

Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs BA (Hons), CILCA

25 April 2024

To: Members of the Markets Working Group

Councillors J Blackman (Chair) and D Baker, M Field, C Pinder-Smith, P McDermott, and J Smith.

Also to:

LCC Markets Officer (Jeremy Williams)
Office Administrator (Michelle Read)

Dear Councillor

Markets Working Group

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Markets Working Group to be held via Zoom at 6.00pm on Thursday 2 May 2024** for the transaction of the following business. Any Councillor unable to attend should forward their apologies to the Town Clerk (tony.briggs@lichfield.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

Tony Briggs
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 15 February 2024 (copy attached) [*Minutes adopted by Council on 11 March 2024*] and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.

4. MARKETS UPDATE

To consider the Market Officer and Office Administrator's report at **APPENDIX 1** (attached).

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted

5. TRADER REPRESENTATIONS

The following questions have been submitted by Traders; the Markets officer will provide an update at the meeting.

1. Some traders worried that some Facebook posts for other events will pull people away from Market Square and the page should be dedicated to events on Market Square only.
2. Why do other users of the electric on the Market Square i.e. catering truck for Food Festival and other events pay £3.93 per van when they clearly use a lot more appliances?
3. Would it be possible to have extra markets i.e. on a Sunday when markets are cancelled due to weather conditions?
4. Could the market block have a deep clean and revamp (repaint etc) as some new market people have passed comment to older traders?
5. Can more information be relayed for a reduced market in some cases, e.g. when it is possible to trade without covers and just tables set up.
6. Traders should have an incentive to stand on reduced market days i.e. small reduction in rent.
7. On some occasions Buskers have made it impossible to talk to customers in some areas of the market. When traders have complained to LDC they were told that the rules on busking are guidelines with no enforcement.
8. Who has the final say on decisions made on the market day to day.
9. Could Casual Traders pay for pitches up front to help encourage them to turn up or give good notice that they are not going to attend.

RECOMMENDED: That the matters be discussed and answers provided to the Traders following the meeting.

6. FAYRES – REVIEW OF CHARGES

Further to discussions at the last meeting (see Minute 46) and as reported to all members of the group via email on 15 March, the Office Administrator compared current Market Square commercial hire costs to the contracted rate as paid by the Bower, confirming the difference across the Bower weekend to be approximately £160 in the Bower's favour. In addition, the Office Administrator posted a request on the NABMA website to establish some benchmark charges for fayres, but there were no meaningful responses to that request.

After being advised of the charges levied by LDC for the hire of Bird St car park for the Bower, it became clear that a cost per m² breakdown would reveal LCC charges more for the Square than LDC charges for the car park. The Square is of course more of a 'prime' location and would attract a premium as a result. It is further understood that the LDC charges are under review.

Given the proximity to the next Bower Fayre date, the relatively small difference in current hire charges and costs if the Square was hired under the normal charging regime, plus LDC's current review into its own charges, the recommendation is to keep a watching brief on the situation for now. Once LDC charges are agreed, LCC can then proceed from an informed position for Market square rates based on those charges and any representations the Bower or the Fayre may make to LDC as those discussions continue.

The direction of the Working Group is sought.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

To consider the report at **APPENDIX 2** (attached).

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be decided by the Working Group – it may be that the Working Group prefers not to set a date pending any changes to Committee memberships at Annual Council.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

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Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG) held via 'Zoom' on Thursday 15 February 2024 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor C Pinder-Smith (Vice Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors D Baker, M Field, P McDermott and J Smith.

IN ATTENDANCE: A Briggs (Town Clerk), Jeremy Williams (Markets Officer), Michelle Read (Office Administrator).

APOLOGIES: Councillor J Blackman.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

41. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: *The Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 23 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes adopted by Council on 11 December 2023].*

42. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

43. MARKETS UPDATE

Members considered the agenda report. The Chair asked for further information on the loss of two regular traders, the Markets Officer confirmed both ceased trading for personal reasons, rather than any dissatisfaction with the Market. The Chair then asked if there had been any feedback on the pitch hire fee increases. The Markets Officer confirmed that the Traders had seen the retention of the 25% 'winter' discount as a positive development that offset the rate increases. Cllr Baker enquired as to the Environmental Health interventions on the Square; the Town Clerk confirmed that the affected trader was working with the EHO and the situation was being closely monitored.

The Chair then asked if it would be possible to look at the trend in social media followers/engagements. The Town Clerk confirmed that the snapshots on record could be combined to present such information, and that this would be made available at a future meeting.

Cllr J Smith enquired as to whether the Red Book Bus had returned to the Square. The Markets Officer confirmed it had not, and that enquiries would be made regarding future dates.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted*

44. ADDITIONAL CHRISTMAS MARKET DAYS - REPORT

Members considered the agenda report detailing the extra Christmas markets held on the Square during the pre-Christmas week. It was agreed that the markets had been a success, particularly as Traders had reported good footfall and wished the provision to be repeated. It was further agreed that the Markets are a positive development for the City, but care should be taken to not adversely impact local shops.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

Following the popularity of the additional Christmas Markets and feedback from Traders, Council to utilise its powers under the Food Act Part III to formally establish additional Christmas Markets to take place on Wednesday and Thursday in the pre-Christmas week of any given year (for example 2024; Wednesday 18 December and Thursday 19 December, 2025 Wednesday 17 December and Thursday 18 December etc).

45. TRADER REPRESENTATIONS

Members were advised that no representations had been received.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

46. FAYRES – REVIEW OF HIRE CHARGES

The Working Group considered the Town Clerk's agenda report which gave background on the pricing structure for the Shrovetide and Bower Fayres (both provided by Pat Collins Fairs), and the Chamber of Trade Christmas Fayre.

In regard to the Pat Collins Fayres, there was considerable discussion as to the possibilities of increasing charges, the amounts of any such increases, and the potential positive and negative outcomes thereof. It was agreed that any such decision required additional research and comparable evidence to ensure the council was neither pricing unreasonably nor providing an unacceptable subsidy at the expense of the public purse. It was agreed that electricity (as used) should be charged for both Fayres.

In regard to the Chamber of Trade Fayre, it was agreed that 'free use' should continue as per the arrangement that has been in place for many years.

RESOLVED:

In regard to the Pat Collins Fayres – LCC officers to prepare comparable hire charge information to be presented to the MWG for consideration at its next meeting. Electricity (as used) to be charged for the Shrovetide Fayre (already in place for Bower Fayre). The matter to otherwise be left in abeyance.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

That 'free use' arrangements for the Market Square be continued for the Chamber of Trade Christmas Fayre.

47. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MARKET AUTHORITIES

Members were given a verbal update on the NABMA conference attended by the Chair, Markets Officer, and Office Administrator. It was noted that the conference did not appear to cater for Markets such as Lichfield as much as would be desired, and that event feedback had been submitted to that effect.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

48. MARKET SQUARE BOOKING RESTRICTIONS – VAPES

Following Cllr Blackman's request that this item be added to the agenda due to the 'Project Vaparound' booking on the Square on 31 January, members discussed whether restrictions should be put in place for such bookings in the future.

It was agreed that there needed to be some form of restriction that guarded against what members saw to be thinly commercialised bookings that advertised themselves as having a health benefit, or providing a healthier alternative, when the clear aim was to market their own product. It was also agreed that a blanket ban on products such as vapes would be impractical.

The Working Group was clear in its desire to steer away from such bookings and sought a policy that would assist in eliminating them in the future. A general statement was agreed, with the Town Clerk to discuss appropriateness/wording with LDC's Licensing team.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

That any Market Square booking purporting to be promoting/selling a product claiming a significant health benefit or as a healthier alternative must have the support of the NHS.

49. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed on receipt of the additional information requested by the MWG at Minute 46. The Town Clerk to circulate suggested dates in due course, time confirmed as 6pm, with an emerging preference for an in-person meeting (to be confirmed).

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.50pm**

Markets Working Group 2 May 2024: APPENDIX 1

Five traders joined the Tuesday market:

- Sumac Native - native crafts, now left the market but may return
- Jemima Joans - craft jewellery
- All kinds of everything - pet products & toys
- Olivesz2 - olives & nuts etc. This trader may come back to the market if there is space
- Exclusive by Design - furniture upholstery
- Simply the best bags – natural jute bags
- Audreys Funding Fashions- Children Clothes

The Friday Market has also welcomed a new trader - 'Silver Elegance' selling jewellery.

'The Potting Shed' has now become permanent on the Friday market and Ryan James Butcher has become permanent on Tuesdays and Fridays and is currently working towards becoming permanent on the Saturday market, too.

In April to date, we have had 3 restricted markets 5 April, 6 April and 9 April.

The Market Square has now been deep cleaned with excellent results; pitch location marks are to be reinstalled shortly.



All food stalls are being monitored for standards of food hygiene with the Environmental Health Officer kept informed of any new food trader coming on to the market. All Licences have been signed and PLI checks have been completed to ensure these are current and up to date.

Tuesday Market Update

The Tuesday market is now full we have 7 causal traders with one of these 'Simply the Best Bags' is now becoming a permanent trader.

Friday Market Update

The Friday market is now full, 'Silver Elegance' who sell jewellery are now permanent, so there are no causal traders on Friday.

Saturday Market Update

Saturday market remains full. Ryan James Butchers are taking the two recently vacated spaces and will go permanent shortly.

We are continuing to update our contact list of Traders that can cover at short notice. This helps us to keep the market full and eliminate large spaces that can convey a feeling of decline, even when the absence is due to pre-planned holiday or illness.

A full and varied market can only enhance footfall into the city, together with having a positive is also having a positive effect on the reputation of the market and supporting other local business, too.

Vegan Market

The Vegan Market runs on the third Sunday of the month. A total of 22 stalls attended the most recent Market, and it is clear that it is getting more popular over time. 2024 dates are confirmed, with promotional posters awaited from the organiser.

Producers' Market

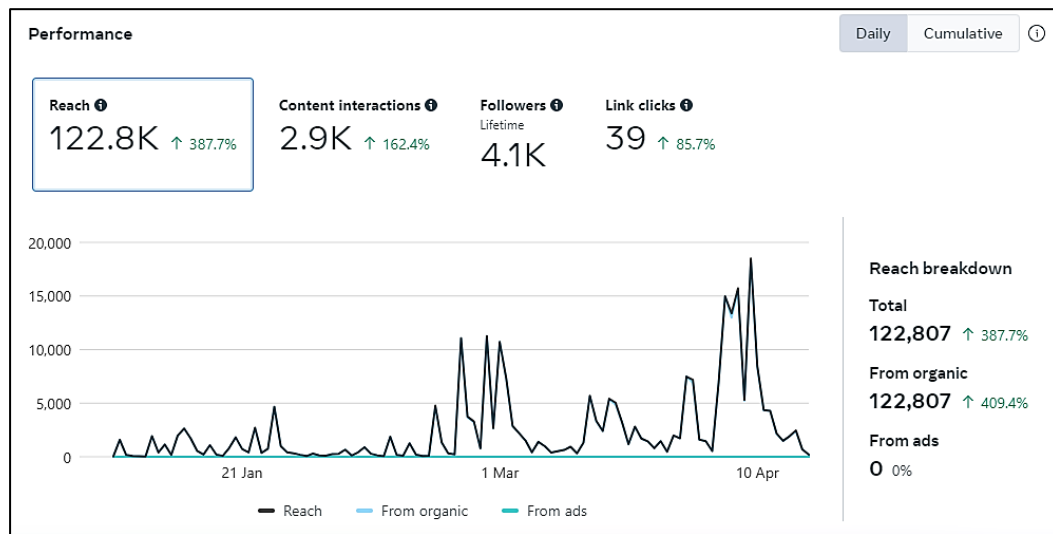
The Producers' Market is organised by CJ Events and operates on the first Sunday of the month. This market is well supported by traders and is very popular with significant repeat visitors. The Producers' market on March 3rd was attended by 22 stallholders on what was a very cold day. Unfortunately, the April Market was cancelled by the organisers due to the forecast high winds.

Markets Working Group 2 May 2024: APPENDIX 2

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS










As advised in the email to MWG members circulated on 15 March, Clive Read – one of LCC's current Premises Attendants and a former Markets Officer who is both interested in and familiar with social media and its intricacies - volunteered to assist with promotion of both the Markets Facebook page and the new Guildhall Facebook page.

This has been progressing on a trial basis for the past few weeks based on a 4 hours/week allocation which includes photographing markets/Guildhall events, specific features on various traders, sharing posts from other groups/traders etc, all with the aim of increasing engagement. The statistics below show a marked increase in reach, content interactions and link clicks.



The screen capture overleaf highlights the most popular posts of the past 60 days (to 22 April), sorted by levels of engagement that those posts generated, rather than by the number of views.

A wide variety of post 'types' are represented, from spotlights on long standing traders, to the need to cancel/reduce the markets due to bad weather. The post centring on historic photographs of the Square was also very popular – it's 'reach' being higher than any other post in the period - confirming that posts that do not just focus on current markets and traders are well received and can contribute to growing the page.

	It a lovely bright day today so why not come down to Lichfield's Saturday market. So, come down and pick up that bargaining today With 18 great traders waiting for you Sat, 30 Mar	Post reach 18,910	Engagement 1,431
	Morning all a crisp chilly morning but hopefully warm up so come on down to the Market today and see what's on offer Highlight on Paul Smith Fruit and Veg ! looking fresh and colourful , come and see what Jake and team have to offer today Sat, 24 Feb	Post reach 16,466	Engagement 1,187
	Some old interesting Market Square facts dating back to 1667 credits to Lichfield conduit land trust - Percy Laithwaite M.Sc Thurs, 4 Apr	Post reach 35,099	Engagement 1,152
	Highlight on one of our long standing Lichfield Market Traders Garry Snape of Bluestone plants , having been trading on Lichfield General Market for 30 years you will find him here on Friday and Saturday markets supplying top Quality plants to the people of Lichfield. Thanks to Garry for his years of support and loyal service to Lichfield General Markets Fri, 1 Mar	Post reach 17,011	Engagement 1,091
	Today and tomorrow the market square is being cleaned please bear with us during this much needed maintenance thank you Wed, 28 Feb	Post reach 13,074	Engagement 1,040
	A spotlight today on a longstanding Lichfield Market Trader Owens Fish who have traded on Lichfield Market for over 15 years, Sam and Marie offer Lichfield a wide variety of fresh Fish and Shell fish. a big thanks from Lichfield Markets for your Support and loyalty Fri, 15 Mar	Post reach 10,246	Engagement 863
	Due to the predicted weather condition and to maintain the safety of traders and customers. A decision has been made that Tuesday Lichfield General market would be restricted to traders that can trade form vehicles. So, today only Ryan James Butchers is on the market square so please come down and support them and pick up a bargain on your... Tues, 9 Apr	Post reach 24,129	Engagement 808
	After the Market Square was washed last week CESC are back to re sand it today and the Market Square looks fantastic Thurs, 7 Mar	Post reach 2,082	Engagement 477
	Highlight Today on one of our longstanding Market Traders since 1987 Martyn Shaw of FRAMED offering frames and an excellent Framing service to his customers Thank you Martyn your loyalty and service to Lichfield General Market is very much appreciated Fri, 22 Mar	Post reach 3,461	Engagement 413

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.