



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER 2015 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

H. A Andrews, K. James, D. Price, K. Reynolds

Together with:

V. Stephens, H. Llewellyn, D. Morgan (Town Councillors)

Also:

Inspector Muirhead (Gwent Police), Mr. Peter Collins (Bargoed Chamber of Trade), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager), A. Jones (Clerk)

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Price Chaired the meeting as Councillor Davies had sent apologies.

Cllrs: D. Carter, D. T. Davies, A. Higgs, A. Collis (Town Councillor).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON THE 3RD JUNE 2015

The previous minutes were taken as read.

4. UPDATE ON UNIT SHOPS

Mr Dallimore advised that there has been some positive activity with value retailers seeking to trade in Units 1/2 & 3. Negotiations are at a delicate stage and there is no guarantee that these retailers will sign on the dotted line. The interest reported previously from 99p Stores has ended following their merger with Poundland, which was referred to the Competition Commission. There has also been some local interest.

Officers continue to work to let one of the larger units which would act as an anchor store to attract other tenants. Discussions are at a delicate stage and 'white boxing' is still considered as an option with quotes being obtained.

5. UPDATE ON PHASE 2

Mr Dallimore advised that the Council is looking to move forward after the Odeon decision and is now set on 'soft market' testing the vacant sites to assess potential development options and also develop viability options. Two consultants have tendered returns for this work and officers will consider these.

Members requested confirmation as to whether or not the funding set aside for the cinema would still be utilised for that area. Mr Dallimore advised that he could not give an assurance that it would be spent in Bargoed.

Councillor Reynolds confirmed as the ODEON cinema is no longer an option the money will be subject to Council approval and therefore cannot give assurances that the money will be spent in Bargoed.

Members asked what sites were being looked at. Mr Dallimore confirmed that there are 4 sites in total - which are outlined in the brief which went out to consultants.

Mr Dallimore advised that during Spring, the Council, budget permitting, will be looking to improve the main site through soft landscaping works along with some drainage improvements.

6. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

Members were advised that this year there will be a 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.

Councillor Price thanked Mr Highway and Mr Wilcox for their hard work and the report.

7. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PAST & PRESENT – ANALYSIS REPORT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group.

Mr Highway informed the group that the exhibitions were very successful and thanked Mr Wilcox for all of his hard work.

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

Councillor Price thanked Mr Highway and Mr Wilcox for their hard work and the report.

8. SOUTH EAST WALES TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATES

Mr Wilcox presented the report to the group.

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

Councillor Price thanked Mr Wilcox for the report.

9. TOWN CENTRE PROMOTIONAL SPACES

Mr Wilcox presented the report to the group.

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.

Councillor Price thanked Mr Wilcox for the report.

10. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – AUGUST 2015

Mr Highway presented the audit report to the group and the following items were raised.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that there is a problem with the steps at Hanbury Road and the repair costs will be circa £27,000.

Members were advised that the 'red clay' is susceptible to frost penetration and is cracking and breaking up, there is also a grey liquid that is bleeding out. Mr Dallimore confirmed that the steps are safe at present but overtime they will continue to deteriorate further.

Members were advised that a report will be prepared to go to senior officers for a decision to be made.

Mr Highway invited Inspector Muirhead to update the group on the parking problems in the town.

Inspector Muirhead advised that there is an ongoing parking problem throughout the town including side streets. A special task team has been out issuing tickets and trying to cover all areas and also educating by enforcement.

The group were advised that the installation of some bollards has helped but there are still issues of illegal parking and officers are trying to resolve but really needs traffic wardens back.

Mr Highway advised that there is a Council seminar in November about parking which he will be attending.

Councillor Price asked for clarity over loading bays and whether vehicles can or cannot park in them. Inspector Muirhead confirmed that this does vary depending on the Traffic Order.

Councillor Reynolds raised concerns over parking problems in Aberbargoed where lorries are parking on junctions and vehicles cannot see past and have to reverse onto main road.

Inspector Muirhead confirmed that he will look into the issues raised in Aberbargoed.

Councillor Price thanked Inspector Muirhead for his update.

Mr Dallimore advised the group that the Council is still seeking confirmation as to whether or not there is a design fault on the granite channel blocks and is in discussions with Capita Simmonds. His team are also looking into other products to prevent the 'rocking motion' with some blocks which needs to be rectified.

Mr Highway confirmed that the tree lights on the High Street have been addressed and thanked Tom Llewellyn for his work.

Mr Hudson informed the group that Morrison's have agreed to the Ice rink going in the car park of Morrison's over a 4 day period with other attractions. Morrison's are keen to be part of the community and legal papers are being drawn up to protect all parties.

Councillor Llewellyn advised the group that the Town Council is fully supporting this event and thanked Paul and his team for all of their hard work and enthusiasm in organising the events in the town.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed at 17:17

CHAIR