



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY 2ND MARCH 2011 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

Also Present:

Ms J. Perkins (Cadw), Mr J. Couzens (Centre Manager, Castle Court), Mrs S. Cooper (Caerphilly Access Group), Mr K. Robottom (CRA) and Mr K. Williams (Clerk – Caerphilly Town Council).

Together with:

A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), P. Hudson (Senior Events & Marketing Officer) and J. Elliott (Research Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Prew, J. Bennett (Group Manager – Advisory Services) and Mr E. Talbot (CIRP).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group meeting held on 16th December 2010 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

2. Malcolm Uphill Memorial (minute no 2)

Although a design has been prepared there appears to be little progress in fundraising. Caerphilly Town Council have allocated a donation of £500 but this may need to be withdrawn if further funding is not found. Mr Dallimore indicated that he would contact the organisers with suggestions of possible funding streams.

3. Air Quality in the Town Centre (minute no 6)

The Chairman reported that the officer dealing with this matter had notified him that there was no progress to report at present but that she would be able to give more information in a few weeks time following re-engagement with the consultants.

4. Update on Eisteddfod Plaque (minute no 10)

It was noted that the plaque had been fitted and it was suggested that the Communications Manager be contacted to consider if any publicity could be gained from the public donation.

5. NEW LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE

A press release regarding the proposed building on the site of the former Post Office building near to Twyn Square had been attached to the agenda. The new facility will accommodate a library, customer first centre, a heritage centre together with other organisations occupying the building such as Gwent Police.

A number of questions were raised on the facility but officers reported that the development was in the early stages and that more detail would be available at a later date. It was therefore agreed that the development be a regular agenda item for meetings and Mr Highway indicated that he would also put the development on the Town Centre Audit.

6. CHRISTMAS MEDIEVAL MARKET AND PROMS IN THE PARK

Mr Hudson gave a post event report on the recent Medieval Market held at Caerphilly town centre on 11th and 12th December 2010.

A paper was circulated giving the footfall statistics, details of the entertainment provided, number of coaches and marketing for the event. The paper also contained various positive comments from visitors, traders, event entertainers and coach operators.

Although the visitors numbers were slightly down on the previous year there had again been a number of coaches booked in for the event. The comments from traders at Pentrebane Street had been positive.

The footfall numbers were down for the castle and officers will be discussing with Cadw the possible reasons for this. Thanks were recorded to Cadw who had allowed free access to accompanied children during the market week-end and it was hoped that this would continue.

The Proms in the Park scheduled for 10th September 2011 was also discussed and it was noted that the official announcement of the acts will start from April. The audience capacity will be set at 5,000 and will commence at 7.45pm on the night.

It was agreed that this event be a standing item on the agenda until the event has passed.

Ms Perkins (Cadw) reported that the successful light and sound spectacular Illuminata Show would again be held in the castle between 30th September and the 8th October.

7. IMPROVEMENTS TO PENTREBANE STREET

It was noted that Wales and West Utilities had not yet confirmed their programme of work for Pentrebane Street. Although they need to give 3 months notice prior to the start the council can reject their application if there are issues (e.g. the Big Cheese, Proms in the Park).

Until this work has been completed further enhancements cannot be progressed to enhance the street as a café culture area. Mr Dallimore reported that re-surfacing and a permanent kerb line will be installed with planters to make more use of the areas in front of the shops. A new artwork will also be commissioned for the wall facing Cardiff Road (on the side of the Bonnie Babies premises).

8. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CO CO'S DISCOUNT BUILDING

Mr Dallimore reported that a letter had been sent recently to the agent of the developer granting planning permission with a number of conditions for a public house. He suggested that the plans for the building be brought to the next meeting.

9. TAXI RANK AT CASTLE COURT – UPDATE

It was noted that for a number of reasons there had been a long delay in progressing the installation of a taxi rank near the Castle Court band stand. The present situation is that the council's Engineering Project Group are awaiting a response/cost estimate from Welsh Water and that the situation is at present at a standstill.

It was agreed that an officer from highways attend the next meeting to give an update on this matter.

Members were reminded that this Management Group had been opposed to the taxi rank at this location.

10. BLUETOOTH NETWORK IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Councillor Kent gave a short presentation on the advantages of a Bluetooth Network being available in the town centre. He explained the process for retailers to advertise offers and how users would access the information. It was suggested that it could be a Town Council funded initiative but with support from the county borough.

It was suggested that Caerphilly Town Council should invite the company to discuss the arrangements and costs and then the initiative could be further discussed by this Group.

Mr Highway indicated that he could if necessary contact retailers through the Town Centre News to gauge interest.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

Caerphilly Town Centre Report 2010

The report gave information on the number of jobs created and lost in Caerphilly town centre throughout 2010. The report also outlined the UK Retail Overview and the Caerphilly Retail overview for 2010.

In Caerphilly town a number of improvements included Pentrebanne Street being rebranded as a Café Quarter and the indoor market reopened in December. The vacancy rates in Cardiff Road continued to fall as new businesses opened. Castle Court Centre remained fully let throughout the year and a new electronic Retail Property Directory has been established. A number of events have been a showcase for the county borough but have also been an opportunity for local businesses to engage with a wider audience. The Town Centre Development Manager has continued to support the retailers and for the first time every business in the town now receives a copy of the Town Centre News. Mr Highway also made

reference to the Town Centre Improvement Group where many town centre issues are discussed with officers and the chairs of the town centre management groups and chaired by the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning.

It was agreed that confidence in the future of the town centre was a major part in it's success and the proposed developments discussed earlier would contribute to this.

A vote of thanks was given to Mr Highway for his hard work and professionalism.

Reference was also made to the Caerphilly Workman's Hall where positive talks had been held with the local committee who had shown a determination to progress a feasibility study and action plan for the building.

12. CAERPHILLY TCIG AUDIT – JANUARY 2011

The Caerphilly Town Centre Audit for January 2011 was received and noted.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Thanks were recorded to Cadw for their cooperation in allowing a junior choir from Lannion (the twin town of Caerphilly) free access to the Castle on their visit.

14. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19th March 2011 at 2.00pm (Rhymney Room).

The meeting closed at 3.30pm