



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK,
ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

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

Councillor:

D.T. Davies

Together with:

Messrs. I. Hill, D. Collins and P. Collins (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), Mr. Cooper (Local Resident), K. Halvey (Bargoed Town Council), L. Tams (Clerk – Bargoed Town Council).

J. Coles (Hochtief Griffiths) and G. Overs and N. Vowles (Valuation Office Agency)

N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), R. Tanner (Strategic Planning & Urban Renewal), I.G. MacVicar (Business Development Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) R. Mathews (Communications Manager), D. Churchward (Network Management Engineer), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), R. Murphy (Communities First), B. Morgan (Project Officer – Urban Renewal), G. Evans (Business Development Manager – Libraries), J. Elliott (Policy Officer), B. Green (Events Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside), Councillors H.A. Andrews and A. Higgs and Mr L. Harding (Bargoed Town Council).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 16TH APRIL 2008

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 16th April 2008 were received and noted.

Car Parking (minute no 11)

A local member considered that it was the independent local traders who had requested that the Police and Traffic Wardens offer more discretion when dealing with parking in the town centre and that Mr Tanner had given the reply to the concerns.

3. PRESENTATION FROM THE VALUATION OFFICE

Mr. Highway reported that the Bargoed local traders were facing difficult trading conditions because of the disruption from regeneration works in the town centre. He had therefore invited Mr Overs from the Valuation Office to the meeting to explain the appeal procedure to the traders.

Mr. Overs explained that any appeal would be based on the effect of the commercial building rateable value (which is valued on a reasonable rental for the property) and not on a compensation for loss of income.

He explained that he had requested all traders to provide as much information on trade figures for the last year and had to date received 7 completed application forms.

There had been concerns regarding the complexity of the forms but Mr. Overs indicated that he or his staff would be available to help any trader complete the form.

Following discussion Mr. Overs indicated that he was prepared to serve an interim notice of appeal for a 12% reduction subject to evidence. Mr Highway indicated that this would be reported to a meeting of the Chamber of Trade on Monday, 17th November which Mr. Overs was invited to attend and if not able to a decision would be conveyed to him.

Mr Highway thanked Mr. Overs on behalf of all the traders for all his assistance in this matter.

4. HARDSHIP RELIEF – BUSINESS RATES

Mrs. Nicole Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance) was attending the meeting to explain the process for Hardship Relief on Business rates.

Mrs. Scammell reported that the authority could in exceptional circumstances grant business rate relief due to hardship.

A report circulated outlined the criteria for the relief to be granted and also gave details of a proposal to support hardship relief for the Bargoed Traders in Upper High Street, Hanbury Road and High Street.

The support would be:-

- a) deferral of business rates for 2008/09 for up to 1 year.
- b) a reduction in business rates of 10% proposed if the trader can produce evidence of a reduction in turnover by more than 5% using the financial year prior to June 2008 compared to the financial year after June 2008.

It was confirmed that this relief is separate and not conditional on receiving a reduction from the Valuation Office.

In response to questions Mrs Scammell confirmed that VAT returns would be accepted in place of statement of Accounts as evidence and that also the local authority may review the situation on an annual basis as regeneration work was expected to disrupt the town centre for a number of years.

5. 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 few months.

Despite poor weather conditions during August September and October the work had remained on schedule.

A power point presentation illustrating the progress to date at various locations was shown.

The Bristol Terrace link is scheduled to open in early 2009 and the retail development plateau and Pengam Road roundabout scheduled for completion in Spring 2009.

A question was raised on the official opening and Mr. Churchward responded that this is presently being considered and would possibly be in March/April.

In response to another question it was reported that consultants are currently working on a document to give clear indications of future work timescales.

6. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Mr. Tanner reported that there is good progress on the retail development proposal. Two working groups (Property and Legal and Engineering) have been set up and regular meetings are being held with Simons.

The Town Centre Action Plan is currently out to consultation.

A concern was raised on the poor visual condition of the 12 properties in Hanbury Road.

A concern was also raised on the problems associated with Christmas lighting and it was suggested that additional cabling be put in place during the future regeneration works for the future.

7. UPDATE ON THE RELOCATION OF BARGOED LIBRARY

Gareth Evans, Business Development Manager – Libraries, was attending the meeting to discuss the library arrangements at Bargoed.

Mr. Evans reported that the temporary relocation of the library to St. Gwladys Church Hall was completed on 22nd October. The temporary building is smaller than the previous and compromises (such as the family history provision being located to the Winding House) needed to be made.

Mr. Evans was however aware that concerns had been raised on the closure of the library during the lunch hour and had received 7 written complaints from the public. The reason for this decision was to enable the same staff to cover the winding house family history provision.

Mr. Evans reported however that he would attempt to address the concerns and if a solution can be found would notify members of the Group.

It was reported that there is no notice on the old library building to inform the public of the relocation and Gareth indicated that this has been noted.

The arrangements for a permanent location at Hanbury Road Baptist Chapel were progressing with Cadw as it is a Grade II listed building. Planning permission will be submitted next spring

and it is hoped that a Customer First facility would also be incorporated in the building.

8. BARGOED EVENTS

Barbara Green (Events Officer – Bargoed) was attending the meeting for this item. Barbara reported that the recent Big Screening of Mamma Mia had been very successful with over 500 people attending and she gave thanks to the volunteer stewards without whom the event could not have taken place.

A few smaller events had been held recently in the town centre including the Big Bag when a plastic bag amnesty was held and a bag for life given to shoppers.

A Christmas event will be held on Saturday, 20th December culminating in a Santa parade and fireworks.

The Chairman thanked Barbara for all her work in arranging the events.

9. ONE WAY PROPOSAL FOR HANBURY ROAD / HIGH STREET

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager, was attending the meeting for this item. He outlined the report attached to the agenda and explained that the proposal was part of the regeneration for the town centre of Bargoed.

He explained the proposals suggested and reported that they would be subject to wide consultation. The proposals are in preparation for very different traffic flows to the present time.

A number of concerns were expressed at the proposals, in particular the proposed two way road from Wood Street to Hanbury Square as this would be the nearest exit to travel south from a number of streets and may become very congested.

10. AMENDMENTS TO CAR PARKING CHARGES IN BARGOED TOWN CENTRE

The Group received a report on amendments to car parking charges which was agreed by Cabinet on 28th October and was presented to the Group for information.

It had been agreed by Cabinet to introduce a 2 hour free parking period in the existing pay and display Emporium and the St. Gwladys Road car park as an incentive to encourage shoppers to Bargoed during the regeneration works as the council acknowledges the particular circumstances affecting Bargoed Town at the present time.

It is intended that the proposal will be implemented by the end of November and will be in place for six months.

A local member expressed concern that the free parking for shoppers should be scrutinised as these parking spaces may be taken by long stay parkers returning to the space after the two hours and re parking.

11. INTERIM PARKING STRATEGY – BARGOED TOWN CENTRE

The report outlined proposals for additional or replacement parking in Bargoed town centre during redevelopment works. There are particular problems in the south of the town because of the development of the retail plateau. A series of measures are therefore proposed and listed in the report for consideration.

Some of the proposals would be permanent but the majority would be temporary measures.

The planning applications for all sites will be submitted in the next few weeks.

It was reported that a review of all parking spaces would be carried out when the regeneration of the town is complete.

The Management Group endorsed the proposals for interim parking.

12. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

Rosemary Mathews, Communications Manager, was attending the meeting for this item and circulated two leaflets for consideration. It is proposed that two newsletters would be issued before Christmas. The first to be an information sheet which will inform traders and local residents about a forthcoming newsletter and contents. The following edition will then be issued in early December with a glossy Bargoed Big Idea branding and distributed more widely.

Further newsletters will be distributed quarterly with additional editions produced as and when required.

Other communication methods will of course supplement the information reported in the newsletters (e.g. website, media, exhibitions).

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

13. Environmental Audit

The Environmental Audit for September 2008 was received and noted.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 28th January 2009.

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm.