

Committee for the year 2021-2022.**56/MK DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made and no dispensations were requested.

57/MK QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

58/MK MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the previous meeting, held on 25 February 2021 for consideration.

One correction was made to the attendee list confirming that Mr D Gibbins be recorded in attendance as Chair of the trader group and not as a member of the public.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Markets Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

59/MK MARKET GENERAL UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a general market update report and several appendices for consideration. These included updates on delivery of activity in the last quarter of 2020-21 and the first quarter of 2021-22, pitch usage, safety guidelines, social media communications, planned visiting markets and staffing. The Sub-Committee welcomed Bethany Holttum as the new support officer. The Sub-Committee received the market annual work plan and noted the planned activity.

There had been 21 casual traders and it was hoped that at least 5 would become permanent traders, as the revised market layout following the lessening of Covid-19 safety restrictions would allow space for market expansion. This would also allow for the resumption of the charity market stalls and it was hoped that the French Market would visit later in the year.

It was noted that the recent (3 August) children's playday on the market had been well received and that further information in respect of the Farmers' Market was due to the next meeting.

The Sub-Committee noted that the resolution made by Policy & Finance Committee on 19 April 2021 to endorse the use of the provisions of Part 111 of the Food Act 1984 alongside the Market Charter, to endorse the Market Rights public statement and to endorse the Visiting Markets Terms and Conditions would safeguard the Market's position.

A point was raised regarding market layout and that for stalls using solid rear walls, it could appear that a “tunnel” was being created between stalls and shops, which might appear unwelcoming or off-putting to pedestrians. The Market Manager would continue to work with individual traders on this. It was noted that there was already liaison between the market and the shops and this would continue.

A question was asked regarding recycling, particularly of crisp packets. There was more work to be done on this for consideration by Council, which would receive updates on its adopted environmental ambitions. It was agreed at the previous committee meeting that a town wide approach might be needed rather than the market leading on this.

The Sub-Committee received a report and a verbal update on the survey done with market visitors at the Central Bedfordshire Community Action Day on 13 July. 69 people had taken the survey and key findings were that most people visited in the morning, most people had walked into the town and that for most people, visiting the market was not the primary purpose of their visit to the town centre. Anecdotal evidence suggested that visitors were coming into town for a number of reasons but were choosing to make their visit on a market day as an added benefit. The survey results had been sent to Central Bedfordshire Council colleagues for information and it was suggested that the survey be repeated later in the year.

RESOLVED to note the reports.

60/MK YOUNG TRADER SCHEME

The Sub-Committee received a report to inform members of proposals to start a new scheme supporting Young Traders on the market.

RESOLVED to secure the National Market Trader Federation (NMTF) insurance cover at a cost of £250 using cost centre 412/4519, to enable young traders to commence trading at low cost and from 16 to 30 years of age.

61/MK REVIEW OF MARKET OPENING HOURS

The Sub-Committee received and considered a report regarding market opening times. The Town Council had previously (pre-Covid) published opening times of 9am – 4pm but this had been reduced during the pandemic period to finishing at 3pm. It was felt that 3pm was more reflective of actual operational practice and noted that some traders did most of their sales in the first couple of hours of trading. A proposal was made to agree to 8:30am – 3:00pm, with vans not permitted on site after 8:30pm or before 3:00pm, and that this could be further reviewed later in the year, recognising that shopping habits had changed significantly during the pandemic and might continue to change.

RESOLVED to change the market opening hours to 8:30am – 3:00pm, that

this change commences from 30 September 2021 and it be reviewed in 12 months' time.

62/MK TRADER REPRESENTATION

The Sub Committee received and considered a report for a proposal for a meeting-by-meeting approach to co-opting market traders onto the sub committee for all or part of a meeting, plus proposed arrangements for traders to request agenda items for a meeting.

Since the drafting of the report, Mr Gibbins had now been formally confirmed as the National Market Trader Federation Liaison Officer. The Sub-Committee agreed that the recommendations at 1.1 in the report were therefore no longer applicable, but agreed to put forward the proposed arrangements in respect of agenda items proposed by traders.

RECOMMENDED to the Cultural and Economic Services Committee to approve the proposed guidelines for how traders may submit a request for an agenda item for the Market Sub-Committee.

63/MK BUDGET REPORT

The Sub-Committee received budget reports for the last quarter of 2020-21 and the first quarter of 2021-22.

It was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had had a significant impact on the 2020-21 financial year, with pitch fees waived for permanent traders, reflecting the very challenging trading conditions given the periods of lockdown and restrictions on non-essential trading.

The figures for the first quarter of 2021-22 reflected a positive start and it was hoped this would continue as the country continued to recover from the pandemic and return to more normal shopping patterns.

The trader Liaison Officer thanked the Council for its assistance in waiving the pitch rent fees during 2020/21, stating that the decision had helped traders significantly

Committee asked officers to pass on their thanks to all of the traders for their ongoing support of the Market over the last 18 months and for their resilience throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting closed at 1141 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2021.

Chair

11 NOVEMBER 2021

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