

MINUTES OF THE HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21 DECEMBER 2017 IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Steve Knights, Market Manager; Dr Maria Iancu, Project Officer

455. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

456. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

457. THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign the same.

458. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

459. DISCUSSION WITH THE HERTFORD MARKET MANAGER

The discussion started with a presentation of the role of Mr Steve Knights as Market Manager. Mr Knights thought that the Hertford Market has a long history, but recently has lost some business because of pound shops and charity shops. Nevertheless, the market still has a strong nucleus of grocery stalls and it could improve its performance by becoming more niched and attracting customers during other street events (such as music).

First question asked was if there is any licence needed for busking. The answer that an entertainment licence should be obtained from the District Council.

The Members wanted to know if the farmers' stalls could be moved from Salisbury Square onto Maidenhead Street, where more traffic comes though. The answer was that while this is technically possible, Salisbury Square is the place where farmers are traditionally based and there is a risk that some may

stop trading should such a move take place. Another question enquired whether it would be possible to place the Farmer's market in a different layout. The answer was that a circle-shaped market attracts more customers than a row-shaped market. However, farmers' stalls have always been placed in a circular shape, which also has the advantage of requiring less effort during setting up.

Another question was whether it would be possible for the Charter Market stalls to be made uniform. The answer was that traders use their own stalls that suit their needs and that setting up the uniform stalls used at Farmers' Market comes at a higher cost.

One Member asked whether there were any farmers who wanted to become permanent stallholders at the Charter Market. The answer was no, since the farmers work every Saturday but in different markets across the region.

Next the Market Manager answered a question regarding waiting lists to become a trader. He commented that waiting lists are not as long as they used to be and that he tries to select at least one stall per type of merchandise.

Another question was asked regarding advertisement. The answer was that the Farmers' Market and the Street Food Market received more advertisement than the Charter Market. At the moment it is considered to promote the markets at train stations. It was noted that the Health Check report by NABMA recommended more advertisement for the markets.

Then the Market Manager answered a question in regards to the interest of traders to form an association. The answer was that currently more and more stallholders decide to become "casuals" rather than permanent stallholders, meaning they can decide on the day whether to turn up or not. This makes it more difficult to assume that there would be enough interest for mutual cooperation from the traders' behalf.

Next question referred to the impact of specialist markets. The Market Manager answered that since its appearance two years ago the Street Food Market was fairly successful and it benefits even food and drink shops around the stalls. However, seeking to bring the food stalls on the Charter Market might not work as well. Apart from the Street Food market there is the Christmas Market and the Farmers' Market, but it has to be noted that each one of these will attract a different clientele.

Asked how he envisions the future of the Hertford Market to be, the Market Manager answered that he believes there always be a market in the town and that specialist food produce will be an important part of that. He believed though that investment is needed at this point for the revitalisation of the local markets.

460. THE MARKET HEALTH CHECK REPORT

The Members noted the report and considered that it provides some very useful information and advice. It was noted the recommendation for a vintage or flea market and comments were received that Hertford used to be a destination for antique traders.

461. PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The Members noted PAPER B containing the preliminary survey results. It was commented that a bias may exist, since market users are more likely to have responded to the survey than those who do not shop there. It was noted that the highest interest of the public was for markets that sell food produce, rather than non-alimentary goods, which is an important aspect to consider in terms of potential future development of the Hertford Market.

462. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following items are discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

463. INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF HERTFORD MARKETS

The Members noted the financial results of the Hertford Markets over the past five years.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Additional information should be sought from the East Herts Council regarding the:

- Actual financial figures for the current budget year;
- Budget projections for the next financial year;
- The impact of the possible take-over for the current staff in charge of markets;
- The support that the Town Council may receive for a transitional period, should the take-over happen.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:05.