

## **Markets Forum**

A meeting of the Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006.

**Present:** Councillor Cook (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Fletcher and Noble.

**Officers:** Mrs S Burgess, P Hutchinson, K Noble and C Watson (DNS); Mrs T Harrison (LD).

**Also in attendance:** P Johnson and Mrs P Mason (Market Trader Representatives).

**An apology for absence** was submitted was submitted on behalf of Councillor Narroway.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

### **Matters Arising**

Members enquired regarding whether there had been feedback on the generators as discussed in the minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> October and were advised that the generators had been inspected by Noise Abatement Officers and only one was deemed to be unacceptable. The market trader has been given time to sort out the generator in question.

### **Appointment of Town Centre Manager**

Members were introduced to Mrs S Burgess who had been appointed as the Town Centre Manager.

Mrs Burgess had a history of working with and monitoring markets, her previous job had been City Manager in Ripon, where she oversaw the markets. She had also traded from a market stall as part of her aromatherapy business.

Mrs Burgess was grateful for the opportunity to be working with the market traders in Stockton and hoped to see good things come from the Council and market traders working together.

CONCLUDED that Mrs Burgess be welcomed to Stockton Borough Council and Markets Forum.

### **Stockton International Riverside Festival 2006**

Members were advised that the item had been withdrawn, however the Chair advised that it would remain a regular item on the agenda.

Members requested that a special meeting be arranged to discuss the Stockton International Riverside Festival prior to any act being booked or decision being made by Mr Kench and his team.

Mrs Burgess advised that she had spoken with Mr Kench and had insisted that the Market Traders were involved from the beginning and every step of the way in relation to the Stockton International Riverside Festival.

Market traders observed that they had not received letters with the forms enabling them to claim compensation as promised by Mr Kench.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The Stockton International Riverside Festival would be a regular item on the Markets Forum agenda.

2. A special meeting of the Markets Forum would be convened prior to any act or decisions related to the Stockton International Riverside Festival being booked, enabling Market Traders to have input and be involved from the start.
3. Mr Noble to be contacted and an urgent request being made for him to send out letters and forms enabling Market Traders to claim for loss of earnings as a result of the Stockton International Riverside Festival 2005.

### **Viewpoint 17 Residents Panel Survey**

Members were provided with a report, which detailed the results of the Viewpoint 17 Residents Panel Survey.

During the Markets Forum held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005 Members agreed that a Residents Panel Survey would be undertaken in relation to Stockton's Market.

The result of the survey had been received.

The survey was conducted in December 2005 with a total of 887 responses. However 733 people completed all six sections of this survey. The overall response area was 75% with a 62% response rate to all the questions.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council were producing a strategy to regenerate the markets throughout the Borough. The questions on the survey would help identify what was needed to be included in the strategy. Markets were a high profile activity and contributed significantly to the local economy, creating colour, excitement and activity in streets that were increasingly dominated by multiple retail chains.

Market Traders advised that they never saw the agendas or minutes from the Markets Forum. It was pointed out that it was the responsibility of the Market Trader representatives to make the agenda and minutes available, however Market Traders requested that more copies of the agendas and minutes be sent to Market Trader representatives.

Market Traders also observed that they had never seen the Market advertised except for a couple of occasions over the year and queried why it could not be advertised in newspapers regularly. Mr Watson advised that the Market Traders have a budget from which they decided what is to be spent on and further advised that £2,000 of the promotion budget had been spent advertising each stall which resulted in a photograph being taken of each stall and stallholder detailing the items sold on that stall which were published.

Market Traders queried the traffic and the number of cars and buses, which used the High Street and parked on the High Street and pavement thus blocking Market Traders. Market Traders requested whether signs could be put in place, however they were advised by the Chair that the Council were looking into appropriate signs as it was now a matter for the Police to prosecute and if incorrect signs were erected it opened the possibility of a prosecution not being possible.

Market Traders were advised that they could take the number plate of any offending vehicle and hand it over to Colin Watson or the Police and it would be investigated.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. Mrs Harrison to ensure that 40 extra copies of the agenda and minutes be sent to the Market Trader representatives who would then distribute them to the remaining Market Traders.

### **New Market Stalls**

Members were advised that Property Development had carried out research into a possible new design of market stall, for the use by stallholders on Stockton's statutory markets. Trials had shown that there were practical difficulties in relation to the proposed gazebo style stalls and that an alternative approach was needed.

The project had been handed over to the Stockton Town Centre Manager for further investigation and costing.

It was proposed that Stockton Borough Council had stalls manufactured locally to its own specification as agreed with the Markets Forum. Mrs Burgess advised that she was involved in the proposed realignment of the Market and that she had shared the reservations of the Market Traders regarding the gazebo style market stalls.

Mrs Burgess advised that she had spoken to other Town Centre Managers and had been advised that one manager in particular had consulted with local companies to design a purpose built stall, which suited the needs of the Market Traders better.

It was Mrs Burgess' intention to talk to each Market Trader to find out their requirements for market stalls. Following the Market Traders' input she intended to come up with three or four stalls that would meet the requirements of all the Market Traders. It was her intention that Market Traders would be provided with the same amount of space currently enjoyed, however she counselled Market Traders that they would need to support change. The Town Centre Manager, along with all members of the Markets Forum, wished to retain the character of the Market, however, it was acknowledged that the Market required regeneration and by doing so it would improve the High Street and encourage tourism to the Market whilst still enabling the Market to be a working Market.

Market Traders queried the disposal and collection of waste.

It was observed that the Market did not use skips, as there was a compactor, however Service Stockton had not been bringing it to the Market.

The Head of Property Development advised that he would speak to Service Stockton to enquire why the compactor was not being delivered and how the collection of waste could be improved.

A member requested that a representative from Service Stockton be invited to the next meeting.

The Town Centre Manager advised that she would speak further with the Market Traders to discuss matters of concern like disposal of waste and requested whether Market Traders would prefer Colin and herself to come round during the day to visit with them individually on their market stall or if they wished to get together as a collective group to discuss the various issues of concern. Market Traders advised that they wished for both methods to be undertaken.

The Market Trader representative requested that the broken paving slabs on the High Street be replaced as some of them affected his stall. Members were advised that the Town Centre Manager would visit the market stall and would note the areas of the broken paving slabs and would note any other problems, which could be dealt with by Service Stockton and would then report them to Service Stockton requesting that the problems be resolved.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The Town Centre Manager and Markets Manager would meet with each Market Trader to discuss the requirements of their stall and any other problems they wished to see addressed and the Town Centre Manager would organise a meeting between herself, the Markets Manager and all the Market Traders to address the same issues.

3. The Head of Property Development will speak to Service Stockton regarding the collection and disposal of waste on the market place.
4. The Town Centre Manager would identify the areas of broken paving slabs and any other issues, which fall under the remit of Service Stockton and would report them to Service Stockton with a request that the issues be resolved.