

Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 23rd January, 2008.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher

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

Also in attendance: Market Traders

Apologies: Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Ian Dalgarno

MF 26/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

MF 27/07 **Minutes of the Meeting Held 12th December 2007**

Members considered that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2007.

S. Burgess informed that the Market Stall Rents increase that was agreed had been included in the Town Centre's financial planning.

Chip and Pin payment schemes were discussed and it was requested that this issue be an agenda item at the April/May meeting when more information on the Tristar Homes Ltd pilot scheme was available.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2007 be agreed as a correct record.

MF 28/07 **Update on Markets Realignment**

The Town Centre Manger informed that side sheets had been distributed to traders prior to the meeting; however the pelmets had not been received from the manufacturer. Once all the items had been delivered and distributed the usage of the new sheets would be enforced.

The quality of the top and side sheets was discussed. The Trader Representatives informed that the new top sheets had ripped easily due to wind, and wear and tear had been noticed. Both the Town Centre Manager and Traders had noticed that the side sheets were getting dirty quickly and the rain was not cleaning them as it should. It was agreed that as traders had only been in receipt of the front sheets for a maximum of three months, and their average shelf life should be approximately one year, that the sheets may not be 'fit for purpose'. The Chair suggested gaining written evidence from traders on any problems they were experiencing with the new top and side sheets to raise with the manufacturers. The Town Centre Manager stated that she would also seek legal advice.

The cost of replacement top sheets was discussed. The Town Centre Manager stated that although Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had provided for the

initial sheets, they would not pay for replacements. She added that SBC may however be able to procure the replacements in bulk subject to resale, to ensure traders get the best possible price.

CONCLUDED that

1. Traders would be surveyed to highlight any problems with the new top and side sheets.
2. The Town Centre Manager would seek legal advice regarding a 'fit for purpose' challenge.

MF
29/07

Billingham Changes to Access

The Town Centre Manager informed that Halladale, the owners of Billingham Town Centre, believed traders at the Town Centre had contributed, albeit unknowingly, to significant damage to the paving blocks by driving on to load and unload. It is Halladale's view that this situation could not be allowed to continue and therefore a compromise had been reached in order that the market could continue to trade viably.

With effect from Monday 7th January 2008, only those traders which actually traded out of their vehicle would be permitted to drive their vehicle onto the paved area beyond the bollards, and all other traders would be required to load and unload from the loading bay. To ensure the new rules were adhered to, a member of SBC Markets staff would be present from 6am on market days, and until the last trader had left the area. SBC and Halladale would continue to monitor vehicles in person and via CCTV to ensure compliance and to identify responsibility for any further damage. If further damage to pavements after repair could be credited to the Market, SBC would be accountable for repair costs.

The Trader Representatives noted that the vehicle SBC used to clean the Town Centre contributed to the damage due to its weight. The Town Centre Manager agreed with this view and stated that they had contacted Service Stockton who was responsible for cleaning the area and requested that the vehicle was no longer used but that the hand cart was deployed instead.

The Town Centre Manager stated that following the changes to access at Billingham Town Centre, some traders had stopped attending the market. She noted that this was expected and Halladale had been informed of such consequences of the new restrictions.

Suggestions were forwarded for incorporating loading, unloading and collection of rubbish for the market in the Billingham Town Centre redevelopment plans, which included having a designated route for vehicles onto the paved areas, and building a store area. The Chair noted that this issue would be raised with Halladale when SBC met to discuss the regeneration plans.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The incorporation of the markets needs in the redevelopment of Billingham Town Centre be raised in discussions with Halladale when designing the new infrastructure (Civil Engineering stage).
2. The information be noted.

MF
30/07 **New Opportunities for Traders**

The Town Centre Manager informed that the Friday Stockton Market was to be expanded, and the existing Wednesday and Saturday Market Traders had been offered spaces on Friday, with the first week being free. Approximately five traders had taken up this offer. The Town Centre Manager was to promote the Friday Stockton Market to new traders, and would offer those new traders who wanted to attend the Wednesday and Saturday Markets a space on the Friday Market before being put on the waiting list.

The Town Centre Manager also informed that the market would expand onto Dovecot Street, where there was room for four more stalls and a plant stall.

Thornaby Market was discussed and members were informed that this would be re-launched once the redevelopment of Thornaby Town Centre had been completed.

The level of business advice given to new traders was raised. The Town Centre Manager noted that some new traders had been given advice from organisations such as The Prince's Trust and Business Link before they decided to approach Stockton Market for a space. A Start-Up Scheme to offer incentives to new Traders was discussed and the Town Centre Manager and Markets Manager stated that they would investigate packages to discuss at the next meeting. However it was stressed that if such packages were introduced these would only be available for those offering new and diverse stock so as not to inadvertently subsidise competition with existing traders.

CONCLUDED that:

1. Start Up Schemes be investigated.
2. The information be noted

MF
31/07 **Redevelopment of Shambles**

The Town Centre Manager informed that the Shambles had not been fulfilling its full potential in recent years and a decision had been made to redevelop the building to make more of the asset.

A diagram of the proposed floor plan was produced and discussed and it was noted that the main change was to remove the existing market office from the centre of the building and to 'double' the depth of each unit making it more viable. This would also increase the amount of natural light coming through the

atrium roof. The remaining space would be divided into 11 units, each unit having a back area and a 'shop front', and unit holders could take a lease on a single or double unit.

One existing tenant (the cobbler) would remain in the building as his contract had not expired. Two other existing tenants, the florist and the barber, had been offered a new tenancy following completion of the redevelopment and these were under negotiation. However there was an intention to make the building a specialist food hall and SBC would attempt to attract specialist food retailers by inviting expressions of interest from potential tenants.

It was believed that the redevelopment of the Shambles would begin in June 2008, and would take four months, being completed by October 2008.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

MF **Christmas Markets Fair 2008 - 2010**
32/07

The report which proposed delivering a range of specialist markets for Christmas 2008 to run from Thursday 27 November 2008, through to Sunday 30 November 2008 was noted.

The proposed event would build upon the already busy and successful Stockton market in the High Street, introduce specialist markets into key areas such as Church Road/Splash plazas and Wellington Square; link areas via Green Dragon yard and Parish Gardens and allow a wide programme of entertainments across all areas including Riverside and Trinity Gardens. The event would provide the foundations for a series of bigger and better Christmas markets leading up to the celebration of the 700th Anniversary of Stockton's Market Charter, in 2010, and beyond.

The Trader Representatives queried the cost of stalls for regular traders at the Christmas Market. The Town Centre Manager explained that if there was a stall rent increase for the Christmas Market, then this would not be a significant increase.

The displacement of the existing traders for the Christmas Market was discussed. It was noted that the regular traders who wished to take part in the Christmas Market could have their regular pitches if they wished to book, and pre-pay, for the full four days. However those who did not wish to book for the full four days may be displaced on the days that they did trade, as those who booked the four days would take priority. The Town Centre Manager stated that traders would have to make a business decision whether they wished to stand for four days in their regular pitch, or stand for their regular two days and risk being displaced. Further detailed information would be produced and circulated to traders over the coming weeks. It was likely that all traders would be asked for a booking fee in advance to secure their pitch.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

