



RISCA TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLT HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON TUESDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 2013 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

N. George, P. Griffiths, K. James, D.T. Davies (Observer)

Together with:

M. Parker (Community Councillor), B. Hancock (Community Councillor), D. Hobbs (Community Councillor), Ms C Mortimer (Clerk), Mr G James (Clerk)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), G. Barry (Senior Assistant Engineer), A. Jones (Complaints Officer),

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: E. Aldworth, R. Passmore, D. Rees, P Leonard, C Edwards (Community Councillor), Inspector Muirhead (Gwent Police), G Richards, J. Bennett

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made

3. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (24TH JULY 2013)

Community Councillor Hancock raised a query from the minutes with regards to the Go2 project - page 4 of the minutes should state that there is no charge to join the site.

Also - point 9, page 5 - there was only one vehicle involved in the incident and not vehicles as stated in the minutes.

The minutes were then taken as read

4. UPDATE ON THE CUCKOO STATUE

Allan informed the group that he has been on site to investigate the condition of the surrounding area and as the land is privately owned the Council cannot go on and clean it.

Community Councillor Parker queried the land ownership and was under the impression that the land would be landscaped and that the Council would maintain it. A request was made to look into the possibility of contacting the owner in writing.

Allan will make further enquiries.

Councillor George asked if there could be anything done to stop the banners being displayed on the fencing by Tesco.

Gavin Barry confirmed that he would look into this with a view to getting them removed.

5. UPDATE ON TOILET BLOCK MURALS AND VOTE

Allan stated that the artist had been approached to come up with a few options for the designs of the murals. Steve then introduced the visual displays of the options.

- Option 1 - Modern Design
- Option 2 - Victorian Design
- Option 3 - Earthy Design
- Option 4 - Trompe L'oeil Design

The group were asked to consider which option they would like painted on the toilet block.

After discussions regarding the designs, maintenance and overall costs, the group decided that they would like to consider further options, which were

- Option 5 - To leave the toilet block as it is
- Option 6 - To paint 2 sides (rear and right-hand side) of the toilet block white and choose one of the designs.

The votes for the option were:-

- Option 1 - No votes
- Option 2 - No votes
- Option 3 - No votes
- Option 4 - No votes
- Option 5 - No votes
- Option 6 - 6 in favour

A second vote was then held and members voted for design Option 1 (6 votes in favour 0 against) to paint the rear elevation and the side facing the park only.

6. RETAIL SURVEY

Steve Wilcox showed the group a PowerPoint presentation comparing the results from the survey to previous years.

The survey this year received a much better response from all four, town centres. The overall feeling from the surveys revealed that the community spirit is valued.

3 out of 4 businesses feel that they will be trading in 12 months time. The best day for trading is over the weekend and more retailers have an online presence, however this could still be improved

Councillor Hancock asked why the Council are encouraging traders to use online service if we want the towns to do so well.

Steve advised that online trading enables people to shop in the evening or at times that they cannot go to the town. This allows retailers the opportunity to trade even when a shop is closed.

The footfall remained fairly constant and stable. Individuals asked for copies of the footfall figures. Steve asked those who would like the figures to email him and he would provide the figures each week.

A request was made for Park Road to be looked at. Andrew advised the Community Council to put their request in writing so it could be passed to the relevant officers.

7. UPDATE ON COMMERCIAL LANE

The Inspector sent his apologies for this meeting.

Councillor Parker wanted to raise concerns on prevention of crimes and safety and requested that the light by the caravan site be repaired, he asked if it was possible to provide the number from the relevant post for officers to look at this.

An issue was also raised regarding rubbish being put out at the location; this will be placed on the audit

Steve advised the group of an incident in Commercial Lane where a vehicle was involved in an arson attack. The police carried out a covert operation and an arrest was made.

8. SAFETY OF EVENT SITE

Allan confirmed that Officers have investigated the matter and due to the openness of the site issues over safety concerns have been looked at.

Placing barriers would prevent vehicular access.

Bollards have been considered and these could be placed at a cost but this would also restrict access. Also considered chain-link between bollards but this would be hazardous for visually impaired people. Views sought from experts confirm that this would be too dangerous.

With regards to placing special flooring down to prevent skateboarding in the area this would result in a trip hazard being made and open the Council up to potential claims being made.

Officers have been onsite during the school hours and monitored the site. Shop managers were approached and advised officers that it is not perceived to be a problem

Councillor Griffiths raised concerns over the gate by the children's play area and asked if it is possible to change the gate to one which prevents children running out. Councillor George asked if the position of the gate entrance could be moved. Allan agreed to go back to Park Services to raise this query.

The recommendation to the group was to leave it at present but to monitor the situation.

9. UNIQUE PLACES DISCOUNT CARD

Andrew advised the group that the discount card is in its second year and is run by the Town Centre Management Team

In November a letter was sent to all retailers in the five town centres of Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Risca and Ystrad Mynach. The retailers are advised that they can set their own discount rate or promotion of their choice.

There is a dedicated website which displays offers for each of the towns. This was shown to the group along with the design of the card.

30,000 cards have been produced

Andrew advised the group that there has been a disappointing response from Risca retailers. Members were asked to see if they could encourage retailers to join the promotion.

Ceri Mortimer (clerk) asked why was there such a disappointing response from Risca retailers. Steve confirmed that from his discussions retailers the feedback is that they cannot afford to offer discount.

The group felt that retailers should be encouraged to join this promotion as the Christmas trading period is an ideal opportunity to increase sales within the town.

Response from the public has been excellent and cards have been distributed to designated collection points for the distribution including the Palace Cinema Library

10. ADVERTISEMENTS ON HIGHWAY

Gavin Barry introduced himself to the group and explained that the Highways department has issues with regards to A Frame boards obstructing the highway.

There is a new policy in place, which sets out what businesses have to consider when advertising on the highway. This duty has now been passed to the retailers and has been distributed throughout the borough.

700 retailers have received the policy and instructions as to what is required, including a size and specification guide. There is a £25.00 charge for the licence to advertise. Some replies have been received and a database established. This policy will be implemented in January 2014.

Highways Inspectors will be monitoring the streets and anyone advertising without the licence will be approached and advertisements removed to provide safe passage for pedestrians.

Gavin was questioned as to whether placing wares or table and chairs on the highway would be covered under this policy. The group were advised that these are covered under a different policy.

11. PONTYMISTER RIVER WALK

Allan has had a look to see what can be done to improve the entrance area to the river walk. Andrew advised that there is a small budget that can be used to tidy up the entrance. There is potential to introduce a nature walk, which schools and families could use.

Councillor Parker advised that the walk could go down as far as Bassaleg. Allan agreed that he could look into this.

Concern was raised over puddles in the area but Andrew confirmed that the Highways department had carried out works last year to resolve any problems.

Andrew informed the group that Tesco work within the community and that this provides an opportunity to join the town up with the store and encourage footfall between the two locations

Allan was given the agreement from the group to take this forward for further discussions and investigation.

12. RISCA TOWN CENTRE AUDIT

It was raised on the audit about the extension of scrap storage in Commercial Lane. Whilst the group were advised that the issue is being dealt with and that the police are working with planning and environmental officers. It was raised that a deputy should attend if the inspector is not able to attend future meetings.

On page 4, the seating area - there is still an issue with weeds and this needs to be looked at. There is also an issue with weeds that need removing from the pillar by the police station.

On page 5, Tredegar Grounds - Councillor Parker asked if it was worth spending money on the land in question as children use this area to ride their bikes. It was confirmed that the approved works are now scheduled to be undertaken.

On page 6, Fly Tipping queries were raised over the collection of the bins from the caravan site. It was requested that the clerk writes in with details so that the appropriate department can consider the matter.

On page 7 Councillor Hancock informed the group that the community council has planted 1000 daffodils in Tredegar Grounds

There were no other issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed at 3.27 p.m.

CHAIRMAN