

D R A F T Minutes from Market Forum Meeting
Thursday 4 June, 2020
2:30pm
Zoom

Present:

Joe Baconnet – Stratforward BID (JB)
Lisa Cowley – STC (LC)
Cllr Jason Fojtik – SDC (JF)
Cllr Ian Fradgley – STC (IF)
Julie Lewis – SDC (JL)
Pat Matjaszek – SDC (PM)
Dermot McGillicuddy – LSD Promotions (DM)
Cllr Peter Richards – SDC (PR) – **N.B** PR had to depart from the
meeting early
Cllr Ian Shenton – SDC (IS)
Sarah Summers – STC (SS)
Cllr Kevin Taylor – STC (KT)

Cllr Bill Dowling was absent from the meeting.

Part One, Open Session: -

1. To elect Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Market Forum;

It was Proposed, Seconded and

AGREED: that Cllr Kevin Taylor be appointed Chairman of the Market Forum for the ensuing year.

It was Proposed, Seconded and

AGREED: that Cllr Ian Shenton be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Market Forum for the ensuing year.

2. To receive Apologies;

None were received.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 February, 2020;

The minutes were approved as correct record and the Chairman expressed that he would sign them and send them to STC for filing.

4. Matters Arising;

- Re-opening of Stratford-upon-Avon town centre and WCC changes

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the re-opening of Stratford-upon-Avon's town centre and the traffic changes detailed in the press statement released from Warwickshire County Council (WCC) on Monday 2 June, 2020.

To assist in the reopening of Stratford Town and the recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council have worked together to produce a temporary scheme which will provide additional space for pedestrians to safely circulate, for customers to queue outside shops and for businesses to expand to meet customer needs.

The proposed scheme includes the introduction of a one-way system with traffic restricted to westbound movements on Bridge Street, Wood Street, Greenhill Street and on Alcester Road between Arden Street and Brunel Way, southbound movements on Rother Street, High Street and Chapel Street and westbound movements on Sheep Street.

The space created by a combination of lane closures and the suspension of some on-street parking will create areas for customers waiting for shops to queue whilst allowing pedestrians to circulate safely. It is also proposed to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the town centre and to make changes to pedestrian crossings.

Traffic management equipment such as cones and barriers will be used to safely segregate people from motor traffic. The councils have plans to work with local art groups to consider options for improving the appearance of barriers to ensure the distinctive look and feel of the town can be retained.

As hospitality businesses open, the space created may allow them to increase their outside tables to accommodate the social distancing requirements.

It is the aim to introduce this scheme to coincide with the reopening of non-essential shops from 15 June.

PM stated that she was not aware of the specific changes WCC would be making to the paved areas of the town centre. IS agreed and responded that more detail is needed especially on what is due to happen on Waterside, as at the moment it is only clear that it will be a one-way system. IS expressed that it is especially essential to close Waterside to vehicular traffic on market days.

KT also agreed that more detail is needed in regard to pedestrian areas and allocations for tables and chairs outside hospitality units.

JB responded that he is currently putting together a document that details divisions for each business and spaces allocated for queueing etc. He also revealed that the speed that WCC has had to come up with this traffic design is not one they are comfortable with and that they would, in normal circumstances, prefer longer to focus on the details.

IF asked how it would be possible to have a market on Bridge Street with the introduction of this one-way traffic plan whilst maintaining space for cyclists, pedestrians, and socially distant queueing. IF expressed a wish to see any excess stalls on the Bancroft as they once were.

JL expressed the importance of finding a balance for everyone. She also voiced that looking at everything together is really difficult when final plans have not been yet seen and that at the moment a day by day evaluation of what we are able to do is important until full plans are visible. Currently, we are aware of the plans for traffic direction and now we need to know the logistics of the rest of the space we are working with in the town centre.

5. General Update from Stratforward BID and/or invited guests:

JB shared a hand drawn image detailing the potential layout for Bridge Street. This image displays the provision of one-way traffic, pedestrian areas, and queueing areas. JB reported that he is using the New West End Company's reopening document as a base for these plans.

JB expressed that there are various things to consider with this plan, such as barrier removal around the Rother Market area (as these barriers create a pinch point on the corner of Rother Market and Wood Street which does not allow for social distancing), bus routes, hospitality seating areas and the requirements of business in order to re-open safely.

JB disclosed that he had un-furloughed three of his staff this week, including one Town Host. However, he will not un-furlough the remaining Town Host team for at least two or three weeks, to coincide with the reopening of non-essential shops.

When discussing the market, JB reported that he thinks his businesses would prefer for the market to return to Rother Street.

JF responded that as Rother Street is such a tight space, it would not be economically viable to reduce the number of market stalls to enable social distance space. JF expressed that in the interest of supporting markets he would prefer to see the market on Waterside.

6. General Update from LSD Promotions:

DM discussed the different location options for the market. He knows that Bridge Street has a lot of aspects to consider, which may not allow markets. For example, businesses may use the wider pedestrian areas for tables and chairs and to sell stock.

Last week LSD Promotions submitted a plan which shows a reduced, single-sided market on Waterside with stalls situated at least 2m apart. DM initially wished for the additional stalls to spill over onto Bancroft, but this was not agreed at the time.

It was thought that one of the reasons that the whole town has not been pedestrianised is to reduce the risk of creating more space for it to just be filled up with tables and chairs from

hospitality businesses. This is also a reason why there is reluctance to use the Bancroft for market stalls, as this could be an area used for effective social distancing.

An alternative option was to create a safer layout for Rother Street, which would be marshalled. If going for this option, the whole shape of the market would need to be reconfigured.

A few members expressed frustration at not receiving these plans ahead of the meeting, and it was agreed that all paperwork relating to the market be sent to the whole forum.

DM expressed that he would prefer the Waterside site for the market on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. He confirmed that he would be happy to trial this plan for one week and if agreed would like to aim to re-open on the weekend of 19, 20 and 21 June. This would be before hospitality is due to reopen as this is expected to happen in July.

SS claimed that she believes the back of the market stalls should be facing the road in order to promote safer queueing. Queues can then disperse onto the Bancroft rather than the road, which will not be closed to traffic

DM responded that the reason he did not arrange the stalls to face that way on the plan was because it left room for less stalls due to obstructions on that side of the road such as trees, telephone boxes etc. He mentioned that if an overspill into the Bancroft was permitted, this would address this problem.

IS expressed he would like to see the market trialled on Waterside first, before considering extending it to the Bancroft. He reiterated that he believed Waterside should be closed to vehicles on market days. DM assured that LSD Promotions have managed to run the market on Waterside without the road being closed in the past, but it does work better when the road is closed.

IS queried why there were some double stalls on the plan. DM responded that these stalls would have screens in between so that traders are not in contact with one another. These screens are equipment that LSD Promotions already owns. DM also assured that all stalls will be disinfected at the end of every day.

IF asked how will LSD Promotions ensure social distancing whilst queueing to be served at the market stalls. DM responded that they would be using marshals but that he is also happy to tweak the plan in order to provide more space for socially distant queueing.

DM confirmed that LSD Promotions is currently talking to traders regarding their return to the market and that they have received a mixed bag of responses. He said that many traders would like to return to the market when it re-opens, with some wanting to wait a little bit longer.

DM and IS expressed that markets are an extremely important aspect of the town and should be considered within the town centre plans.

SS agreed and spoke that she believes that the market should be seen as equal to every other business in the town. JL added that we need to find plans suited to everyone, considering all needs and that all were treated equally.

7. Date of the Next Meeting;

It was agreed by all that another meeting would be needed shortly to continue discussing the plans for the town centre and how the market fits in to this new structure. The forum asked JB to ask WCC when we should expect finalised plans.

It was agreed that the forum reconvene at 12:00pm on Friday 12 June, 2020. However, if more information is received before this date the meeting will be moved forward, possibly to an evening outside of office hours.

The open session of the meeting closed at 4:00pm and JB departed at this point.