



CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TREDOMEN BUSINESS CENTRE
ON THURSDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 2012 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Cllr. P. Bevan - Chairman
Cllr. J.E. Fussell - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

C. Elsbury, M.H. Newman, Mrs. L. Williams

Together with:

Ms. J. Perkins (Cadw), Mrs. S. Cooper (Caerphilly Access Group), Mr. R. Gough (GAVO), Mr. K. Robottom (CRA), Mr. R. Williams (CIRP), Mr. K. Williams (Caerphilly Town Clerk), Ms. J. Bennett (Group Manager, Business & Enterprise Support), Mr. A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), Mr. A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal & Conservation), Mr. P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), Mr. G. Barry (Assistant Engineer), Mr. S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), Mr. J. Elliott (Research Officer), Ms. Jackie Dix (Policy & Research Manager).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Davies, Mr E. Talbot (CIRP).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr. K. Robottom raised an interest on the town centre audit - collapsed wall (p9), which relates to his daughter.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the 24 November 2011 be approved as a true record with the amendment that Mr K. Williams (Caerphilly Town Centre Clerk) was in attendance at the meeting of Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group on 24th November 2011.

3. COMPLAINTS REFERENCE ACCIDENT CLAIMS OPERATORS CARDIFF ROAD (FROM TOWN CENTRE AUDIT)

Mr. Gavin Barry (Highways) informed that Mr. John Rodgers (Legal & Governance) has drawn up a formal notice on obstruction on the highway. A break of management regulations has now occurred twice with further violation potentially leading to a custodial sentence. Agreed for this to be brought to the attention of the Police in the next Town Centre Group Improvement Management Meeting, with item to be on the agenda of the next Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group Meeting.

4. NEW BUILDING UPDATE

Mr. Allan Dallimore (Urban Renewal & Conservation) informed contractors on site with full demolition to take place in the spring, with a view to the new building opening 2013. Local groups are being consulted over specification. Mr. Dallimore to come back to the next Caerphilly Town Centre Management Meeting with further information following the consultation.

5. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE TOILETS

Mr. Andrew Highway (Town Centre Management) informed that the complaints made about the condition of the toilets had been discussed with Mr Ian MacVicar (Economic Development) and Mr. Tony White (Waste Strategy & Operations). The following solutions have been agreed:-

- Extractor vent to be replaced in both men and women's toilets
- Cracks in floor to be sealed with heavy paint
- Railings to be erected to stop people sleeping rough at the back of the toilets
- Heating upgraded
- New signage installed stating toilets regularly monitored and inspected
- Soap dispensers have been replaced
- Police alerted to problems and have agreed to patrol when in area.

6. MALCOLM UPHIL PLAQUE VISUALS

Mr. Dallimore circulated visuals for the plaque around the table, which are currently obtaining a quote for. Mr. Richard Williams (Caerphilly Town Centre) thanked Mr. Dallimore for all his work with the project stating that Caerphilly town Centre Council had raised £4,000 towards the cost of the plaque. The Chair thanked all those who have contributed financially and also those involved with fund raising.

7. CAERPHILLY MEDIEVAL MARKET

Mr. Paul Hudson (Marketing & Events) spoke to his written report noting this was the eighth time the event had been held and the third year roads had been closed in the centre of town. He reported the footfall to the event had been positive with 23% more people attending on the Saturday than for the previous year. Unfortunately there was rainfall on the Sunday, but nevertheless a good attendance.

Mr. Hudson has focused on stimulating an interest with three hundred coach companies in Wales and England in the surrounding areas to the Caerphilly borough. A close working arrangement has also been formed with CADW in both planning and running this event. Together every attempt is made to keep the event fresh maximising on the unique selling

point of the event for business. A school completion was held in designing a banner which will be used in future advertisements for the event.

There was a problem with two delivery vehicles becoming stuck. However, information had previously been given out on the road closures.

Ms. Julie Perkins (CADW) endorsed the success of the event but noted improvements could be made by encouraging businesses stay open between 5.30pm and 7.30pm before the commencement of the illuminations show. It was noted that 2,036 people attended the illuminations show.

Mr. Steve Wilcox (Town Centre Management) has undertaken a post event survey with retailers. Thirty one businesses responded with positive comments received, although half the retailers felt they had experienced no direct business benefits from the event.

Mr. R. Gough (GAVO) suggested the survey should be widened out to include eateries and entertainment establishments. This was agreed with the view to form a standardised post event feedback form to be used across the town centres in ascertain the views of all beneficiaries to events.

Cllr. Elsbury asked whether ice rinks improve footfall. However, the price for hiring an ice rink for a week was £25,000 and this was seen to be prohibitive.

Cllr. Fussell asked how many shops took concessions. The answer was four. Cllr. Fussell also asked if a canopy could be provided for future events. Ms. Perkins said a walkway around was being considered and Cadw was currently looking at financial aspect.

8. AIR QUALITY UPDATE CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE

An information report noted that the Council are currently investigating an area of Nantgarw Road that is failing the annual air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide. A minimum of six months continuous monitoring data is required to run the air quality model, which will predict the extent of the area that is failing the air quality objective. The results should be known by the summer.

Members felt given the technical nature of the report it would have been beneficial for an officer to be there to take questions and requested an officer to attend the next Caerphilly Town Centre Meeting to take questions on this report.

9. RETAIL JOBS REPORT

Mr. Highway talked through his written report taking a longitudinal look at retail on both a UK and Caerphilly level. In 2011 overall UK premium retailers did better than value ones, 2011 saw job losses and Government austerity measures correlating with a decline in consumer confidence. The summer months in 2011 were poor in temperature, consequently consumers spent less on summer clothing and other summer related items. At the end of 2011 the retail environment remained tough.

At the start of 2011 all Castle Court shopping centre units were fully let. The women's clothing retailer *Bonmarche* was a welcome addition as was the opening of *Gregg's*. However, there was the loss of *Mothercare*.

In the approach to 2012 Castle Court is continuing to perform well. There has been the addition of *Brighthouse*, however, as this store trades on people borrowing money to purchase their goods it tends to operate in areas of high deprivation.

Mr. Highway noted that the presence of street pastors provided useful commentary on the nighttime economy with Caerphilly town centre appearing to be in the middle range of activity.

Mr. Highway thanked Mr. Hudson for the two events held each year in Caerphilly town centre, which are proving so successful in attracting people into the centre. He commented that the Town Centre Management Improvement Group is working hard to attract visitors to the Caerphilly town centre. He also gave thanks to Mr. S. Wilcox in the valuable contribution he has made for the first year in his new role of Assistant Town Centre Manager.

10. TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

The following comments were made on the audit:-

- Bus Stop Kerb, Castle Street (p1) - work imminent.
- Streetscape Project, Pentrebane Street (p3) - Mr. Dallimore has been chasing, and has been told the work is likely to be completed close to either side of the financial year.
- Lines & Signs Town Centre (p3) - still not done.
- Proms in the Park - BBC will make announcement of location of next proms in April.
- Fencing Repairs, Owain Glyndwr Fields (p5) - completed.
- Tree Cutting, Lower Twyn (p5) - completed.
- Grit Bins Town Centre (p5) - completed.
- Cleansing of Moat Bank (p5) - litter picking soon to be undertaken.
- Water Leak, Cardiff Road (p7) - water is still seeping. A watching brief needs to be maintained. Cadw agreed to investigate this further and report back to the next Caerphilly Town Centre Group Meeting. It was thought that there could be a spring there and a site meeting involving utilities, Cadw & CCBC (Mr. Dallimore lead) may be necessary.
- Condition of Steps, Cardiff Road (p8) - completed
- Tommy Cooper Statue (p8) - cobbles replaced, Mr. Dallimore to check if statue requires re-cementing.
- Grit Bin, Pentrebane Street (p8) - completed.
- Steps Twyn (p9) - completed
- Collapsed Wall (p9) - relates to Mr. Robottom declaration of interest.
- New entry on town centre audit single rail to be inserted for steps.

11. CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIAN GUARDRAILS

Following a report to the last meeting of Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group a survey has been carried out with retailers along Cardiff Road to establish their views on the potential to remove the pedestrian guardrails through the town centre. The findings of the survey were circulated showing half of retailers surveyed were in favour of removing the guardrails. However, there were concerns expressed that removing the guardrails would compromise safety for school children and older people. The Chair proposed to leave the barriers there this was seconded and put to the vote, which unanimously upheld that the barriers should remain in place. There were no abstentions.

The meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.