



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON THURSDAY 22ND APRIL 2010 AT 4.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor K. Smallman – Chairman

Councillor:
Mrs K. Presley

Messrs C. Sharp and J. Organ and Ms D. Davies (Local Residents), A. Farina-Childs, D. Davies and J. Hold (Blackwood Town Council) and Mr P. Lambert (Local Business).

Together with:

A. Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), B. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), J. Elliott (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. Davies (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside).

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest were made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES

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

Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 24th February 2010.

3. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH FOR ROYAL WELSH AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF TWINNING PARTNERSHIP WITH LUDWIGSBURG

Mrs R. Mathews (Communications Manager) was attending the meeting to present this item. Mrs L. Barrett and two representatives from Ludwigsburg were also present.

Mrs Mathews explained that the council had awarded the Freedom of the Borough to the Royal Welsh and as part of the celebrations the regiment will march through the towns of Caerphilly and Blackwood on Saturday 25th September. This year will also be the 50th anniversary of the twinning partnership between the Caerphilly County Borough and

Ludwigsburg and it has been agreed that the celebrations for this event and the Freedom of the Borough event have an element of joining together and would therefore appropriate to combine the two.

The celebrations will take place on the week-end of the 25th/26th September and will include a number of commemorative events including an evening concert at Blackwood Miners Institute where a number of choirs and the Young Musician of the Year will be performing. Funding will be sought and if successful it is hoped to fund a giant screen which will be sited opposite the Institute in Blackwood in order to relay the events to the public. Mrs Mathews explained that an appeal is being made for memories, photographs etc of past twinning events and that an exhibition will be held for one month in a local museum.

The event would be an excellent opportunity for the town of Blackwood to capitalise on the occasion and Mrs Mathews would welcome any suggestions from the Management Group.

A member suggested that should a giant screen be secured for the event it could also be used to transmit the evening concert to the public. It was questioned if tickets for the concert would be available for the residents to purchase as they may be interested in attending. Mrs Mathews indicated that a small steering group had been set up to discuss the allocation of seats but she had noted the comments.

A number of activities and temporary road closures are still to be finalised and further details would be provided to the Management Group in due course.

The Management Group were enormously supportive of the event for Blackwood especially as many young people from the local communities are serving in the armed forces.

Further details would be provided at the next meeting of the Management Group.

4. CLOSURE OF BLACKWOOD HIGH STREET AND INSTALLATION OF THE BARRIER

Mr Bob Campbell reported that the gates and signs were now in place and that the Police had maintained a presence in the town and fined a number of drivers who had attempted to drive along the High Street during the evening closure.

Mr Campbell and the Clerk of Blackwood Town Council confirmed that they had not to date received any complaints from the public although it was reported that there had been some concerns expressed recently though the media by a few traders that their businesses had suffered since the road closure.

A local resident did however express concern that he considered that since the closure anti social behaviour appeared to have increased at Cliff Road and the local car parks. This concern was discussed by the Management Group and it was suggested the road closure may not be associated with the problems although the Chairman indicated that he would contact Inspector Childs and report this matter to him. The concerns at the car parks were discussed and whose responsibility it would be to enforce any existing by-laws at the car parks and the procedure for actions taken on areas monitored by CCTV.

Mr Campbell confirmed that he would investigate the concerns raised and Mr Highway would include the item on the town centre audit.

The Chairman expressed concern that no Police representative was present at the meeting to respond to these comments.

5. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS - UPDATE

Mr Campbell reported that following the advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Orders a number of comments/objections had been received and considered. It was noted however that support for the Order had been received from the local ward members and Police and as the exercise was to simplify the situation it was agreed to proceed with the Order. It was also reported that no adverse comments to the Order had been received from the Caerphilly Access Group.

The Traffic Regulation Order for High Street will therefore be advertised next week and signage and markings put in place a few weeks later.

6. ARTWORK AT THE BUS STATION

Mr Dallimore circulated the five short listed drawings and explanation text which were selected by the Arts Sub-Group. He reported that the winning idea by Rubin Eynon was that of two cast iron tram workhorses pulling an imaginary heavy load. Rubin's design showed that both horses would have variations in the surface texture and cast into each horse would be different objects from modern day life.

As there are concerns over the use of material that is allowed to rust naturally, the group have asked the artist to reconsider the core materials. There is a meeting between the group and the artist in late April to discuss this matter further. There will be community involvement with local schools in finalising the designs.

7. SOUTHERN RETAIL PARK

Following concerns at a previous meeting Mr Dallimore circulated a report on the present situation in finding retailers for the vacant units at the Southern Retail Park. The report outlined a comprehensive list of the type of retailers which would be considered under the current planning condition. The Planning condition on the units does not however seem to be the only factor in them remaining empty as although the council has received several inquiries from potential tenants, feedback appears to suggest that the rental terms being offered by the developer are not attractive or competitive for the locality.

8. FORMER WOOLWORTHS STORE

It was reported that there had recently been an increase in fly-posting in the town in particular on the former Woolworths store, the TA Public House and the former Job Centre.

The planning department has commenced enforcement action against the venues being advertised on the posters.

In addition owners or agents have been contacted to gain consent (in the form of a disclaimer) to allow the council to access their property and remove the offending fly tipping and the Probation Service has recently removed the fly tipping posters from the TA Public House.

As a final measure however it should be noted that it is the Councils right to remove fly-posting and they can look to regain cost incurred from the owners through the Magistrates Court.

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

9. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT GROUP AUDIT – MARCH 2010

The Improvement Group Audit for March was noted.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A vote of thanks was recorded to Kevin Etheridge who had resigned as a local member for the Blackwood ward. Members placed on record their appreciation for all his work.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 22nd July 2010 at 4.30pm – Pontllanfraith Council Chamber

The meeting closed at 5.55pm