



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Ref: D&L//Hertford Markets Working Party

15 December 2017

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Hertford Markets Working Party will be held on:

**THURSDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2017
IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD
AT 7.00 PM**

The Agenda is attached.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Whelan'.

Mr J Whelan
Town Clerk

Councillors: P Boyle, S Cousins, B Deering, Mrs S Dunkley and Miss J Sartin

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AGENDA - MEETING OF THE HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2017 AT 7.00 PM IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Members' declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (as defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012) where these Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

- a) Have not already been entered into the register and
- b) Relate to a matter to be considered

To note that such interests so declared must be formally notified to Town Clerk and the Monitoring Officer at East Hertfordshire District Council of the interest within 28 days.

To receive Members' declarations of Declarable Interests in accordance with Hertford Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted 8th April 2013).

3. THE MINUTES

To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 and to authorise the Chairman to sign the same.

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

Members of the public may speak about specific items on this agenda which contain a recommendation, provided they have advised the Town Clerk of their wish to speak no later than midday on the Friday before the meeting (or midday of the last working day of the week before the meeting). A list giving details of the name(s) and relevant agenda item(s) will be circulated to Councillors before the meeting commences.

5. DISCUSSION WITH THE HERTFORD MARKET MANAGER

The Hertford Market Manager of East Herts Council to answer any questions that the Members of the Working Party may have about the operation of Hertford markets.

6. THE MARKET HEALTH CHECK REPORT

To receive a report on the Hertford Market by NABMA, following their visit in Hertford on Saturday, 11 November 2017 (**PAPER A**).

7. PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

To receive a report on the preliminary results of the research on market users and non-users, up to 13 December 2017 (**PAPER B**).

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It is recommended 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 item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

9. INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF HERTFORD MARKETS

To receive a report providing information on the work progress to date and the most recent financial results of the Hertford markets (**PAPER C**).

REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY – 21ST
DECEMBER 2017

AGENDA ITEM 6 – THE MARKET HEALTH CHECK REPORT



**MARKET HEALTH CHECK REPORT
FOR HERTFORD MARKET**

Carried out for:

East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
Herts
SG13 8EQ

Report by:

Peter Turvey

November 2017

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The National Association of British Market Authorities (Nabma) is the country's leading representative markets' organization, which provides a number of services to its 200 plus members.

1.2 One of the services Nabma provides is a "free of charge one visit" basic Market Health Check. This is carried out by an experienced market officer who acts as a consultant adviser and provides this short written report upon their view of the subject market in terms of its strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats.

1.3 This report refers to Hertford Market and this service was requested by Steve Knights, Market Manager, for East Herts District Council (EHDC).

1.4 The main issues for requesting the Health Check were;

- Lack of business and traders
- Sustainability

1.5 A visit to Hertford was made on Saturday 11th November 2017. The weather was mild and overcast. A meeting was held with Steve Knights, which was very useful, being open with frank discussions about the market as a whole. A time slot had also been allocated to meet with invited town councillors who had shown an interest in the Health Check process, but none turned up.

1.6 Following the meeting with Steve, an individual walkabout of the market and surrounding area was done, discussions held with most of the traders and photographs taken.

2.0 Location and Retail Environment

2.1 Hertford is the county town of Hertfordshire, which is about 19 miles north of central London and has a population of around 26,000. Hertford serves as a commuter town for London and has two stations, Hertford East to London Liverpool Street and, Hertford North to London Moorgate. There are good road links to the national motorway network, including the M1, M11 and M25. The town is also served by a number of bus services.

2.2 The town's retail offer differs from the many clone towns that presently exist, whereby it does not have a large modern shopping centre, but it does have a high street with fewer than the usual chain stores and has a high number of independent shops. Both Tesco and Sainsbury's have a presence close to the town centre, but Waitrose, that was part of the Bircherley shopping area, has recently closed down. There are now redevelopment proposals, including plans for a new hotel on the site.

3.0 The Market Offer

3.1 A Royal Charter was granted to Hertford in 1680 to operate a market. The general retail market takes place every Saturday, with trading hours between 8.30am and 6pm. The market averages between 15 and 20 stalls along sections of Maidenhead Street, Railway Street, Bircherley Green and Salisbury Square. The traders consist of 9 regulars and the remainder made up of long and short term casuals. The market stalls are of varying styles, colours and quality, which are all supplied, assembled, dismantled and maintained by the traders.

3.2 The goods and services offered at the retail market at the time of the visit included; cut flowers, Tunisian pottery, eggs, children's clothes, hats and scarves, cosmetics, ladies clothes, wet fish, bread, fruit and vegetables, pillows and cushions, cards and diaries, vapour cigarette accessories, cakes, CDs and LPs, general housewares, birdseed and a small burger van.

3.3 On the day of the visit a Farmers' Market was operating in Market Place. This has been going on for around 12 years and occurs on the second Saturday of every month between 8.30am and 1pm. There were around 18 stalls offering such things as; cheese, pre-packed meat, pickles, coffee beans, honey, fruit and vegetables, bread and cakes. Apart from one small mobile unit, all the stalls were of the same style and colours. The stalls are provided by EHDC , who also arrange their assembly and dismantling through Veolia, their waste contractor.

3.4 Around 8 times a year through the warmer months, a street food market has taken place on Thursday evenings between 3pm and 9pm.

4.0 Ownership and Management

4.1 All the markets in Hertford are owned and managed by EHDC. The Market Manager also has responsibility for the weekly market in Ware and an overseeing role for Bishop Stortford's market following its management transfer to the local town council.

4.2 It is understood that consideration is being given to transfer the management of Hertford markets to Hertford Town Council, similar to the Bishop Stortford arrangement.

5.0 Main Issues

5.1 Lack of business and traders

5.1.1 The historic town centre of Hertford has many conservation areas, with Tudor buildings and historic sites. As such, the streets are narrow and without large open areas to facilitate a market area. The weekly retail market is spread over a number areas with stalls differing in style and appearance.

5.1.2 Feedback from the traders, included; “Since Waitrose shut there have been less customers”, “the proposed development at Bircherley Green is causing uncertainty”, “the rents are OK, but there are too many gaps between stalls”, “why can the traders on the Farmers’ Market leave earlier than us?”, “more advertising is required” and “we need more events and attractions”.

5.2 Sustainability

5.2.1 Similar to other markets and town centres around the country, the market has probably felt the effects of internet shopping and “pound” shops. These factors alone have had a major effect on market sales and impacted on certain traders who can no longer competitively compete.

5.2.2 Apart from a few permanent traders, the other traders operate on a casual basis, some of which are regular, others on an occasional basis and some that only last a couple of weeks. The number of traders on the Farmers’ Market has remained fairly consistent in recent times.

6.0 Proposals for Consideration

6.1 Lack of business and traders

6.1.1 The market is located in the heart of the town centre, where it should attract the most visitors, but unfortunately the historic layout is not conducive for a market environment. No other area in the locality appeared suitable for a market and it is considered should remain where it is.

6.1.2 Except for most of the stalls in Salisbury Square, as shown in Figs 1 and 2, the other stalls, as shown in Figs 3 and 4, were of various styles, appearance and in some cases spaced far apart, which did not enhance the retail offer, especially in the setting of a historic town centre. Consideration should be given to unifying the appearance and re-siting some of the stalls to avoid large gaps, similarly to that of the Farmers’ Market.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

6.1.3 One of the unique selling points of a market is its traders. In most cases the traders are individual businesses who offer their goods, services and more importantly their knowledge direct to the customer, which today is a rare retail practice. It is important that more emphasis is placed on the customer interaction by providing a more enjoyable shopping experience in relation to other retail outlets. The traders should be encouraged not only to promote their goods and services, but also themselves with their personal knowledge and experience. The traders should not solely rely on the Council for marketing and promotion, they should be encouraged to take responsibility for this important factor.

6.1.4 Another unique selling point of a market is the diverse range of goods and services that can be offered, many of which are not available locally. It is suggested that these specialist goods and services are promoted more prominently. Once again the traders themselves should promote these, where the Council may be able to offer help and guidance.

6.1.5 Feedback from some traders indicated there was an increase in footfall when there was entertainment or special events taking place in the town centre on market days. It is suggested a programme of varied entertainment be provided, possibly on a monthly basis. It is worth considering making contact with local groups who would welcome the opportunity of performing as a way of promoting their acts and taking donations. It is also suggested to arrange themed markets for Halloween, Valentine's Day, Mother's and Father's Day and other national events as a way of trying to get the traders involved in promoting the market. Consideration should also be given to more children activities, especially during the school holidays, to attract young families.

6.1.6 Although Hertford is a historic town centre with many visitors, potential customers should be encouraged to visit the market from other areas in the town. Apart from the “A”-boards advertising the Farmers’ Market, as shown in Fig 5, there appeared to be no other directional signage or any market advertising in the town centre. Consideration should be given for the provision of finger directional signage, as shown in Fig 6, especially from the railway stations, visitor attractions and public car parks.



Fig 5



Fig 6

6.1.7 It was noted that Hertford markets have a page on the EHDC web site. It is suggested that each individual market has its own dedicated page to enable more information on traders and goods on offer. It is also important that this is reviewed and updated regularly. With social media probably being the most powerful advertising tool available today, this should be used to promote the market and the traders encouraged to use more social media to promote themselves and the market.

6.2 Sustainability

6.2.1 Consideration should be given to the formation of a Traders’ Association or for Traders’ Representatives who could attend meetings with the Market Manager on a regular basis. It is also suggested that an Open Forum style meeting takes place on an annual basis where the Market Manager, traders and other interested stakeholders are invited to attend. The agenda should include a review on what has happened, which acts as a reminder to what has been done and achieved, but more importantly, these meetings should mainly be used to discuss the market’s project plan for its short, medium and long term proposals. It is always important to get the traders involved at an early stage if there are any new initiatives, thus alleviating possible future disagreements. These meetings will also allow attendees the opportunity to raise issues directly.

6.2.2 The market lacks identity, it is suggested that it requires branding, with its own logo that could be used on the stalls, all promotional material, literature, web site etc. An emphasis on its heritage and long history would make it more of an interest for visitors, for example, renaming it "Hertford Charter Market - established 1680". Consideration could also be given to having a permanent feature or structure somewhere in the market area that provided historical background and old photographs are always popular for comparing yesteryear with today.

6.2.3 It is important that surveys are carried out for all users of the market and potential customers to gain feedback. For users, this would not only include customers, but also the traders as they are a critical part of the market operation. Consideration should be given to carrying out surveys away from the market area to try and capture feedback from those in other parts of the locality who may not be aware of the market's existence. The surveys could be done face-to-face, online or by completion of a survey form. Returns could be encouraged with a lucky draw competition with the winner(s) having a voucher to spend at the market. Not only do surveys provide feedback they also act as an advertising tool. It is also important that the feedback is made available to all and a plan put in place to deal with the issues raised, otherwise the whole exercise would be a waste of resources.

6.2.4 It was good to note that registered charities often use space on the market. Consideration should also be given to having a Market Information stall, which could provide literature on the market, on local history and attractions.

6.2.5 It is suggested a Business Plan for the market should be produced, that is based on 1, 3 and 5-year intervals, so that short, medium and long term targets can be identified. The Plan should also be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure targets are on-line and modifications made when and where necessary. The Business Plan should include the following;

- a Marketing Plan to "market the market" to ensure occupancy rates of permanent and temporary stalls are fully maximised
- produce an Annual Events Programme with activities planned on a regular basis throughout the year, to provide variety and interest to different parts of the community
- closely monitor income and provide future projections
- footfall counts in the town centre on a quarterly basis to monitor the level of visitors
- review of the Markets Policy

6.2.6 It was good to note the Markets Policy had recently been reviewed. In light of recent tragic events, such as the terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower fire, it is strongly recommended the Health & Safety section of the Policy is thoroughly reviewed to reflect these incidents. The Police should be consulted in respect of minimising risk to traders and shoppers from possible attacks. The Fire Service be consulted on fire prevention, evacuation and assembly points, similarly to those specified in commercial buildings. Perhaps having test fire drills and evacuation of the market area could be considered. This may highlight the necessity of keeping passages through the market clear of display goods, waste and other obstructions. It is appreciated not every possibility can be covered, but it is important for the regulations to cover these aspects.

6.2.7 It was noted that the Market Manager currently collects some licence fees, in cash, directly from traders at their stalls. This practice has potentially serious health and safety implications and it is strongly advised that all payments are made by cashless means as soon as possible.

6.2.8 A large proportion of most market's budget is spent on waste disposal. It was noted that bins, as shown in Fig 7, are provided for traders to dispose of their waste, which was then removed by the Council's waste contractor. With the cost of waste disposal often increasing, it is suggested that consideration is given to either making it compulsory for all traders to dispose of their own waste, provided they have the correct waste transfer notices, or for those generating the most waste, such as the fruit and vegetable traders, to be charged a premium to cover the costs of disposal. This arrangement would substantially reduce the market's costs.



Fig 7

6.2.9 It is understood that the present schedule of fees and charges has not been reviewed recently to take into account the actual costs of facilitating the markets. It is suggested that these costs are determined in order to see if the market is financially self-sufficient or a financial burden and whether fees need to be amended accordingly.

6.2.10 It is strongly recommended that the Nabma website is regularly used and to refer to the Nabma and NMTF joint project on “Mission 4 Markets”, which can be viewed at www.mission4markets.uk. It is hoped East Herts Council maintains membership of Nabma and continues to enjoy all the benefits it offers.

7.0 Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

7.1 The brief was to provide a short analysis on the existing operation of Hertford Market. This report has been based on data and time allocated for this review. Proposals have been suggested and if any of these are to be implemented, it is advisable to consult and seek approval from all interested parties, especially those relating to Planning, Highway, Legal and Health & Safety issues.

7.2 This report would not have been possible without the assistance and co-operation of Steve Knights and all the traders that took part in the discussions.

7.3 The advice and comments within this Market Health Check Report are provided on the basis that there is no liability for the use of its content, either by Nabma or the Nabma Consultancy Colleague carrying out this free service to Nabma members. Content attributable to Nabma should not be published or transmitted to third parties without the consent of Nabma.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Working Party **notes** the report.

**REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE HERTFORD MARKETS WORKING PARTY –
21ST DECEMBER 2017**

AGENDA ITEM 7 – PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the Members of the Working Party on the actions taken for applying a survey on the local markets and to detail on the information collected to date.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Hertford Markets Working Party decided in September 2017 to undertake a survey on both market regular customers and non-users. An online survey was opened on Monday, 27 November 2017 and will close on Sunday, 17 December 2017. The survey has been promoted on HTC's website and on Facebook and Twitter and has received 294 responses by 13 December 2017.

The survey uses two distinct set of questions: one for users and one for non-users. The survey is intended to provide additional information for Members to consider, but its participants were self-selecting in choosing to undertake the survey so it cannot be said to present a balanced picture of all public views.

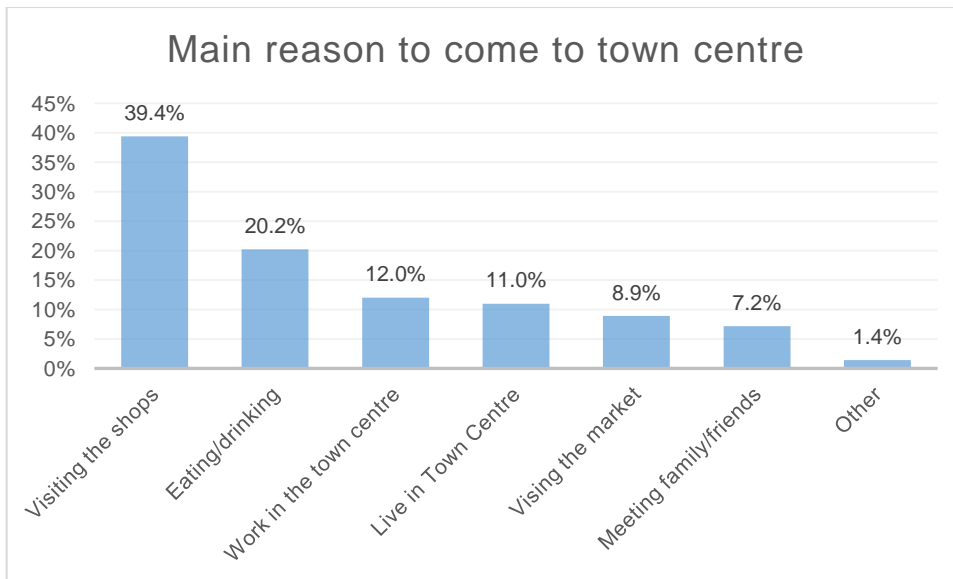
3. SURVEY RESULTS UP TO 13 DECEMBER 2017

The online survey will close shortly after the dispatch of this Agenda. The data already collected for each question in the survey is considered below.

Main Purpose of Visiting the Town Centre

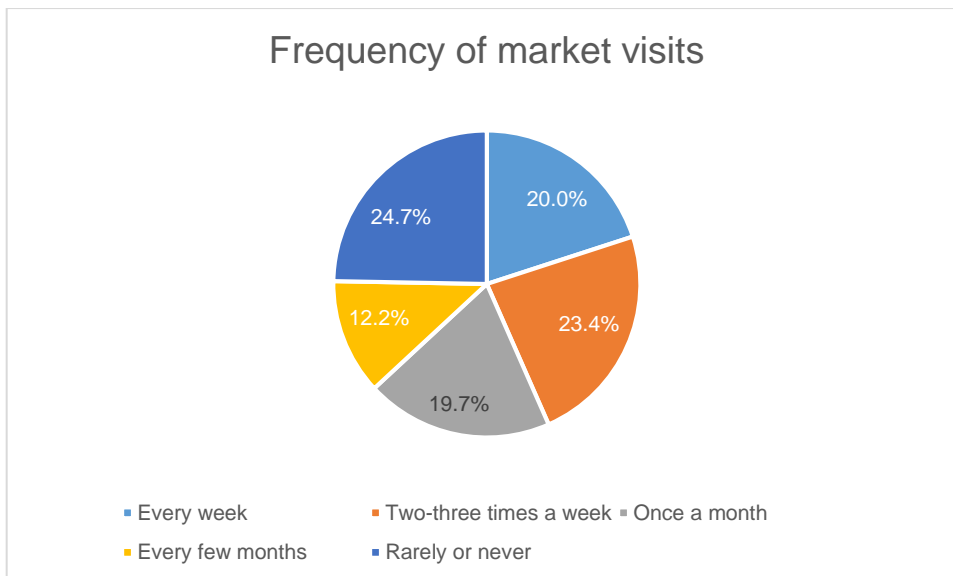
Despite some retail space vacancies, the main appeal of Hertford is as a shopping destination, with *Visiting the shops* being the most popular reason for coming to the town centre. While shops act as a magnet for town centre, they can draw customers to the market and vice-versa, increasing commercial benefit for all.

22 responses were received in the *Other* category and were appropriate, they were included into other relevant categories. For instance, for responses such as "banking" or "to get a haircut" responses were included in the category *Came to visit the shops*, while "going to the club" was included in the *Eating/Drinking* category. After this processing a few responses remain in the *Other* category, such as "visiting the Courtyard Arts"; "I don't visit the town centre anymore" and "I pass-by on way to my child's school".



Visits to the Market

43% of the respondents are regular market customers, who visit either every week or two-three times a month. It is likely that some of the people who responded “once a month” only come for the Farmers’ Market. About a quarter of the responses came from people who never go into the Hertford Market. The reasons why they don’t are considered in one of the questions below.

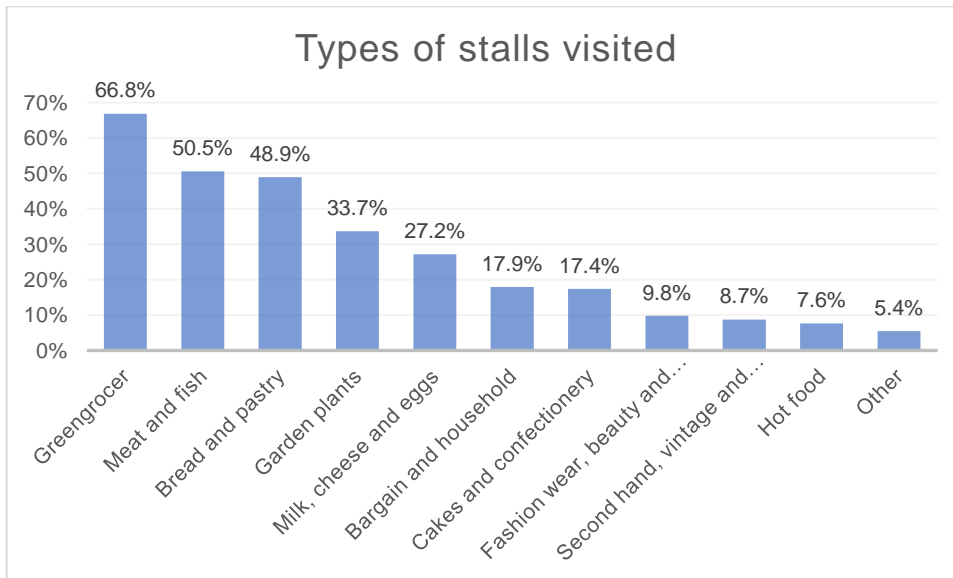


PART A: SURVEY ON REGULAR SHOPPERS

Types of Stalls Visited

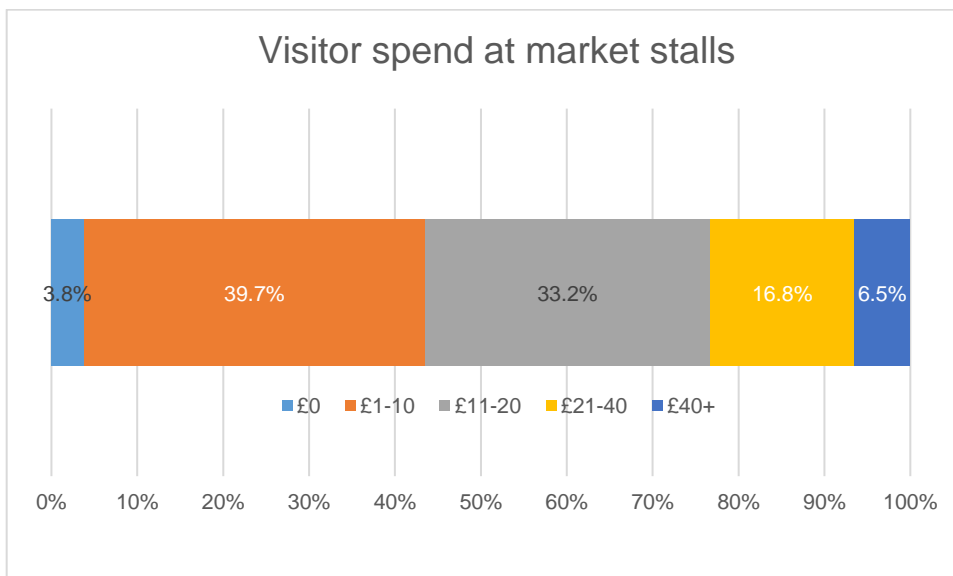
A good range of products is available for the shoppers at the market stalls. Results show that food stalls (fresh and hot) are the most popular ones with the

customers. As elsewhere, greengrocers are the heart of the market, visited by two thirds of the shoppers. It has to be noted that compared to other markets, garden plants category has a higher than usual support. Another well supported category is *Bargain and household*, including pet products. In the *Other* category were included responses such as the “vinyl record stall” and “Spanish stall”.



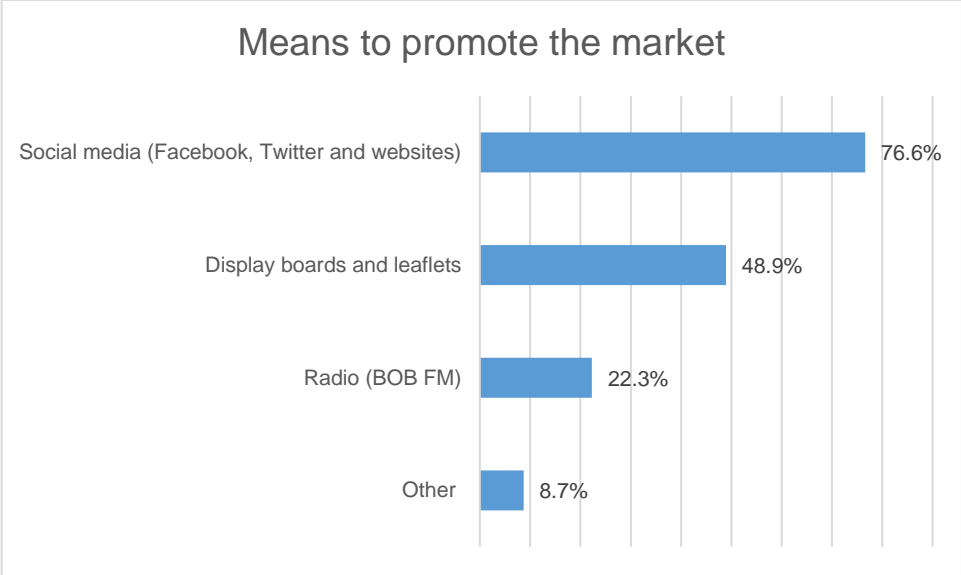
Spending in the Market

Most market visits are being converted into purchases, which suggests the market has a certain draw to people, either for its fresh food, bargains, unusual items or the personal connections established when buying from stallholders.



Advertising the Market

Social media is a popular and cost-efficient method to reach the public and it is recommended that the market continues to be promoted through this means. Comments received from the public in the *Other* category include suggestions to advertise the market in the local newspaper, at the Town and Tourist Information Centre, on Instagram and at the Hertford Theatre.



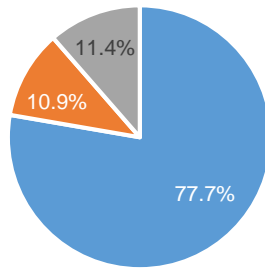
Positive Impact of Hertford Market

Regular market buyers were asked to express agreement or disagreement with a set of statements about the market. The large majority of the visitors agree that the market provides a way to buy local produce.

Less than half of the people who shop in the market believe they are saving money by doing so. A high proportion of people also agree that the market lets local people earn a living, indicating its importance as a source of economic opportunity.

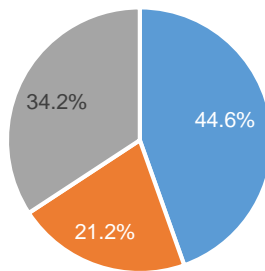
The majority of people disagree that the market is the main reason to visit Hertford town centre, which is conforming to first question on reasons for coming into town centre. Most respondents equally do not regard the weekly market as the heart of the community.

The market enables me to buy local produce.



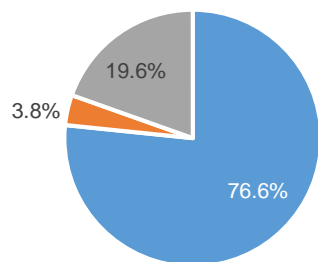
■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

People save money by shopping in this market.



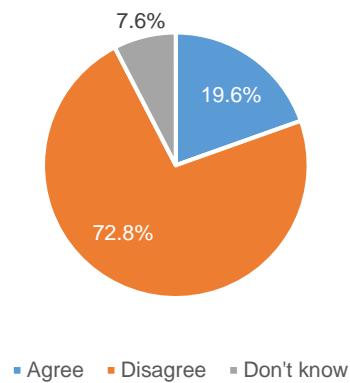
■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

The market lets local people earn a living.

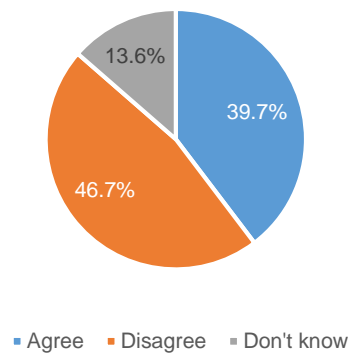


■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

The market is the main reason for coming to town.



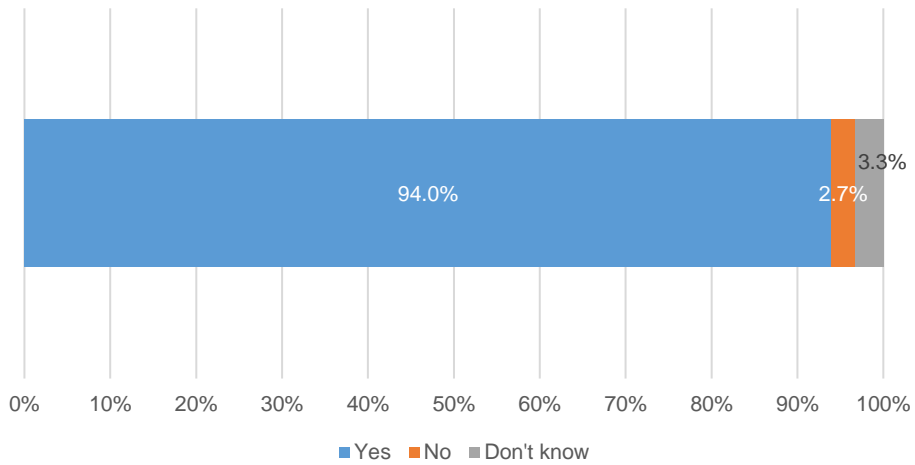
The market is the heart of our community.



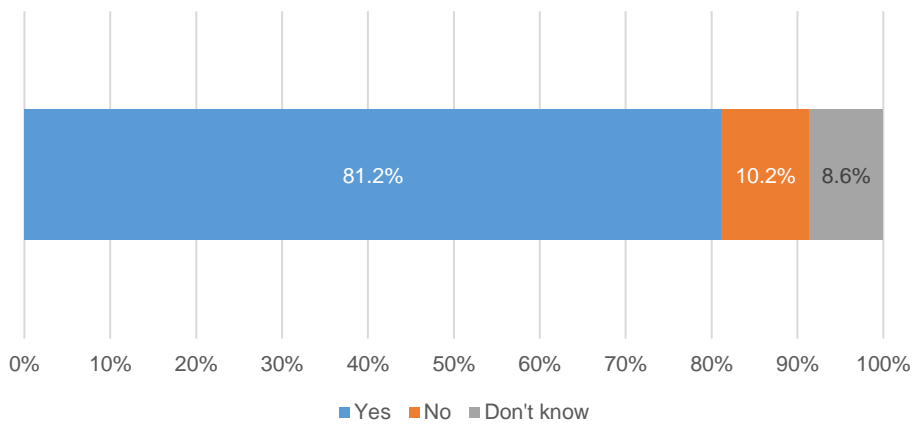
Possible directions of development

Regular market shoppers were asked to consider whether they would be interested in specialist markets. All ideas received positive feedback, however the strongest support was for improving the Farmer's Market.

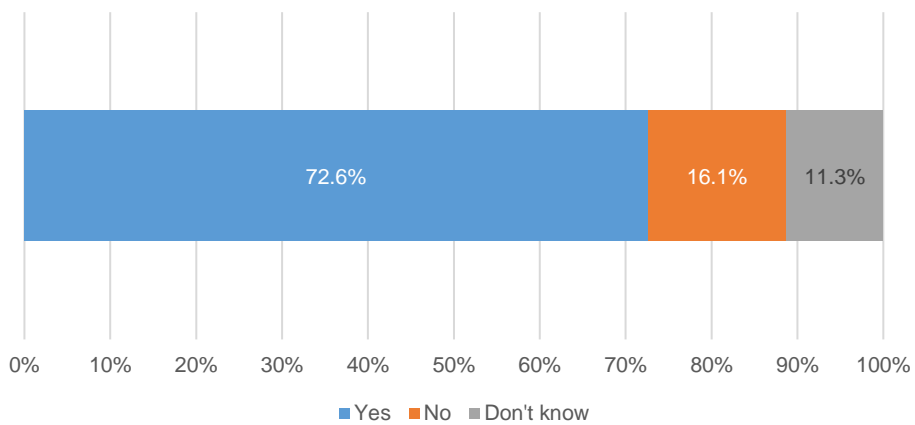
Regular shoppers: Improved Farmers' Market



Regular shoppers: New International Food Market



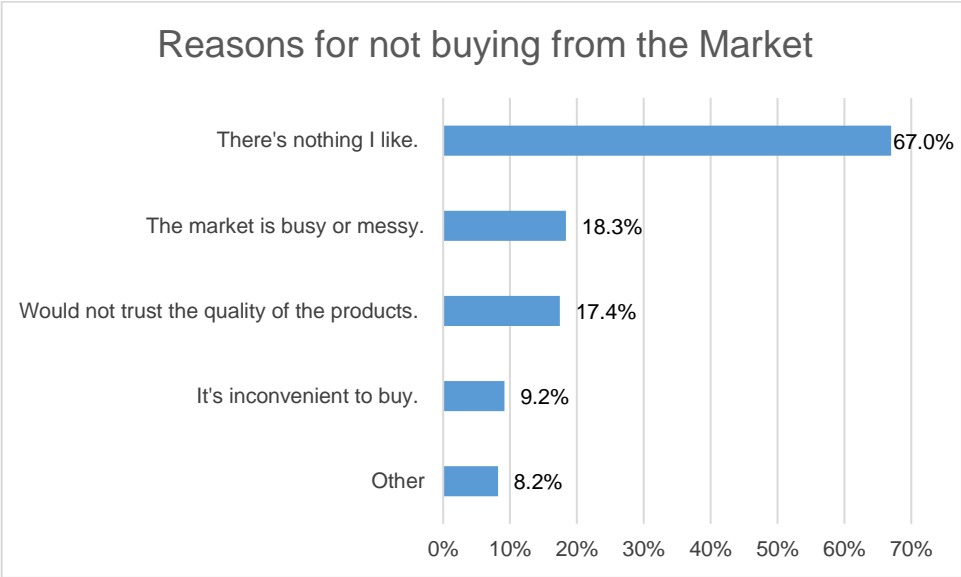
Regular shoppers: New Vintage and Crafts Market



PART B: SURVEY ON NON-CUSTOMERS

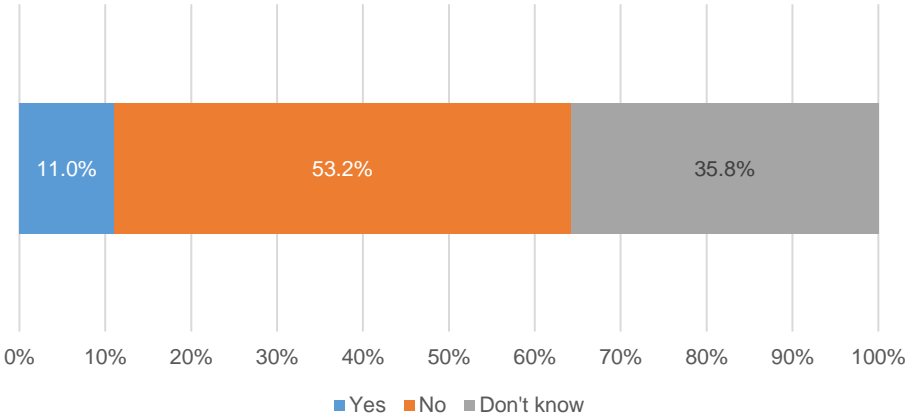
Non-customers' thoughts on the market

By 13 December 2017, 109 responses out of a total of 294 were received from people who do not shop regularly in the Hertford Market. Main reason stated for choosing not to buy from there is the lack of variety, including concerns regarding the small number of stalls and lack of options for various lifestyles such as vegan. A few comments were received on the people's preference for shopping mid-week, the expensive prices in the market, or simply stating that the survey-taker has never visited the market.

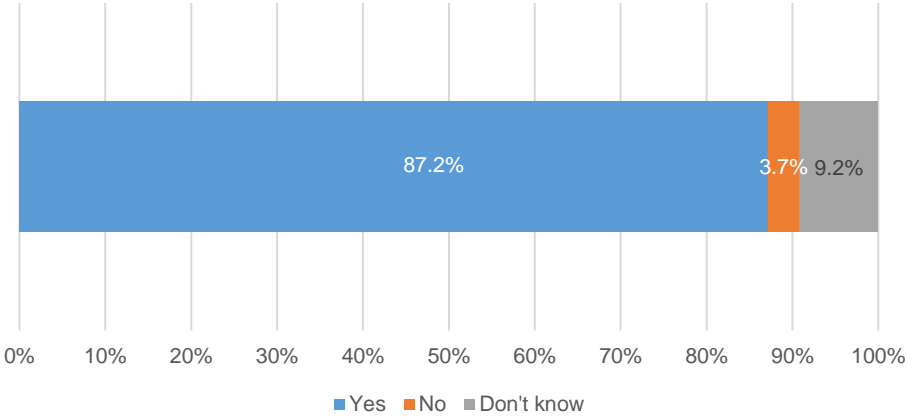


Asked whether they would eventually decide to shop in the market, should some changes occur, the majority of people agreed that better quality of the products and improved market aspect would have a positive impact. A less busy market would not be a strong incentive for shopping, however seeking new customers for this particular reason creates a circular reasoning. The question on market busyness correlates with the responses received in the previous question, were 18.3% of the non-customers believed the market is busy or messy.

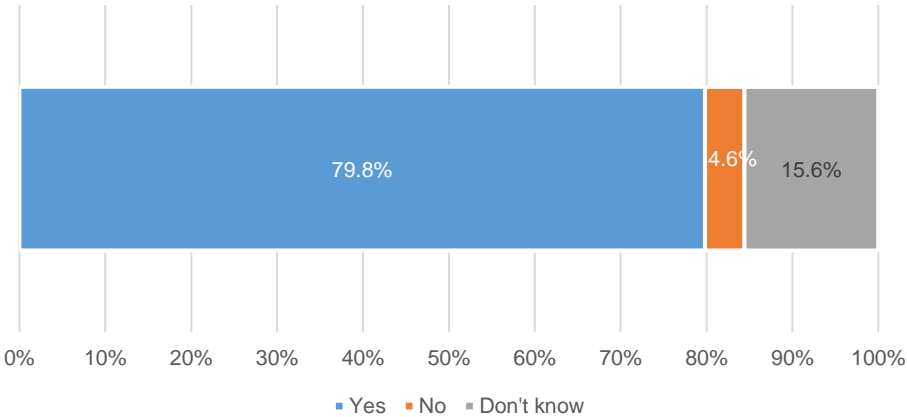
Non-customers: intention to visit if the market was less busy.



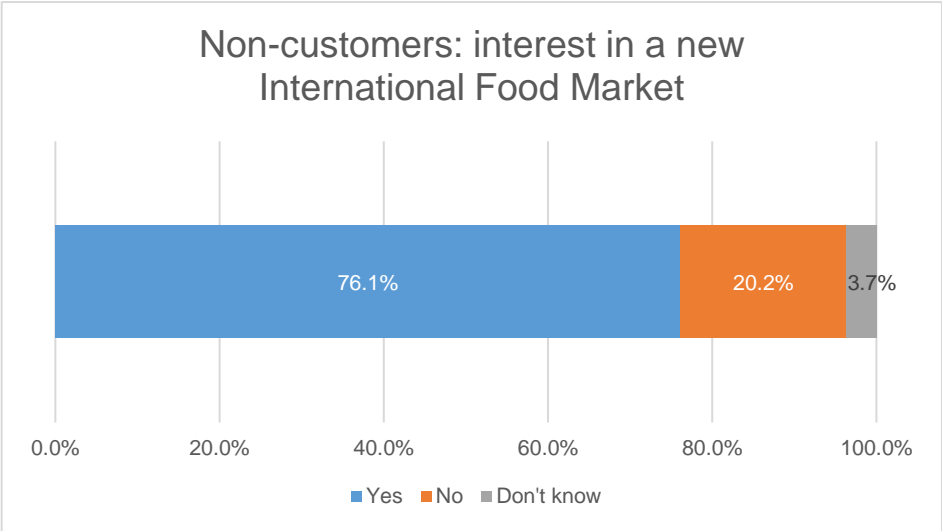
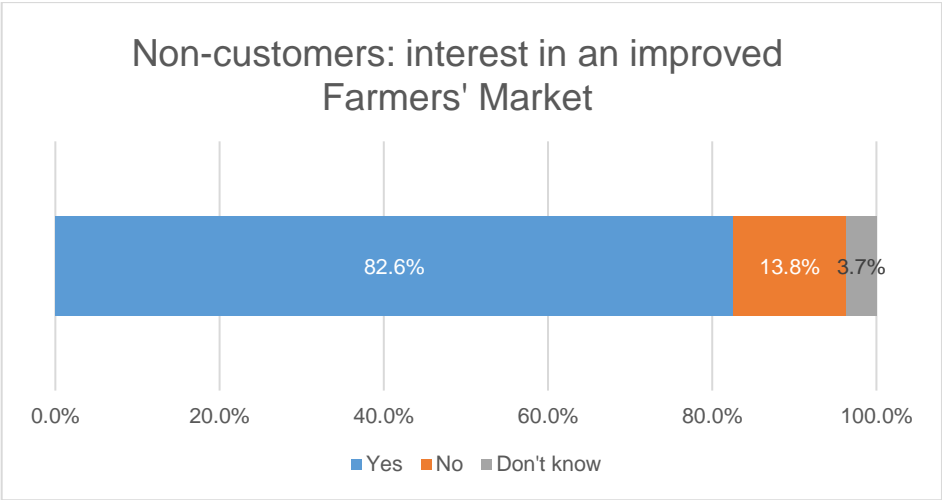
Non-customers: intention to visit if there was a better quality and variety of products

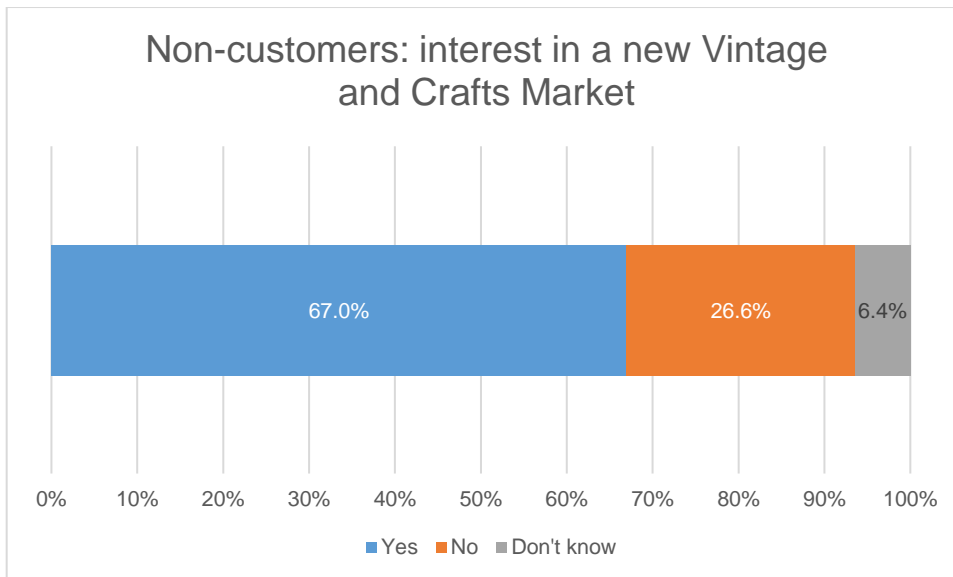


Non-customers: intention to visit if the overall aspect of the market improved.

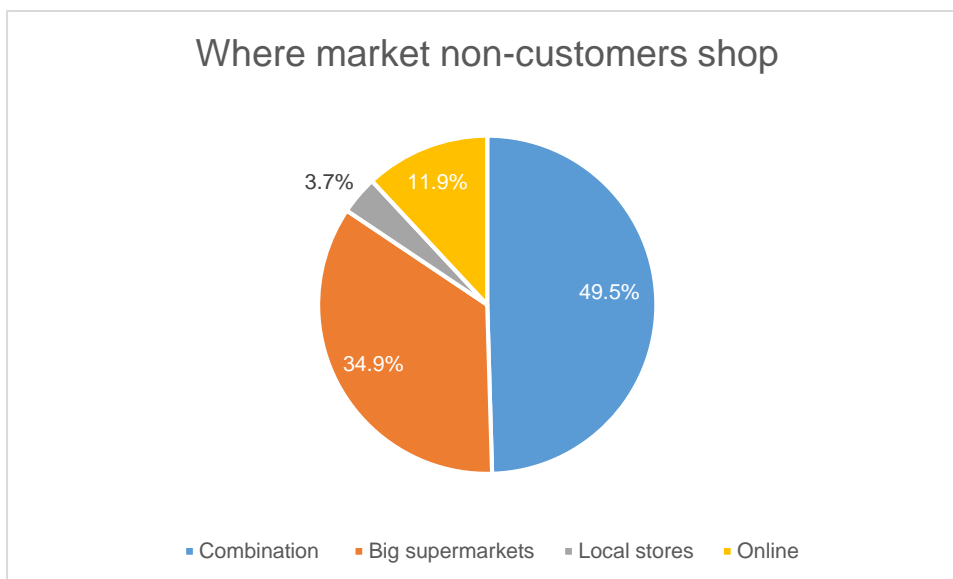


Next set of questions asked if people would choose to buy in the Hertford markets, should specialist markets take place. This question was also applied to the group of regular market buyers. Responses from the two cohorts are in line with each other: most interest is for the Farmers' Market, then for an International Food Market, and least interest is for a Vintage and Crafts market. Overall, each of these specialist markets appeals less to non-customers than to regular customers.



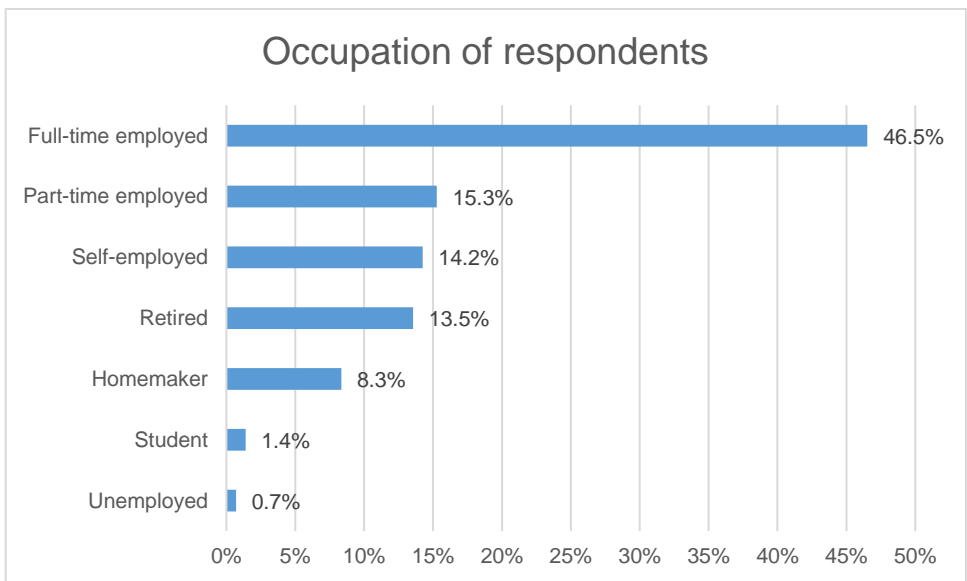
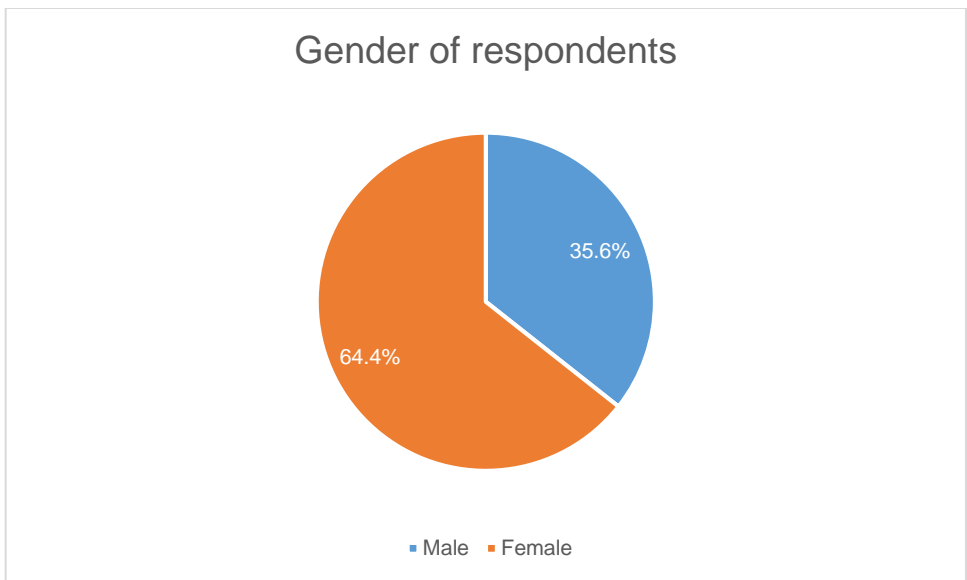
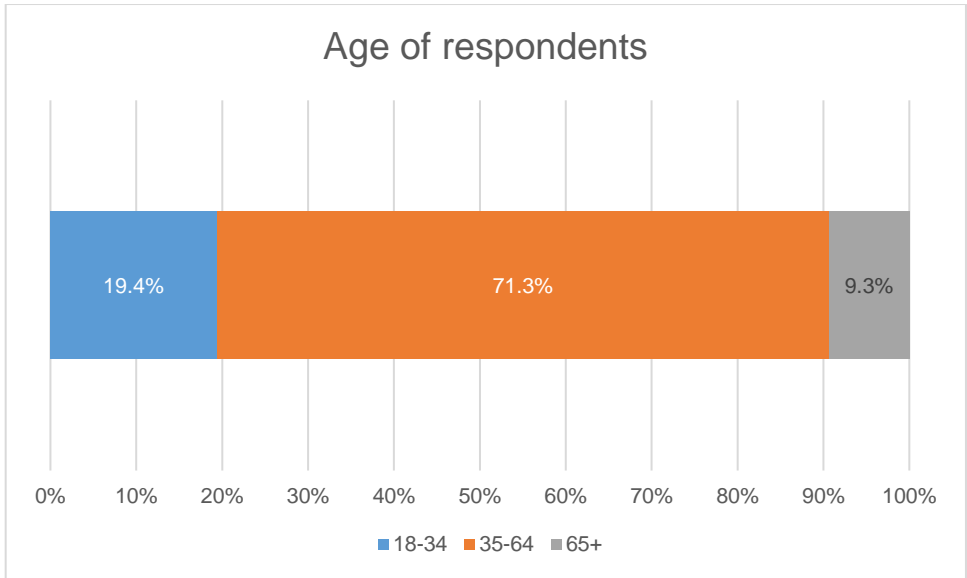


A question was asked on the current shopping preferences of the market non-customers. Results show that nearly half of survey-takers take advantage of the various benefits of each means of shopping, including the big supermarkets, online shopping and local stores.



Demographics of survey takers

The following data presents demographic information on the survey-takers, both market customers and non-customers. It can be noted a predominance of female respondents, of those aged between 35 and 64 and of those economically active. About 90% of the residential postcodes are from Hertford (SG13 and SG14), and about 7% are SG12 postcodes (Ware and some surrounding villages).



4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Working Party **notes** the report.

Report by Maria Iancu – Project Officer