powers for dealing with litter, Litter Clearing Notices (which will replace litter control areas) and the changes to Street Litter Control Notices (including Fixed Penalty Notices).

A question was asked regarding the problems of identifying litter if there were several Takeaways in a street. Mr Ross replied that morally the person dropping the litter should be liable. The new powers will however make it an offence to drop litter at any location. Work is currently being done on speaking to food takeaways to encourage them to urge their clients not to drop litter. Another concern was expressed regarding the apparent lack of the mechanical sweeper used on the pavements. Mr Lloyd indicated that he would check on the schedule for the sweeper and if necessary the matter could be included on the Town Centre Audit. A question was raised on action taken when litter is thrown into private gardens. Mr Ross responded that his section would be willing to take evidence statements from members of the public and then issue a warning to the offender. Another problem area (endorsed by the Chamber of Trade) was the litter in the gardens at the back of certain retail premises in the town centre. Mr Ross responded that 'Litter Clearing Notices' may help resolve this issue. A letter, notice, fixed penalty and prosecution will be used as necessary. The banking near the train station was also reported as a bad litter area although it was noted that the area is in the ownership of network rail and is therefore primarily their responsibility.

The Chairman thanked Messrs Lloyd and Ross for attending the meeting.

9. BARGOED CONSULTANTS BRIEF

Mr Morgan reported that negotiations to purchase properties at Hanbury Road were progressing well. He expected that four properties would be acquired by the end of the financial year and that negotiations to purchase the other properties were progressing. If good progress continues it is expected to be on site in the summer months. Consultants will be preparing a design brief which will be given to the developer. Consultants will be interviewed on 26th February 2007 and the matter then progressed with input from the Management Group.

10. BARGOED – HEADS OF THE VALLEY FUNDING

Mr Highway outlined a report giving details on a successful bid of £98,000 which had been awarded from the Heads of the Valley Programme to promote Bargoed.

Members congratulated Mr Highway on securing the funding and noted the details in the report.

Miss O'Connor also reported on a programme of projects which were possible through Heads of the Valleys funding. It was agreed that the Head of the Valleys Programme Update be circulated to all members of the Group together with the list of agreed projects.

11. BARGOED RETAILING JOBS

Mr Highway circulated a report illustrating the number of retailing jobs gained and lost during 2006. The report illustrated that 33 jobs had been lost and 48 created.

The Management Group noted the report.

12. LICENSING REPORT

It was noted that following representation to the Licensing and Appeals Committee, an application for extension of licensing hours from the Rahjipoor Restaurant and Take Away had been refused.

13. BARGOED PUBLIC CONVENIENCE CHANGES

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in this item as he is a member of Cabinet. (the committee that will eventually determine the proposals). He took no part in the discussions.

A recent report to a Scrutiny Committee proposed changes to the opening hours of Bargoed public conveniences. The report proposed that an attendant would only be present for 6 hours between the times of 8.00am-6.00pm – (the toilets would be still opened during the remainder of the time, but unmanned). Members of the Group were requested to give comments on the proposal and these would be considered when the report would be considered by Cabinet. The Group noted the change in opening hours and expressed their concerns with the proposed reduction in hours and loss of manned attendance. However, it was noted that, if there was to be a change in the opening hours 8.00am to 6.00pm was preferred. It was also endorsed that the toilets be manned in the afternoon from 12.00pm to 6.00pm, particularly in the early evening to prevent people congregating and vandalism. Members also suggested that consideration be given to appointing a private company to run the toilets and retain any revenue.

14. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The Environmental Audit for November 2006 was received and noted.

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.