

Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 6th September, 2006.

Present: Cllr B Cook (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J Beaumont, Cllr Mrs S Fletcher, Cllr L Narroway, Cllr W Noble; Ms L Hutchison, P Johnson and P Mason (Market Trader representatives)

Officers: S Burgess and C Watson (DNS); Mrs T Harrison and Miss S Johnson (LD).

Also in attendance: Market Traders

Apologies: G McDonald (DNS)

1 Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 5th July 2006

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2006 were considered prior to their submission to Council.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of 5th July 2006 are approved and will be submitted to Council.

2 Stockton International Riverside Festival 2006 - feedback and 2007 - proposal - Verbal Report

CONCLUDED that the item be postponed to the next meeting.

3 Markets Redevelopment – Verbal Report

The Town Centre Manager addressed the Members and Market Traders updating them on the proposed design and construction of new stalls and re-alignment which was felt had an impact on one another.

Market Traders observed that previous minutes had stated that the Markets and Town Centre Manager would visit with each individual Market Trader at their stall to discuss their needs, however this had not happened and therefore they felt that they had not been properly consulted.

Members were advised that discussions regarding improvements to the market, such as new stalls had begun with Market Traders and the Forum, two years previously.

The Town Centre Manager apologised for not yet meeting with Market Traders and advised that she would try and meet with each individually or would organise a meeting for all of them but requested that they attended if a meeting was held. Market Traders were reminded that they could contact the Town Centre Manager whenever there was a concern. Otherwise they could talk to her team who knew each of the Market Traders and their products and who talked with them at their stalls on a continuous basis.

An open consultation had taken place at the Swallow Hotel on 21st April 2006, to which all Market Traders had received an invitation to attend to discuss the design, construction and re-alignment of new stalls and layout of the market and how to deal with waste.

The meeting had been successful although many Market Traders had not attended.

Market Traders acknowledged receiving invitations but they had not attended as they had not realised the full extent of the discussion.

Market Traders questioned the need for new stalls and whether the rent would increase?

They were advised that the Council had already made the decision that there were to be new stalls, therefore the Town Centre Manager had consulted with Market Traders at the earliest stages for their input regarding design of the new stalls.

Rent had been set until April 2007 at which point it would be reviewed.

Members were informed that as a result of the comments received at the consultation with Market Traders, Three types of new stalls were proposed:

1. A single front facing stall
2. Double Stall
3. Double Walk in Stall

All the new stalls would be of the same height, roof pitch and depth with the double stall being twice as wide as the single stall.

A prototype of each of the stalls would be made and be set up on market days, over a six week period commencing on 4th October. The first week would be for Market Traders to look at, the remaining weeks would be for various Traders to set up their products and try out the stall. Market Traders would need to book the stall with the Markets Manager. Due to the number of stall holders it was hoped that at least one type of each stall holder would try out the stalls.

Market Traders would then be invited to give feedback on the new stalls at a meeting, however Market Traders would need to view and test the stalls for the consultation to be effective and assist themselves and the Town Centre and Markets Managers.

A Member advised that the stalls would have to be fit for purpose and therefore queried whether further prototypes would be made if Market Traders requested dramatic changes after testing the original prototypes?

Members were advised that there would be cost implications but if needed, a new prototype would be built.

Once the design had been decided upon and the stalls had been purchased the next decision would be regarding the distribution of the stalls. The Town Centre Manager would propose a number of options and would invite Market Traders and Members of the Forum to input their views on the best of these., the options under consideration were:-

1. Issue Market Traders with their own stall bundles for which they would be responsible, including erection of the stalls.

2. Use Service Stockton or similar contractor to keep and erect the stalls, which would be at a cost of £600,000 per year. The cost would need to be recouped and could result in either a further allocation from Council budgets or significantly increased Market Traders rent.

3. In each of the market locations, a purpose built store incorporating the cash office would be erected. On arrival to the site Market Traders would drive up to the window, pay for their site and collect their stall bundle.

Market Traders advised that they did not want new stalls; they wanted the market to stay as it was, but be tidied up and issues relating to anti social behaviour to be addressed. They were also not happy with any of the options regarding distributions.

The Town Centre Manager and Market Manager advised that other methods of distribution could be considered but that things could not stay as they were.

The Chair observed that Market Traders had repeatedly told the Forum that the Market was in decline; therefore efforts were being made to reverse the decline; however Traders were now advising that it was not in decline.

Market Traders queried what would happen if they boycotted the market and did not stand?. Traders were advised that it was the responsibility of the Market Traders along with Members of the Forum and Officers to ensure the success of the market.

Regeneration and improvement would improve the Markets Traders revenue. The Town Centre Manager and Members of the Forum confirmed their support of the Market and requested Market Traders worked with them to ensure the success of the market.

CONCLUDED that

Three prototype stalls will be built and over a six week period Market Traders can view them and book a day to test them out with their products.

Feed back will then be requested from Market Traders regarding the suitability of the new stalls.

4 Forthcoming Events - Discussion

Members were advised that the Market's Fair would be held on 23rd September 2006. The Market Traders' costumes would be paid for from the Markets Fair budget.

On the 7th October 2006, the Market's Team were holding an event to encourage new university students to use Stockton as their town. A stage would be erected outside the Town Hall and would feature unsigned bands.

Market Traders who would be affected had agreed to relocate.

The Town Centre Manager advised that following feedback from Traders, her team were happy to rearrange the social event, which usually took place on the

evening of the Markets Fair, closer to Christmas.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

5 Markets Promotions Group – request for volunteers

The Town Centre Manager requested volunteers to be involved in the Markets Promotion Group which would be led by Colin Watson, Markets and Town Centres Manager.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont, Councillor Mrs Fletcher, Mr C Higgins, Mr B Tibbit, Mr M Cain, Mrs C Rowe and Mrs L Hutchinson volunteered.

CONCLUDED that Councillor Mrs Beaumont, Councillor Mrs Fletcher, Mr C Higgins, Mr B Tibbit, Mr M Cain, Mrs C Rowe and Mrs L Hutchinson volunteered to be on the Markets Promotion Group.