



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

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

PRESENT:

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

Councillor:

A.G. Higgs.

Together with:

Messrs I. Hill and P. Collins and Ms J. Thomas (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), Mr and Mrs Cooper (Local Residents), Messrs I. Hughes and H. Farrant (Bargoed Town Council) and J. Coles (Hochtief Griffiths).

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), R. Tanner (Strategic Planning & Urban Renewal Manager) A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) D. Churchward (Network Management Engineer), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), J. Ridgewell (Business Manager – Development Parks) S. Beacham (Senior Parks Officer), S. Trew (Senior Horticultural Liaison Officer), R. Lloyd (Special Projects Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from B. Morgan (Project Officer- Urban Renewal) R. Murphy (Communities First Co-ordinator), J. Elliot (Research Officer), D. Collins (Bargoed Chamber of Trade) and K. Harvey (Bargoed Town Council).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 11TH APRIL 2007

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 11th April 2007 were received and noted.

3. PRESENTATION – ANGEL WAY AND BARGOED REGENERATION

Mr John Coles, Liaison Co-ordinator for Hochtief Griffiths, was attending the meeting to give a progress report on the project to date and outline the anticipated programme of works for the next three months. The progress to date had included site clearance, extensive highway drainage and road works, temporary bridges constructed over the railway (on the 4-6th July) and the majority of the piling works. An information centre had been established at 28 Hanbury Road (opening times: Tuesday Thursday and Friday 11-3pm), whilst a brochure and newsletter is presently being printed. Future works planned for the next few months will include further road construction, commencement of the major structures, drainage works to the retail development plateau and preparation for more earthworks.

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

- A scheme signboard had been wrongly aligned when entering Gilfach- it was confirmed that this will shortly be addressed.
- Will artwork feature on the new roundabouts? – Mr Churchward confirmed that he would be meeting a consultant to discuss this matter.
- Could major events in the scheme be advertised for spectators? (E.g. the new rail bridge had attracted a lot of spectators)
- The response was that unfortunately many of the major works will be completed in the nighttime and large numbers of spectators could be a safety problem on the site.

Mr Churchward informed the meeting that the northern end of the town would be shut for a long period when the existing bridge is removed and the new road works are completed in this area. However, the new cross-valley link road to Aberbargoed would be open before these works were commenced. Finally it was agreed that the Chamber of Trade would be kept informed of proposals so that they would be aware of any future traffic disruptions in the town centre.

The Chairman thanked Mr Coles and Mr Churchward for the presentation.

4. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Mr Tanner, Strategic Planning & Urban Renewal Manager outlined details of a draft report that will be presented to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet later in the month and would be subject to change. The report gave details of a development brief to be issued to prospective developers of the Bargoed 'Plateau' site. The brief sets out the requirements for the site, including which types of land uses are essential and which are desirable and contained an illustrative layout demonstrating how the requirements could be achieved. There is a requirement for the commercial elements of the scheme to include a large anchor foodstore, a range of unit shops and possibly a multiplex cinema. It is also suggested that cafes, pub/restaurant facilities overlooking the country park would be desirable, as would residential apartments at the southern entrance to the site. Mr Tanner explained that an amended report (without any financial speculations) would be presented to Cabinet at the end of the month and if endorsed will be marketed with an aim to select a developer by October. Details of the visual picture were explained with a light modern frontage overlooking the valley to project the best of the past but with a new modern image. A question was asked about new sculptures for the town centre and Mr Tanner responded that the public would be consulted on the possible brief – the sculptures would possibly acknowledge the past but also be attractive to modern investors. A further question was raised on car parking and if there would be a charge at the new development. Mr Tanner responded that there would probably be a charge for car parking as it would deter commuters using the spaces for the whole day and would make spaces available for short term parking shoppers. These changes would however be reported to the appropriate Scrutiny committee and Cabinet. Finally Mr Tanner reported that an exhibition will be held on the retail development and also to illustrate proposals for the new library.

He also confirmed that he would be willing to attend a future meeting of the Bargoed Chamber of Trade to outline details of the new development.

Members of the Management Group endorsed the Retail Development proposal.

5. HEADS OF THE VALLEYS FUNDING

Mr Highway, Town Centre Development Manager introduced a report on the proposals for Heads of the Valleys funding available to the Bargoed Chamber of Trade. The Bargoed Chamber of Trade were awarded £7,000 over three years from the Heads of the Valley programme to support traders within town centres and the report identifies areas where finance is available. A number of ideas for projects had been agreed and were listed within the report. These will be costed, prioritised and progressed during the next few months.

The Management Group endorsed the proposed areas of funding.

6. THE BIG SWEEP

Rhodri Lloyd, Special Project Officer, was attending the meeting to give an update on the recent 'Big Sweep' initiative in Bargoed. Mr Lloyd reported that although the weather was particularly bad the event was a great success and thanked the Chamber of Trade for their involvement. The event was also supported by a number of agencies and was an excellent example of partnership working. Approximately 50 people were involved and over 3 tons of waste removed from the town centre. There will also be a number of future initiatives such as knotweed control and "Pride in the Alley". A number of vacuum systems are presently being purchased to clean up the cigarette ends outside a number of premises. The concerns associated with litter in all areas were discussed and it was agreed that the public should be educated not to drop litter. If this was not successful and there was continuing dropping of litter then it would be followed by enforcement (with publicity).

7. UPDATE ON ST GWLADYS GARDENS/BUS STATION AT BARGOED SQUARE

Mr Ridgewell, Business Manager – Development Parks, reported on the disappointment of the recent landscaping works at St Gwladys Gardens. The grass cutting on the banking had only been cut once this year although another cut was programmed this morning and cuts should be on a more regular basis in the future. The area near the Bus Station is on target for planting and should be completed in the near future to hopefully give a good display for the rest of summer. The hanging baskets however have been a huge disappointment. The extremely bad weather and the timing of erecting the baskets (they were the last in the county borough) may account for their poor appearance. Remedial measures have been agreed and the baskets will be tidied up and given an extra feed. Finally Mr Ridgewell agreed that they were possibly the worst he had seen and that he would not expect a financial contribution from the Town Council towards them. The Town Council reported that they were aware and embarrassed by the situation and that a working group are meeting next Wednesday to discuss the floral displays. It was noted that the situation was unfortunate as displays had been excellent in previous years.

The Chairman announced that Mr Ridgewell would shortly be retiring and best wishes were conveyed to him for the future.

8. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The Environmental Audit for May 2007 was received and noted.

The following items were discussed: -

Page 4 Taxi Company Operators Licence – Noted that the officer responsible for investigating this would shortly be returning to work.

Page 5 Christmas Lights- Bargoed – Bargoed Town Council had partly financed work to upgrade the lighting in preparation of the Christmas lights Thanks recorded to D. Denner.

Page 8 Weed treatments – Noted that further weed treatments will be completed over the next few weeks.

The meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.
