



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON TUESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2013 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

H. Andrews, D. Carter, A. Higgs, K. James, D. Price, K. Reynolds

Together with:

V. Stephens (Town Councillor), H. Llewellyn (Town Councillor), D. Morgan (Mayor), A. Collis (Town Councillor), V. A. Button (Bargoed Chamber of Trade)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), A. Jones (Complaints Officer), Inspector Sarah Greening (Gwent Police), Paul Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), Stephen Pugh (Corporate Communications Manager), Sean Coomer

Councillor Diane Price took the Chair in the absence of Councillor Tudor Davies. It was agreed that agenda items would be rearranged, as individuals need to leave early

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor D. T. Davies, J. Bennett (Group Manager Business Enterprise Support)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Andrew Highway read out the section on Declarations of interest and there were no declarations made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (5TH JUNE 2013)

Previous minutes were taken as read.

4. RETAIL PROPERTY DIRECTORY

Andrew Highway advised the group that there is an electronic database on the website for Caerphilly Business Portal.

Businesses making enquiries about retail properties can go onto this site to locate suitable premises and find out all of the relevant information with regards to the premises and who is selling it.

5. RETAIL SURVEY

Andrew Highway introduced the power point presentation to the group.

The suggestions from the survey have thrown up some interesting responses and shows that businesses have noticed improvement from previous year.

100 surveys were sent out and this year included some open ended questions designed to get more responses.

The results to each question in the survey were shown on the Powerpoint and explained by the officer. The overall positive feedback shows that the Town Centres provides a good service

Steve Wilcox was thanked for his work preparing the report and processing the survey results.

6. UNIQUE PLACES DISCOUNT CARD

Andrew read through his report and confirmed that the discount card would be available within the 5 towns for two weeks 7th December to 24th December leading up to Christmas.

It was confirmed that there is a considerable amount of interest from retailers already and the team is actively working with businesses to promote the discount card.

The card is available to collect from a number of outlets, which include

- Various town centre Christmas events, Council customer first centres, Council attractions & libraries.

There is also a mobile phone app to enable shoppers to download offers, this app will be advertised on all buses, newspaper adverts and Council's news line paper.

Councillor Carter raised the question would there be free parking during the period the discount card is on offer. Councillor Reynolds confirmed that Christmas free parking would be considered, however there is no proposal at present for permanent free parking. If agreed, free parking at Christmas will be noted on the card.

Allan Dallimore also advised the group that with the opening of Morison's there would also be an additional 400 spaces available for up to 3 hours.

7. MORRISONS UPDATE

Allan Dallimore updated the group on the current position with regards to the opening of the store. This is anticipated to be the 2nd December 2013. Morrison's have yet to confirm how the store will be launched and when.

Councillor Price asked if there was any news as to whether or not the other units will be occupied the same time as the opening of Morrison's.

Andrew confirmed that the agents handling the allocation of the units have confirmed that they are still in talks with retailers and have confirmed that the units will not be opened at the same time.

There was some surprise to this as it would have been thought to be more beneficial to open before Christmas however interest will still be there for shoppers to go to Bargoed with both Morrison's and the garage opening.

Councillor Stephens stated that it would be more beneficial if a larger well, known firm took up occupancy of the unit to bring interest to Bargoed.

Councillor Collis asked if there was any truth in the rumour that a cinema and home bargains are considering going to Blackwood.

Andrew confirmed that he had spoken to the planning department who have confirmed that there has been no planning application made for a cinema in Blackwood so at present the speculation is based on press reports.

Councillor Carter confirmed that the focus site is on the agenda for discussion at the next planning meeting.

Andrew ended by stating that agents are working hard to ensure that the tenants that take up the units are the right ones for the town and ones that will stay for a long time.

8. PUBLIC REALM UPDATE

Allan Dallimore confirmed that the proposal is for Caerphilly County Borough Council is to build the cinema and rent out. This is currently in the tender process for the submissions to be evaluated.

The target is to be in a position to appoint mid November with a view for start on site being January 2014. The works will take approximately a work for the cinema to be completed with the Cinema opening approximately Spring 2015.

Council's Legal Department have prepared the legal paperwork and this is currently with Odeon for signing.

The question was asked as to whether Odeon could withdraw and the answer was that they could however, Odeon have confirmed that they are still going ahead with their plans.

Councillor Collis asked whether or not the rumour of the cinema in Blackwood could possibly undercut Bargoed project.

Allan Dallimore advised that Odeon is a large operator and can therefore get films in advance compared to smaller operators and therefore any other cinema would not be showing new releases.

Councillor Reynolds asked whether there is any possibility that Odeon has sold out to Vue Cinema.

Allan confirmed that Odeon is owned by TerraFerma and they could look at any new developments but there is nothing to confirm that sale is going ahead.

Councillor Higgs asked for clarification as to how many contractors are being considered.

Allan advised the group that 6 went out to tender but only 2 returned.

Allan advised that the Engineers department are currently looking into costs for demolition. Approximately 200,000 budget needed.

Morrison's build came in under budget so the under spend will be put back into the funding for Bargoed improvements.

Issues with regards to contractor's compounds will be raised in a report at the next meeting.

Marketing for restaurant area, which includes, access roads and diverting utilities will cost approximately 170,000 to divert gas compound. Local restaurant providers are being looked into for the units next to the cinema with a view to trying to avoid fast food diners.

With regards to the Woolworth's scheme there has been a delay but should be opening around mid November 2013.

With regards to queries raised regarding the naming of the building it has been decided not to name the building, as this would not be a building for access to members of the public.

Scaffolding is still up around unit 7 and this should be removed soon. Steps down to Trafalgar building this area has, been pointed out with a view to be sorted within the 12 months defects period.

In relation to the traffic, the traffic order is now in place and double yellow lines are to be placed throughout.

9. ARTWORK VISUALS

Allan provided the group with visuals of the artwork to be put in place throughout the town.

The group were advised that there was some delay with regards to the miner's head and it is anticipated that the artist is looking to have this artwork in by the 7th December 2013.

The Daffodil's are anticipated to be installed mid 2015. The Artist is looking to provide information to our structural engineers with regards to confirmation that the Daffodil's are able to stand structurally for 30 years.

10. HANBURY SQUARE TWO WAY TRAFFIC

Allan confirmed that this is now back to a two-way traffic route and all signs are in place to show this.

Councillor Reynolds asked if the message could be passed out confirming that Wood Street is now two-way traffic.

Councillor Llewellyn requested could arrows be placed on the road to show that traffic flows both ways.

Police confirmed that they have not had any problems reported but did think that the white lines put back would be a good idea and the permanent signs put in place showing that the route is now two-way.

Andrew confirmed that there has been positive feedback from retailers stating that the two-way traffic does help and seems to be more traffic flowing better.

11. ROYAL SQUARE BUS STOP

Costing for the lay-by were passed around to the group and Allan read through them highlighting the 3 options available and broke down the costs. Allan confirmed that the utilities are happier for the Council to work to the lower 2 and Capita Simmonds have suggested that option 3 would be their recommendation.

Options have been looked at and Allan is continuing to have further talks.

It was agreed to wait and see how things change with regards to traffic once Morrison's opens to see how things settle

Andrew confirmed that the footfall data for the South and North of Bargoed has altered and probably will do even more once Morrison's opens so it would be better to wait to see how things settle down and come back to this issue at a later date.

Councillor Higgs brought to the attention of the group that there was an incident where the Police had reported that a vehicle parking on pavement has caused problems.

There has also been an incident where a vehicle pulled up and parked on the bus stop nearly hitting a lady with a pushchair so that he could go to the bank.

Allan advised that once double yellow lines go down these issues should reduce as well as police enforcement and physical deterrents such as skinny bollards in designated areas.

Councillor Collis stated that whilst double yellow lines will help it is really enforcement that is required.

Andrew agreed that double yellow lines will improve driver's behaviour, enforcement will be easier but it will need time to settle.

Inspector Greening agreed that this would help and any assistance to enforce parking problems welcomed. The police are doing their best but there will always be opportunist drivers who will try to park where they should not.

There has been a problem with granite blocks moving as they are being nudged. Allan has confirmed that these are going to be cemented in place.

Allan was thanked by, Councillor Price for all of his hard work

12. NEW FACILITY FOR TOWN COUNCIL

Councillors Stephens and Llewellyn were asked to provide an update on the new facility

The group were advised that the final negotiations with the Police are now being resolved and tenders to paint the porch are to take place in November so that it is completed by early December.

The Town Council are in the process of acquiring new furniture at present.

Andrew thanked the town council for giving Bargoed its own Town Hall Councillor Price thanked the Town Council for all of their hard work.

13. CHRISTMAS EVENT

Paul confirmed that his team are currently holding on plans so that things can tie in with opening of Morrison's.

This gives the opportunity to re-brand Bargoed and bring the two events together for the whole of the Town to benefit.

The Ice Rink was originally planned for one day but this could go on for 4 days subject to funding. This will open the same day as the Christmas Market.

Ms V. A. Button asked for confirmation as to whether the ice rink would be in St Gwladys car park or could it be moved to somewhere else. Paul advised that if the ice rink was moved to a smaller place there might not be much interest.

During the Christmas Market there will be activities throughout the Town with 19 stalls including funfair and the team are still working on this. There will be a grotto near the Church.

Councillor Price asked for clarification as to what events are to be held in the Events Square at the South end.

Paul confirmed that there will be potentially local bands & choirs who are to be contacted and there will also be street entertainment.

Councillor Carter did suggest that the local schools should be contacted to participate.

The Town Council confirmed they would need to contribute to funding to keep the price down.

14. FIRST ROYAL WELSH BATTALION PARADE

Stephen Pugh was able to feedback to the group that the event for the troops was a fantastic event for the all who attended.

Turnout exceeded the anticipated figures and was a huge spectacle to watch.

Thanks are to be passed to the police for the logistics of the event. The traders were a fantastic support and contributed an excellent effort to their hard work in decorating the shop fronts.

Ms V. A. Button commented on how everyone enjoyed the day and they were all stated how the whole thing was a huge Wow day.

Councillor Higgs had to judge the decorated shop fronts and stated that this was a very hard task as everyone had put in so much effort and they are all deserved winners for all their hard efforts so a big well done to everyone.

The Communications team are all to receive thanks for all their efforts in organising this event.

Ms V. A. Button advised the group that Simon's have place a video of the event on face book for everyone to see.

Stephen confirmed that Simon's and Morrison's were very supportive

Councillor's commented on how the event was a huge feather in the cap for Bargoed and showed the true community spirit and also liked to thank Stephen and his team for all their efforts.

15. BONFIRE NIGHT DISPLAY

Councillor Llewellyn confirmed that everything is in hand; there will be rides for children as well as the fireworks display. There will be no sweets this year as there is expected to be a lot more visitors this year and to give out sweets to so many would be an impossible task.

The question was raised as to whether or not the Morrison's car park would be opened for this event.

Allan advised that the car park would be coned off so people should not really stand there, as the works are still ongoing. Allan requested that the timing's of the event be emailed to him.

Ms V. A. Button wanted it noted that last year there was used sparklers left lying around for months and does not want this to happen again. Public Services will be contacted to clean the area.

16. AUDIT

Office Quarter the date has now changed to November due to lift delaying proceedings.

Railway Station Fencing Councillor Andrews stated that the fencing should be sorted and the budget found to carry out these works. This is to be passed to Clive Campbell.

Lighting of Angel Artwork, Councillor Higgs stated that the tree lighting is not working. Allan is going back to the contractors to fix them.

Councillor Andrews asked is there any traffic assessment to petrol station, with regards to the volume of traffic and if it would affect the area.

Allan advised that there has been an assessment on the road safety audit stage 1 & 2 post completion stage 3 external party to see if there are any risks. Allan will bring to the next meeting the RSA stage 2 results.

Litter and cigarette ends Royal Square. Councillor Stephens has stated that this is still an area of concern. Allan is going to speak to Tony White and arrange for cigarette bins to be placed there.

The meeting closed at 3:41 pm

CHAIRMAN