



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE ON
WEDNESDAY, 11TH APRIL 2007 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D.T. Davies, A.G. Higgs and E.K. Griffiths

Together with:

Messrs I. Hill, D. Collins and R. Perry (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), Mr J. Cooper (Local Resident), Messrs I. Hughes, L. Harding and H. Farrant (Bargoed Town Council) and PC M. Brown (Gwent Police).

J. Coles (Hochtief Griffiths) and S. Slocombe (DEIN).

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), D. Churchward (Network Management Engineer), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), B. Morgan (Project Officer- Urban Renewal) and D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K.V. Reynolds, P. Collins (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), R. Tanner (Strategic Planning and Urban Renewal Manager) A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), R. Murphy (Communities First Co-ordinator), J. Elliot (Research Officer) and Inspector Doidge (Gwent Police).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 17TH JANUARY 2007

Subject to the amendment that D. Collins represented the Chamber of Trade the minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 17th January 2007 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Greener Tidy Business Campaign (Minute no 8)

It was noted that there was still a problem with dog fouling in the town centre and in particular at Spar Square opposite the Police Station. Mr MacVicar indicated that he would include this problem on the Town Centre Improvement Audit.

4. MINUTES - 1ST MARCH 2007

Subject to the amendment that D. Collins represented the Chamber of Trade the minutes of the special Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 1st March 2007 were received and noted.

5. PRESENTATION – The Greater Bargoed Regeneration Scheme

Mr John Coles, Liaison Co-ordinator for Hochtief Griffiths, was attending the meeting to give a progress report on the project. Mr Coles reported that since he last attended the Management Group and exhibitions had now been set up in the library, Bargoed and the Drill Hall, Aberbargoed. Over 7,000 letters had been prepared for delivery to local residents and a brochure is currently being developed. In conjunction with road safety officers, contact has been made with local schools to talk about safety issues and also to encourage school children to become involved in environmental projects. A venue for a 'drop-in' information centre has yet to be agreed but should be identified in the next few weeks.

The company have registered for the Considerate Constructors scheme and the site offices have been established off Pengam Road with a present staff of approximately 40.

Works undertaken to date mainly consist of site clearance, storm water drainage, and preparation works for piling and temporary bridges. Environmental issues are being addressed and currently reptiles are being translocated in accordance environmental agency guidelines.

A programme of works to July will include completion of environment mitigation works, continuation of piling and relocation of the network rail signal.

During discussion the following points were raised with Mr Coles and Mr Churchward.

- Will there be vehicle weight restrictions on the Commercial Street link road and traffic restrictions on other streets in the Aberbargoed area affected by increased traffic flows. Mr Churchward replied that it was unlikely that a weight restriction order would be introduced on a new length of highway. However, he suggested there is likely to be a review of traffic regulation orders in the area following the development when traffic patterns will need to be established prior to any restrictions being introduced.
- Will there be a pedestrian way across the new viaduct from Aberbargoed to Bargoed? Mr Churchward confirmed that a footway would be available from Aberbargoed to Bargoed across the new viaduct.

A member raised a concern regarding security on the construction site and reported that he had seen children and motorcycles on the construction site recently. Mr Coles emphasised that health and safety is very important to the developer and that he would discuss the matter with the appropriate officer. Mr Churchward also indicated that he would agenda the concern at his weekly meeting with the contractor. Concern was also expressed at the lack of progress on the 'drop in' centre for the public to visit for information.

Mr Coles responded that a number of premises had been considered but due to problems such as the standard of the building they had been discounted. He considered that a quality venue would be needed to publicise the whole of Bargoed Regeneration (and not just Angel Way).

The delay in producing the brochure was also discussed and Mr Coles reported that he had met with an officer from the Council's Business Development Unit who would assist in providing images for their brochure.

The importance of the contractor using local businesses was also discussed and Mr Coles indicated that this would always be investigated. Sponsorship of local events and local community groups and any equipment assistance would always be considered. Mr Coles confirmed that Hochtief Griffiths had made a contribution to the Big Bed event.

Finally it was suggested that when appropriate the Management Group visit the construction site to view progress.

6. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Mr Morgan, Project Officer – Urban Renewal, reported that the acquisitions of properties in preparation for the retail development proposals were progressing well. Five properties had been targeted for acquisition during the last financial year and negotiations on the remainder are on going. Short-term leases will be available on the purchased properties and a compulsory purchase order is in place if needed.

A member raised a concern regarding the untidy condition at the rear of the premises. Mr Morgan replied that unfortunately the council had inherited the problem with the acquisitions but that he would speak to the Property Services department about the concern.

A question was raised on the possible locations for relocation of the library and Mr Morgan replied that a structural survey was currently being undertaken by an independent Valuer on one possible building and the results would be known shortly.

7. BARGOED VIRTUAL STREET SCENE

Mr MacVicar gave a presentation on Bargoed Virtual Street Scene. He explained that the proposal is to remove the barriers of distance and put Bargoed Town Centre on the World Wide Web in order to be in a strong position when competing in the global market. The web page will create a virtual town street scene with the ability to access each individual shop and view any special offers. There are obvious benefits to the scheme ie. the number of potential customers. The scheme would be the first in Wales and a possible bid could be made to the Heads of the Valley or Convergence Fund. Mr Collins (Chamber of Trade) reported that a presentation had been made to his organisation and had received a very favourable response. 30 businesses have pledged their support and a number of positive responses had been received. Mr MacVicar welcomed the support but reminded the group that a number of issues still needed to be addressed (a robust bid would be needed to secure the £250,000 cost of the scheme and also investigations into the technology needed).

8. HEADS OF THE VALLEYS FUNDING

Copies of a spreadsheet, illustrating funding to Bargoed Town Centre Projects 2007-2010, was circulated at the meeting. The total amount allocated to 2010 is £98,000 and individual allowances were discussed. It was confirmed that there is a possibility of a carry over if the money is not spent in a particular year.

The Management Group noted the report.

9. UPDATE ON 45 HANBURY ROAD

Mr Morgan gave an update on the environmental improvements for 45 Hanbury Road. He apologised for the delay in progressing this scheme and reported that the scheme will be put out to tender on the 25th April and the work is expected to take approximately 6 weeks. Following a concern on litter at this location, he indicated that any rubbish would be cleared as soon as possible.

10. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The Environmental Audit for March 2007 was received and noted.

The following items were discussed: -

Page 4 Motif Bedding Display – Concern raised at bedding plants being removed

Page 5 Station Road – Concern regarding condition of banking on railway side opposite garage (litter and condition of trees after pruning)

Page 5 Taxi Company Operators Licence – update needed on possible taxi company operating without necessary approval

Page 6 Dirty Doorways – Concern expressed on the appearance of area near Woolworths alleyway – litter culprit may be from upstairs flat – could prosecution of offender be considered.

Page 6 Mechanical Sweeper – further details required on mechanical sweeper rota within the town centre.

Page 8 Power Wash Wall (High Street) Concern expressed that the area is still very dirty.

Page 8 Broken Window – High Street - Noted that the window is now boarded up and that perhaps a mural could be considered.

Mr MacVicar indicated that he would forward the concerns and comments to the appropriate officers and also the Town Centre Improvement Group would be meeting shortly to discuss progress on all issues included on the Environmental Audit.

The meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.
