



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2014 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

D. Carter, D.T. Davies, K. James, D. Price

Together with:

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

Also:

CSO Chris Hopkin (Gwent Police), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager),
S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal &
Conservation), G. Richards (Highways Maintenance Manager), A. Jones (Complaints Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: E. M Aldworth (Consultee), H. A. Andrews, A. Higgs, K. Reynolds
Inspector S Greening (Gwent Police), Paul Hudson (Marketing and Events Manager), John
Thomas (Client Liaison Officer), Dave Whetter (Principal Engineer)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (1ST OCTOBER 2013)

Previous minutes were taken as read.

4. UPDATE ON UNIQUE PLACES DISCOUNT CARD

The report was presented to the group and Mr Highway advised that the main goal of the initiative was to raise profile of town centre, which was achieved. However feedback questionnaire showed that retailers reported low transactions of the number of persons using the card.

Ms. Button confirmed that she personally did not see anyone with a card in her shop but thinks that traders need to offer better discount. Councillor Davies requested that Ms. Button seek feedback from Chamber of Trade.

5. ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE HIGHWAY

Members were presented with the report and Mr Richards advised that the report had been brought to the previous meeting. The report highlights what is acceptable for retailers to display on the highway.

Letters have been distributed to 720 retailers throughout the borough. The letter sets out the size of the frames that are acceptable and the fee of £25.00 for retailers to sign up for a licence.

Ms. Button asked for confirmation as to whether there will be an automatic renewal to the licence. Mr Richards confirmed retailers would receive a letter when it is time to renew licence.

6. JOBS REPORT

Members were presented with the report by Mr. Highway who confirmed that Bargoed is performing significantly better than other towns.

Councillor Davies raised concern over footfall figures, as there does not seem to be any increase since Morrisons opened. Officers hoped figures would improve in 2014.

Mr. Collis questioned whether the 200 jobs created by Morrisons were included in the report. Mr Highway confirmed that they were not included but the figures can be made available. It was agreed to amend the title on his report in future.

7. ST. DAVIDS DAY

Apologies were received from Mr Hudson. Members were presented with the report by Mr. Highway.

The report reflects the current financial position of the Council with a smaller event being planned. Members requested the itinerary to be circulated.

In addition the group were updated on the open-air cinema. Mr Highway confirmed that Mr. Hudson has secured the film Frozen for the event, which is to take place on the 28th March 2014.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if the advertisements for future events could include a prompt for people to bring a chair. The request will be passed back to Mr Hudson however it may not be possible to change posters for the event if they have already gone for print.

8. BARGOED CINEMA UPDATE

The Chairman read out the following statement with regards to the Cinema project.

“Both Odeon and Caerphilly CCBC remain fully committed to bringing a cinema to Bargoed. However, tenders received currently exceed available budgets. Consequently both parties are discussing details of design and build specification with potential contractors. Due to commercial confidentiality it is not possible to give further details at this time. However, once

a way forward is agreed both CCBC and Odeon will be issuing a joint statement. It is hoped that this can happen soon.”

9. UPDATE ON THE WOOLWORTHS BUILDING & RELOCATION OF STAFF

Mr Dallimore informed the group that the reasons for the delay in the offices being opened, were down to problems with the installation of BT cables.

BT wanted to excavate the highway to enable them to lay cables but the Highways department refused the request and an alternative area of pavement has been identified where the cables can be laid.

BT have stated that due to the current weather conditions their priority is to deal with reconnections not new installations, therefore the anticipated date for completion of these works is early April 2014.

Mr. Dallimore confirmed that once cables have been laid it would take approximately one week to fit out the offices.

Councillor Davies requested members be kept updated.

10. UPDATE ON HJJ BUILDING

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that the Council is in a position to take ownership from Fairlake and an agreement from Welsh Government would enable this to take place.

Money has been secured from CCBC and Welsh Government to demolish the building and make the site good. CCBC Engineers are currently costing up the works and working towards an August 2014 demolition date.

Once the property is demolished the Council will be looking to third parties to develop the area. Following Internal discussions party wall agreements with neighbouring properties will be drafted.

A European funding package of £1m has been secured, which must be spent by mid-2015. This money will be used to demolish the HJJ building, ancillary works at the bottom of Colliers Walk and additional public realm works, such as remedying illegal parking hot spots by installing "skinny" bollards. The money will also introduce and fund a Commercial Improvement Grant scheme, which can be accessed by local businesses for up to 75% of the cost of premises improvement works.

Mr. Dallimore confirmed that artist drawing for Pocket Park Exhibition will be in the town soon and will be available to members.

The Chairman thanked officers for all their hard work.

11. UPDATE ON HANBURY ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

The report was presented to the group by Mr Highway. The figures provided show that the number of visitors who use the library and customer first services has increased dramatically.

The chairman wished to thank Mr. Titley and Mr. Evans for their hard work

12. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

Mr. Highway presented the audit to the group for discussion.

CSO Chris Hopkin (Gwent police) advised the group that there have been a few incidents at the store and Officers have met with the manager to suggest ways to improve security. The police will also increase their patrols in the area.

Town Councillor Stephens brought to the attention of the group that there is an issue in the car park of Morrisons whereby a vagrant has moved in. The police were unaware of this and will look into the matter.

The Police suggested that the installation of CCTV cameras would be beneficial.

There was an issue with the stores roof leaking. This has now been rectified.

Questions were raised over the cinema site as to what can be done with the land until the cinema is built. Mr. Dallimore advised that once Simons were leaving the site it would be left tidied and secure. It is anticipated that once the HJJ building commences the site will be utilised.

Councillor Davies raised concerns reference the cleansing and ongoing problems with the steps at Hanbury Road. Mr. Dallimore reported that officers are looking at different cleansing options. A costing for cleaning the steps along with re-pointing them has been requested.

Councillor Price thanked the Park Department for cleaning the war memorial.

Members of group expressed some disappointment with the content of the Christmas market and early discussions are taking place in respect of this year's event.

There were no further issues with the audit

The meeting closed at 5:35 pm

CHAIRMAN