



## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 2:00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: P. Cook, N. Dix, C. Hawker, K. James, A. Rees, T. Williams

Together with:

Town Councillors: C. Erasmus, Z. Hammond

Also:

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

#### **1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Mr Highway opened the meeting and requested nominations for the Chair. Councillor Hawker nominated Councillor Dix and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Rees.

Councillor Dix took over the meeting and invited nomination for Vice-Chair. Councillor Williams nominated Councillor Cook and this nomination was seconded by Councillor James.

Councillor Cook accepted the position.

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

Councillors: E. Aldworth (Consultee), D. T Davies (Consultee), Mr J Hold (Clerk), Mr H Edwards (Blackwood Retail Partnership), Mr A Oldham (Manager Blackwood Shopping Precinct), Mr S Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), M Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer Planning).

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 26TH FEBRUARY 2016**

The minutes were taken as read.

**5. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' STORIES**

Mr Highway presented his report to the group.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway and his team for their hard work.

The Chair stated that it is very important to use all available means to promote the town and that this is an excellent idea which shows how dynamic our High Street is.

**6. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET**

Mr Highway presented his report to the group and showed the group what the design of the booklet would look like.

The group were advised that the booklets would be in production in the next few weeks.

Mr Highway informed the group that retailers are becoming more aware of the scheme as each year passes and already 30 retailers have submitted offers.

The group were advised that the offers received to date appear to be more competitive than in previous years.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway for the report and the hard work.

**7. GO2 MY TOWN VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE WEBSITE.**

Mr Highway took members on a virtual tour of the Go2 My Town Website and highlighted how the site works and the information available to people interested in setting up new businesses in the town centre.

Councillor Cook asked if there was a direct link from Caerphilly Council's website. Mr Hudson advised that IT is looking into this.

Mr Highway showed the group how to find the stories for each of the towns on the site.

Mr Highway shared with the group some of the comments of appreciation from retailers featured in the 'Stories' initiative and were grateful of support from the Council.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway and stated that having good working relationships with the retailers is very important.

**8. RED LION UPDATE**

Mr Dallimore passed on apologies from Mike Jones from Planning and read out the following statement provided from the officer.

"The current position is that I have written to the company that owns the land requesting their assistance in cutting back the overgrowth immediately surrounding the building and removing the resulting material, together with any rubbish or debris that became evident after cutting back the overgrowth from the land. No response was received to my initial correspondence, or subsequent letters. I have obtained Authority to take action under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act, which is the only avenue open under the planning legislation to try and remedy the current condition of the land. The Local Planning Authority is not in a position to take direct action to clear the site until any legal action has run its course. Notices under

that section of the Act have to be served on the owner or occupier of the land, the recipient of such a notice has the right of appeal, currently to the Magistrates Court against the requirements of a notice. I have sent a Requisition for Information to the company to establish who has an interest in the land, as they may be liable under any action taken. When the necessary information has been provided, it is my intention to issue a notice that would require such steps as may be considered necessary to be taken to return the land (including building) to a state of amenity.”

Mr Dallimore informed the group that Mr Jones has written to the owners but have not received a response, therefore the next step would be to consider if illegal action should be taken.

The Chair stated that it is frustrating but understands that we have to go through process and thanked Mr Dallimore for the update.

## **9. THURSDAY NIGHT ROAD CLOSURE IMPLEMENTATION**

Inspector White advised that the situation in Blackwood is being monitored by the police and officers have carried out research and checked CCTV footage, He informed the group that only 5 instances had been reported which included anti-social behaviour or speeding, but no cruising on Thursday night.

Inspector White confirmed if calls are received they will revisit the possibility of closing the road again until then the road will remain open.

The Chair expressed concern over length of time taken to implement the road closure in the first place and so it is important to monitor the situation and not to allow car cruisers to come back to Blackwood town centre.

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the infrastructure and signage will remain in place in case it is ever needed again.

The Chair thanked Inspector White.

## **10. AUDIT**

Mr Highway presented the Audit and the following items were raised.

Poundstretchers site – Mr Highway confirmed that he has spoken to the owner and this matter is still with the Insurance Company.

Toilet Block Enhancement – Mr Dallimore confirmed that Mr Jones has written to owner requesting that they cut back brambles. Mr Bolton had called back to confirm that he would be cutting them back although nothing has happened as yet.

Mr Dallimore advised that the Council will be looking to start process of issuing Section 215 notice via colleagues in planning.

The Chair wished to thank Mr Jones.

Street signage Resetting Gordon Road – Councillor Rees questioned whether the Monnington Lodge (Brewers Lodge) had changed its name and if it had then the street sign in place will need to be changed. This will be checked by Mr Hudson.

Condition of Steps R/O Wesley Road Car Park –The Chair advised that the area is looking a lot better. Z. Hammond confirmed that there is work currently being carried out with the railings. Mr Dallimore will chase for update.

Antisocial behaviour – Officers are very proactive and are targeting specific areas and moving people on. The Chair thanked officers.

Z. Hammond raised concerns from The Market Place Manager about groups gathering under shelters and lighting small fires which set off fire alarms by Peacocks and Iceland.

This will be raised with the Community Safety Wardens and the Fire Service.

Parking bay restrictions – Inspector White confirmed that Officers have been out and issued parking tickets over 3 days of enforcement.

Proposed amendment to Traffic Order – Inspector White advised that there is a meeting next Friday at 2pm to and invited Councillors to attend the meeting.

Former Guide Hall – Mr Highway advised that the demolition crew are waiting for utilities to be disconnected to enable them to go in. The Chair thanked officers in the Council.

Cleaning of planted area – Thanks were passed to Mr Rhodri Lloyd and his team. It was noted that there were mattresses found and evidence of people sleeping there, this will be passed to the police for further investigation.

Wheelchair Accessibility – Mr Dallimore advised that specific areas in the town centre would need to be identified so that officers can assess to see if CCBC own the land and consider what adaptations can be carried out. The group were advised that the Caerphilly Access Group could be brought in to discuss any issues.

Z. Hammond wished to thank Paul Hudson and his team for all their hard work on the Carnival event and looking forward now to a successful Christmas event.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed 15:12.

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CHAIR