



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON THURSDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

C. Elsbury, S. Kent, M. Newman AMD Mrs L. Williams
R. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside

Also Present:

K. Williams (Clerk, Caerphilly Town Council), K. Robottom (CRA), E. Talbot (CIRP) and
R. Gough (GAVO).

Together with:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban
Renewal), C. Davies (Senior Environmental Health Officer), P. Hudson (Senior Events and
Marketing Officer), S. Beacham (Senior Parks Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support
Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Prew, Ms J. Arrowsmith (Cadw),
J. Elliott (Research Officer) and J. Bennett (Group Manager – Advisory Services).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2010 were received as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

2. Free Access to Caerphilly Castle (minute 2)

A meeting has yet to be arranged with Cadw regarding concerns that free access into the
castle should be given to all visitors during the Medieval Market week-end.

3. Malcolm Uphill Memorial (minute no 3)

Noted that fundraising is continuing and that £300 had been granted from Caerphilly Town
Council to the fund.

4. AIR QUALITY IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Mrs Claire Davies (Senior Environmental Health Officer) was attending the meeting for this item. Mrs Davies reported that work is continuing with consultants and that the situation is generally improving. The Steering Group will reconvene at the end of the year when the 2010 data is available. Although there are still a few problem areas, there is an improved trend in the town centre readings. This may be due to a number of factors, i.e. weather, better fuel and the scrapage scheme which has resulted in fewer older cars with bad emissions on the road.

Members noted the progress made and thanked Mrs Davies for attending. A further report to be presented when appropriate.

5. CAERPHILLY FLOWER FESTIVAL

Members watched a slide show presentation of the exhibitions and venues at the Caerphilly Flower Festival. This years festival was the fifth year it had been held. Next year's event will also be over a three day period (a preview day for the churches on a Friday) and held on the 24th, 25th and 26th June with a theme of 'Nature meets Industry'. More churches and voluntary organisations have expressed an interest to be involved and it is hoped to attract more families to the event next year. It will remain a free festival for visitors.

Thanks were recorded to Mr Andrew Highway and Mr Simon Beacham and to all officers who had been involved in the successful event this year. It was reported that the prestigious Silver Gilt Award had been awarded to Caerphilly by the Wales in Bloom Competition. The judges were impressed that the local council, Cadw, local businesses, Arriva Trains and Caerphilly Town Council had all contributed to achieve the result. Mr Beacham confirmed that financial restraints may result in some small changes for next year's programme but assured members that they would be working to achieve the same impact and displays throughout the town.

It was agreed that a contribution of £3,000 be given to the 2011 Caerphilly Flower Festival from the Area Forum Budget.

6. CHRISTMAS MARKET REPORT

Mr Paul Hudson outlined arrangements for the forthcoming Medieval Christmas Market and gave details of the 2009 event. The report circulated gave details of the proposed site layout and it was noted that suggestions to utilise and increase the footfall at Pentrebane Street and Castle Court Centre are being considered. A number of traffic management issues are also being addressed and a map illustrating the park and ride route and road closure was circulated. The benefits of holding regular events and increasing visitors to the town was discussed and it was agreed **that a contribution of £2,000 be given to the 2010 Caerphilly Medieval Christmas Market from the Area Forum Budget.**

7. UPDATE ON PENTREBANE STREET CAFÉ QUARTER

Mr Allan Dallimore reported that the experimental traffic order at Pentrebane Street was in place and that there were good occupancy levels for the retail premises at this location. The tables, chairs and recent planters had attempted to improve the streetscape. There has however been a number of vandalism incidents to the planters and an introduction of a permanent kerb line is being considered. This and any re-surfacing work not however be completed until the new year, as the road will be dug up for scheduled utilities work. A concern was raised at the parking in the loading bays of large vehicles which restricts views from the café area and other general parking issues.

Mr Dallimore indicated that he would investigate the matters raised although he reminded members that budget restraints may prevent further work in this area. An update will be presented to the next meeting.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

Town Centre Management Retail Survey

Mr. Highway outlined the findings of a Town Centre Retail Survey. He explained the methodology and the results obtained. The questionnaire was distributed to 170 retailers and there was a response from 69. The biggest response was from independent retailers (44 responses). The overall findings appear to indicate that although the majority of retailers are still experiencing falling sales, business optimism is increasing and there appears to be a more positive attitude amongst retailers about the future.

One question asked if the retailers had a web site (40 responded that they did) and if they sold goods on line (only 24 responded that they did). Although a number of shops would be unable to sell online (e.g. charity shops) there does appear to be a missed opportunity by some retailers to create a 24 hour shop window. Mr Highway indicated that colleagues in Business Advisory Services would be exploring the options available to encourage retailers to have an on line presence. The findings also indicated that the Town Centre News and Footfall Index continue to provide useful information to the retailers.

9. CAERPHILLY TCIG AUDIT – MAY 2010

The Caerphilly Town Centre Audit for May 2010 was received and noted.

Eisteddfod Plaque (Page 5) – A paper was circulated giving four possible locations for a 1950 Eisteddfod Plaque to be installed:-

- Location 1 on the stone Pillars of the Eisteddfod Arch
- Location 2 to fit to the floor space within the Eisteddfod Arch
- Location 3 underneath the bench adjacent to the Eisteddfod Arch
- Location 4 at the lectern adjacent to the Eisteddfod Arch

The Group agreed that Location 1 (on the stone pillars) would be the preferred location.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that a public consultation and exhibition on key development sites in the town centre would be held from 11th - 31st October at the Tourist Information Centre (downstairs). The exhibition will have staff available to discuss any issues on Saturday 16th, Monday 18th Wednesday 20th, Saturday 23rd and Monday 25th October.

The 2002 Town Centre Action Plan is now outdated and feedback from the consultation will help to evolve a new action plan to set out a way forward and vision for the town.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 16th December 2010 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm.