



BARGOED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH 2015 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D. Carter, D.T. Davies, A. Higgs, K. James, D. Price, E.M. Aldworth
(Consultee)

Together with:

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

Also:

Inspector Muirhead, 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), P. Hudson (Marketing Events Manager), A. Jones
(Complaints Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors: A. Higgs, K. Reynolds.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (15TH OCTOBER 2014)

Previous minutes were taken as read.

4. CINEMA UPDATE

Mr Dallimore informed the group that the cinema is currently in stage D where design submission has been received from architects with revised drawings, external design, seat numbers based on a value engineering exercise and taking into account the site constraints. This submission is currently being reviewed by officers and who will then arrange with Odeon for them to formally re-affirm their interest.

The new timescale for completion of the works is Spring 2017.

Mr Dallimore advised that with regard to the takeover proposal of Odeon, he had been advised that the company were continuing to trade as usual and still plan to open new cinemas in UK and Ireland.

Members expressed concern over funding and this was noted by the officer. The building design has been value engineered which will in turn lower the costs. Mr Dallimore confirmed that the Council is currently looking for gap funding from Welsh Government.

5. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET @ CHRISTMAS ANALYSIS REPORT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group and discussed how the voucher scheme was a success for both retailers and the public.

The group were advised that throughout the five towns 90 offers were made and hopefully this will increase in future. Looking through the survey carried out, 91% of retailers stated that they would consider taking part in a future scheme.

From the feedback provided by the public, it is apparent that the key to a retailers voucher being used was in the strength of the offer. Members were advised of comments listed in the appendix of the report.

Mr Highway and Mr Wilcox were thanked for the report and all their hard work.

The Chair introduced Inspector Muirhead to the Group as the new Gwent Police for Bargoed.

6. CHOOSE THE HIGH STREET PAST & PRESENT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group and advised that this new initiative aims to re-connect people with their local town centre.

This new scheme was discussed with the group and members were asked if they had any old photographs, which could be used in a library exhibition.

The initiative will include an exhibition of archive photos held at the library in each town centre, as part of this there will be a competition where people will have the opportunity to win two £50 "Love to Shopping" vouchers. On the entry form people will be asked to complete the sentence – "I choose the high street because..." It is hoped to use some of these sentences in the future to further promote the town centres.

7. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS REPORT

Mr Highway presented the report to the group. Members discussed the report

The Chair raised concern over the fall in footfall figures in the North of the town and it was agreed that hopefully this will improve once the Unit Shops are let.

Thanks were passed by Mr Highway to Mr Wilcox for all of his hard work and to Mr Paul Hudson and his team for their work on the events program.

Members noted the important role Bargoed Town Council play in staging events in the town working in partnership with the Council's own events team.

Councillor Ken James confirmed that he was pleased to receive the report and acknowledged that the Town Council work well in the partnership with the Council and Chamber of Trade. The group were advised by Councillor James that Bargoed has been nominated for an award for Regeneration National Award which is to be presented in the Royal Institute of London on the 31st March 2015 and is the only Welsh project going forward for nominations.

8. UNIT SHOPS

Mr Dallimore provided a verbal update to the group on the units.

The group were advised:

Unit 5 - now let to Greggs.

Unit 6b - let to Subway (opening on 23rd March).

Unit 7 - shop window decals to be installed on Friday.

Unit 4 - an initial offer from a national retailers is being considered.

Units 1 & 2 - there is progress on shop fit out designs, but work on a legal agreement has been delayed as there is a 40-day stand still period, enforced by the Competition and Markets Authority which is drawing to a close. During this period the retailer is unable to engage with the Council. Retail agents acting for the Council will ask the retailer for an update on their position and are also looking at alternative options should the original retailer not proceed with the units.

There will be a new marketing brochure produced to market the site to a UK wide audience. New hoardings on units have been fitted to prevent water ingress.

9. POCKET PARK SCHEME UPDATE

Mr Dallimore advised the group that the initial tender returns have all exceeded the available budget so there has been a re-tendering process under-taken with a value-engineered scheme. This will mean less trees, a smaller floorscape and that the proposed improvement to 'Chisholms Lane' will not take place. Finally, the number of new bollards throughout the town will be reduced.

Revised tender has been issued and returned. The Council is about to appoint a preferred contractor and a commencement date is now the last week of March 2015.

10. HJJJ BUILDING

Mr Dallimore advised that the initial contractor declined to proceed at tendered rates. The works were therefore re-tendered and the preferred contractor declined the work when offered.

The next placed tender Dyer & Butler have agreed to take on the works and the compound will be set up week commencing the 16th March 2015 with works commencing on the 23rd March and an anticipated finish date of early June.

Letters have been sent out to local retailers advising of the works schedule.

11. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Mr Dallimore advised that there has been 50 expressions of interests of which 4 applications have been approved, 3 are having work done on site. Two further applications are in development. CC Sports is currently awaiting approval from Head of Service signature and another business is awaiting revised quotes.

The deadline for the budget to be spent is the end of May.

12. UPDATE BARGOED ICE RINK

Mr Hudson informed the group that for this year's events, his budget has been reduced by £15,000. As the ice rink costs approximately £20,000 alternative ways to fund the event are been considered. A community match fund has been identified which would cover the cost of the event.

Two contractors have been written to and asked for costs for them to hold the event and currently officers are awaiting their reply.

Talks are ongoing with Morrisons to establish the possibility of relocating the event in the underground car park. If Morrisons agree to this it would reduce the overall costs of the event. The store manager is enthusiastic about holding the event there but the decision rests with the regional manager.

Town Councillor Howard Llewellyn passed on thanks to Councillor James for supporting the event and securing funding, he asked if Councillor James would consider opening the event.

Councillor James confirmed that he would be very happy to open the event.

13. BARGOED TOWN CENTRE AUDIT – FEBRUARY 2015

Mr Highway presented the audit to the group and the following matters were discussed.

Illegal parking – members discussed the issue of illegal parking throughout the town and Inspector Muirhead advised the group that PCSO officers have been undertaking enforcement action.

The group also discussed that there are some retailers who are still parking illegally.

Inspector Muirhead advised that his officers will continue to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in the town

Mr Dallimore advised the group that he has been looking at the site where number 45 was demolished to place the new notice board there. The Town Council has provided the funding for the notice board and thanks to the Town Council were noted. The board has been ordered.

Cllr Carter expressed concern over damage to the Miner's Heads artwork, this will be placed on the audit.

Mr Collins wanted to raise concern over the highway just past the library as the surface is breaking up. Mr Dallimore will refer this to NCS and Capita Simmonds and set up a meeting.

There were no further issues raised on the audit.

The meeting closed at 17:22