

For Council: 1 October 2024 APPENDIX 1

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG) held via 'Zoom' on Thursday 12 September 2024 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors B Watkins (Vice Chair) D Baker and C Pinder-Smith,

IN ATTENDANCE: S. Thomas (Deputy Town Clerk), Jeremy Williams (Markets Officer).

APOLOGIES: Cllr R Bragger, P McDermott, and J Smith, Michelle Read (Office Administrator)

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: *The Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 2 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes adopted by Council on 10 June 2024].*

60. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

61. MARKETS UPDATE

Members considered the agenda report and noted that all markets were now at capacity. The Working Group commended the work of the Markets Officer and was pleased to hear that there was now a waiting list for each market, noting the strong social media performance. Members also noted the number of stalls for the Festive Market on Minster Pool Walk as part of the Christmas Lights Switch On event on 24 November, having confidence in Officers to ensure the stalls would be well placed and maintained.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

62. TRADER REPRESENTATIONS

Members considered the agenda report which contained a number of questions/comments from traders. These are detailed below with responses:

1. *Do Traders want to work between Christmas and New Year?*

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that the Council passed a resolution on 15 February 2024, utilising its powers under the Food Act Part III, to formally establish additional markets on Wednesday and Thursday in the Christmas week of any given year.

The Markets Officer commented that traders had informally been asked if they wished to trade, of which only five permanent traders had expressed an interest. The general consensus being that they also wished to trade on the Sunday before Christmas which would currently mean they would be subject to Street Trading fees as this is not a market day.

Members requested that the Markets Officer formally ask all traders if they wished to trade on Sunday 22 December 2024 and if so, would they be prepared to pay in advance. The Markets Officer to report back to the MWG who can then make a recommendation to Council if appropriate.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the markets which fall in between Christmas and New Year [notably Friday 27 , Saturday 28 and Saturday 31 December] are normal market days and traders would be expected to attend.

2. *Can members of the Markets Working Group visit the market?*

Members agreed to meet with the Chair of the MWG and the Markets Officer so that formal introductions to traders could be made. The Markets Officer to arrange a convenient date and time with Members.

3. *Request only a 4% rise in pitch fees as agreed in January 2023.*

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that Council approved a 5% rise in pitch fees at its meeting in January 2023 and 2024.

Members deferred further discussion until Agenda item 6.

4. *Is the Lichfield Market Facebook Page for everything going on in Lichfield. It is taking trade away from the markets by advertising other events.*

LCC try to not promote events that are not in direct conflict with the markets, but this needs to be balanced with other events that can be promoted and are in the city centre – the aim being to both promote the markets as a destination in itself, but also any other nearby events that could lead to people visiting the market.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that very often posts about other events were simply shared on the markets Facebook page in an effort to promote community engagement and support the City as a whole.

Councillor D Baker suggested that any posts regarding other events in the City also include the strapline “ *Don't forget to visit Lichfield Markets.*”

5. *Could the Markets Facebook page be run by the Markets Officer to save money.*

The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the markets Facebook page was run by the Markets Officer with the assistance of an additional officer who also took photographs. The additional officer only works a few hours per week and also posts on the Guildhall Facebook page, often cross populating which has led to an increased engagement on both pages.

Traders are asked to note that the Facebook page is not maintained by an external group.

6. *There is confusion about who agrees new lines because two people have given permission. The Markets Officer sees the day-to-day lines so should have the final say.*

The Markets Officer explained that some confusion had arisen on one occasion when a trader had been given permission by another officer to sell a new line. It was made clear to the trader concerned that this was an exception. It was confirmed that new lines are only authorised by the Markets Officer.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that all traders' licences will be updated in March and will list, in detail, the lines that traders sell.

7. *Many thanks for refurbishing the market square toilet block, providing a new microwave and kettle.*

Members noted the Traders thanks.

63. MARKET CHARGES 2025/26

To assist with the process of preparing the draft 2025/26 budget, Members considered the current pricing structure for the markets and Pool Walk hire. The Members present agreed to defer a decision on market charges until another meeting of the MWG could be convened when more members could attend in order that charges may be discussed in detail.

RESOLVED:

- a) ***That a decision on market charges be deferred until such time as another meeting of the MWG can be convened.***
- b) ***The Deputy Town Clerk to circulate suggested dates to all members of the MWG for an additional meeting in November.***

64. CONTINUATION OF TRADERS 25% WINTER DISCOUNT.

Members considered the agenda report which set out the reasoning for offering traders a 25% discount during the months of January and February.

In addition, Members considered the appropriateness of offering a 25% discount to traders when they are reduced to selling from vehicles due to severe weather, such as high winds. Members agreed that this would be another way of supporting regular traders and that the financial impact of this additional discount be monitored and reported back to the MWG in a years' time when charges are considered again.

RECOMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- a) **The 25% Winter discount continue to be applied to trader's pitch fees during the months of January and February.**
- b) **That a 25% discount be applied to those traders who attend and are reduced to selling from vehicles as a result of severe weather.**
- c) **That the City Councils' severe weather policy be updated to reflect the 25% discount when trading from vehicles.**

65. MARKETS OFFICERS REPORT RE FOOD FESTIVAL AND USE OF POOL WALK.

Members considered the Markets Officers report and observations made during the Food Festivals held in May and August 2024.

Members agreed that further sanctions be imposed on the organisers of the Food Festival but wished to defer a decision as to what these should be until the next meeting of the MWG and that Staffordshire County Councillor, Janice Silvester- Hall be invited to attend.

RESOLVED: That further sanctions be discussed at the next meeting of the MWG and that Staffordshire County Councillor, Janice Silvester- Hall be invited to attend.

66. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Deputy Town Clerk to contact members of the Working Group to ascertain a convenient date in November, a meeting via Zoom being the -preferred option

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.14pm.**