



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON THURSDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2007 AT 4.30 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Chairman

Councillor N.S. Dix

Councillor D.T. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Together with:

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), S. Smith (Senior Assistant Engineer), A. Dallimore (Team Leader- Urban Renewal), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer) and D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer).

Also Present:

Mrs E. Mantle, Mr D. Jones (Blackwood Town Council)

Mr C. Cook (Access Group)

Mr P. Lambert (Local Business)

Messrs C. Sharp and J. Organ (Local Residents)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) and J. Elliot (Research Officer).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record: -

Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 23rd November 2006.

Matters Arising

Blackwood Public Artwork Strategy (Minute No 4)

Mr Dallimore, (Team Leader – Urban Renewal) reported that the expected date of February 2007 for commencement of artwork would probably now be March 2007.

3. BLACKWOOD CHARTIST FAIR

Mr MacVicar, Business Development Manager introduced a report on a Chartist Fair Event which will be staged on Blackwood High Street on 8th and 9th June 2007. Mr MacVicar reported that the event would aim to increase the number of shoppers and visitors to the town and raise the profile of Blackwood. The event will have a chartist theme and incorporate many activities including a craft fair, fun fair and street entertainers. The event will also give an opportunity for retailers, shoppers and officers to appraise the impact of pedestrians only in the town centre.

The estimated cost of the event is £12,000 and will be funded from various sources.

A question was asked about deliveries to shops during the closure and it was confirmed that this matter had already been discussed with the major store holders. It was also noted that a vehicle path would need to be available during the event for emergency vehicles.

It was confirmed by an officer that the anticipated closure would be from Bridge Street to Pentwyn Road (and not Hall Street and Gordon Road as stated in the report) although no detailed plans had yet been made.

Town Councillor D. Jones applauded the initiative and asked for details of funding and publicity costs. Mr MacVicar responded that the cost of the event would be funded mainly from various county borough departments but also from the Capital Area Forum budget, Capital Regional Tourism and Blackwood Town Council. There would also be additional revenue generated from the funfair and ice cream vans. Publicity for the event would be restricted to available funding although it is expected that poster, leaflets and radio promotion would be used to publicise the event.

It was confirmed that the Blackwood Independent Traders had been invited to join the working group and that the Access Group would be fully informed and consulted on the event.

A suggestion was made that local schools be involved in the celebrations as numbers to the town would be increased by their parents accompanying them.

The Chairman reported that a number of enquiries regarding the event had already been made from outside the town from people with an interest in the history of the Chartist story and the work of the author Alexander Cordell.

Finally Mr MacVicar reminded the Group that the event would also be used to evaluate the results of a pedestrian only town centre although Mr Lambert considered that from a trading respect a permanent predestination should not be considered until bigger retailers are attracted to the High Street and the foot fall increased.

It was recommended that the Management Group support the proposal with the proviso that the event will only be held if all the logistics such as deliveries, car parking and bus operations could be satisfied.

4. BLACKWOOD INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Copies of the Blackwood Investment Portfolio were circulated. The aim of the portfolio is to capitalise on the recent investments in the town e.g. Artwork, new bus station etc. in order to raise the profile of the town to potential investors. Members agreed that the file was a very professional attractive document and hoped that it would succeed as a marketing tool to attract new retail development.

A member commented that although the Southern Retail Park was mentioned in the leaflet, a photograph in future publications would be welcomed.

Concerns were again expressed regarding the traffic movement at the Southern Retail Park and Mr MacVicar indicated that a written report would be presented to the next Management Group meeting.

5. UPDATE ON WORK OF MULTI AGENCY PROBLEM SOLVING GROUP

As no Police representative was present an update on the Multi Agency Problem Solving Group was given by Councillor Dix. Councillor Dix reported that the number of anti social behaviour incidents have decreased. Following regular meetings of the Group it had been agreed that Stages 1 and 2 be implemented and 300 fixed penalty notices had been issued. If the situation deteriorates then Level 3 will be implemented and dispersal notices issued. A local resident reported that there were still incidents at the Cliff Road car park and that the barrier was not lowered in the evening. It was agreed that this concern would be investigated further with the CCTV Team, the Police and the owner of the premises.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

The January Environmental Audit for Blackwood Town Centre was received and noted.

Matters Arising

A question was raised on the consultation and future proposals for public conveniences in the Town Centre and it was agreed that this item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 10th May 4.30pm at the Council Offices, Pontllanfraith.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm

CHAIRMAN