



## BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON TUESDAY 14TH MARCH 2018 AT 4:00PM

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PRESENT:

Councillors:

C. Andrews, A. Collis, D.T. Davies, L. Harding, D. Price, S. Morgan

Together with:

Town Councillor V. Stephens, H. Llewellyn

Also:

A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Higgs, S. Horton and A. Jones (Clerk)

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 4. MINUTES – 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2017

The minutes were taken as read.

### 5. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO BARGOEDTOWN

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

Members were referred to update 1 in the report relating to a Business Report for 2017. Mr. Highway noted that Poundworld will be changing to a multi-point price retailer, which is becoming common in the value sector.

Consumers are now looking for “experiential shopping”, which is where there are activities to partake in along with being able to make purchases. The High Street is likely to change over coming years in light of this.

The Bargoed North footfall camera was removed when the footfall counters were changed over to a new provider – PFM Footfall. The cameras were offline for eleven weeks during the transition period.

Members were referred to update 2 in the report on 'Choose the High Street' Christmas Voucher Booklet. Mr. Highway reported that a feedback survey was sent to all participating businesses in January 2018. 96% of respondents feel that schemes such as this highlight the importance of shopping locally and 83% would consider taking part in this (or a similar discount scheme) in the future.

Advertising of the scheme was cut extensively in 2017 in order to make MTFP savings. The feedback suggests that this needs to be looked at if the scheme is run again as respondents felt that the scheme was not publicised well enough. The format of the booklet and overall promotion in the future will need to be considered in light of MTFP saving requirements.

Members were referred to update 3 in the report on Civil Parking Enforcement. Mr. Highway informed the group that the Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet have received the "stage 1" report. It has been agreed that the Authority will take on Civil Parking Enforcement and it will be done in-house as opposed to being contracted out.

Gwent Police will continue to enforce parking until December 2018, but will continue to work with Local Authorities after this date where Civil Parking Enforcement hasn't been fully implemented by this date. Council Officers are currently reviewing all of the Traffic Regulation Orders in force across the County Borough, along with all lines and signs denoting parking restrictions. Formal agreement from Welsh Government is required to fully and formally adopt Civil Parking Enforcement and it is anticipated that this will be obtained in January 2019 based on current timescales.

Cllr. D.T. Davies expressed his concern over the proposed 5.5 post being created as he does not feel that this will provide adequate resources to enforce parking across the whole County Borough.

Cllr. S. Morgan explained that priority will be given to town centres initially, followed by the smaller villages and side streets in the County Borough. Community Safety Wardens may also be given the power to enforce parking, but their primary role will remain as Community Safety Wardens and the duties they currently carry out. The "stage 2" report will contain further details on practicalities with implementation and operational plans.

Town Cllr. H. Llewellyn asked if standards will be set for the new enforcement staff so that there is a consistent approach, namely that they will start with a softer educational approach before enforcing.

Mr. Highway noted that discussions have been ongoing with Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Council who have been carrying out Civil Parking Enforcement for several years and had to implement it far more quickly than Caerphilly. Part of this includes information on how staff started with a softer approach before routine enforcement.

RCT and Cardiff Councils have cars fitted with cameras and equipment that can detect a car's number plate electronically and are used to enforce areas such as outside schools and bus lanes/bays. The benefits of the cars include being more efficient at large-scale enforcement and avoiding confrontational situations for enforcement officers.

Cllr. S. Morgan informed the group that there are active discussions with RCT and Cardiff in relation to whether Caerphilly can trial the cars and looking at the possibility of the lease/purchase being shared between Authorities.

Members were referred to update 4 in the report – Cardiff Capital Region update. Mr. Highway informed the group that City Deal will involve a total investment in the region of £1.2bn. The

Metro scheme will benefit Bargoed as the Rhymney Valley train line is seen as a priority upgrade. A new Regeneration Strategy is currently being developed in order to facilitate bidding for projects.

Members were referred to update 5 in the report on channel blocks. Mr. Dallimore explained that the granite channel blocks are failing throughout the town centre and investigative works need to be carried out. If the blocks have been installed correctly, a claim could be made against the company that designed the scheme. If the installation is found to be incorrect, a claim may be made with the contractors. The investigative works will be carried out before the end of the financial year and are likely to be carried out over a weekend as road closures will be required. When budget allows, the channel blocks will be removed and the area tarmacked.

Members were referred to update 6 in the report on the letting of units 3&4, Lowry Plaza. Mr. Dallimore informed the group that the lease with DWP has now been signed, so the use as a new Job Centre Plus can be publicised. Planning permission has been granted for the shop frontage and signage and the fit out is out to tenders, with contractors currently visiting the site to cost up the scheme. The Council's marketing agents will now be going back out to the market with unit 6a in light of DWP's occupation.

The former Head Landlord – Rockspring – has sold their interest in Lowry Plaza. The new owner is Bargoed Estates Ltd. based in Manchester.

Cllr. D.T. Davies enquired as to whether there has been any interest in the former Job Centre at the northern end of the town. Mr. Highway noted that the former Blackwood Job Centre has gone on the market recently with a local agent, so the same is likely to happen when the Lowry Plaza centre is opened.

Members were referred to update 7 in the report on the Plateau Development Site. Mr. Dallimore informed the group that Cabinet approval has been obtained to investigate the sale of the site to a pub-restaurant chain. The interested party will be meeting with Development Control officers shortly to discuss their proposals for the site. They are also in dialogue with Property Services in readiness for investigatory works to commence on the site.

Following the site meetings and investigatory works, a sale price offer will be made to the Authority for consideration. Mr. Dallimore explained that there is likely to be little monetary gain on the sale of the site due to there being clawback from the Welsh Government Land Reclamation Grant that was issued to remediate the site.

Members were referred to update 8 in the report on antisocial behaviour in Morrisons' car park. Mr. Highway provided an update as there was no police representation at the meeting. The Police recently met with Mr. Highway and the Manager of Morrisons where several options were discussed, including closing certain sections of the car park in the evening, but this is likely to be very problematic operationally.

The Store Manager will approach head office to ask for a security guard for the store. Since the meeting, letters of support for a security guard have been issued from CCBC, local Police and Bargoed Town Council.

Cllr. D.T. requested that a letter be sent to the Regional Manager of Morrisons on behalf of the Town Centre Management Group expressing concern in relation to the level of antisocial behaviour in the store.

## **6. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE AUDIT**

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

Hanbury Road Steps – Mr. Dallimore informed the group that a site meeting recently took place to consider cladding the steps with a low maintenance slip-resistant surface. Unfortunately, this was not deemed a suitable option for the steps. However, NCS will shortly be cleaning the steps and carry out some repairs that are more aesthetically pleasing than previous repairs.

Installation of New Parking Bay, Lowry Plaza – Mr. Dallimore noted that a Traffic Regulation Order is required to implement the bay, which has now been advertised. As such, the lines and signs for the day will be installed within one month.

Movement of Granite Blocks – Mr. Dallimore advised that the defensive granite blocks that prevent pavement parking throughout the town have moved after being nudged by vehicles. These will all be returned to their original position during the road closure to carry out the investigative works on the channel blocks.

Missing Coping Stones at the Southern Punch-Through – Mr. Dallimore informed the group that the fixing method used to secure the stones wasn't as specified. A claim has been lodged with the installation contractor.

Daffodil Artwork – Mr. Dallimore noted that high level cleaning equipment is required to clean the trumpet. This is currently being sourced and the clean will be carried out in due course.

Damage to Miners' Heads Artwork – Mr. Dallimore informed the group that NCS has been commissioned to carry out the repair work, which has been delayed due to poor weather. The repair will be completed when weather conditions allow.

There were no further issues raised.

The meeting closed at 17:28.

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CHAIR