



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER 2014 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D.T. Davies, A. Higgs, K. James, D. Price, K. Reynolds

Together with:

V. Stephens (Town Councillor), H. Llewellyn (Town Councillor), D. Morgan (Town Councillor),
A. Collis (Town Councillor)

Also:

Inspector J. Hill, 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 & Conservation), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), P. Hudson (Marketing Events Manager), A. Jones (Complaints Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: D. Carter
G. Barry, G. Richards

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (21ST MAY 2014)

Previous minutes were taken as read

4. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that there have been a number of expression interest forms received in relation to the grants; however smaller traders may struggle to pay up front up to £10,000, which would then be claimed retrospectively. This is a European funded scheme and balance of around £20,000 is left based on estimates submitted.

There are 7 retailers currently having their applications processed, with the cut off date for applications to be received in late November.

5. CINEMA UPDATE

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the tender process has been given the go ahead for the 2-stage process of warm shell (external) and fit out (internal).

There is an issue with gap funding and the council is in dialogue with Welsh Government. A report will go to Cabinet in due course.

Mr Dallimore advised that the key date is December 2016 to commence operating however members were concerned that this would not happen as previous dates have not been met.

Members were advised that once the tender process has gone through, officers would have a better idea of an operational date and any additional funding required.

Members questioned as to whether Odeon would see cinema in Blackwood as a reason not to go ahead. Mr. Dallimore confirmed that Odeon do not see Blackwood Cinema as direct competition and are confident that the market has not been effected.

The Chair confirmed that this is positive and hopeful news and thanked Mr. Dallimore for the update.

6. HJJJ BUILDING

Mr. Dallimore informed the group that tenders went out 6th October 2014 and the proposed start date is November 2014, with the anticipated end date of February 2015.

This was considered by Planning Committee on the 8th October 2014.

7. FORMER WOOLWORTHS BUILDING

Mr. Highway read out the following statement from Mr. Dave Titley

'We are in the process of moving the CCBC contact centre from Dyffryn House to the former Woolworths building in Bargoed. This will see the transfer of about 20 staff from Dyffryn House to the new Contact Centre. The move will be complete by November 7th. The Contact Centre handles phone calls and emails for several services within CCBC including Highways, Waste Management, Environmental Health, Licensing, Registrars and Job Applications.'

8. POCKET PARK

Mr. Dallimore confirmed that the commencement of the works is to take place in early January 2015 and the anticipated completion date is April 2015.

The daffodils artwork is currently under construction by the artist and the issue with regards to the entrance junction in the car park being very tight will be resolved as part of the works.

9. BUS STOP AT ROYAL SQUARE

The report was presented to the group and Mr. Dallimore advised that the results within the report are consistent with previous reports.

Mr. Dallimore advised that a working group has been established to investigate Members' concerns and officers will periodically review the impact of the bus stop and consider whether an alternative should be considered.

Mr. Highway advised that a survey carried with retailers adjacent to the bus stop on Royal Square and they would not like to see the bus stop moved.

10. ALL NEW TRAFFIC REGULATIONS IN BARGOED TOWN CENTRE

Mr. Campbell advised that the parking thorough the town has been reviewed periodically. The Council will look to review parking orders to suit as the regeneration work continues and all parking restrictions amended accordingly.

The group discussed the issues on parking within the town and it was agreed that it is an enforcement issue and a behaviour change is needed by motorists. Hopefully the situation will improve once all of the regeneration works are completed

11. TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY FOR BARGOED

Mr. Campbell summarised the report that was circulated prior to the meeting and advised the group that once all the public realm works and regeneration works are completed the proposals contained within the report will be implemented.

12. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET' CAMPAIGN PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr. Highway informed the group that the Portas Review (2011) identified several threats to town centres. The "Choose the High Street" (CTHS) campaign aimed to promote the County Borough's principal town centres to the public and businesses alike. Starting in the summer of 2014, the CTHS initiative used several platforms to highlight the brand and town centres; these included: free cotton shopping bags bearing the logo, billboards in the town centres, balloons and leaflets distributed at summer events and a series of YouTube videos.

The number of new businesses and potential business enquiries were summarised in the report, along with feedback from business and public surveys, which gave differing perceptions of the campaign. However, it was noted that there was a very small number of business surveys received.

The campaign is intended to be long-term, aiming to make people change their attitudes and shopping habits to support local businesses. Mr. Highway stated that it would continue as long as budgetary commitments allowed, bearing in mind the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Authority.

13. 'CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS'

Mr. Highway provided an overview of the "Choose the High Street @ Christmas" campaign, which aims to link in with the existing, ongoing campaign, but also continue the Christmas discount scheme that has been run since 2012.

Following feedback from previous years, it was decided that the format for 2014 would be slightly different. During the last two years, any offers submitted by businesses were listed on a Website. To redeem the relevant offer, the consumer would present a discount card at the time of sale. This was deemed to be too complicated by businesses and was supported by the fact that transactional use of the card was low, despite 30,000 cards being distributed across the County Borough.

The Christmas 2014 format is based around a voucher booklet. To redeem an offer, the relevant voucher is cut out from the booklet and presented at the time of sale. Businesses were sent a letter, sign-up form and prepaid return envelope with the Town Centre Gazette and this simpler format has proved popular, resulting in 92 offers being received – the highest to date.

Voucher booklets will be available in Libraries and Customer First centres in the town centres, as well as at some of the visitor attractions. Publicity of the scheme, which goes live on 1st December 2014, will be via Heart FM, The South Wales Advertiser, Caerphilly Observer, Newline, CCBC's Website and social media.

A second element of the Christmas campaign is the launch of a "Pop-Up Shop Guide" that outlines the steps that need to be undertaken in order to establish a short-term use of a property. This is particularly useful for budding entrepreneurs who want to try a business model during the key pre-Christmas trading period. The guide is available in both hard and electronic copy.

Members thanked Mr Highway and Mr Wilcox for their report.

14. BARGOED CHRISTMAS MARKET 2014

Mr. Hudson discussed the previous success of the Christmas Market, but wanted to add more vibrancy to this year's event.

The group were advised that although the event is now well known, an extensive promotional campaign would be used again this year. To this end, a request for funding of £2,000 from the Area Forum Budget was made to pay for a regional radio campaign specifically for the event.

Members unanimously agreed to the £2,000 of funding, all were in favour. There were no abstentions.

The Chairman advised the group that Mr. Collins who was present today would be closing his shop within the next two weeks. Mr. Collins' family have had their shop in Bargoed for 64 years and they will be a sad loss to the town and wanted to wish Mr. Collins and his family all the best in his retirement on behalf of the group.

Mr. Collins thanked the Chair for his kind comments and stated that he had mixed feelings about retirement.

15. PROPOSAL FOR THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM (CRT) SERVICES

Mr Highway confirmed that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

16. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – OCTOBER 2014

The report was presented to the group and members were asked to raise any concerns.

Councillor Price pointed out that the Railway Station fencing on Station Road is still an ongoing matter.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed at 17.32 p.m.

CHAIRMAN