

**MINUTES OF THE HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2017 IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

PRESENT: Cllrs P Boyle, S Cousins, B Deering, Mrs S Dunkley, Miss J Sartin

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Ruffles; Mr J Whelan, Town Clerk; Dr Maria Iancu, Project Officer

**271. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**272. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

**273. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

**274. HERTFORD MARKETS**

The Members noted PAPER A and agreed that they would need further information before considering any possible ideas for the improvement of the Hertford Markets.

It was requested that Officers seek more detailed information from East Herts District Council on the financial information relating to their current running of the market, including in relation to waste disposal. Clarification of the terms of any transfer of the market, including the underlying Charter, to also be sought.

**275. THE HERTFORD FARMERS' MARKET**

Following Cllr Cousins' visit to the Farmers' Market on 9<sup>th</sup> of September, it was reported that the stallholders believe the Hertford market is one of the best in the region. They would like it to continue, however it would be desirable if more people visited it. It was reported that some businesses are thriving, will other are struggling to cover the recurrent costs such as stall rent, parking while unloading merchandise and parking during trading hours.

It was discussed that the layout of the market can hinder the movement of the people and there is a tendency to visit only the stalls from the main road. It was suggested that new layouts could be considered, such as placing all stalls on Maidenhead Street. Members felt that music and other events during market days could possibly attract more visitors to the town centre.

It was considered that the Market's opening hours (8am to 1pm) are too early for some customers and it may be desirable to organise it slightly later (such as from 10am to 3pm).

**276. THE HERTFORD SATURDAY MARKET**

Cllr Boyle reported that the third Saturday of the month seems to be a day of slower business in the market. It was reported that traffic in the Bull Plain area can become congested because of the mix of stalls and cars and pedestrians passing-by. Equally, there is no easy access to the stalls in the Salisbury Square. The main direction of travel appears to be from Maidenhead Street to the train station. A few discussions with the stallholders revealed a relative dissatisfaction with their business at the Hertford Market. It was observed that there is no constant stream of customers, but rather peaks and lows. It is believed that the number of customers has decreased in the past and in the recent period it has stabilised.

**277. THE SAFFRON WALDEN MARKET**

Cllr Dunkley visited the Saffron Market and reported that it is organised on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The stalls can vary throughout the year and occasionally there are organised special markets (such as Italian and French). The market is arranged in a square shape and behind it there are shops. It was described that there were 20 stalls on the Saturday market and some of them had a very attractive display. The variety and quality of the offer proves that there are successful markets in the region and that lessons can be learnt from them.

**278. THE BISHOPS STORTFORD MARKET**

Following the visit of Cllrs Sartin and Deering to the Bishops Stortford market and a meeting with Bishop's Stortford Town Council's Chairman of the committee overseeing it, it was reported that the town lacks a central square in which the market can be unitary organised, so it is spread throughout the town centre. It was noted that the market stalls sell a various range of products and some stallholders are also doing business online. The experience of Bishops Stortford's Town Council to improve profitability and work with East Herts could be useful in case the Hertford Markets will be taken over by Hertford Town Council.

**279. VISITS TO OTHER MARKETS**

After a visit to the Harpenden Market it was reported that the local market appears to be very successful. It is organised on a Sunday, with a large variety of food stalls, as well as other shops that open during market trade hours. It was reported that there are business owners who trade in markets throughout the country and that collaboration with them can be considered.

Members discussed that further information will be sought regarding the Letchworth Garden City charter market, but that a visit there to their regular Saturday market had found just two stalls in operation. It was reported that the Epping Market organised on a Monday appears to also be a successful market and the Members might benefit from visiting it.

It was reported that Leighton Buzzard Market invested in researching ways to make the local market more profitable and that further information could be sought on this matter. There has recently been a campaign launched by market traders against changes to the market.

The Members concluded that the layout is a very important aspect for a market. Also, there was a mention that if reduction of traffic is considered during market hours, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) might be needed.

#### **280. SURVEY ON THE HERTFORD MARKETS VISITORS**

The Members decided that surveys will be applied to the market visitors. In addition, it was considered that there has to be some data collection on stallholders, shops, as well as non-customers. In addition, questions could be added about the customers' income bracket and preferred means of information.

It was discussed that footfall would need to be measured, however this may be difficult because there are possibly six different entrances and exits from the market.

#### **It was RESOLVED that:**

The survey will be circulated to the Members to make any necessary changes.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:20.