



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH 2017 AT 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors: D. T Davies, A. Higgs, K. James

Together with:

Town Councillors: V. Stephens, H. Llewellyn, D Morgan, A. Collis

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), P. Hudson (Marketing & Events Manager),
S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), D. Smith (Principal Engineer), A. Jones (Clerk)

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors L. Harding, K. Reynolds, D. Price
A. Dallimore (Team leader – Urban Renewal & Conservation)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair wished to thank officers for their support over the last five years on behalf of the group.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 5TH OCTOBER 2016

The minutes were taken as read.

The Chair advised that the issue with the carriageway drainage grids throughout the town centre is still a problem as they need to be tightened. Mr. Highway read out an update from Mr. Dallimore regarding the Channel Blocks and drain covers:

“More and more blocks are failing and it has been determined that this could be down to the quality of the initial design by Capita Symonds. In order to establish if the problems relate only to the design or also the quality of workmanship it will be necessary to take some core samples from the concrete beds that the blocks are laid on. This work will cost in the region of £5k and is likely to be funded from the core budget allocation for 17/18.

NCS have been instructed to go through the town to tighten up on the bolts holding down the drainage grids where possible.”

4. BUSINESS REPORT

Mr. Highway presented his report to the group.

The group discussed footfall data and a request was made for the data to be sent to Ms. Tamms (Bargoed Town Council Clerk). Mr. Wilcox confirmed he would arrange to pass on the data.

Mr. Highway advised that the footfall cameras would be reduced to one and that Mr. Wilcox would be providing an update further on the agenda.

Mr. Highway advised the group that there was a change with regards to the Go2MyTown Website and read out the following statement from his Head of Service:

“The Division is currently working towards migrating the content and information on the GO2MyTown website onto the Council’s corporate website.

This change results from concerns over how the Council’s corporate Business Support and Town Centre pages are hosted on the corporate website. It is assumed that an individual or company seeking business information would in the first instance search the Council’s corporate website rather than search for GO2MyTown. In this respect it should be noted that there are no links from the corporate site to GO2MyTown.

Whilst the service provided via GO2MyTown up to November 2016 has been free of charge, in the external provider’s aspiration that GO2MyTown would become a commercial site, in recent months the external provider for the GO2MyTown has started to levy ongoing monthly charges that are considered to be unsustainable.

The outcome of the review of GO2MyTown is that the Division’s business support and town centre website service will revert to being hosted on the Council’s corporate website. In the months ahead Regeneration and Corporate Services IT officers will migrate the existing content of GO2MyTown onto the corporate website resulting in the pages for business support and town centre to be updated, refreshed and aligned to associate content across the Division, Directorate and the Council.”

The Chair thanked Mr. Highway for his report.

5. ‘CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET’ CHRISTMAS VOUCHER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Mr. Highway noted that the scheme has now been in operation for several years and 2016 was the most successful to date with a total of 112 offers received.

Mr. Highway extended special thanks to the Graphic Design team for their work designing the booklet and to the Community Safety Wardens for distributing the booklets to the various collection points.

The booklet not only marketed the five managed town centres, but also contained adverts for the various Christmas events across the County Borough as well as various CCBC services.

30,000 booklets were produced, which were available from a number of places including local libraries, tourist attractions and supermarkets. The participation of the supermarkets has assisted greatly in the dissemination of the booklets, particularly as Tesco in Risca and Ystrad Mynach took part for the first time in 2016.

A survey was sent out to participating businesses after the Christmas period. Although the response rate was quite poor, it did highlight that feelings towards the scheme are generally positive. However, the bus advertising – used for the first time this year – was not deemed to be successful and this is something to consider for future years.

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

6. PROCUREMENT OF FOOTFALL COUNTER PROVIDER

Mr. Wilcox informed the group that the contract for the footfall counter provision has recently expired. Following a tender process, a new supplier has been appointed – PFM Footfall Intelligence. There will be a period of transition where the old supplier's service and equipment is removed and the new supplier installs its equipment. This is likely to take place in early July, but Officers will work with the companies to ensure that any downtime is kept to a minimum.

As noted earlier in the meeting, the number of Bargoed footfall cameras will be reduced from two to one so that it is consistent with the other town centres that have footfall counters. This reduction will also contribute to the savings required in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Bargoed North camera will be removed, leaving only the Bargoed South system (located in *Bargoed Sight Centre*).

The Chair thanked Mr. Wilcox for the update.

7. LOWRY SHOPS UPDATE

Mr. Highway read out the following statement from Mr. Dallimore:

“Unit 7 is now operating as a traditional fish and chip restaurant. The owner – Mr. Nur – is tied into the long lease and is currently trading well.

A draft licence has been forwarded to the owner's solicitors for establishing seating outside the restaurant on the plaza.”

The Chair welcomed the business and confirmed that feedback is that the quality of the food is very good. Members of the group also confirmed that they have all had good feedback.

In relation to units 3&4, the lease is in an advanced stage and should be signed shortly. Once all parties have signed the lease, publicity on the new tenant will be released.

Unit 6a – There is currently interest from three high street names, however initial discussions with each party have established that they would each require a substantial incentive package to locate to Bargoed. Therefore, officers have agreed that the best way forward will be to remarket the unit once units 3&4 have been let. It is hoped that this news will help stimulate the market.

8. PHASE 2 UPDATE

Mr. Highway read out the following update from Mr. Dallimore:

“All soft landscaping works to the cinema site have been completed at a cost of £20,000 and a maintenance regime is currently in place.

DTZ was commissioned to investigate alternative uses for the site. They have finalised their report, which does show some interest for the largest site. This report is currently with the Communities Director.

9. FINANCIAL TABLE SHOWING THE TOWN COUNCILS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO EVENTS IN THEIR OWN TOWN

The group was provided with a table setting out the Town Councils' expenditure for events. This was requested to be added as an appendix to the minutes (APPENDIX 1 attached) following the meeting.

The group discussed the table and requested that this should be made public so that other Town Councils can see how the event contributions vary across the County Borough.

Mr. Highway advised that this table will provide Mr. Hudson with a good benchmark to take to all other groups for future events.

Mr. Highway commends Paul and his team for all of their hard work.

Mr. Highway thanked the Town Council on behalf of the retailers who really appreciate the events and have commented on how they serve the community, which is very important for the town.

10. ICE RINK 2017

Mr. Hudson advised the group that discussions are ongoing with Morrisons with regards to dates. The group was advised that the funding will be the same as previous year.

Mr. Hudson confirmed that discussions are taking place with the provider regarding the size of the ice rink and other attractions for the event.

Mr. Highway thanked the Town Council for the tickets for Ice Rink.

11. UPDATE ON CHANNEL BLOCKS & GRIDS

Mr. Highway provided the group with the update earlier in the agenda.

12. BOLLARDS OUTSIDE FRISKY FOX

Mr. Highway advised that there are parking issues that the Authority is trying to manage and read out the following update from Mr. Dallimore:

“After requests from local Members about particular pinch points for pedestrians on the pavement running parallel to Lowry Plaza, two bollards have been installed to prevent vehicles parking up on the pavement. Another bollard will be added by NCS early next week at the location.”

Mr. Smith passed around photographs of the area outside the Frisky Fox demonstrating how people are parking on the wide pavement area and on the area parallel to Lowry Plaza.

Mr. Smith advised the group that a solution, in addition to placing the bollards on the pinch point, would be to allow parking on the wide area outside Greggs, which could accommodate parking for around six vehicles. In addition, the bay outside the Frisky Fox could also be used for parking. Both of these bays would be limited waiting for 30 minutes.

Mr. Smith read out views from PC Clark Evans from Gwent Police:

“In respect of the parking restriction changes we discussed this morning outside Greggs in the High Street, Bargoed police have no issues with the proposed changes by making the low level pavement in front of Greggs into a 30 minute limited waiting bay and moving the barriers back to prevent injury or damage to pedestrians and property, we also recognise the need that the barriers need to be lifted outside the Frisky Fox, to allow persons to park in that parking bay also.

This has been a very difficult area to police and enforce the parking restriction, because of the wide drop kerb that is in place as it looked like a parking bay from the very start. Every member of the public we try to enforce this issue with states that they believe it was a parking bay with no restrictions.”

The group discussed the proposals and were asked if anyone objected to these proposals. The group were advised that if parking was agreed then there would be a need for signs to be placed and lines drawn to delineate the parking areas.

The Chair invited the group to vote on converting the pavement area outside Greggs to 30 minute waiting. The vote was 7 in favour and 0 against.

The group discussed the issue of the filming for Stella outside the Frisky Fox and would that be an issue. Mr. Smith advised that whenever events are on, an order can be put in place to allow film crew to be there. The traffic arrangements can be reviewed if it does not work.

The chair invited the group to vote on taking away the bollards and restricting parking to 30 minutes waiting outside the Frisky Fox. The vote was 7 in favour and 0 against.

The group discussed that parking throughout the town is an issue. Mr. Highway advised that enforcement is problem in all towns and is a matter for the police.

Cllr. Higgs raised concern from an incident that he witnessed outside Peacocks whereby a child ran out of the shop and somebody had mounted the kerb to park illegally. As they pulled onto the kerb, they nearly hit the child as he exited the shop. Mr. Highway requested that Cllr. Higgs send an email to him with specific information and he would refer the matter to Inspector Muirhead.

13 CAR PARKING TASK & FINISH REPORT

Cllr. Llewellyn informed the group that he attended the Task & Finish Group meeting and it was discussed about imposing charges where there is currently free parking within the towns.

The group discussed that as regeneration works have not yet been completed, they feel the free parking should remain.

The report stated that Hanbury Road Car Park is always busy. The group were advised by Mr. Smith that officers carry out regular surveys of the number of spaces in use, but he is unsure if they are ever conducted on the weekend.

Cllr. James advised that the task and finish group have been asked to raise recommendations but the final decision will be made by full Council.

Mr. Smith advised the group that he is on the Task & Finish Group and a number of issues will be looked at including park & ride, residential areas, maintenance, business rates on car parks and CCTV. The findings of the group will be passed to the relevant Scrutiny Committee

and then Cabinet and Council in due course, but this will now be after the Local Government elections.

14. AUDIT

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

Hanbury Steps – Mr. Highway read out the following update from Mr. Dallimore:

“Although these steps are unsightly they are not considered dangerous. They are part of the regular Highway Inspector’s inspection regime and will continue to be monitored on a regular basis.

As outlined before at the TCMG, a full investigatory report has been commissioned for the steps, which has now been completed. The conclusions of the report identify a budget requirement of circa £75 - £80k in order to undertake a comprehensive package of works to bring them back to their original state. Officers have made several internal bids for resources to pay for these works, but with no success to date. Another round of bidding against the capital reserve budget is to be opened shortly and officers will again submit this project for consideration.

The Chair raised the issue of rubbish being thrown down the banking alongside the railway and the footpath linking Bargoed Gateway and Eastview Terrace, which looks very unsightly. Mr. Highway advised that he would contact colleagues in Cleansing and ask for the area to be looked at.

Mr. Highway advised the group that he met with the Police two weeks ago and discussed weekend Dispersal Orders after eight bins were set on fire in Morrisons loading yard. The Community Safety Wardens and Police are dealing with the situation and the Morrisons store manager has stated that he will close the gates at 6 o’clock to prevent anti-social behaviour.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed 17:53.

CHAIR