



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON THURSDAY, 26TH JULY 2007 AT 4.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Chairman

Councillor D.T. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Together with:

A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), M. Chapman (Safer Caerphilly CPS),
R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer) A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager)
J. Elliott (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

Also Present:

Mr D. Jones and Mrs C. Dix (Blackwood Town Council) and Mr I. Palmer (Town Clerk –
Blackwood Town Council), Mr P. Lambert (Local Business), Messrs C. Sharp and J. Organ
and Ms D. Davies (Local Residents)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer),
S. Smith (Senior Assistant Engineer) and Councillor N. Dix.

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 10th May 2007.

Matters Arising

3. Traffic Movement – Southern Retail Park (Minute no 8)

Mr Campbell, Senior Assistant Engineer, reported that the developer would be starting work
on the island sometime in August and a Traffic Order would be obtained banning a right turn
at the premises.

4. Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (Minute no 9)

It was suggested that a representative from Blackwood Town Council should be invited to attend the meetings of the Multi Agency Problem Solving Group. The Chairman responded that although he considered that there would be no objection to this request, Gwent Police should be contacted as they coordinate the meetings.

5. TIMELINE ARTWORK

Mr Dallimore circulated a location plan and details of the nine paving panels which will be known as the Blackwood Timeline. They will be installed on the High Street at the beginning of August. Each piece will be cast in bronze and the centre will feature a solar light which will give a glow during the hours of darkness.

The Timeline will depict the historical development of the town and display images representing the history of Blackwood from the nineteenth century. Educational leaflets will be produced to promote the Timeline to local school children.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the funding had been provided by an Arts Council grant and that with good weather installation should only take one day.

6. CANDO INITIATIVE

Ms Chapman, Assistant Community Safety Officer, was attending the meeting to give details of a CANDO (Community and Neighbourhood Directed Operations) initiative which will shortly be developed in the Blackwood Town Centre area. The CANDO initiative is designed to tackle areas of crime and disorder and social disaffection by creating a pool of partners who are committed to make an impact on recurring problems. It is about delivering local solutions to local problems that have been identified by local people.

Ms Chapman reported that she was presently contacting local groups to nominate representatives to attend the CANDO meetings. In response to a question it was confirmed that although local residents would not be individually invited, resident groups or housing associations could possibly nominate a representative to attend.

Two of the local ward members confirmed that they would be attending the meetings and it was confirmed that Blackwood Town Council could make a nomination.

It was reported that the first meeting would be held on the 9th August and the Chairman suggested that names and contact details be given after the meeting.

It was noted that previous CANDO initiatives in the county borough had been very successful and the evaluation results can be found on the Community Safety web site.

A question was raised on acquiring additional resources for the project and Ms Chapman assured members that a commitment to the project had been made from the Police, the local authority and Community Safety.

It was confirmed that although drug abuse would possibly not be an issue for CANDO to address, binge drinking in the town centre was presently a major concern and would need to be tackled.

In response to a question Ms Chapman confirmed that details of the Action Plan of the CANDO will be reported to the Group for information.

7. CHARTIST FAYRE SPECIAL EVENT

Mr Highway presented a report on the Chartist Fayre which was held in Blackwood Town Centre on the 8th and 9th June 2007.

The report outlined that the primary objectives of the event were:

- To attract more visitors to the town
- Provide an opportunity for retailers to increase sales
- To evaluate the concept of a pedestrian High Street in Blackwood

The report explained all aspects of the Fayre including an analysis of the High Street closure, Transportation, Car Parks, The Event, Retailers Reaction, a Survey, Footfall, Policing, Media, Go Wild Event and First Aid.

A local retailer outlined a concern regarding the funfair. The rides were positioned only on one side of the street and were a problem where the back of the ride was facing a store. He did however consider that overall the event was a success and would like it to continue.

The importance of involving children to understand the history of the event was discussed and it was noted that children at a local comprehensive school were presently very involved in researching information about the Chartist movement.

A representative from Blackwood Town Council reported that only one negative comment had been received and that it was regarding insufficient disabled parking.

Mr Highway reported that the event was mainly subsidised by the market stalls and funfair. He placed on record his thanks to the Chartist Fayre Working Group which included the Police and Blackwood Town Council.

Although the footfall numbers appear to be disappointing, the photographs attached to the report illustrate a very crowded town during the event. The event created an event space in Blackwood High Street – Blackwood has not before used the High Street for an event of this type.

It was agreed by the Group that the event was overall a success and should if possible be held on a regular basis. In addition to the encouraging public comments, the majority of retailers had also responded in a positive way.

The event could be considered as a showcase to raise the profile of the town with a possible added benefit of bringing previous shoppers and visitors back to Blackwood.

It was noted that a decision on the future of the event would be made in September when the event programme for 2007 is reviewed by the Head of Economic Development and the Group requested that the Cabinet member for Regeneration (who was present at the meeting) convey their positive comments and request that the event be repeated in the future.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

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

Matters Arising

An update/comments were made on the following:

9. Car Cruisers – High Street (Page 2)

It was noted that should the request for the evening closure of High Street be presented to the council then a Traffic Regulation Order and possibly Cabinet approval would be needed.

10. Proposed Closure of Public Conveniences (Page 5)

A Blackwood Town Councillor placed on record his concern that Blackwood Town Council were consulted belatedly in the consultation process.

11. Southern Pedestrian Linkages (Page 7)

Noted that detailed designs are presently being drawn for a scheme to link Thorncombe Road/High Street and the new Blackwood Gate Retail Park. A contract will be given in late summer and the route will be possibly ready to use by the spring.

12. Bus Traffic Issues – The Interchange (Page 8)

It was agreed that a report on the Interchange be given at the next meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 15th November at 4.30 p.m. at the Council Offices, Pontllanfraith.

The meeting closed at 5.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN