



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2009 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs D. Price – Vice Chair Presiding

Councillors:

H. A. Andrews, D. T. Davies, A. G. Higgs.

Councillor R. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside.

Together with:

P. Collins , D. Collins and I. Hill (Bargoed Chamber of Trade).
Town Councillors L. Harding and Ms K. Halvey.

I. MacVicar (Business Development Manager), R. Tanner (Strategic Planner and Urban Renewal Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), D. Whetter (Senior Engineer), M. Lloyd (Design & Construction Manager), B. Green (Event Officer), L. Hughes (Community First Co-ordinator), and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Carter and K. V. Reynolds, B. Morgan (Project Officer – Urban Renewal) L. Evans (Highways Infrastructure Manager) and J. Elliott (Policy Officer).

It was reported that Bryan Morgan was away from work because of illness. It was agreed that best wishes for a speedy recovery be sent to him from the Management Group.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES - 15TH JULY 2009

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 15th July 2009 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

3. Pengam Lights (Minute No 3, Page 2)

Clive Campbell reported that the legal process for highway changes at this location had concluded and that any objections would now be reviewed. (No objections had been received from the Police). A final report would be prepared and available in 2/3 weeks time.

4. Cardboard Collection (Minute no 5, Page 2)

It was noted that the Chamber of Trade were to meet with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

5. Bargoed Town Centre Action Plan (Minute no 9, Page 3)

Mr Tanner reported that it is proposed that the business quarter of the town should be located in the north where there will be excellent transport links. A bid for convergence funding has also been made to convert the former Woolworths building to offices. A concern was raised again that the old library clock had disappeared with the recent demolition works despite a request to preserve it from the Town Council (who had originally purchased the clock) and that the matter should be investigated.

It was suggested that the matter be investigated by officers involved in the contract to demolish the building and then when the facts are established, compensation action may be appropriate from the Town Council.

6. Update on Park and Ride and Bus Station (Minute no 10, Page 10)

Work progressing well and local ward members to be kept informed of the work. A meeting was requested with the local ward members and the Chamber of Trade to look at the designs. A request for daffodils to be planted as part of the landscaping is currently being considered by the Parks Department.

7. CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Ms Barbara Green (Events Officer) was attending the meeting for this item. A report on the forthcoming Bargoed Victorian Christmas Event on the 19th December had been circulated with the agenda and Barbara reported that the event is being financed through Heads of the Valley funding. It is hoped that the retailers would participate and dress their window in a Victorian theme (with a prize for the best). It was agreed that a costing be sourced to consider appointing a window dresser to advise the retailers. It was agreed that early, good and clear publicity would be essential for the event to be a success.

In response to a question raised, a budget of £14k would be available to finance the whole event.

Finally Barbara requested that any details of events planned for the Greater Bargoed area could be forwarded to her and then included in the Winter Calendar leaflets.

A concern was raised on the lack of communication regarding future Heads of the Valley funding (which included the Events Officer post where funding may discontinue at the end of March) and the difficulty in maintaining the good work already established.

8. BARGOED LIBRARY UPDATE

Mr Tanner reported that although planning permission had been granted for the library, permission would now be sought for the signage of the building. Building consent from Cadw is also still awaited.

The proposals for a café viewing area overlooking the country park were discussed and a report will shortly be prepared outlining the possible options for the catering contact.

Concern was expressed on the condition of the adjoining buildings and if the owners could be encouraged to renovate their premises.

Roger responded that unfortunately statutory powers are only available to the council if the building were not in a safe condition.

Thanks were recorded to all the officers involved in the new library project.

9. ONE WAY SYSTEM AT HANBURY ROAD

Mr Campbell reported that the one way system in the town centre had now been in place for a few weeks and although there had been a few minor issues at the start, the new road scheme seemed to be going well. Thanks were recorded to the Police for their assistance during the change.

The new scheme will be reviewed in conjunction with the new Angel Way roadway in approximately six months when the new traffic patterns have settled.

In response to a question on possible need of additional road signs, Clive explained that the present signage is an interim measure and any need for more will be reviewed in time.

A member expressed concern regarding the one way system near the former Woolworths store near Hanbury Road as motorists are unaware that the one way system extends this far.

A concern was also expressed regarding the monitoring of the speed along Angel Way and Clive reported that this was being progressed and that a survey had recently been carried out by the Safety Camera Unit in this area.

10. RETAIL PLATEAU UNIT

Mr Tanner reported that unfortunately there was no news to report on the retail plateau unit. An agreement remains with Simons although in the current financial climate it may be difficult to put a viable financial package together.

It was reported that a temporary car park would be provided near the rugby club and that 148 temporary spaces would also be provided on the retail plateau prior to the Christmas period.

Mr Whetter also reported that a plan is being developed to upgrade the car parks within the town centre.

The Park and Ride car park will be operational from the 19th October and the official opening by the Deputy First Minister scheduled for November 4th.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

11. Town Centre Retail Survey

Mr Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) gave a power point presentation on the results of a recent retailers survey. A total of 150 surveys were sent out and 62 were returned. The results of the survey will be used to indicate how the retailers view the recession, to understand how the retailers perceive their own future and to gauge the potential long- term impact of the recession on the high streets.

A number of questions were asked and the findings/conclusions of the survey were that :-

- All sectors of retail are experiencing a fall in sales.
- Retailers perceive that a number of factors are behind the recession.
- There is some fear over long-term job security.
- Retail is a happy sector to work in.

A question was raised on footfall numbers in relation to shopping trends and Andrew indicated that footfall is not always an indication of spend – it is an important statistic but not a bench mark for spending. The report on jobs lost and gained within the retail sector is probably a better indication marker.

12. Environmental Audit

The Environmental Audit for May 2009 was received and comments made on the following :-

Page 2 Communication of the Changes – suggested that it would now be appropriate for another communication to be circulated.

Page 4 Station Banking - Concern raised regarding the poor chain link fencing around the allotment site and the un kept nature of land at the station banking.

Page 6 – suggested that a bus stop be positioned in the middle of the town centre when the new link is made between High Street and the new Bus Station.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 24th February 2010.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm