



## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH ON THURSDAY 21ST JULY 2011 AT 4.30 PM**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor K. Smallman – Chairman

**Councillors:**

Mrs K. Presley and N. Dix

Mr. C. Sharp, Mr. J. Organ and Ms. D. Davies (Local Residents), Ms. M. Franklin (Blackwood Town Councillor), and Inspector K. Childs and PS Neil Jones (Gwent Police)

**Together with:**

A. Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), P. Hudson (Senior Events and Marketing Officer, CCBC), K. Collins (Community Planning Liaison Officer), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), J. Elliott (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Davies (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside), J. Hold (Clerk, Blackwood Town Council), Mr P. Lambert (Local Business), J. Bennett (Group Manager – Advisory Services) and B. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer),

#### **1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declaration of interest was made at the meeting.

#### **2. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Kelly Collins to her first meeting of the Group and wished the clerk recording the minutes good wishes for her retirement.

#### **3. MINUTES**

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

Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 4th May 2011.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Presentation (Minute no 5)

Mr. Dallimore reported that since the last meeting the artwork and a new barrier near the library, have been installed.

#### **5. PRESENTATION – SHOPPING ATTITUDES**

Mrs Kelly Collins was attending the meeting to give a presentation on Shopping Attitudes. Retail information is collected by the council and a shopper attitude survey conducted within the main town centres of the county borough. The survey provides important information and may be pivotal to securing improvement grants

Kelly gave a brief overview of findings – within the Blackwood catchment area a telephone survey of 250 people and an on-street survey of 201 was conducted. The information collected would also be used for monitoring the policies in the Local Development Plan. It was reported that Blackwood had performed well in the way it is perceived for shopping and 67% of shoppers considered the town highly favourable as a shopping location. The town has become one of the most popular shopping towns within the county borough and has been especially successful in retaining premises for convenience shopping.

A concern was raised on poor occupancy levels at the Southern Retail Park and officers reported that there were restrictions on the type of retailers who would be considered for occupancy under the current planning conditions and that the retail park was privately owned. Officers are however continuing to have informed discussions with the owner of the Park. A further question was raised on purchasing bulky goods from the internet and Kelly responded that were not a significant number had answered 'yes' to this question.

It was suggested and agreed that all members of the Management Group be supplied with a full copy of the report.

#### **6. BLACKWOOD SUMMER EVENT**

Mr Paul Hudson was attending the meeting to give an update on the recent Blackwood Summer Event. The event had been targeted for families with young children and initial feedback from the public and retailers had been very positive.

The event had included 42 stalls, a craft fair, street entertainment, a fun fair and an Urban Beach. The event provided a good balance with the Christmas Market for a Summer and Winter event.

A concern was raised on the high cost of fun fare rides although it was accepted that there is no way the fares can be controlled although if the event attracts more rides competition may result in lower prices.

It was noted that the event was partly funded by the area forum budget and funding will be crucial for any future events. Thanks were recorded to the Events Team for all their work and for engaging with the retailers to include them and make the event of economic benefit to them.

#### **7. BLACKWOOD RETAIL PARTNERSHIP AND DATA SHARING**

Mr Highway gave details of a new mechanism for traders to engage with the Police on concerns such as retail theft. The partners have agreed to share information and regular

meetings are convened once a month on a Tuesday for 30minutes. The aim of the Partnership is to share information and make Blackwood Town Centre an undesirable place for retail theft.

The local Police have been supportive of the Partnership and have invested time and resources.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted that the Blackwood Summer Carnival would be held on Saturday 6th August.

**ITEM FOR INFORMATION**

**9. Blackwood Town Centre Improvement Group – Audit – July 2011**

The Improvement Group Audit for July 2011 was noted.

The meeting closed at 5.15 pm.