

## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 15TH FEBRUARY 2007**

**SUBJECT: CHARTIST FAIR EVENT**

**REPORT BY: ANDREW HIGHWAY - TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information on the Chartist Fair event, which will be staged in Blackwood High Street on 8th and 9th June 2007.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 It is proposed to close High Street Blackwood for two days in the summer to stage an event. The event will aim to achieve three primary objectives.
1. Attract additional visitors to the town.
  2. Provide an opportunity for retailers to increase sales.
  3. Evaluate the concept of a pedestrian high street in Blackwood.
- 2.2 The event will be called the 'Chartist Fair' and has potential to be a significant attraction in Caerphilly County Borough's events calendar. It will also help Blackwood to further enhance its position as a one of the principle town centres within the area.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Smart Alternative sets out Authorities 15 year strategy for regeneration. Principle 5 'Re Establish Town Centres as a foci of economic activity' sets out the overall objective of Town Centre Management.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The main shopping environment in Blackwood is a linear high street with full vehicle access. Whilst it is recognised that many people like the existing vehicle / pedestrian balance, it is also accepted that not all shoppers favour it. In August 2006 the Blackwood Traders Association undertook a town centre survey amongst its members, one of issues raised was pedestrianisation. The creation of a 'one off' event, which effectively delivers a pedestrian high street, would give retailers, shoppers and council officers the chance to appraise its impact on the town. In addition it would provide retailers with a platform to attract new customers and cement existing relationships by promoting special offers. Visitors could also have a chance to visit the new bus station and see the Chartist Bridge.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the road closure would be implemented at High Street at its junction with Hall Street and its junction with Gordon Road. This will create a large pedestrian space for activities to take place in.

4.3 The event will have a 'Chartist' theme and incorporate some of the following:-

- A continental & craft market with children's fairground rides.
- Enhanced floral provision in the town centre.
- A planting demonstration and display by the Blackwood Garden Centre.
- A walk that includes dramatic interpretation of the Chartist story.
- Open air bus trips across the Chartist Bridge.
- Promotions from independent retailers in the town via the Blackwood Traders Association.
- A Market Place Shopping Centre promotion.
- Day and evening street entertainers.

4.4 Collaborative working will be key to the events success, whilst the main event will be coordinated by Caerphilly County Borough Council the support of the Police, Blackwood Town Council, The Blackwood Traders Association and The Market Place Shopping Centre is paramount.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The cost of the event will be funded from:-

- Various departments from within Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- The 'Area Forum Budget' allocated to Blackwood Town Centre Management Group.
- A contribution from Blackwood Town Council.

## **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Tourism Unit of Caerphilly County Borough Council will coordinate the event with support from Community Safety Wardens and the Police.

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 A copy of the event proposals have been sent to; the manager of the Market Place Shopping Centre, the Town Council and the Blackwood Traders Association.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 After consultation with the Cabinet Member For Regeneration and the Chair of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group, it was agreed to allocate £1000 towards the cost of the event from the Area Forum budget allocated to the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group.

Author: Andrew Highway – Town Centre Development Manager  
Consultees: Paul Hudson – Assistant Tourism Officer  
Ian MacVicar – Business Development Officer  
Clive Campbell – Transportation Manager  
John Ridgewell – Parks Business Development Manager  
Graham Thomas – Community Safety Control Room Manager  
Bob Campbell – Senior Assistant Engineer  
Alan Dallimore – Urban Renewal Manager  
Inspector Fleming - Blackwood Police Station

Background Papers: None