



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK
ON WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH 2009 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor J.E. Fussell – Vice-Chairman (Presiding)

Councillors:

S. Kent and M.J. Prew

R. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside

Together with:

I.MacVicar (Business Development Officer), A.Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager),
A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), P. Hudson (Tourism Officer), J. Elliott
(Research Officer), S. Beacham (Senior Parks Officer), M. Cook (Manager TIC), and
D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer)

Also Present:

K. Robottom (CRA), E.Talbot (CIRP), J. Stephens (Cadw) and K. Williams (Clerk, Caerphilly
Town Council).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P.Bevan and Mrs S.Cooper (Caerphilly
Access Group).

1. BEREAVEMENT

The Chairman referred to the recent death of Councillor Geoff Hibbert who had been a
member of the Management Group. Members and officers stood in silence as a mark of
respect.

2. MINUTES

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

Caerphilly Town Centre Management Management Group held on 3rd December
2009.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Top of Town Development (minute no 2)

It was reported that officers had met recently with the developer to discuss possible funding from European Convergence for the development.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Regeneration and Countryside had also attended several meetings with the Deputy First Minister at the Welsh Assembly to stress on a political level the importance of the scheme.

Councillor Davies reported that should funding be considered through JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) the earliest decision would be 2010, in addition as the project falls within another strategic framework there would be further delays which is unrealistic for this project. Also the principle driver of the project was housing which in the present market is difficult to promote.

He considered that the council should continue to lobby the Welsh Assembly for a commitment but that other smaller options may need to be considered to improve the top of town.

4. Condition of Co Co's Building (minute no 4)

Members are aware that the owner of the Co Co's Discount building is resistant to any present improvement and therefore officers have been considering options to provide some form of cladding to cover the building.

Mr Dallimore circulated a report showing photographs of various short term options to clad the building using a hoarding / building wrap.

The possibility of funding from advertising on the building wrap was discussed although it was noted that the owner of the building has indicated that he will only permit the scheme if remunerated for granting such permission.

The general condition of the building was discussed and although it was reported that remedial work had been completed by the owner a few months ago (following a notice served on him) it was still considered by a member that it is a dangerous building.

It was agreed that the council's Building Control section be requested to re-visit the property and that their findings be conveyed to the Independent Retailers Association and Councillor Fussell. If the building is then considered unsafe, the various powers and options available to the council be explored and some dialogue be sought with the owner.

5. Planning Application – Tesco Stores (Minute no 7)

Mr Highway reported that he had received a letter from the Chief Executive of Tesco giving an assurance that there were no proposals to close their store in the Town Centre when the new store at Gallagher Retail Park is opened. The front of the town centre store had also been fitted with a new façade following representation from officers.

6. Seating Facilities (minute no 8)

Mr Highway reported that new seating and benches below the Tourist Information Centre had recently been installed in an attempt to address the concern at the lack of seating in the town centre.

7. Grant Assistance – Working men’s Hall (minute no 10)

Councillor Fussell reported that a number of new members had recently been elected on the management committee of the hall and were keen to explore funding for renovation. A full structural survey will be carried out on the building with a grant from a CCBC Technical Assistant Fund.

8. Parking on Grass Verge – Nantgarw Road (minute no 11)

It was suggested that a knee rail or a chain could deter the cars from parking although it was agreed that the situation be monitored as Cadw are still working in the area.

9. Use of Former Indoor Market Site (minute no 12)

Mr MacVicar reported that the feasibility of re-opening the indoor market at Pentrebane Street had been considered and did not seem to be commercially or financially viable.

The traditional market trade has dwindled and many of the market stalls have suffered with the availability of cut price good in the retail stores.

The physical condition of the former Market building is poor inside and outside and would possibly need a considerable financial investment to refurbish it. There are health and safety issues as asbestos is present and it does not comply to DDA standards.

Mr Talbot reported that he had compiled a list of parties interested in trading from the building and expressed disappointment that it could not be considered.

It was agreed however that Mr MacVicar would investigate the feasibility of funding for a full structural survey to determine exact costings to re-open the building.

10. EVAN JAMES MEMORIAL

Mr Dallimore circulated suggestions for a memorial to Evan James and the Management Group considered that Option 2 (the carving of the Welsh dragon’s head and wings with the words of the anthem around a sycamore tree at Dafydd Williams Park) was the preferred option.

11. EISTEDDFOD ARCH

It was reported that the stone pillars would be completed by the end of the week and the canopy fitted next week. The best location for the flower beds will then be discussed and all work should be completed by the early April.

12. PROPOSED LIFE TRAIL /WELLBEING UNITS

Mr Beacham outlined the report and explained the units will encourage older adults into gentle exercise as part of their normal walking routines.

It was agreed that the purchase be agreed in principle and that a contribution of £2,200 be given from the Community Forum Budget .It was suggested that Mr Beacham explore other possible funding and if unsuccessful make a further request for the balance from the 2009/2010 budget allocation.

13. CHRISTMAS MARKET

Mr Hudson circulated a report on the proposals for the 2009 Caerphilly Christmas Market .He explained that it is proposed that this year there would be a temporary closure of Cardiff Road and part of Castle Street in order to achieve a greater integration and expansion of the event into the town centre. Business operators within the town will be advised that deliveries will need to be made in advance of the weekend and a dialogue will be entered into with local residents to allay any fears of extraneous traffic.

The entry cost to the castle over this weekend was discussed and Mr Stephens (Cadw) reported that at last year's event the total income was £7,976 and expenditure costs were £12,500 so that approximately £4,500 was subsidised for the event. The proposal was this year to allow local residents free entry but to still make a charge to other visitors.

A suggestion was made that in view of the success and increasing numbers of the event, Cadw consider free entry during the weekend as they gain a lot of publicity and could regard it as a sustainable venture.

Mr Stephens replied that the proposal was a compromise given the strictly limited budget, although alternative ways of using the subsidy could possibly be discussed in the future.

It was agreed that a lot of work is still needed to prepare for the event and that Cadw be asked to review their position and possibly consider different options in the future.

14. PARASOLS FOR CAERPHILLY VISITOR CENTRE

Mr Cook ,The Manager of the Tourist Information Centre, Caerphilly, outlined a proposal for semi permanent parasols to be purchased and used on the Lower Twyn Square as this would then allow the area to be used as an over-spill area for the growing programme of small community events even in bad weather.

It was reported that additional seating is currently being installed in the area so that a relaxing covered area would be created with the parasols.

It was agreed that a contribution of £1,800 be given to purchase one parasol unit ,subject to the planning and the highways section confirming that they have no objections. A liaison with the Parks department would also be prudent as a number of hanging baskets are set up in this area.

15. PROPOSAL FOR MEMORIAL TO MALCOLM UPHILL

Members discussed a proposal to erect a memorial to Malcolm Uphill who was born and lived in Caerphilly. He was the first man to lap the Isle of Man TT at over 100 m.p.h.

It was reported that the Caerphilly Motor Cycle and Light Car Club were keen to be involved in the discussions and may be able to provide a financial contribution.

It was also noted that his widow who still resides in Caerphilly would be in favour of a plaque. Mr Dallimore indicated that he would discuss the matter in further detail with Mr Talbot and other interested parties and report back to the next meeting.

16. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items were reported for information:

a) Retail Job Creation, Caerphilly 2008

Mr Highway outlined the report and explained the retail job figures for 2008. He reported that although it had been an extremely difficult time for retailers in the High Street, Caerphilly had attracted a number of new businesses to the town although the loss of Woolworths had resulted in a large number of job losses.

The footfall figures are however positive and Castle Court still continues to attract a large number of shoppers from north Cardiff.

The Town Centre news is now circulated widely and enabled the retailers to feel part of the community.

Members noted the report

b) Caerphilly Town Centre Audit – March 2009

Details of the March Audit were noted and the following point raised:-

New Cigarette Bins (Page 3) – a question was raised on the number of cigarette bins and locations throughout the town - a response to be given at the next meeting.

17. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17th June 2009 at 2.00 pm

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm