

Stratford-upon-Avon Market Forum Update to Town Council Members - January 2020

I am incredibly proud not only to represent Town Council on the Market Forum but also to Chair the Committee in my first term.

The Market Forum monitors the market agreement. It comprises representatives of both District and Town Councils and the BID. The Market Forum is administered by the Town Council and it is the Town Council's responsibility to maintain all appropriate records of the meetings.

The Current contract is between LSD Promotions, Stratford on Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council.

Regular Markets

- Rother Street Charter Market every Friday
- The Friday Market has experienced difficult trading conditions. Normally uplift in trade occurs during late March into April but most traders are reporting this did not occur in 2019. Although reports are mixed, a definite decline in trade was obvious with Stratford confirming that general reports from businesses in town were also down by 20%.

The Charter Market is normally considered the weakest trading market so felt the downturn particularly badly. This was reflected by a small decline in trader numbers. However, it continues to attract interest from new traders. It appears the causes for this were the national decline in retail, uncertainty over Brexit creating a fall in spending, a particularly wet June coupled somewhat with a reduction in international tourists although this market is mostly popular with locals.

Rother Street Urban Mix Market every Saturday

Consistently good trade reports were being received by traders throughout 2019. It still receives very good feedback to its style from both locals and visitors. Some trader reports indicate it outperformed Sunday's Upmarket.

Bridge Street Upmarket every Sunday

This market has moved location on a number of occasions and operates either on Waterside or Bridge Street. Unanimously the

traders prefer to be on Waterside during the summer and Bridge Street during the autumn and winter. Retailers in Bridge Street such as Sainsbury's and Poundland see a 25% reduction in takings during the periods the market is on Bridge Street. However, we received many positive comments from shoppers and visitors as the marketplace has more space, particularly for the elderly and disabled, and the shops were not obscured by stalls.

Victorian Christmas Market – Friday, Saturday and Sunday in December

This was an enormous success in 2019 attracting vast amount of visitors. Eventually we appeared to have achieved utopia as all sectors benefited from increased takings. Regularly we hear 'too many markets' but not on this occasion.

The Market Forum is a demanding group especially the relationship between LSD Promotions and Stratford BID. I have actively encouraged both of these organisations to work together more proactively. This can only benefit the town and our attempts to re-vitalise the central business district.

I believe we should always have a market presence in Stratford-upon-Avon, however, there is always room for improvement and all future discussions/negotiations should clearly consider frequency, quality, diversity and location.

Councillor Kevin Taylor