

For Council: 11 March 2024 APPENDIX 2

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**