

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 8TH MAY 2002 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan - Chairman
Councillor Mrs. K. Gwynne - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

J. Fussell and M.H. Newman

Together with:

M. Howland (Team Leader- Urban Renewal), A. Jones (Community Safety Officer), P. Gomer (Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure), T. White (Refuse and Cleansing Officer), D. Earey (Principal Engineer) D. Nutt (Tourism Officer), D. Price (Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer), J. Elliott (Research Officer) and Mrs D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

M.L. Evans (Caerphilly Town Council), A.J. Vizard (Caerphilly and District Civic Society) and PC
J. Wearing (Gwent Police), Mr. J. Couzens (Centre Manager - Castle Court Centre).

By Invitation of the Chairman: Mr Howitt and Mr Hyatt (Cardiff Rail Company - Valley Lines)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A. Hood, (CADW) and Councillor K.R. Snell.

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 27th February 2002 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

Kick (Minute no 35)

Mr Gomer, Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure reported that the former indoor market at Pentrebane Street was now being used by 'Kick' as an indoor skateboarding facility and they had applied to Sportlot for funding for more equipment at their premises. A condition of the funding would be that the equipment would be relocated if the centre closed and a letter confirming this would be sent from the council.

A member reported on the success of the facility and on high number of participants.

However concerns were raised from members that problems still existed from skateboarding in the Town Centre and particularly near the Bus/Train Station.

Park Lane Potential Development (Minute no 39)

Concern was raised at the timescale of the proposed development as existing buildings, which may be demolished in the scheme may need maintenance work in the near future. Mr Howland, Team Leader, Urban Renewal reported that there would be no significant progress until the commissioned study is completed. The joint venture between the Welsh Development Agency, Wales Tourist Board and the Council would need to be financially viable. It was agreed that this item be placed on the agenda of the next meeting scheduled for September.

Top of Town Development (Minute no 40)

Mr Howland reported that the development company involved were unable to attend this meeting but had been invited to attend the next meeting in September.

Owain Glyndwr Fields (Minute no 44)

Mr Gomer reported that the maintenance programme for the fields had been agreed and the area would be included on the CCTV schedule in an attempt to discourage dog fouling. It was reported that a meeting had been arranged for the 20th May to discuss the exact location of the changing rooms.

Maintenance of Block Paving - Twyn Square (Minute no 45)

It was noted that although the maintenance had been carried out the drainage stones around the trees had not be replaced. An officer confirmed that a delivery was expected shortly following some difficulty in obtaining the correct product.

It was also reported that an additional weed spraying and removal would be carried out in the town centre this year.

PRESENTATION BY CARDIFF RAILWAY COMPANY - VALLEY LINES

The representatives from Cardiff Railway Company introduced themselves and gave a presentation to the group on the operation of the local rail service in the past year.

Mr Howitt reported that the franchise process was underway and eight companies had been short-listed. The companies have until 28th June to submit their bids and the successful operator will be announced in 2003.

He outlined the train performance indicators for delivery of service regarding punctuality and reliability and the figures achieved. For the 12 months period to 31st March 2002 89.2% (target 92.0%) had been recorded for punctuality and 99.0% (target 99.5%) for reliability. He explained that reasons for major delays are always reported to passengers via notices at the stations.

It was noted that a 40% growth had been recorded in the number of rail journeys in the last 3 years and in the last 16 weeks there had been 13% increase in passengers.

The recent introduction of concessionary fares on bus transport for the elderly had been too recent to gauge any decrease in rail use although there had been a slight decrease in the sale of railcards for the elderly. One of the most serious issues facing the Company is over crowding on the trains, when at peak times half the capacity of the full train will be standing. Although extra trains do not necessarily mean more income the Company is working with the Strategy Rail Authority in an attempt to increase the capacity of trains and extend the platforms to accommodate them.

A second locomotive and 4 carriages were introduced in November on the Rhymney line and a decision is awaited from the Strategic Rail Authority on the proposal to strengthen 2 journeys on the Rhymney/Cardiff line to 4 carriages.

It was also noted that the majority of the Rhymney operations on a Saturday would be locomotive hauled with 4 carriages from 2nd June 2002.

The Company is working closely with local authorities and Railtrack to improve facilities at the stations. The introduction of CCTV and 'Help Points' has been installed at many of the stations and a proposal is being considered for a bus turning area at Ystrad Mynach Station where buses provide a link to and from Blackwood.

A comprehensive refurbishment has been carried out on the carriages which is expected to be completed by March 2003. Images will be painted on the side on the carriages and Caerphilly Castle will be included.

A member referred to the proposed opening of the Ebbw Vale line and the timescale envisaged. Mr Howitt answered that a substantial amount of investment would be needed and it would possibly be some years before the line was operational for passengers.

A member raised a concern that although a letter of concern had been sent to Railtrack in 1998 the poor visible condition of the steel railway bridge at Cardiff Road, Caerphilly had remained the same. It was agreed by Mr Hyatt that he would investigate this matter with Railtrack.

The Chairman thanked Mr Howitt for attending the meeting and his informative presentation.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM CAERPHILLY TOWN COUNCIL

Steel Road Bridge A469 - Caerphilly Railway Station

It was noted that this item had been discussed earlier in the meeting with the representatives from Cardiff Railway Company.

Removal of Graffiti - Premises and Stonework in the Town Centre

The Town Clerk outlined to members the problem areas of graffiti and maintenance in the Town Centre.

Mr Howland reported that a maintenance programme had been arranged to renovate the stonework and art work at Station Square and Southgate Square.

The concern at the graffiti was discussed and it reported that the majority of the graffiti was on privately owned premises. It was agreed that a letter be sent from the Council encouraging the owners of these premises to remove the graffiti.

Resurfacing of Major Roads e.g. Nantgarw Road

Mr Earey circulated a street map outlining the part of Nantgarw Road which had shortly been scheduled for resurfacing. Members expressed concern that a similar road surface problem may occur when Wessex Water complete their works at Cardiff Road. Mr Earey explained however that Wessex Water has a requirement to only reinstate the road to a reasonable surface.

A concern was also raised at the number of parked cars at the entrance of Bonfield Estate although it was explained that there are no parking restrictions at that location.

Skateboarding - Progress of Bye Law

The problems of skateboarders at various locations in the town centre and the difficulties facing the police in this matter were discussed.

Officers outlined the progress on the introduction of the new Bye Law to prohibit skateboarding. However as a representative from Legal Services was not present to confirm any details the Chairman agreed to contact the department for more information and to report any progress back to members of the group.

The meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.
