



## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON FRIDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2015 AT 2:00 P.M.**

---

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: P. Cook, K. James, T. Williams

Together with:

Councillor Z. Hammond (Town Councillor), Mr J Hold (Clerk), Sgt M Thomas (Gwent Police)

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal & Conservation), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), A. Jones (Complaints Officer - Clerk)

#### **1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors – D. T. Davies (Consultee), N. Dix, Mr H Edwards (Blackwood Retail Partnership), Mr S Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager).

Councillor Cook took the meeting in the absence of Councillor Dix.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 5TH JUNE 2015**

The previous minutes were taken as read.

#### **4. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN**

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

Members were advised that this year there will be a 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet with over 100 offers which is more than in 2014.

Mr Highway wished to thank the retailers for participating and also thank the Council's Graphics Team who designed the booklet and associated publicity material.

Mr Highway was thanked for the report.

#### **5. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PAST & PRESENT – ANALYSIS REPORT**

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

The group were informed that the exhibitions were very successful and Mr Wilcox was thanked for his hard work.

The group were advised that the only disappointment was with the lack of interest from the schools. Only Blackwood Comprehensive School participated, they were very enthusiastic in bringing forward ideas for what they would like to see on the high street.

Councillor Cook thanked Mr Highway for the report.

#### **6. SOUTH EAST WALES TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATES**

Mr Highway presented the report to the group in the absence of Mr Wilcox.

Members discussed the figures of vacant premises within the table and were advised that these may well have changed as the figures were from October 2014. Mr Highway confirmed that Mr Wilcox could bring updated figures to future meeting.

Councillor Cook thanked Mr Highway for the report.

#### **7. TOWN CENTRE PROMOTIONAL SPACES**

Mr Highway presented the report to the group in the absence of Mr Wilcox.

Members discussed the report and Mr Highway informed the group that Mr Wilcox has worked hard to build a good working relationship with the promoters who use the site and is very grateful for all of his hard work.

Mr Highway advised that the Town Council are invited to use this space free of charge.

Councillor Cook thanked Mr Highway for the report.

#### **8. REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR DEFIBRILLATORS**

Mr Hold advised the group that Blackwood Town Council met and agreed to fund the installation of one defibrillator in the town but were looking to the Town Centre Management Group for funding of a second defibrillator for installation possibly at the bus station.

Mr Highway informed the group that he had checked the budget and there are no funds available as the £7,000 within the Area Forum Budget has been set aside to pay for the maintenance and repairs to steps in the town.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that NCS are currently arranging for quotes for the works. The group were advised until the costings are provided no decision can be made. It was agreed that once the figures have been provided should there be any balance left then this matter could be brought back to the group and the monies made available towards the cost of installing a second defibrillator.

Members of the group were invited to vote on this proposal.

Members of the group voted 5 in favour of the proposal there were 0 against.

## **9. CHRISTMAS EVENT UPDATE**

Mr Hudson confirmed that the event is taking place on the 5th and 6th December. There will be 45 stalls, Reindeers and Donkeys, the funfair will be as in previous years and Santa's grotto will be in Tidal Stores.

Mr Hudson advised that his team is looking at walk about entertainment and children's craft workshops for both ends of the high street and also hoping to organise a Nativity scene.

The event has been advertised in 'What's On' guide, 40,000 leaflets have been produced, posting of social media feeds, and radio adverting on Heart FM. This year a single Christmas Market flyer has been produced to cover all of the Christmas events across five town centres.

Sgt Thomas asked Mr Hudson to provide him with the link for the event so that he can arrange for it to go on the Blackwood Police Twitter page.

Mr Hold informed the group that the Town Council had purchased new lamp post figurines for £20,000 and the lights will be turned on the 23rd November.

## **10. RED LION UPDATE**

Mr Dallimore advised the group that Mr Tim Stephens has written to Jackson Property Ltd who own the building and is awaiting a response before determining what action is taken.

The group were advised that Planning may take further action if needed but this will depend on the response provided by the owners.

## **11. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – AUGUST 2015**

Mr Highway informed the group that he has spoken with the architect for former Poundstretcher's site but at present until the insurance is resolved no new scheme can progress.

Mr Dallimore advised that in relation to the cleaning of the artwork he has a small budget but some of the cleaning is required to be done by the artist.

Mr Dallimore updated the group that nothing had changed in relation to the toilet block.

Mr Highway informed the group that the new managing agents for Blackwood Retail Park and they are implementing a new cleaning program.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the bench has been removed as large groups were gathering.

Sgt Thomas advised that his officers have difficulties in issuing tickets, however the Community Safety Wardens have powers to issue tickets.

Sgt Thomas advised that the number of calls has reduced and the number of patrols have been increased. The area is under a Public Space Protection Order enabling Community Safety Wardens to move people on. Since the removal of the bench the number of gatherings has reduced.

There will be a drug rehabilitation team in the area for the next 4 weeks to engage with drug users. The local authority has served notice on rough sleepers camping under the Chartist Bridge.

The meeting closed 15:07.

---

CHAIR