



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 20TH JANUARY 2010 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

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

Together with:

Messrs P. Collins and D. Collins (Bargoed Chamber of Trade).
Town Councillors D. Morgan and L. Harding.

I. MacVicar (Business Development Manager), R. Tanner (Strategic Planner and Urban Renewal Manager), B. Morgan (Senior Planner), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), O. Ashton (Heads of Valleys Project Officer), J. Elliott (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. V. Reynolds, Ms K. Halvey (Bargoed Town Council), Mr I. Hill (Bargoed Chamber of Trade) and Mr J. Cooper (Local Resident).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that Mr I. Hill was absent because he was representing the Town Council at a funeral of one of their members. He also reported that Barbara Green has left her position as Events Officer and wished her well in her new job. He welcomed Mr Bryan Morgan back to work.

3. MINUTES - 15TH JULY 2009

The minutes of the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group held on 14th October 2009 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

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

It was noted that no contact had yet been made by either party to arrange a meeting.

5. Bargoed Town Centre (Minute no 5,Page 2)

Mr Tanner reported that it appeared that the local contractors had not been instructed to salvage the clock belonging to the Town Council when demolishing the old library. Mr Tanner suggested that a letter be formally sent to him from the Town Council outlining their concerns in order for him to investigate if a replacement could be forthcoming by other means.

6. Update on Park and Ride and Bus Station (Minute no 6, Page 2)

Mr Campbell reported that landscaping works were on-going but unfortunately bad weather had delayed work.

7. One Way System at Hanbury Road (Minute no 9, Page 3)

Mr Campbell reported that to date he had received very few negative comments from the public or Police regarding the new one way system. The system is however part of a wider scheme and reviewed as part of the whole road network in due course. He also indicated that he would investigate a concern raised regarding difficulties when vehicles are exiting the Emporium car park.

8. UPDATE ON PENGAM LIGHTS

Mr Campbell reported that all work had now been completed at this location. Although a concern was raised regarding cars parking illegally in the evening at this vicinity it was explained that this would be an enforcement matter. There were further problems of vehicles cutting in to turn right. It was suggested that further arrows were required. Other concerns regarding traffic issues at Gilfach Street, traffic speeds at Angel Way, lack of directional signs to Fochriw and Deri and problems at the southern car park slip road were noted.

9. CHRISTMAS EVENTS/VICTORIAN FAYRE UPDATE

Mr Hudson circulated a report on the Greater Bargoed Victorian Lantern Parade and Firework Display. The event was held on 19th December and was this year promoted with a Victorian theme. There were 16 stallholders booked into the event, a Santa's grotto with musical and children's entertainment provided throughout the day. A lantern parade and firework display concluded the celebrations.

It was agreed that participation in the Victorian theme had been disappointing and a member suggested that certain businesses were inappropriate for window dressing in this theme. It was also difficult to dictate to people on how they should dress for the day. A concern was also raised on communication of the event and the need to publicise more widely.

Mr Hudson gave thanks to all the volunteers involved in the event and reminded members that it is essentially a community event for the greater Bargoed area which will be developed each year.

A meeting would shortly be held to feed back comments/suggestions received from the event. In discussing this item a question was raised regarding the future funding for the vacant Events

Officer post. It was reported that a part time event officer had been agreed in principle and officers would continue to meet and plan events using Heads of the Valley funding for 2010/11. The Chairman suggested that Heolddu was now a Community Focus School and that contact be made to involve a representative from them in future events meetings. Concerns were raised regarding the number of stalls although it was pointed out that Bargoed had the same number of stalls that Caerphilly did in 2008. It was also suggested that communications with the participants could be improved and that Aberbargoed should if possible be linked and involved in the events at Bargoed.

10. BARGOED LIBRARY AND CAFE

Mr Tanner referred to the report attached to the agenda regarding Hanbury Road Baptist Chapel café/coffee shop. The report would be discussed at a Cabinet meeting on the 2nd February and he requested comments from the Group in order to report back to that meeting.

He reported that the proposed area would not be large enough to serve meals and therefore a café/coffee shop would be considered and the most suitable way of operating this enterprise would need to be chosen. Three options have been identified:-

Social Enterprise
Local Authority run
Private Enterprise

The report outlines the potential strengths and weaknesses of each of the three options and after detailed evaluation recommends that bids be invited from Social Enterprises to run the coffee shop independently of the council. Should a viable Social Enterprise not be found, the coffee shop to be tendered out to a private enterprise.

A member raised a question regarding timescales for appointing a provider and Mr Tanner explained that the report was being taken to Cabinet prior to the commencement of the building works for a decision in order to proceed with negotiations. Should none of the proposals be viable the building plans work could then be amended.

It was also suggested that Social and Private enterprise might have difficulties in making a profit and that consideration be given to installing vending machines instead.

Mr MacVicar reported that should the Social Enterprise option be chosen discussions would be held with leading advisors within the business development field to look at potential business plans and cash flows.

Should the enterprise not proceed it was suggested that Bargoed Town Council might be interested in occupying the area.

Finally a question was raised on the apparent delay in the signing of the leasing agreement and Mr Tanner assured members that although the project would not be funded in a conventional way, United Welsh are committed to the project and the delay has occurred as minor details still need to be clarified. The lease has however been returned to United Welsh and interviews have begun for tenders with work expected to start at the end of February.

It was noted that during building work a site compound will need to be constructed at the back of the building which will result in a diversion of the main road.

11. RETAIL PLATEAU UPDATE

Mr Tanner reported that negotiations are continuing with Simons and the Welsh Assembly Government during a difficult financial climate. An extension has been granted until the end of

the financial year and because of the confidentiality and the sensitivity of the issue was unable to give any more information at present. The Cabinet member assured members that everyone involved was fully engaged and hoped that a positive announcement would be forthcoming. Mr Tanner reported that a bid for European funding would enhance the town centre with a new bus station and public realm features. Thanks were recorded to Mr Tanner and his staff for all their work in the recent developments.

12. CLEARING OF PAVEMENTS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

Concern was raised at the level of snow clearance in the town centre particularly Spar Square which had been cleared in previous years. A trader commented that unfortunately one fall of snow was in the week before Christmas which would traditionally be one of their busiest periods. Mr Highway reported that similar concerns had been received from other town centres and that he would be putting the item on the Town Centre Audit and he would also be attending a de-brief of the recent bad weather arrangements (which had been convened by the Emergency Planning Section).

Mr MacVicar concluded that concerns and comments had been noted and that the matter would be included on the Town Centre Audit in order for appropriate officers to respond to the concerns.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

13. Jobs Created and Lost in Bargoed Town Centre 2009

Mr Highway outlined a report on the jobs created and lost in Bargoed Town Centre during 2009. He explained that the year had been very difficult for retailers with a number of major stores going into administration. Also in anticipation of the large new shopping development in Cardiff opening, a new local strategy was launched in September called 'Unique Places' which aimed to show that the local town centre had its own individual identity and character. The report gave details of jobs lost and created and then compared results to the previous year. It also gave details of the footfall for the two comparable years.

Members noted the report

14. Environmental Audit

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

Page 3 Demolition of Properties – Hanbury Road – reported that the lettering on the hoarding was deteriorating.

Page 4 Welsh Water Works, High Street - Concern raised regarding the permanent water leak at this location which during the bad weather had caused ice to form on the zebra crossing.

Page 4 – Station Banking, Station Road – the area had still not be cleaned –update needed.

Page 8 – Signage Scheme, Town Centre – has been back to retailers with the design – hope to complete the scheme before end of March.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19th May 2010

The meeting closed at 3.30pm