

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG) held via 'Zoom' on Wednesday 16 December 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), S Thomas (Deputy Town Clerk), A Briggs (Town Clerk).

APOLOGIES: Lucy Clarke (Civic Officer).

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: *The Minutes of the MWG meeting held on 2 October 2020 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes received by Council on 7 December 2020].*

18. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

19. REVIEW OF MARKET RENT INCENTIVES

The Working Group considered the agenda report which provided an update on the current situation regarding rental incentives. It was agreed that the longstanding January/February discount should be implemented as normal.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

20. PRODUCERS MARKET REVIEW

Members considered the agenda report, and all agreed that the relationship between the Council and CJ Events had proven to be mutually beneficial, and that the resulting Producers Market had been a success and should be continued.

The Working Group considered the draft contract documentation, which is based on a five-year agreement with an annual rent review and a break clause at year three. There was some concern as to the length of the draft contract, but it was confirmed that the contract terms reflect those in place between CJ Events and other councils. It was suggested that the payment to LCC should be linked in some way to RPI/CPI and/or to the prevailing rental charged by CJ Events, rather than being a fixed sum for the contract period; officers to discuss this matter further with CJ Events.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That subject to further discussion on the detail of monies payable to LCC as detailed above, the City Council enter into a further agreement with CJ Events to provide the Lichfield Producers Market under the terms as set out in the draft contract documentation considered by the Working Group.*

[the further discussions referred to in this recommendation have now concluded to the satisfaction of the MWG.]

21. FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH CJ EVENTS

The Working Group considered whether it would be appropriate to investigate options for CJ Events to become more involved with the running of the City Council's General Markets. All agreed that an informal discussion with CJ Events could be potentially beneficial, but the Working Group was clear that it would not wish to invite CJ Events to take a substantial role in the General Markets at this time, preferring instead for such discussions to be confined to opportunities for information sharing and collaborative working.

RESOLVED: Officers to enter into informal discussions with CJ Events and report back to the next MWG meeting.

22. CHAMBER OF TRADE CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Working Group considered the Town Clerk's agenda report which summarised discussions between the City Council, LDC and a Chamber of Trade representative in regard to the Chamber's Christmas Fayre which is usually held on the Square on the first Sunday in December each year and would therefore conflict with proposals for the Producers Market. Members of the Working Group expressed disappointment as to the nature and tone of the comments made by the Chamber representative. Informal discussions via email during October had confirmed individual members' belief that the Producers Market should take priority; the MWG considered the appropriateness of formalising that position. The MWG suggested the Chamber of Trade be offered Minster Pool Walk as an alternative on the proposed day of the Fayre, or the Market Square on an alternative date.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The MWG confirms its belief that the Producers Market should continue to be hosted on the first Sunday of each month (excluding January), despite the clash of dates with the Chamber of Trade Christmas Fayre which is normally hosted on the Square on the first Sunday in December each year.***
- 2. Minster Pool Walk be offered as an alternative on the proposed date of the Fayre, or the Market Square on an alternative date.***

23. 2021/22 PITCH FEES – GENERAL MARKETS

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report which asked for guidance regarding any increase in market pitch hire fees and/or the associated service charge for 2021/22. The MWG considered the appropriateness of reviewing market charges within the financial year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed the appropriateness of a request to Council for delegated authority in this matter *[the matter of any increases to be formalised by Council at its budget setting meeting in January 2021]*

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- 1. That Council favourably considers the MWG view that no pitch/service charge increase be implemented for 2021/22 at the City Council meeting of 25 January 2021.***
- 2. That delegated authority be given to the MWG to review the prevailing pitch/service charge rates later in 2021/22 and successive years, and to vary those rates as resolved to be appropriate by the Working Group. [delegated authority to be withdrawn at any time upon request of the working group or resolution of the Council]***

24. MARKET SIGNAGE UPDATE

Officers provided an update regarding the revised Market signage which is located predominantly on City centre car parks; the replacement signage having now been designed, manufactured and installed.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

25. BOOSTING OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Members considered the agenda report detailing the outcome of the trial to 'boost' social media posts that relate to the market. It was agreed that while effective in generating interest in the markets it was difficult to ascertain whether or not that interest translated to increased footfall. The MWG felt it worthwhile to continue to 'boost' posts but at a reduced rate from those during the trial period. It was suggested that boosts lasting for more than 24 hours could be investigated further to perhaps capture more than one market day. At the request of the Chairman, this matter to be a standing item on the agenda at future meetings.

RESOLVED: Officers to allocate up to £30.00 per month to boost social media posts relating to the Markets; officers to vary which posts/markets are subject to boosting as they deem appropriate. The situation to be reviewed at the next meeting.

26. PROVISION OF LCC OWNED MARKET STALLS

At its meeting of 2 October 2020 the MWG 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.

The MWG was asked whether it wished to extend this date due to similar conditions/restrictions currently prevailing and in order to provide further surety to traders and contractors. The MWG noted that a review of the stall erection contract was due to come before Council in April 2021.

RESOLVED: The MWG extend the resolution that stalls will not be provided on LCC Markets from the current date of 31 December 2020 to 31 March 2021 (that being the expiry date of the MWG's current delegated authority).

27. SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

The MWG considered the draft policy. It was suggested that a 'red weather warning' could automatically lead to a cancelled market, providing clarity for Traders and officers alike. However, it was agreed there have been circumstances in the past where a wide-ranging warning was issued and Lichfield was not itself affected to a great degree. It was agreed that while a significant factor in deciding whether or not to cancel a market, the weather warning itself should not be the determining factor.

RESOLVED: That the draft Severe Weather Policy be approved.

28. CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS

The MWG considered the Civic Officer's agenda report concerning contactless payments and whether LCC should insist that such a service is offered by traders at the City

Council's markets. The MWG agreed that while contactless payments should be encouraged, there was no appetite to make such payments compulsory at this time. It was also agreed that the reduction in the use of cash, notably by the younger generation, would lead to Traders adopting contactless technology in due course.

RESOLVED:

- 1. *LCC to actively promote and encourage customers to purchase goods from market traders using contactless technology as a preferred option***
- 2. *LCC to encourage all traders to offer contactless payments to their customers, but not to make it compulsory at this time.***

29. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Confirmed as Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 10.00 via 'Zoom'.

30. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr McDermott thanked the Mayor and Sheriff for their promotion of the Markets on Saturday 13 December.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11:03am**