



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH JUNE 2013 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

D.T. Davies (took the chair following his appointment), D. Price, H.A. Andrews, A. Higgs, K. James, D. Price.

Together with:

V. Stephens (Town Councillor), H. Llewellyn (Town Councillor), D. Morgan (Mayor), B. Jarrett (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), V.A. Button.

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), A. Jones (Complaints Officer), Inspector Sarah Greening (Gwent Police).

APOLOGIES

Councillor D. Carter, K. Reynolds, Mr. John Coles (Alun Griffiths Contractors), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor David Tudor Davies be appointed as Chairman and he formally took up his position.

It was agreed that Councillor Dianne Price be appointed as Vice Chairman.

The Chairman would like to have noted his appreciation for all the work that Councillor David Carter has carried out as Chairman for the Bargoed Town Centre Management Group over the past 5 years.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (6TH FEBRUARY 2013)

Previous minutes were taken as read.

3. MORRISONS UPDATE

Allan Dallimore confirmed that Simon's have been awarded the fit out contract and are looking for the store to be ready for opening before Christmas.

The Chair enquired as to what was happening to the land where number 27 previously was.

Allan Dallimore advised that this area of land is now classed as obsolete for development due to the sewer pipe and nothing could be built above it. It has been decided to landscape this land and flowers planted with possibility of seating dependent on funding but this will need further discussions with the architect from Capita to consider a long-term maintenance programme.

A request was made from Councillor Dianne Price to have a town clock placed on this site to which again clarification would be sought from the architect.

Jan Bennett has confirmed that Job Centre Plus will be holding 2 open days on the 16th & 17th August for appointments within the store. There will be a hotline available to the public for enquiries on the 6th August where potential candidates will then be given a 15 minutes slot for either of the two open days.

Job Centre Plus are anticipating approximately 800 applicants for the 220 vacancies. These posts will consist of 28 Management positions. The remaining vacancies will be part time or fixed term contracts between 10 to 30 hours per week.

A question was put to Allan Dallimore as to how high the Morrisons tower on the roof would be and Allan Dallimore has advised that he will be able to bring visual aids to show what the finished premises should look like to the next meeting.

4. CINEMA UPDATE

Allan Dallimore informed the group that the Legal Department are looking to finalise the 25-year lease. Procurement has shortlisted 6 Contractors who will be issued with the tender requirements in order for them to submit their tender quote for the contract. Allan Dallimore advised that he would be able to bring visual aids to show what the finished premises should look like to the next meeting.

The tender process is anticipated to take place between July and August and interviews will be held with Contractors and award of contract could be in place by the end of October.

Once Morrisons has opened the works will start immediately on site for the cinema. The contract work for the cinema is a 60-week programme and works are anticipated to be completed the early part of 2015.

A question was raised as to how much interest has there been in the other retail outlets.

It was confirmed that the property agents appointed by the Council have received a considerable amount of interest and it is hoped that all of the units will be filled.

Mr. Jarrett asked whether these units would be completed the same time as Morrisons opens.

Allan Dallimore advised that Simons would have the structures completed by the time Morrisons opens as for the internal completion works this will be down to the individual retailers to complete, as they require.

5. MARKET UPDATE

Andrew Highway read through the report and confirmed that there has been a drop in stalls recently and the Council are in discussions with the operator to source other potential stallholders for the market. There has been some interest expressed from food stallholders and this is being looked into.

Councillor Price raised the question as to whether or not an indoor market could be considered, as it appears that the weather is driving stallholders away. A number of buildings were vacant in the town and officers are looking at what potential uses these could be put to.

Andrew Highway advised that the current indoor markets located in Blackwood and Caerphilly were struggling also. The group were advised as the operator has a contract for 6 months the option of an indoor market could not be considered. It would need to be looked into after the 6 months has ended and then we could look into the possibility of an indoor market and look at potential premises if there is a need to.

6. PUBLIC REALM

Andrew Highway passed on John Coles apologies for not attending. Andrew Highway read through the report provided by John Coles. The report advised that the first phase works scheduled for mid August is ahead of schedule and should complete by the end of July.

Alun Griffiths Contractors have installed a memorial plaque in honour of James Thomas and this is to be unveiled soon. It is noted that Alun Griffiths Contractors have undertaken this work at no cost to the Council.

The Chair would like to note that the Contractors have worked well with the Council and members of the public and are very quick and good at dealing with problems straightaway.

Artwork for the square will not be carried out until the contract work is completed but Allan Dallimore will bring visual displays to the next meeting showing examples of the work.

Mr. Jarrett raised concerns over the deterioration of the current artwork opposite the police station and asked for clarification as to what would be happening with this.

Allan Dallimore advised that once works are completed the architect from Capita Simmons would be looking to see how artwork could be repaired and maintained. The issue is already on the Bargoed Town Centre Audit.

7. BUS STOPS

Allan Dallimore read through the report on the bus stop at Royal Square and discussions then took place on possible options to resolve any problems. Positioning of the bus stops is causing problems for traffic in particular the emergency services. The volume of buses stopping causes a gridlock problem. Requests were made for something to be done about it.

It was confirmed that there would be discussion with the bus company to see if the situation could be looked at. It was stated that once the works are completed in Hanbury Square the flow of traffic should improve.

Councillor Ken James confirmed that unfortunately there is no additional funding available so option (e) of the report is the only option at this present time.

8. PARKING

It has been identified that the parking in the town still remains a problem with people still parking illegally.

The group were advised by Allan Dallimore that further public realm works are to be put in place such as double yellow lines, posts and bollards along with street furniture and these should help in deterring drivers from parking illegally.

It was reported that the police have issued parking fines but given the length of the High Street there is an issue as by the time the police have made their way towards the drivers who have parked and quickly popped into the shops, most cars have then driven away. Members of the group stated that this is not really a deterrent for drivers.

It was requested that Wardens be returned to the town to prevent drivers from parking illegally. Andrew Highway confirmed that discussions took place with the Police previously when the scheme was conceived, at this time a Traffic Warden was still in post. Circumstances have now changed following Gwent Police's decision to discontinue the Traffic Warden role and replace it Police Community Support Officers.

A question was raised as to introducing private Traffic Wardens as used in some other areas. The group were advised that parking regulations is not a Council role it is the Police who are responsible for the regulations on parking.

It was anticipated that once all the works have been completed and all the street furniture is in place the parking should improve.

9. UNIQUE PLACES

Andrew Highway read through the report and handed out a booklet on Unique Places and explained to the group that there is a model of how Town Centre Management Groups are run.

The new Unique Places brochure includes a number of endorsements praising the model of Town Centre Management as an example of good practice. The document will be used as a marketing tool.

10. EMPTY SHOPS

Andrew Highway advised that Urban Renewal and Town Centre Management Team are looking into empty premises to determine if they can be brought back into temporary use. The new Vibrant and Viable Places Regeneration Fund offers the potential to secure funding and the Council are working on a bid for monies.

Mr. Jarrett highlighted that there are vacant premises in the Emporium building, which is a landmark for the town and considers that these premises should be filled. Andrew Highway advised that there is hope of attracting private sector tenants into the area.

11. AUDIT

The audit was taken as read.

The police are to be thanked for all the work and time spent discussing issues with retailers over the subject of retail burglaries.

The meeting closed at 3:45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN