

Markets Forum

A meeting of Markets Forum was held on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2010.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Bill Noble, C Higgins (Market Trader Representative), M Pinkney (Market Trader Representative)

Officers: Mrs A Brayshaw, Mrs S Daniels, J Glancey, N Laws, Mrs E Marsh, C Watson (DNS); Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: Market Traders

Apologies: Cllr Ian Dalgarno and Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher

M **Declarations of Interest**

28/10

Councillor Fletcher declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to the Christmas Festival item due to being Chairman of the Stockton Borough Public Transport Users Forum.

M **Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2010.**

29/10

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2010.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

M **Thornaby Market**

30/10

Members were advised that following the assignment of the lease to BAE Systems Pension Fund Trustees Limited, all obligations and conditions of the Development Agreement with Thornfield had been retained and transferred. This included the Markets Agreement covering the Council's rights to continue with a market on Thursdays.

A meeting had been held with the new owners to establish their intentions for the centre. Early discussions indicated that the owners were keen to improve the existing market in order to increase footfall into the Town Centre. Suggested improvements included alteration of the existing layout and provision of new canopies to improve the appearance of market stalls. Proposals to refurbish the Inshops into smaller sized retail units for local businesses were also being considered.

The Forum was advised that a site visit had taken place on a market day with the new owner. The new owner had concerns regarding the layout of the market. The owner did not want the stalls to face away from the shops; this was agreed with by the traders at the meeting.

BAE were carrying out negotiations to improve the vacant shops.

Market traders requested that if stalls were moved closer to ASDA that longest standing traders were given first refusal. Traders were advised that such a move might not happen but market traders would be kept updated.

Market Traders advised that they hoped that the changes would be in place by Christmas 2010; officers were happy to push for this to happen.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The Report be noted.
2. The Regeneration Projects Manager will request that BAE make the alterations to Thornaby Market prior to Christmas 2010.

M
31/10

Billingham Market

In August a meeting was held between the Town Centre Manager of Billingham, Care For Your Area and Regeneration. Concerns were raised regarding health & safety, primarily vehicular movements during market trading hours, access to the market and the dismantling of market stalls. It was suggested that a window of time for erecting market stalls was established as some traders were still arriving and driving through the market at 10am when there were a large number of pedestrians in the centre resulting in some instances of vans driving 6 inches from properties. Traders would also adhere to the designated areas to gain access in and out of the market.

A follow up meeting would be arranged for early November to monitor the situation; discussions would also take place regarding potential revised layouts for the future.

Market traders advised that they were unclear as to the reason for the complaints as the only time Billingham Town Centre was busy was during the market.

Officers advised that the issue regarding vehicle movement had improved and the Town Centre Manager really supported the manager and wanted the market to succeed.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

M
32/10

Townscape Heritage

Members were advised that Stockton Borough Council had received a first-round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme in Central Stockton. The HLF had set aside £1,784,900 for the Central Stockton THI, including development funding of up to £44,500. The development funding would be used by Stockton Borough Council to produce the second-round submission needed to secure the remainder of the money from the HLF. The HLF used the THI programme to make grants that helped communities to regenerate Conservation Areas throughout the United Kingdom that displayed particular social and economic need. A THI scheme aimed to encourage partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces within the defined area.

Consultation took place at the Markets Forum meeting to outline the proposed Central Stockton THI scheme to enable input for interested parties in sufficient

time to allow incorporation into the second-round submission to the HLF. Traders were requested to complete a consultation feedback form to make their opinions known.

Officers advised that they were required to demonstrate that there was support from local businesses including Market Traders.

Traders indicated that they were supportive of the broad principle of improving the Town Centre, however they expressed concern that simply repairing buildings would not bring more people to Stockton Town Centre. Officers advised that securing an economically viable future for the buildings was a key requirement of the scheme.

Traders enquired whether the Council would offer subsidised rates to those wishing to rent vacant shops, however they were advised that the rateable value was set by the Valuations Office (a central Government agency) not the Council. However officers agreed to investigate how these rates were determined and what relief may be available.

Discussion took place regarding some negative media in relation to the high vacancy rates in Stockton Town Centre. The methodology used was questioned by officers as both Regeneration and Planning reported significantly lower vacancy rates than those published in the newspaper article.

A Member requested that the funding be put to use in the best possible way so as to provide maximum benefit to the Town. The Member noted that a large sum of money from a previous fund had been spent on the church but it had not benefited the Town.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Officers will investigate an appropriate response to the vacancy figures published for the Town Centre.
3. Officers will investigate rates for the Town Centre.

M
33/10 **Christmas Market Festival**

Members were advised that the Christmas Festival would take place between Thursday 2nd and Sunday 6th December.

Internal discussions were taking place regarding the proposed location for the Victorian fair during the Christmas Market Festival. To create a link to the Parish Gardens and create a high profile event that linked both the Parish Gardens and the High Street, it was proposed that the fair be located between Dodson's Fountain and the YMCA shop.

Officers noted that 11 market traders would be affected. However locating the fair in the proposed area would provide synergy between the market and the craft stalls and traders would benefit from additional footfall.

It was noted that some traders had unnecessarily been displaced in 2009 as some rides had not attended.

Officers advised that as part of the proposals it was agreed to consult with traders as this was an opportunity to seek their views.

Traders advised that they did not wish to be displaced as that Saturday in December was their busiest day of the year.

Traders requested that the road be closed and the fair be put in the road. Officers advised that it had been considered in the first year but they would put the idea forward again, however this would create issues with regards to buses and road closure orders.

It was also suggested that the fair be put on the cobbled road from Barnacles chip shop as this would provide minimum disruption be visually appealing and would provide the link between the market and the craft stalls.

Officers advised that they would put forward the proposal to the events board for consideration.

Members queried the membership of the events board and were advised that it was an officers working group.

Members were advised that the proposals for the market went to Cabinet and a steering group had been set up as a result, however officers had agreed that details should come back to Markets Forum for consultation with market trader representatives.

Traders requested a special meeting to feedback the information once a decision was made.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Officers will put forward the suggestion that the fair be put on the cobbled road from Barnacles chip shop as this will provide minimum disruption, be visually appealing and will provide the link between the market and the craft stalls.

M
34/10

Farmers Market

Officers advised that a meeting had been held with Lorna Jackson from Food First who was keen to supply Stockton with 6 more farmers markets for 2011. Lorna was currently in the process of drawing up a list of dates for the future markets, which would be agreed with officers.

Officers advised that the increased footfall was pleasing to Lorna Jackson and the shops in Wellington Square.

Members were advised that there would be a Halloween theme for the farmers market on Saturday 30th October 2010.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

M
35/10 **EU Services Directive**

Members were advised that work continued on the markets review, including an appraisal of the latest advice from NABMA on the implications of the European Service Directives and the potential implications for operations in the Borough. The recommendations in the Government's report 'Can the traditional market survive?' and the Retail Markets Alliance's 'Markets 21' report were also being appraised. Potential changes under consideration included the use of a register of market traders along side new shorter term licences and integration of the market with the public realm improvements outlined in the Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide. A more detailed report of the findings would be available for the next Markets Forum.

Officers were pleased to advise that the new government was backing the market.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

M
36/10 **Marketing**

Members were advised that during a previous Markets Forum officers were asked to investigate the possibility of a voucher scheme for traders. Traders had previously been asked at a Markets 700 meeting whether they liked the idea of a voucher scheme/loyalty card for the market and the general feedback was that they saw no benefit in giving discounts. They were also shown the vouchers that were produced for the university students last year. Officers were happy to look into this again; however budgets would need to come from either the markets service or market trader's promotions fund.

Members were advised that a retail forum existed who were keen to work with Markets Forum regarding vouchers.

Officers advised that the previous reasons for traders declining were that they would have to give away 10% of income and all traders would need to be involved.

Market traders suggested that the publicity should be in the form of a competition for which the prize would be £50 worth of vouchers to be spent in the market.

Mr Ridger, a market trader, advised that if the council put £50 into the vouchers he would put £50 of his own money in to bring the total to £100 in vouchers as it would provide good publicity for the market and should therefore boost business.

Enquiries were made regarding the use of the big television screens in the Town Centre to advertise the market; however Members were advised that the cost prevented its use.

Members queried why there were no signs on the A19 advertising that Stockton

was a heritage town and had a market. Members were advised that there was a limit to the number of brown signs that could be erected.

Officers advised that they would make enquiries with the Highways department regarding the placement of signs to advertise the market and encourage visitors from other areas.

Officers advised that there was a scheme of roundabout sponsorships and the long term contracts on a couple of prominent roundabouts coming into Stockton were about to finish. The scheme was not available to the Council as it was for private business only but Market Traders could choose to pay to advertise the market on one or both of the roundabouts.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Officers will make enquiries with the Highways department regarding the placement of signs to advertise the market and encourage visitors from other areas.

M
37/10 **Market Traders Promotions Fund**

Members were provided with a breakdown of the Market traders promotions fund and were advised that the current balance was £5,752.13.

Members were advised that from the market trader's promotional fund, market traders had provided a horsebox to a young lady who suffered from Obstetrical Brachial Plexus Paralysis to enable her to carry on with her equestrian skill more easily. Market traders were pleased to advise that the young lady was doing well and had raised more money.

Traders advised that an application for funding had been received from Winneybanks football team for sponsorship of tracksuits. It was felt that it would provided good advertisement for the market and would help the football team.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.