

Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 12th December, 2007.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher

Officers: S. Burgess, C. Watson (DNS) M. Jones (LD)

Also in attendance: Market Traders

Apologies: Cllr Bill Noble

**MF
23/07** **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

**MF
24/07** **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14th November 2007**

Members considered the minutes held on 14th November 2007.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2007 be agreed as a true record.

**MF
25/07** **Increase in Market Stall Rents**

The Town Centre Manager presented a report to advise Members of the proposal to increase market stall rents.

It was explained that the report showed the situation for 2007/8 financial year. Therefore, the figures included an element of projected outturn, where the final quarter of the year was estimated, based upon a combination of the previous three quarters' figures and, where relevant, a comparison with the same period in previous years. The Town Centre Manager noted that the report was compiled in accordance with Government guidelines and met the criteria for public sector accounting.

Members were informed that the costs shown were only those which were billed direct to the market service. However, an income target was set by the Council as to how much the market was expected to earn, and this included a contribution to the overall supplies and services provided by the Council from which the market benefited, but which were not directly attributable to the market alone.

The Town Centre Manager noted that there had been Council expenditure that related directly to markets for which the cost had not been passed on. This was primarily the provision of new stall covers, for which the overall project costs included trials, samples and publicity was in the region of £100,000.

The Town centre Manager explained that if there were no changes to stall rents, the market would continue to lose money year on year at an increasing rate as other costs go up. The report suggested an increase of £3 per unit, which was calculated to generate additional income based upon 2007/8 year's actual

occupancy rates, to offset the under-recovery against the budgeted income target. This would allow the Markets to pay their way for the additional Corporate allocations set by the Council, with a small surplus for contingency and reinvestment in the markets. The Town Centre Manager stressed that whilst there were fluctuations in the numbers of traders standing each week, with considerable vacancies at certain times such as January and February, the markets service was charged full costs all the time for the whole area.

Members raised the previous suggestion to introduce a chip and pin payment scheme, where Market Traders paid their rent by cash/debit card. The Town Centre Manager informed that Tristar Homes Ltd were carrying out a pilot into chip and pin payments, and if that pilot is successful then the cost implications for introducing the system for Markets would be investigated.

The Forum agreed a £2 increase for 2008/9 to be implemented on 1 April 2008, and a further automatic £1 increase in 2009/10 to be implemented on 1 April 2009.

The Market Manager noted that during January and February traders who stand for three consecutive weeks would not be charged for the fourth week. Traders raised an issue with the purchasing of produce for the market on 2nd January. The Market Manager informed that for traders selling fruit and vegetables, should they be unable to obtain stock to trade on that day they would not be charged.

CONCLUDED that Market Stall Rents would be increased by £2 per unit in 2008/9, and an additional £1 in 2009/10.