

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MARKETS SUB-COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 1030 HOURS

Present: Councillors G Perham
 D Bowater
 R Berry
 P Snelling
 R Goodchild
 K Cursons
 F Kharawala
 J M Freeman

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 V Cannon (Head of Cultural and Economic
 Services)
 S Sandiford (Head of Democratic Services)
 A Harrison (Market Manager)
 M Jahn (Committee Officer)
 Cllr V Harvey

Members of the Public: 0

35/MK APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor G Perham be appointed Chair of the Markets Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2020-2021. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor G Perham Chair of the Markets Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2020-2021.

Councillor Perham took the Chair.

36/MK APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor F Kharawala be appointed Vice Chair of the Markets Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2020-2021. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Kharawala Vice Chair of the Markets Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2020-2021.

37/MK APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor T Morris.

38/MK DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting. No declarations were made.

39/MK QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

40/MK MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27 February 2020 for consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Markets Sub-Committee meeting held on 27 February 2020 be approved as a correct record, to be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

41/MK CASHLESS PAYMENTS

The Sub-Committee received and considered a report regarding Cashless Payments for market rents. Members had previously considered this option and concluded its reasons for moving to cashless rent payments with the Covid-19 pandemic further supporting the need to change the operational practice. World Pay offered competitive contractual rates for using their cashless systems which would incur a service charge and it was proposed to utilise current year budget savings to address the anticipated 2020/21 budget shortfall and then to create a new budget line within the market budget for financial year 2021/22.

Members agreed that cashless payments would be safer for all concerned, traders and officers alike. Also many people do not carry cash and the opportunity for a card purchase could result in more purchases by shoppers. A full consultation had taken place with traders and only one comment was received back from a trader. A newsletter would be circulated to all traders once cashless payments began.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee:

- (a) to introduce cashless payments for on-the-day market rent collection**
- (b) to enter a contract with WorldPay to facilitate the collection of cashless payments for market rents.**
- (c) to vire funds across from the Central Bank Charges budget line 4381/12, into the Market Cost Centre creating a new budget line to cover the service charges associated with the contactless payments for the remainder of 2020/21, in order that accurate costs for the running of the market can be established.**
- (d) that the new budget line is taken forward within the Market cost centre for 2021/22, to cover future service charges associated with the cashless payment system.**

42/MK MARKET GENERAL UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received and considered an update report on market activity including market delivery from April to September 2020, trader recruitment, social media platforms, promotion and future visiting markets.

Due to COVID-19 the market had to be cancelled from lockdown at the end of March until May when a limited 'essentials' market was held in Hockliffe Street Car Park. The market was able to return to the High Street on the 20th June once the TTRO was in place and the High Street pedestrianised. The layout of the market had been reconfigured to follow the 2m distancing rules and become COVID secure. All regular traders had returned to the market by the end of July which enabled officers to allocate a small number of casual trader pitches. Feedback from the public had been mainly positive regarding the pedestrianisation enabling the market to spread over the whole High Street. Extra markets were held once a month on a Thursday to offer the speciality, casual and start up traders to attend and gain access to a market.

Visiting Markets, which operate independently from the Council, were able to reschedule their attendance after lockdown eased. The Street Food Heroes returned on two Sundays 9th August and 13th September and were very well received by many customers. The Vegan Market attended on 20th September with 39 traders taking part and have re booked to return for two dates in May and September 2021. The French Market originally booked for April 2020 were able to return on 2nd October with a limited number of traders as only English based French traders were able to attend due to restrictions.

A question was raised regarding why the number of stalls set up for the Vegan market seemed more than the Tuesday and Saturday markets. The pitch size of the Vegan stalls were smaller than the normal market. On reflection of the day, discussions had taken place to advise the food stalls be spread out to reduce queueing and crowding in one area. Also perhaps the advertising for these speciality events could be amended so they are referred to as a Vegan Fayre or Event so the public would not immediately associate them with the Town Council market event. Committee were informed that these independent operators' trade names included the word 'market' to promote themselves. Officers will consider how best to assist the promotion and create separation between the markets and the Council.

A suggestion was made to look into the format of the market if the pedestrianisation was made permanent and enabled more solid structures to be installed in the High Street which could be used in all weather conditions and by other businesses. Although this could be a good idea it would restrict other uses of the High Street if the stalls were a permanent fixture, but consideration could be given to ideas in the future.

The Sub Committee also agreed that on days when the inclement weather policy was put into operation notices should be put at the top and bottom of the High Street advising there may be a reduced market because of the weather.

Thanks were given to the Officers for their hard work and continuing to make the market thrive.

RESOLVED to note the report.

43/MK BUDGET REPORT

The Sub-Committee received and considered the budget report. This was by no means a typical year to make year on year income comparisons due to COVID 19 lockdown and restrictions imposed but the situation was being monitored and the traders were grateful for the support given by Leighton-Linslade Town Council.

With the start of another four-week lockdown it was suggested that an extension be made to the free rent period to the end of December. Members agreed a recommendation should be made to the Policy and Finance Committee to enable a quicker decision.

RECOMMENDED to Policy and Finance Committee to waive the payment of market pitch fees by permanent market traders for a further month with collection re-commencing on Saturday 2 January 2021.

RESOLVED to note the report.

44/MK MARKET 12 MONTH REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received and considered a detailed 12-month review report showing the unique circumstances the market had faced this year with the COVID-19 restrictions in place. This was the third review since the market relaunched in late September 2017.

The market layout had to be reconfigured to adhere to restrictions and the closure of the High Street to traffic enabled the stalls to be spread out and use the highway. Feedback had been generally positive from the public and the retail premises in the High Street. Members discussed the TTRO and the removal of the buses from the High Street permanently or only on market days. Upgrades to the electric supply had halted for the time being but would be considered in the future in consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was agreed opening times should be explored to reflect how the majority of customers and traders use the market, and the current layout would continue until the end of the TTRO. It was suggested as the bus stops were now in West Street, some banners or a noticeboard be installed to welcome people to Leighton Buzzard and direct shoppers to the High Street and the market.

Thanks were given for a comprehensive report and for all the hard work the officers had put in to enable the market to continue and thrive in the current situation.

RESOLVED

(a) to advise Full Council that this Committee seeks to continue using the

road space for future market delivery beyond the period of the experimental Temporary Traffic Road Order and the permanent removal of buses on market days.

(b) to consider undertaking a review of market opening hours.

The meeting closed at 1204 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2020.

Chair

25 FEBRUARY 2020

DRAFT