



## **BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 2:00PM**

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PRESENT:

Councillors:

T. Williams, K Etheridge, N. Dix, A. Farina-Childs, S. Morgan

Together with:

Town & Community Councillor B. Baber & Mr J Hold (Clerk)

Also:

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

#### **1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Mr Highway opened the meeting and requested nominations for Chair.

Councillor Dix nominated Councillor T Williams and was seconded by Councillor S Morgan.

The vote was 2 for and 2 against. Councillor Morgan had the casting vote under the Terms of Reference and nominated Councillor Williams.

Councillor Williams thanked members for nominating him and accepted the post and took over the meeting as Chair.

Councillor Williams invited members to nominate for Vice Chair.

Councillor S Morgan nominated Councillor A. Farina-Childs this was seconded by Councillor K Etheridge.

Councillor Etheridge raised changing the Terms of Reference to allow Town Councillors to be appointed to Chair and Vice Chair posts

Councillor Etheridge was advised by Mrs Sullivan that Town Councillors cannot be appointed under the Terms of Reference and if this was to change it would need to go to all Town Centre Management Groups for approval. If the five Town Centre Management Groups approved the change the next step would be for the matter to be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny committee and then onto Cabinet.

Mr Highway advised that the group could take a vote and Councillor Williams offered to place this on the agenda for the next meeting if the Group wanted it.

The Chair invited the group to vote on the matter, it was agreed to place the item on the agenda for the next Blackwood TCMG meeting

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D T Davies, Community Councillor D. Jones & Mr H Edwards (Blackwood Retail Partnership)

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

## **4. MINUTES – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

The minutes were taken as read.

Matters arising on page 4. The group were advised that there was an update on the Red Lion in the report to follow.

There were no further matters raised.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

### **5. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO BLACKWOOD TOWN**

Mr Highway introduced the report which provided an update on matters relating to Blackwood town centre

Members were referred to update 1 in the report relating to the time of meeting. Mr J Hold requested that the time be changed to 5pm. The group discussed changing the time but a majority agreed for the time to remain at 2pm.

Members were referred to update 2 in the report on Unique Places. Mr Highway provided information on the new document and advised that a hard copy would be available, the document would also be included in welcome packs to new businesses.

The Chair requested that copies be provided to the group. Mr Highway confirmed he would arrange that.

Councillor Dix stated that it was a good idea and will assist in future regeneration Councillor Morgan also agreed.

Councillor Morgan asked if this was circulated to commercial estate agents. Mr Highway confirmed copies are sent to agents if requested. Councillor A Farina-Childs requested copies for the Town Council too. Mr Highway confirmed he would arrange to send copies to the town council and Mrs Sullivan will arrange for pdf copies to be sent to clerks.

The Chair thanked Mr Highway.

Members were referred to update 3 in the report on the 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet. Mr Highway informed the group that there were already 30 offers which is a good response.

Councillor Dix stated that retailers need to support the scheme and seize the opportunity to promote their business.

Mr Highway thanked Mr Wilcox for all his work. The Chair thanked Mr Highway.

Members were referred to update 4 in the report on Red Lion Site. Mr Dallimore advised the group that the site will be on agenda for quite some time.

Mr Dallimore advised that a planning application granted in 2017 is for two blocks of flats. Contracts hopefully are to be exchanged next month, with a start date on site later in the year.

Mr Hudson raised issues with noise from the flats being next to the Miners Institute.

Councillors raised concerns over the loss of car parking spaces and asked if the car park would remain open when development works are taking place.

Mr Dallimore responded that he was not sure whether the car park could still be used and would get a method statement from the contractors and put any views forward.

The Chair asked if it would be possible for a site meeting to be arranged with the developer.

Mr Dallimore agreed that a pre commencement meeting with the contractor/client could be arranged and would advise on a date at a future meeting.

Mr Highway advised that car parking is on a programme for Regeneration and Scrutiny.

Mrs Sullivan advised that a report on the matter will be going to future meeting of the Regeneration and Task & Finish Group.

Members were referred to update 5 in the report on Barclays Bank Site.

Mr Dallimore advised that consultation took place 18 months ago to discuss what would go on site, but at the time this was not financially viable.

The Authority is in dialogue with Welsh Government but unable to give any further information at this time.

The group were concerned about illegal parking in the bay outside the windows retailers (next to Barclays bank). Mr Dallimore advised that a traffic order would need to be in place to remove the bay and he would speak to colleagues in Traffic Management about the Traffic Regulation Order.

Members were referred to update 6 in the report on Toilet block. Mr Dallimore read out the following update provided by Michael Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer)

*I am now able to inform you that notice under Section 215 of the Planning Act have been issued and served on those persons we believe to be the owners of the land. Those notices will come into effect on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (at least 28 days has to be allowed between the date the notice is issued and before the notices are effective to allow the recipients the opportunity to appeal against the notice.) The notice requires that all the overgrowth is cut back and the resulting material together with any litter, rubbish or debris present is removed from the land and that the windows and doors of the building are secured shut. They have one calendar month to complete the works.*

Mr Dallimore advised that Mr Jones has had a productive dialogue with the owner.

With reference to the sites future, Mr Dallimore requested that if the group have any ideas for the site please would they contact him.

Councillor Dix wished to thank Mr Dallimore and Mr Jones for their hard work.

Members were referred to update 7 in the report on summer and Christmas Events.

Mr Hudson advised that there are two key Council led events in the Blackwood town centre events programme The Beach Party and Christmas Market.

The group were advised that both events are well attended with over 10,000 visitors and no issues have been raised.

Mr Hold advised that the Town Council organise entertainment stages and put on dances, music, Christmas sleigh & light and they will be looking to explore with officers how to integrate with the two events.

Mr Hudson confirmed that retailers were supportive and took an active role.

The Chair thanked Mr Hudson for his update.

Members were referred to update 8 in the report on 'Choose the High Street' Retail Property Index.

Mr Highway confirmed that this information is available as a PDF document on Caerphilly Council Website.

Mr Highway would arrange to send copies to the Town Council and requested that if anyone wanted any further information to contact either himself or Mr Wilcox.

Members were referred to update 9 in the report on Procurement of a new Footfall Counter.

Mr Wilcox confirmed that feedback on the figures generated would be available once the new system is verified and calibrated. The Chair thanked Mr Wilcox the update.

Members were referred to update 10 in the report on Aldi.

Mr Highway advised the group that the property has been purchased by DWP and work is ongoing to convert the unit into office space.

Members were referred to update 11 in the report on former Poundstretchers site.

Mr Highway advised that the Insurance claim is still to be settled.

Members were referred to update 12 in the report on Parking Enforcement.

Mr Highway read out the update in the report.

Councillor Morgan confirmed that this will be going to Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in October and again in March. The consultation is a long process and involves five Local Authorities.

The group discussed the interim arrangements and were advised that the Police will still be dealing with any parking enforcement for the foreseeable future.

Mr Highway advised the group that the report provided is a in new a style and if members of the group would like any items listed for future meetings please would they let him know.

Councillor Etheridge and other members of the group raised concerns over Relay taxi drivers parking on pavements and other vehicles parking in loading bays.

Mr Highway confirmed that he would raise these concerns with the Police Inspector.

Councillor Morgan advised that possibly CCTV cameras could be checked to help to identify these issues too.

Mr Highway confirmed that he would clarify this with Mr Carl Nesling whose teams monitor the CCTV cameras.

Mr Hold wished to inform the group of an event where the Blackwood Historical Society in 2020 will be the bicentenary of first houses being occupied in Blackwood. Mr Dallimore advised that the authority may have some historical maps in their records which could be provided.

## **6. BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE AUDIT**

Mr Highway presented the audit and the following items were raised

Litter bin fires. Councillor Dix was concerned that this is now a weekly occurrence on a Friday evening with youths taking retailers bins and setting them on fire. The Fire Service is called out regularly and the Council's Cleansing team also attend to clean up the area of rubbish and melted plastic.

The group were advised that this will be monitored.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed at 15:16pm

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CHAIR