



YSTRAD MYNACH TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON TUESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER 2013 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

A. Angel, D. Bolter, K. James, M. James, J.A. Pritchard, E. Aldworth (Observer)

Together with:

C. Mortimer (Clerk, Gelligaer Community Council), PS Carl Morgan and CSO Rebecca Chivers (Gwent Police)

By Invitation:

Councillor Mrs. E. Aldworth

Also:

D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), G. Barry (Senior Assistant Engineer), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D.T. Davies

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members queried the requirement to declare an interest, as many of the traders within the town are known to them. Mr Perkins, Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified that the Group does not have a decision making role, however it is a role of influence and therefore Members were asked to be mindful of any items and declare an interest and leave the meeting in accordance with the usual protocol.

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were asked to note the Terms of Reference, which referred to the nomination of a Chair and Vice Chair. Members were reminded that in the event of a tie vote, the Cabinet Member would have the overall deciding vote. Members were reminded that only County

Councillors are able to vote in this instance, and only those with voting rights on the committee, not observers.

Councillor Angel queried the membership. Officers confirmed that the Community Council has been invited to attend the Group, and Members had been asked to pass on any contact details of any Groups that may be interested in taking part in the Town Centre Management Group.

The Terms of Reference were received and noted

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The Group were asked for nominations for Chair.

It was agreed that Councillor Alan Angel be appointed as Chairman and he formally took up his position. Councillor Martyn James was appointed as Vice Chair.

Mr Perkins left the meeting.

4. RETAIL SURVEY

Members were presented with the results of the Annual Town Centre Management Retail Survey. They were asked to note that the survey was conducted prior to the inception of the Ystrad Mynach Town Centre Management Group but that Ystrad Mynach will be included in the next survey.

Members thanked Mr Wilcox for the presentation and queried how the weekly footfall is calculated for Ystrad Mynach. Officers confirmed that there is an electronic thermal imaging camera located outside Premier Stores, which calculates the number of visitors to the town. Officers added that the camera is situated at this location, as this was the most popular location in the town. Members queried the possibility of adding an additional camera at the lower end of town, which sees a lot of visitors from college and school children. They were advised that, due to financial restrictions, this is not possible at present.

Members discussed the inclusion of the Supermarkets Tesco and Lidl in the footfall calculations. Officers stated that both the supermarkets are within the boundaries, as determined by the LDP.

Members noted the report and presentation.

5. UNIQUE PLACES DISCOUNT CARD

The report detailed information on the Unique Places Christmas Discount Card Scheme, which is running in the County Borough's five town centres between 7th and 24th December. Members were informed that retailers could sign up to the scheme and register an offer to provide customers with a discount on production of their Unique Places Christmas Discount Card. The level of discount will be left to the retailer's own discretion. When retailers register for the scheme they receive a 'star' poster to display in their window and the offer will be posted on a dedicated website which has been specifically designed for smart phones, tablets and PCs. Town Centre Management will be using various platforms to promote the scheme including: bus advertising, newspaper adverts and a dedicated page in the Council's Newline paper, which goes to every household in the County Borough. The scheme is designed to get more people in the County Borough to spend locally this Christmas and provide the local retailers with the opportunity to capture some of that spend.

Members noted the report and felt that the scheme would be beneficial to retailers. They noted that the Christmas Event has already taken place in Ystrad Mynach but officers confirmed that the card can be used at an earlier date, but at the discretion of the retailer to accept, however, the advertising etc. would be live from 7th December 2013.

6. PARKING CHANGES

Mr. R. Campbell, Senior Assistant Engineer and Mr. G. Barry, Senior Assistant Engineer provided Members with a verbal presentation on parking changes within the Town Centre. Members were asked to note that a number of issues have been brought to the attention of Officers by residents, Members and Police Officers, some of which have been actioned.

Members highlighted that the Town Centre has a pay and display parking facility, which is seldom used, as are the allocated Taxi Parking bays. Members proposed utilising the spaces for general parking use and allowing free parking in the car park for 30 minutes.

Members also discussed the bus stop on Siloh Square. It was noted that there is significant congestion in the square when a bus is in the bus stop and cars are parked on the opposite side of the road. It was suggested that, as there is a bus stop on Pengam Road, that it be utilised for all stops, which would free up a number of parking spaces in the Square and reduce the congestion. Officers agreed to suggest these proposals to the relevant departments and feedback at the next meeting.

7. BRAND PRESENTATION

Members were provided with a detailed presentation on the branding that has been selected for the Town Centres within the Borough, and specifically, the branding for the Ystrad Mynach Town Centre.

Members thanked officers for the report and were happy with the branding selected. They highlighted that there are some vacant business properties within the Town Centre and queried business interest and any uniformity guidance or preservation orders in place, which could deter some businesses from locating to the Town Centre. Officers agreed to clarify with the Planning Department and provide an update.

8. ADVERTISEMENTS ON HIGHWAY

Mr. G. Barry provided Members with a verbal presentation in relation to the revised protocol relating to advertising on the Highway and in particular with regards to A Frames. Members were informed that a policy has been in place for a number of years, however this provides a Code of Practice, which stipulates the acceptable length and width. Members were asked to note that feedback from businesses has been positive and they have welcomed the guidance. A database has also been developed to record the businesses that have received approval and adequate insurance for the use of A Frame signs.

Following queries, officers confirmed that consultation was conducted with representatives from Disability Groups and that the Policy takes wheelchair user access into account.

Members raised concern about the banners on highways advertising businesses, birthdays and homes for sale. Officers confirmed that these signs also fall under the policy. Highway Officers will request businesses to remove their signs within 12 hours and birthday signs are removed immediately. Members were informed that there is a policy in place, which aims to control the display of signs for house sales on the highway. Members were asked to contact Highways Officers if they have concerns about whether signs are permitted.

9. YSTRAD MYNACH AUDIT (NOVEMBER 2013)

Members were asked to note the Ystrad Mynach Audit document and were advised that further updates on progress would be presented at the next meeting.

Members queried the works on Siloh Square. Officers confirmed that works are scheduled for a deep clean and repair of the mosaics and also for the plants and benches to be refreshed. Members raised concerns that the ground surface can be hazardous during winter months with frost and ice. Officers confirmed that works will be conducted to refresh the area, however, a limited budget is available. Mr Highway requested that any specific requests from Members, relating to shrubbery or plants be sent directly to him.

The meeting closed at 3.45 p.m.