



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor K. Smallman – Chairman

Together with:

A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), P. Hotchkiss (Registration/Licensing Officer), S. Beacham (Senior Parks Officer), J. Elliott (Research Officer), D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer)

Also Present:

Messrs C. Sharp and J. Organ (Local Residents) and J. Hold (Clerk- Blackwood Town Council)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Etheridge and Mrs. K. Preseley, I.G. MacVicar (Business Development Officer) Mr. P. Lambert (Local Business) and Mrs. B. Edwards (Blackwood Chamber of Trade).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

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

Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 4th June 2008.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Former Public Convenience Site – High Street (minute 3)

The Chairman reported that a recent Notice of Motion to Council on this topic had been unsuccessful and that the matter now closed. Consideration would be given to signposting shoppers to the toilets at the Blackwood Miners Institute.

Mr Hold reported that Blackwood Town Council still considered that a toilet facility should be available at this part of the town and had requested costings for a stand alone automated

facility.

Mr Dallimore reported that a grant may be available to café's public houses etc. who are willing to let the general public use their facilities.

4. Blackwood Study – The Way Forward

Mr Dallimore gave an update on the Blackwood Study. He explained that the consultants, Powell Dobson, have consulted on their draft proposals with the Blackwood Town Councillors, local ward members and the Town Centre Management Group.

Minor changes have been agreed, the document amended and then presented to the Client Group for feedback. The document will then be ready for wider consultation. For wider consultation it is proposed that a letter drop be made to every retail/commercial property in the town centre giving a summary of the proposals. Also at the same time a manned exhibition in the town centre could showcase the proposals (this exhibition could be promoted through poster and letter drops to residents).

However wider consultation will not be taken until there is an assurance that funding avenues are available.

At present the priority for the Welsh Assembly Government is the Heads of the Valleys area. Convergence funding was identified to take the project forward but at present Blackwood is not identified in the Sustainable Regional Framework of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and as such stands little chance of funding.

WEFO have however indicated that a revised framework document could be issued as soon as January and as the council have lobbied for Blackwood to be identified within the document and a verbal assurance has been given it will be prudent to delay any consultation until written confirmation is given.

It was reported that Councillor Etheridge wished to convey his thanks to officers involved in the study work.

5. Blackwood TCIG Audit

The following items were discussed:

- (a) Car Cruisers – the Town Clerk reported that he had made contact to arrange a meeting but had not received a reply. (AH to investigate);
- (b) Northern Retail Park – Cleansing issue reported at top of steps and side of Cliff Road- may be private property – will be highlighted to Cleansing department and town clerk informed;
- (c) Noted that there is a need to report any incidents as evidence is needed when addressing issues;
- (d) New Artwork – Gravel Lane – Reported that a number of issues had meant that the work would not go ahead.

6. Issues from the Previous Meeting

Mr Hotchkiss was attending the meeting to respond to issues raised at a previous meeting.

He explained that trading in the street and selling wares (such as Big Issue sellers and Ambulance Chasers) is controlled in town centres by a legislation and the 82 Act needs to be adopted by the authority in order to enforce this legislation. This authority has never considered that there was a need or demand to adopt the legislation although a report will be presented to the council in the New Year outlining concerns and options available to the authority.

Big Issues sellers are excluded from any form of control as it is considered to be similar to a newspaper seller and part of the street scene.

Busking is considered to be an entertainment and also part of the street scene but could be controlled if the Act was adopted.

Mr Hotchkiss indicated that it was important to include and comments on this issue within the report and urged members of the Group to contact him with their views.

The Group were again disappointed that a representative from the Police was again unable to attend and Mr Highway indicated that he would contact the local Police Inspector with their concerns.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 12th February 2009 at 4.30 pm – Pontllanfraith Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 5.05 pm.