



RISCA TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLT HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JULY 2013 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

D.T. Davies, N. George, K. James, R. Passmore, D. Rees, P. Leonard

Together with:

M. Parker (Community Councillor), W. Price (Community Councillor), C Edwards (Community Councillor), Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk), Mr. G James (Clerk)

Also:

S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation), S. Morgan (BisNet Project Manager), G. Williams (Interim Monitoring Officer), A. Jones (Complaints Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Gail Williams opened the meeting and explains the Terms of Reference to the group in relation to the vote for the Chair and Vice Chair. The only members eligible to vote are County Borough Councillors, recognised organisations and up to 2 members of each relevant Community or Town Councils. The casting vote is for the Cabinet Member.

The terms of reference will be under review in October 2013. It is at this point that the reference to Vice Chair will be considered and any other issues raised can be looked at.

The group were asked for nominations for Chair.

It was agreed that Councillor Nigel George be appointed as Chairman and he formally took up his position.

Gail Williams then left the meeting.

It was agreed that Councillor Rhianon Passmore be appointed as Vice Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES

Councillors: E. Aldworth, P. Griffiths, D. Hobbs (Community Councillor), J. Bennett, Inspector Muirhead (Gwent Police), A. Highway.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs. Gail Williams read the Declarations of Interest paragraph from the agenda to the Group when the meeting was opened. There were no declarations of interest made.

4. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (27TH MARCH 2013)

Councillor James noted the minutes and then Councillor Passmore seconded them. However Councillor Rees then pointed out to the group that Councillor Passmore was not present at the previous meeting so therefore was not able to second them. Councillor Rees then confirmed them as accurate.

5. UPDATE ON THE CUCKOO STATUE

Allan Dallimore advised the group that there was some concern raised as the cuckoo had been removed from the site. Allan was able to advise that the artist had removed the cuckoo, as it was not working properly. The artist has now looked at the cuckoo and has now got the mechanics of the movement working and will be reinstating the cuckoo shortly.

Councillor Rees has requested that the area around the statue be cleaned as it is somewhat unkempt at the moment. Allan confirmed that he would speak with Tony White to arrange for the area to be tidied.

6. MURAL PAINTING

Allan Dallimore confirmed that he has spoken to the artist with regards to the toilet block. Craig Lewis has been commissioned for 5 designs to be taken out to the Community for further discussions. Due to a family bereavement this part of the process has been delayed, but designs should be received within the next few weeks.

The Chair asked why were the toilets closed. Allan advised that he would speak to Tony White regarding this issue.

7. WATER WORKS

Steve Wilcox advised the group that Welsh Water were carrying out works from the 3rd June 2013 and had experienced problems as there was a significant amount of damage, which resulted in delays with the work.

Reinstatement works were due to commence on the 28th July 2013.

Councillor Parker stated that there was a lack of notification to local people living within the area and traffic management system that was in place enabled people to park where they should not have parked.

If major works were needed proper consultation should have been required. It is requested that it be fed back to Engineers, however there was no criticism of the workmen.

Steve Wilcox advised that Welsh Water had informed the Council that they did notify residents and businesses and Town Centre Management kept the business updated regularly via the Town Centre News publication. Councillor Parker stated that this was not the case and no letters were received.

Councillor Passmore asked for further clarification to see what notifications were sent out. Steve advised that Town Centre news had notification and prior to the date the works commenced there would have been two notifications sent out.

Councillor Parker is going to approach the shop owners to establish if they received any notification from Welsh Water and he will pass on any information to Steve. Steve agreed to send copies of all correspondence that was sent to businesses to Councillor Parker.

Councillor Parker stated that there was a delay due to the works, which caused problems. Allan and Steve agreed to meet with Councillor Parker on site to discuss his concerns.

Councillor Rees advised that the bus stop on the side of Gregg's bakery needs to be extended as this also causes problems if more than one bus arrives at the same time. This means that passengers are not being able to step off the buses safely as there is not enough room for more than one bus to pull in properly. The location of the bus stop needs to be looked into. It was felt that if the traffic lights were moved further down the street this would resolve any problems in future.

Councillor James suggested that this item be included on the next Audit for Risca Town.

8. GO2 PROJECT

Steve Morgan introduced himself to the group and explained how his team was set up to administer and roll out the project.

The Go2 project is set up to deal with 7 Town Centres, which include Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Rhymney, Newbridge, Risca & Ystrad Mynach.

The aim of the project is to provide grant assistance to businesses to help them develop and promote their services with an online website.

Steve presented the group with a PowerPoint presentation.

The website would be titled "GO TO MY TOWN" this would then allow businesses the access to create their portal link into the website to promote their business and also enable easy access for members of the public to find local businesses that can provide the required service.

Steve and his team visit local businesses that often do not know what other businesses are within the locality and could possibly lose out on sourcing local business instead of going elsewhere.

An example was given where a local business in Rhymney did not realise that there was a business not too far from them that was able to provide them with the packaging that they required, and they were currently having to go to Ireland to get the product. Steve and his team were able to link the two businesses up and establish a service between them, thus reducing the carbon footprint at the same time.

There are a lot of businesses that currently operate without a website but there is approximately 60% of those that have got websites that are not updated on a regular basis. This project is there to assist those even if they have a website it is all geared up to link the businesses to the GO TO MY TOWN portal.

Steve gave an example of a business Motor Tech who since setting up their website and linking to the portal have seen an increase in their volume of trade.

There is an entry fee of £500 payable per business and the project will appoint a web designer to work with the businesses to set up their website and connect them to the portal. Guidance and advice is always provided when needed.

Mary Portas wrote a review to encourage the use of the Internet for local shops and the importance of setting up websites for both businesses and consumers alike.

Once businesses are linked into the portal it could be possible for them to advertise job vacancies, add photos and reviews and pretty much anything that needs to be included to promote the business.

Councillor Parker asked if this could be the demise of the high street. Steve advised that we need to try and re-invent our businesses and provide additional services to survive. A lot of people like to go and look in the shops and then go home and buy online, there is also the service that you can click online and arrange to collect from the store. These are some examples of how businesses can change.

Councillor Passmore stated that this project is very innovative and asked how are we going to make it more attractive to all businesses in the Caerphilly County Borough.

Steve advised that his team is trying to raise the profile by working with the Town Centre Management Groups and they have a stand in The Big Cheese. The team requires more engagement from businesses to get them interested and is planning on carrying out letter drops to promote the site.

Once businesses realise that it is a good opportunity they will be more likely to sign up.

Councillor Leonard asked what sort of businesses it would support and Steve advised that there are no exclusions. The portal is there for any business, school, charity, social enterprise, sole trader etc.

9. FEEDBACK OF 1940'S EVENT

Councillor Rees advised that this event was run by the Risca East & West Community Action Group and volunteers from the Community. Over 3,000 people attended the event, which was a very good turnout.

Each year the event gets better and the numbers increase. The event was fantastic and sincere thanks were sent to Jan and Paul's team for their hard work and contribution.

The marketing was done well and Councillor Rees wishes to thank everyone who made the event a success. It has been identified that there could be more retailers who could have had more involvement. Steve Wilcox will look into this for future events including the Christmas event this year.

There was an issue with lack of toilet facilities, which needs to be addressed in future. The Chair asked how many shops have signed up to opening their toilet facilities to the public. Councillor Rees confirmed that some have signed up but it is not well advertised that they do this; again this could be looked into. Steve agreed to relay Councillor Rees's concerns to the appropriate Officers and feedback.

Councillor Rees raised the issue of lack of ice cream vans on the day. In parks throughout the Borough there are franchises set up for operators of the ice cream vans. The Council did not set up a franchise for Risca. This would have been a good opportunity to increase trade if this had been sorted. Again, Steve agreed to feed back information to Councillor Rees.

Councillor James confirmed that all queries would be passed onto relevant people as well as the thanks. He stated that the event was superb and 3,000+ is a phenomenal turnout.

Councillor Parker raised an issue where the crime prevention panel experienced a major event on the day where there was fraud being committed by a couple of individuals who were trying to dispose of forged notes. The individuals were arrested and bundles of forged notes were retrieved from their vehicles.

10. AUDIT

Allan Dallimore advised that for the artwork in Tredegar grounds, Tredegar Street the artist has been commissioned to look into designs and themes. The funding is currently not available.

Councillor Rees asked if the item regarding the zebra crossing in Tredegar Street could be re-opened. Councillor James confirmed that this decision would be down to Highways, there is currently no funding but it could remain on the Audit.

The new footbridge at the rear of Lidl. The group has agreed that there needs to be reports from planning providing reasons for the delay and for them to communicate to local people and provide updates.

The rumble strips. Allan advised the group that this matter will be discussed with members and a meeting will be arranged soon.

The Risca Discover more sign. Allan has confirmed that this is part of the potential toilet block mural project and there are 5 designs to be looked at and he will bring these to the next meeting.

Cycle racks. Allan has confirmed that the location of the cycle racks has been agreed which is by the One Stop Shop. NCS are going to provide quotes and once received the delivery and installation time is between 6 to 8 weeks.

Councillor Rees has asked why there were less hanging baskets in the town. This will be looked into.

Loading issues outside Animal Friends. The police were monitoring with 2-hour checks but this has now stopped. A request for the police to be contacted to see what is happening was made to the group.

Memorial bench at Tredegar Grounds. The group were advised that the bench is on order.

Councillor Parker requested that there be a notice put by the commemorative plaque by the reinstatement of "The Valleys & Rivers of Islwyn" in the northeast corner of the park. It was agreed that this would be discussed and considered once the reinstatement works are completed.

The meeting closed at 3.43 p.m.