



YSTRAD MYNACH TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE ON TUESDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 2014 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

A. Angel, D. Bolter, K. James, E. Aldworth

Together with:

C. Mortimer (Clerk), Inspector Ian Bartholomew (Gwent Police), Mr W Jeff (Tredomen Allotments Association), Dr M Jorro (Rhymney Valley Music Club), Mr K Jones (Ystrad Mynach Partnership)

Also:

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

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: M. James, J. A. Pritchard, D. T Davies
S. Wilcox (Assistant Town Centre Manager), P. Hudson (Marketing and Events Manager)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO NOTE THE PREVIOUS MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15TH JULY 2014

Dr Jorro was not noted as sending in apologies. C. Mortimer advised on item 8 the last but one paragraph should have read 'preserve' not 'reserve'.

The minutes were taken as read, subject to the above amendments.

4. ARTWORK SILOH SQUARE

Mr Dallimore advised that in the previous meeting he said he would look into the condition of the artwork and consider possible solutions for its repair.

The group were presented with the following two options:

- Option 1 – Circular block paving costing £4,531.00 with little maintenance
- Option 2 – A resin-bound gravel costing £5,952.94 that requires regular cleaning to maintain colour

The group were invited to vote on the preferred option and a show of hands were 5 in favour of option 1.

The group discussed the removal of the dome and the fountain feature and a show of hands were 5 in favour of removing both items. Mr Dallimore will examine the possible relocation of the fountain within the surrounding area.

5. '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.

6. '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.

Mr Highway passed his thanks to Chairman and their members for handing out voucher booklets in the Christmas Fare.

7. CHRISTMAS EVENT FEEDBACK

Mr Highway passed on apologies from Mr Hudson and said that feedback was very positive.

The Chairman confirmed that the event was very successful and there were approximately 4,000 visitors.

Feedback from retailers, visitors and stall operators was overall very positive. One operator commented on how this was the best event he had attended as the warmth of local community really stood out to them and he wanted to return next year.

The Chairman highlighted problems with JPL who were providing the sound system. It was felt that they were rude to some people. The Chairman asked if there could be an alternative operator booked for next year's event.

Mr Jones advised that there was a problem with Co-speedy and the Christmas lights – some of the bulbs were not working and there was no safety switch fitted. These could have been checked overnight as they were delivered the day before and stored in David Lloyd's building yard. Replacements had to be brought in.

Mr Highway will pass comments back to Mr Hudson.

8. YSTRAD MYNACH TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – OCTOBER 2014

Members enquired about the item on audit for bus stop location. Mr Highway advised the group that all options have been looked at, by officers and bus companies. It has been confirmed that the bus stop will remain as it is.

The Chairman advised that there are issues at certain busy times of the day where emergency services are not able to get through.

Inspector Bartholomew confirmed that he was not aware of any incidents that emergency services were not able to get through but will look into this and feedback to transportation.

Mr Highway will also add the emergency services blue light issue to the audit report in addition officers will discuss with traffic management possibly changing traffic orders.

Meeting closed at 15:12

CHAIRMAN