



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE,
TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J.Bevan - Chairman
Councillor J. Fussell – Vice- Chairman

Councillors:

G.G. Hibbert, M. Newman, S. Kent and M. Prew

Councillor D.T. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Together with:

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), A. Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager), D. Earey (Principal Engineer –South), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), D. Price (Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer), P. Hudson (Tourist Officer), J. Elliot (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

Also Present:

R. Gough (GAVO), K. Robottom (CRA), J. Stephens (CADW), K. Williams (Caerphilly Town Council), J. Couzens (Castle Court Shopping Centre), Mrs. S. Cooper (Caerphilly Access Group), Inspector B. Williams (Gwent Police) and L. Shattock (CIRP).

APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. C. Forehead and T. White (Refuse and Cleansing Officer).

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record.

Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group held on 6th June 2007.

MATTERS ARISING

2. Top of Town Development (minute No. 3)

It was noted that the planning application for the Top of Town development had be approved

by the Welsh Assembly Government and the developer will now be looking to acquire the properties in the area.

The scheme will possibly be completed in three phases with the smallest block at the castle end completed first.

3. Caerphilly Visitor Centre – Ground Floor Lease (Minute No. 6)

It was reported that a range of issues regarding this property would shortly be presented in a report to Cabinet.

4. Caerphilly Flower Festival - Update (minute No. 10)

Mr. Price reported that the Flower Festival had again been a successful event. It was noted that the Independent Retailers had contributed £500 to publicise the event in the local Campaign newspaper. Mr. Price also made reference to the success of Caerphilly in the Wales in Bloom Competition who had year achieved a 'Silver Gilt' prize. The official presentation for the award will be held at Caerphilly Castle on 28th September 2007. Members of the Group thanked his department for all their hard work. Mr. Highway also reported that a new set of flower banners would be displayed in the town in preparation for the Wales in Bloom awards ceremony.

5. Post Office Closure (minute No. 12)

The Group expressed disappointment at the apparent disregard of concerns raised regarding the relocation of the Post Office at the Twyn to W H Smith at the Castle Court Centre. It was reported that work to accommodate the new Post Office would commence on 10th September. Concerns were raised by members regarding fire regulations and general capacity for queuing in the building although it was noted that requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act and Building Regulations would need to be complied with.

It was agreed that an officer would consult with the Development Control Section for further information on these matters.

6. Crescent Road Playing Fields Entrance Feature (minute no 14)

Mr. Dallimore circulated a copy of a photograph that had been obtained of the original Eisteddfod Arch. He reported that he was discussing with the Tourism Section the work needed to prepare a scheme in conjunction with the facilities needed for the Big Cheese event and progress an overall environmental scheme for the area.

7. CORRESPONDENCE FROM CAERPHILLY TOWN COUNCIL

The following items were submitted for discussion:-

(a) Provision of handrail at steps leading from Twyn Car Park to Market Street –

Mr Earey responded that unfortunately this request had been previously considered but that the area was too narrow to accommodate a handrail. It was suggested however that a rail on one side may be beneficial and the representatives from the Access Group indicated that they would visit the area and report back to Mr. Earey.

(b) Need to move dropped Kerb outside the Post Office –

It was reported that Mr Highway had recently met with the Town Clerk to discuss the concern and take photographic evidence. He had subsequently passed the information on to the appropriate officer and that both items had been added to the Town Centre Audit.

8. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Robottom referred to the letter attached to the agenda and circulated recent photographs of vehicles parked illegally within the town centre.

Inspector B. Williams responded to the letter and expressed his disappointment that although he had held meetings with the residents they were still insistent on pursuing this issue. Inspector Williams gave statistical evidence on the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued from June to August in the town centre:-

Cardiff Road - 112 fixed penalty notices in loading bays
St. Fagan's Street - 98 fixed penalty notices in resident bays
Windsor Street - 31 fixed penalty notices in resident bays

(With other streets a total of 283 fixed penalty notices were issues in total)

He asked members to compare these figures to Newport City Centre who had issued 14 during the same period. Inspector Williams considered that if a comparison was made of other nearby town centres then Caerphilly possibly had issued a very excessive number of fixed penalty tickets.

Inspector Williams also reminded the group that issuing tickets does not always prevent people re-offending and that although his officers would continue to enforce illegal parking there would be no increase in staff. Inspector Williams considered that any further escalation of the issue could be seen as excessive and over zealous. This could have an adverse effect on the local businesses as shoppers may be deterred from using the town centre and more importantly he was not prepared to reduce his manpower at the expense of dealing with other crime and disorder issues within the town centre.

Mr. Shattock (CIRP) agreed with Inspector Williams and reported that he had witnessed verbal abuse to the traffic warden and CPSO's on a number of occasions when they were attempting to control illegal parking in the town centre. However he made reference to a few local businesses that rely on their vehicle for loading during the day (e.g. florist) and if there was any possibility of issuing a business permit to these retailers.

Mr. Earey responded that a balance of need must be considered and one request will upset another parking group although he agreed that it might be possible to organise a small committee with the Police and traders to discuss these issues.

The Chairman also suggested that the resident Association should consider attending the local PACT (Partnership and Communities Together) meetings, which had proved extremely successful in addressing a number of local issues.

9. TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – JULY 2007

Details of the July Audit were noted and it was reported that a number of items had been progressed / finalised since the report was prepared.

Matter raised from the Audit:-

Page 4 Painting of Shop Front – Cardiff Road – Mr. Shattock reported that the majority of retailers were in favour of a improving their premises – this will be progressed with the appropriate funding body.

Page 4 Developer Meeting – Cardiff Road – reported earlier that although planning permission has been granted there is little progress to discuss at present- however a meeting between the developer and retailers was required to investigate possible leases in the new development.

Page 5 Refuse Issues, Pentreban Street – Enforcement Team had visited the premises although noted that the problem still exists – will remain on the town centre audit.

Page 6 Drinking and Littering – David Williams Park – noted that there has again been problems in the area and one incident with the Park Ranger.

Page 7 Business Crime – Bartlett Street – congratulations given to the Police for their response and advice given to the new retailer.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 5th December 2007 at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN