

## **REPORT FROM LSD PROMOTIONS – RE-OPENING THE MARKETS IN STRATFORD-UPON-AVON**

“Whilst we all await Government guidance as to when it will be practicable to bring stalls back in to town, we also think it is appropriate in advance of this time, that we lay out our thoughts, ideas and suggestions for moving forward. We indeed hope this information will prove helpful and prudent, allowing all of us the opportunity to discuss all aspects in preparation and in advance of re-opening.

We believe we will need to adjust aspects of the markets to safely introduce a ‘new normal’ for the foreseeable future and in this regard it appears social distancing is going to with us for sometime. We understand that outdoor markets are considered vital to the economy and an important shopping option, a great footfall driver, the outlet is also relevant in terms of freedom, mental health and fresh air. The Government is likely to reintroduce or rather allow markets to return in the fairly early stages of relaxing lockdown, but we need to be ready to move as soon as this happens. Outdoor Markets will undoubtedly be subject to a number of changes and in this regard we foresee that this will include 2sq metre social distancing, the wearing of face masks, the introduction of screens appropriately, and hand sanitising on all stalls.

We are currently liaising with and advising the NMTF regarding the reintroduction of markets and I think it is fair to say that we jointly agree they will look somewhat different on their return, but it is very important that we maintain a standard of excellence and roll out the best outcome commercially, with the utmost safety. It goes without saying that after being locked down for so long, people will need to go out for their physical and mental well being and from a trading prospective we fully relate to the pressure the industry is under to get back to work. The very nature of a market is a whole shopping experience, certainly in the current climate.

Financial values have of course changed due to Covid-19 and this will need to be reflected for an unknown period at this early stage. We will need time to make the necessary assessments of what the affect of the closures has been, with our traders during the initial return period. It will be vital that our contractual payments of the market fees are frozen during this period until we can reestablish their values. As a relatively small private company this has been an extremely challenging period of complete shut down of the markets and the discontinuation of all rents/charges to traders during this time. Nevertheless, with much hard work and support from our local authority partners we will eventually overcome the financial damage to our company and relaunch the markets successfully, no matter how stressful this unprecedented period has been.

Regrettably, indications are that some market trader's businesses will not survive the lockdown, but it is also expected that other business models that formerly occupied indoor shops and premises, will take up stalls. Currently, in this regard we are expecting and hopeful of a good stall up take on the initial return. Space for stalls will be of the utmost importance, in fact one of the most vital aspects to the new normal for markets in the immediate reintroduction period, to allow successful social distancing and enough space for shoppers to browse and/or queue to make purchases. Of the three current market locations in the town, Bridge Street provides the largest area to distance stalls and people. We therefore propose for your serious consideration that we locate stalls on all three market days in Bridge Street, with Waterside on standby for Sundays if overspill is needed due to demand. Yet unknown.

By relaunching the three market days on Bridge Street, giving traders and local businesses that wish to trade, free rent on all the opening days, this will also generate a good opportunity for substantial press and social media coverage. The offer of a free stall to all the town's businesses will, we believe, enhance the statement that Stratford-upon-Avon is open for business, but with all stringent safety measures in place.

We are currently only considering the return of regular weekly markets until we receive indication that special events are to be permitted and in what format. Traders have been fully refunded for the Easter Festival and Bank Holiday Mondays (All of which are pre-paid events) we are also expecting to have to refund pre-payments for the summer event (Neverland), but currently we await Government direction on this.

Finally, we are pleased to let you know that the SUAVCM applications are live and we are taking bookings without payment at the present time. The interest remains high with over 100 applications in so far.

Please let me know your thoughts and in the meantime I have attached a draft of our newly designed social distancing sign that will be mandatory on all stalls. These will be A2 correx signs, to be displayed on stalls until further notice, under Government guidance. LSD Management and staff will be responsible for putting these up and taking them down, ensuring that they are clearly displayed at all times.

PLEASE KEEP  
**2 SQ METRES** APART

S O C I A L  
D I S T A N C I N G



**WHEN WAITING**  
TO BE SERVED AT THIS STALL

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

