

Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 15th November, 2006.

Present: Cllr B Cook (Chairman) , Cllr W Noble, Cllr Mrs J Beaumont, Cllr M. Cherrett (vice Cllr Mrs S Fletcher), Ms L. Hutchinson, P. Johnson, Mr J. Mason and Mrs P. Mason (Market Trader representatives)

Officers: S. Burgess and C. Watson (DNS);R. Kench (CESC); M. Henderson (LD)

Also in attendance: Market Traders, S. James (Cleveland Police)

Apologies: Cllr Mrs S Fletcher, Cllr L Narroway

1 Minutes of meeting held on 6th September 2006

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2006 were considered prior to their submission to Council.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of 6th September 2006 be approved for submission to Council.

2 Feedback from SIRF and 2007 proposals

The Forum considered a report relating to the Stockton International Festival and discussed related issues affecting Stockton Market. Members were reminded of the drivers coming from a review of SIRF in 2002. The Forum was provided with headline findings for SIRF 06 and noted that they were very positive. They included: -

- Satisfaction levels of 98% of people were satisfied, or better
- Levels of visitor spend had increased from £27.97 per head for 05 to £38.55
- Favourite performance or attraction was the town hall stage, for the second year running
- Regional television and print media coverage was excellent with live and pre-recorded pieces on BBC and ITV.
- 88% of visitors from outside the TS postcode considered that the event had a positive effect on the profile of the Town.

Only 2% of visitors were disappointed with SIRF.

As highlighted by the survey the Town Hall Stage was the most popular attraction and it was suggested that this justified the displacement of market stalls. However, it was recognised that the loss of stall sites for regular traders was a real problem for those affected.

The Forum noted that Senior Management at the Council considered the Market to be an integral part of the Festival and because of this, as much of it as possible should be maintained during the festival. It was considered that it contributed significantly to the feel; attraction and success of the Festival and cancelling it would detract from the overall atmosphere.

The Forum agreed that ad hoc arrangements for dealing with displaced Market Traders should not continue and it was suggested that every effort should be made to formulate an agreed permanent scheme, in consultation with the Market

Traders, to deal with displacements and minimise negative affects on individuals. It was agreed that consideration on this should take place at the earliest opportunity.

The Forum briefly discussed other potential set-ups for the Festival that would impact less on the Market Traders. The Forum noted that lots of thought went into the structure of the Festival, taking on board the needs of all those affected including spectators, market traders, performers emergency access etc and it was considered that the current structure struck the most appropriate balance for all concerned. It was explained that next year's Festival would take place 1st – 5th August 2007 and information about how much of the market would be required would be provided as early as possible. A guarantee of a minimum 2 months notice was given. It was noted that when assessing space required, the Council always tried to accurately assess exact amounts needed, however, the Council considered that it was better to slightly overestimate.

It was explained that the Festival attracted visitors from outside the area. Expenditure in the Town was increased and this provided obvious benefits for shops, pubs, cafes, market traders etc.

CONCLUDED that: -

1. the report be noted.
2. consideration of a scheme to deal with displaced market traders be undertaken and further reports be brought to the Forum on this and associated matters in the New Year.

3 Protecting Traders from crime and anti social behaviour

The Forum was informed of existing arrangements for dealing with crime related incidents and anti social behaviour. In the event of any incidents Market Traders were advised that they should contact a Markets Officer using their mobile telephone number. On receipt of this the officer would contact the surveillance centre and CCTV would be used to monitor the incident. An Officer described a recent incident that had been dealt with in this way resulting in the arrest of an individual.

Market Trader representatives noted this, but pointed out that such cover would not be available if an incident occurred at 4.00am.

The Forum was informed that the surveillance centre could be contacted directly, plus, although Police foot patrol would not be in operation at this hour, the Police would respond if contacted. A telephone number to contact the Police was provided and it was explained that the 999 emergency numbers could also be used if necessary.

It was suggested that, in order to assist Market Traders, a pocket size card should be produced detailing telephone numbers of Markets officers, the Surveillance Centre and the Police.

The Forum was provided with details of a scheme, the aim of which was to reduce retail crimes, such as shoplifting and anti social behaviour, throughout

Stockton Town Centre. The Town Centre Manager and PCSO Sarah James (Cleveland Police), who would co ordinate the scheme, provided the panel with details of how the scheme would operate: -

The police, security services and retailers would share the most up to date intelligence and information on known and new offenders, and work together to

- prevent criminal activity
- gather evidence to help with the arrest and successful prosecution of persistent offenders.
- Make town centre businesses, shoppers and visitors feel safer by implementing measures, which everyone could use to reduce crime.

Features of the scheme would include:-

- A retail crime co-coordinator (a police officer)
- Help and advice on what could be done to deal with shoplifters and anti social behaviour
- Shared information from Cleveland Police, Stockton Borough Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team and others in the scheme
- Regular, updated, detailed information to help recognize and deal with the Top 10 offenders and a regular newsletter
- Membership of an Asset Recovery Scheme

Specific reference was made to an Asset Recovery Scheme and it was explained that those signing up could make claims to recover the costs of stolen assets.

In addition to the above it was envisaged that Traders would have access to radios, that would be linked to a network, including security at Wellington Square, Castlegate Centre and the Police.

In terms of cost it was explained that they would be firmed up later, but were not expected to be significant and probably in the region of £25 per Trader.

The Forum agreed that the Crime Prevention Initiative was a good idea and supported it in principle.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. the Crime Prevention Initiative would benefit Market Traders and the Town Centre as a whole.
2. further information and possible costs be provided to Traders and they be given the opportunity to sign up to the scheme.
3. a pocket size card be produced detailing telephone numbers of the Market's Officers, the Surveillance Centre and the Police.

4 Markets' Redevelopment update

The Forum considered a note that had been prepared following an assessment of the practicalities and resource implications of delivering, erecting and

dismantling new Market Stall Units.

The Forum noted that in terms of time, costs and Health and Safety issues the option of delivering and erecting/dismantling the new stalls had to be discounted.

In view of this it was considered that the best option would be to provide new canopies for existing stalls.

In order to progress this, Market Traders had been formally requested to provide dimensions of their stalls. It was envisaged that most stalls would fit into standard sizes, however, it was accepted that it might be necessary to purchase some bespoke canopies.

It was explained that canopies were likely to be the responsibility of Market Traders. Other likely requirements would be: -

- Use of Canopies, a condition of a Trader's Licence
- No encroachments
- No Trading off the floor.

The need for Market Traders to forward their stall's correct dimensions to the Council was emphasised. Also an indication of preferred colours had been requested. The Council could not progress the matter further until this information had been received. It was important that everything was in place in time for a launch in the Spring of 2007. Officers explained that they would re issue the request for the information and extend the time period for receipt by 2 weeks.

With regard to the colour of the canopies it was generally considered that a stripe would be the best and most effective option and early indications were that Market Traders would prefer green, though other colours could still be considered.

A Market Trader representative indicated that a sample of the new canopies, he had handled previously, had been extremely heavy and difficult to manoeuvre.

It was explained that when ordering new canopies the Council would discuss such issues with potential suppliers. Officers indicated that they were aware that there were lightweight versions of the canopies available.

A trader pointed out the importance of all stalls displaying the new canopies and, to enforce this, he suggested that Traders arriving at the Market without canopies should be turned away, but be required to pay the rent for that day.

Other issues discussed related to the use of stall skirts and it was agreed that these improved presentation. Also it was agreed that traditional clips should be used as fixings.

Finally, the Stockton Town Centre Manager formally thanked the Market Traders for their invaluable contributions to date in redeveloping the Market.

CONCLUDED that

1. the most appropriate way to proceed with the development of the Market was to purchase new canopies and skirts.

2. Market Traders should provide the Council with dimensions of their stalls and provide an indication of a preferred colour/design within the timescale that would be notified to them.

3. it be noted that there were likely to be additional conditions of licence associated with the provision of canopies and redevelopment of the Market.

5 Christmas Market Fair

The Forum was asked to consider holding a Christmas Fair. The Forum noted that the Fair held earlier that year had been successful and had attracted favourable comments.

The Forum felt this was a good idea and a number of suggestions were made, including: -

- Christmas themed fancy dress
- Santa Hats
- Free Mince Pies

CONCLUDED that the Market should hold a Christmas Fair and the event be included in publicity.

6 Any other business

A Trader raised an issue relating to access to toilets. It was explained that keys for toilets were available from certain Traders on the Market. It was agreed that this be highlighted and details provided in a note to Traders.

Trader representatives queried why they had not been informed that an Ice Rink would be situated in the Town Centre over the Christmas period. It was explained that the Ice Rink was very small and would not encroach on any Market Stall sites and would therefore not directly affect any traders.

This was noted, but representatives requested that they receive consultation on such issues in the future as when rumours of an ice rink had surfaced they had received heavy criticism from other traders for not keeping them informed. Officers noted this.

Traders requested that any advertising of free children's rides offered should indicate that Traders were sponsoring the rides and any donations would be passed to Butterwick Hospice.

CONCLUDED that the above be noted and actioned where appropriate