

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG) held via 'Zoom' on Friday 2 October 2020 at 10:00am

PRESENT: Councillors J Checkland (Chairman) P McDermott, D Robertson, J Smith, C Spruce and M Warfield.

IN ATTENDANCE: J Appleyard (LCC Markets Officer), L Clarke (Civic Officer), S Thomas (Deputy Town Clerk), A Briggs (Town Clerk).

APOLOGIES: None

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

9. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: *The Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 17 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes adopted by Council on 28 July 2020].*

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Cllr D Robertson requested further information on the social media 'reach' of the market advertising and the possibility of 'boosting' certain posts to improve this reach; further information to be provided to the MWG as soon as practicable.

11. REVIEW OF MARKET RENT INCENTIVES

The Working Group considered the Town Clerk's agenda report which provided an update on the current situation regarding rental incentives, as well as comparable evidence from other local markets. It was noted that Lichfield is the only local market offering significant discounts at this time and that markets were operating at or near capacity (within the social distancing guidelines that necessarily reduce the capacity of the Square considerably). Having regard to the City council's most recent interim financial report and following discussion amongst the Working Group, it was:

RESOLVED:

1. Saturday Market:

- *The existing 25% fee discount for the Saturday Market is to be removed following the Market of Saturday 10 October 2020, returning to 100% of prevailing rate thereafter.*

Tuesday and Friday Markets:

- *The existing 50% fee discount for the Tuesday and Friday markets to be removed following the markets of Tuesday 6 October and Friday 9 October 2020, returning to 100% of prevailing rate thereafter.*

- 2. The status of any incentives to be a standing item at future meetings of the Working Group.**

12. ARREARS POLICY

Members considered the Town Clerk's report and further information provided by Officers regarding the appropriateness of the 72-hour notice element of the current arrears policy. It was agreed that there should be no arrears incurred for those who are self-isolating etc, but it was felt that the 72-hour notice policy was open to potential abuse.

RESOLVED: That the 72-hour notice element of the current arrears policy be removed, returning to the wording of the original arrears policy, but with exceptions for self-isolating etc.

13. PROVISION OF LCC OWNED MARKET STALLS

The Working Group considered the Town Clerk's request for guidance as to whether there would be a likely return of market stall provision during 2020. The request was made in order to be able to provide some surety to the contractor. It was agreed that as a result of the additional cost (to the council and to traders) of providing stalls, the reduction in capacity that would result, and the potential for transmission of COVID-19, that stalls would not be provided. The situation to be reviewed in due course.

RESOLVED: That LCC market stalls will not be provided on Friday/Saturday markets for the remainder of 2020; the situation to be reviewed in due course.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Confirmed as 16 Wednesday December at 10.00am.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Markets Officer confirmed that there had been no observed occurrences of traders leaving early following the random spot checks that have been carried out following over the past few weeks; the spot checks to continue.

Cllr D Robertson asked whether the 'one way' arrows on the Square could be improved, especially as they are likely to be in place for some time. The Markets officer to progress this matter as soon as possible.

Cllr J Checkland asked if the complaints from traders about the skip overflowing were justified. Officers confirmed that there was adequate skip provision for the number of Traders and problems only occurred when rubbish was not placed in the skip sensibly. Officers also confirmed that the reduction in the number of weekly lifts of the skip had resulted in a cost saving of £3,500 per annum.

Cllr D Robertson advised that there is a sign on Backchester Lane car park that still refers to the Farmers' Market; officers to investigate further and make arrangements for replacement.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.35am**