

D R A F T Minutes from Market Forum Meeting
Thursday 6 February, 2020
2:00pm
Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon

Present:

Joe Baconnet – Stratforward BID (JB)
Lisa Cowley – STC (LC)
Pat Matjaszek – SDC (PM)
Dermot McGillicuddy – LSD Promotions (DM)
Cllr Peter Richards – SDC (PR)
Cllr Ian Shenton – SDC (IS)
Sarah Summers – STC (SS)
Cllr Kevin Taylor – STC (KT)

Part One, Open Session

1. To receive Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllr Bill Dowling, Cllr Jason Fojtik, Cllr Ian Fradgley and Tony Perks.

2. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 October, 2019;

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising/General Update from Stratforward BID and/or invited guests;

JB reported that two of the BID sub-groups had met recently. They are still both raising issues with the markets as described in previous meetings of the Market Forum.

• **Thursday Night Christmas Markets/Victorian Christmas Market Festival**

JB fed back on Christmas trading and how the Thursday night Christmas markets, other than Switch-on, had not provided a strong enough pull to entice retailers to stay open. PM responded that the poor weather had affected these evenings and that there was the general election that also occurred during this time. The market traders and town's retailers were equally affected by very low footfall.

This led to a further discussion on the Thursday night markets and the Victorian Christmas Market. Although the VCM was a later agenda item,

Thursday late night shopping/markets and the VCM soon rolled in to one discussion and the two were considered concurrently at great length. It was agreed that the Thursday night markets were more successful prior to the introduction of the VCM.

It was eventually proposed that we should make more of the Switch-on night, with JB advising that he would like to work with DM to put some young children's rides in the town such as teacups etc. and some more street entertainment to try and ensure that there is enough to do so that people will stay longer once they have witnessed the switch-on and visited Father Christmas.

It was also agreed that the three-day VCM would be made into a four-day event by incorporating Thursday 10 December. Previously, this would have been one of the Thursday late night shopping/markets. It was decided to scrap the other late-night shopping evenings/markets. They will now only happen on 26 November (Switch-on) and 10 December (Victorian Festival) 2020.

- **Survey Results**

JB was asked whether he had the results from the survey that Stratford BID had carried out with their businesses to compare footfall and takings on market days versus non-market days. He confirmed that there were no survey results to be presented at this time.

4. Matters Arising/General Update from LSD Promotions;

DM briefly touched upon the performance of the markets during the last quarter, as detailed in the Market Operators' Report. The report goes on to explain the performance of the town's markets as follows:

- **Rother Street Charter Market (every Friday):**

The Charter Market, normally considered the weakest trading market in Stratford is feeling the downturn nationally. In the period covered by this report the market has seen a number of good days mixed with some not so good with an overall lower attendance of traders compared to the two previous matching quarters.

- **Rother Street Urban Mix Market (every Saturday):**

Consistently good trade reports in the main continue to be received for this market, despite the downturn, particularly when the weather is dry. Trader attendances are comparable to the previous two-year quarters.

- **The Upmarket (every Sunday):**

The Upmarket moved from Waterside back on to Bridge Street in November with many traders believing it to be the right location for the winter months. Trade on the Upmarket is holding its own as the offer is unique. The market remains full.

The full report is attached as **Appendix 'A'** to these minutes.

5. General update from The Town & District Councils:

- **Survey**

PM presented the Forum with the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Centre Business Survey (attached as **Appendix 'B'** to these minutes). This survey is due to go out to businesses in the town, on behalf of the Market Forum.

A few amendments to the questions were suggested and PM will take these back to SDC to be implemented before it is set live on Tuesday, 11 February. Digital and hard copies will be available and both Councils and the BID will supply the electronic copies on their websites. PM also asked JB if the Town Hosts could please distribute some hard copies to their businesses.

- **NABMA Conference**

A few members of the Forum attended the NABMA Conference in Birmingham on 30 January. Attendees were particularly pleased with the coverage on the Youth Market Final that was held in Stratford-upon-Avon last September. The four finalists spoke at the conference and BBC's The One Show's coverage of the final was played.

The final of the Youth Market will once again take place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2020 and there was discussion of how we as a town can get more involved with the prize element. JB suggested that the winner of the food section could be given the opportunity to trade at the Food Festival in September. DM offered that the overall winner could have a stall at the VCM.

- **Evening Market**

During the Market Forum meeting that took place on 4 July, 2019 SS asked about the possibility of an "evening market". Conversations around this eventually developed into discussing a 'Foodie Friday' market. This suggestion has not yet come to fruition and SS reiterated that 'Foodie

Friday' was not the intention of her suggestion. The possibility of an evening market was discussed with the following questions being raised:

- **Would it work in a town where the businesses already claim that there are too many markets?** It was thought that this market would be held outside of retail opening hours and therefore would not be a direct competitor;
- **What day would it be held on?** It was agreed that this market would work best on a Friday evening;
- **Where would the market be located?** Bell Court was agreed as a perfect location for this type of market as it would not require a lot of stalls in order to fill the space. There is currently the Charter Market on Fridays at Rother Street nearby, so LSD staff will already be in town and on hand to set this up;
- **Would it work if it was a non-food market?** It was suggested that a mix of craft stalls, food and live music would fit nicely in this location.

DM confirmed that he has a meeting with Bell Court next week and will discuss this with them and then report back to the Forum.

- **Victorian Christmas Market Festival – Dates for 2021**

As discussed earlier in the meeting it was agreed to make the three-day VCM into a four-day event by incorporating Thursday 10 December. The dates for 2020 have not been widely circulated as yet, and we will promote it as a positive announcement: 'due to the incredible success of the Victorian Christmas Market, and following feedback, especially from coach operators, we are proud to extend the Festival to a four day event starting on Thursday 10 December until Sunday 13 December 2020'.

Although all members of the meeting were hugely supportive and enthusiastic, the stumbling block was the additional cost that both the Town and District Councils will incur by adding another day. It was estimated that it could be as much as £6,000. There were discussions of sponsors, however we have not tackled this with a proactive response in the past. JB agreed to discuss a financial contribution with the BID Board and then DM confirmed that LSD Promotions would agree to underwrite the additional cost up to a maximum of £6,000.

This approach has the support of the JB who believes that this will be seen as a very positive move by the retailers and businesses. This will not be in breach of the market contract and will please those who say there are too

many markets. Bridge Street will remain open to traffic on three days when it would have been closed.

Advent Communication who does the PR and publicity for the event will be informed, and it is hoped that they/we can get the information out next week.

A further meeting to discuss the VCM has been scheduled for 28 February at 10:00am at the Town Hall.

6. Date of the Next Meeting:

Thursday, 21 May, 2020 at 10:00am at the Town Hall.

Part Two, Closed Session

No items were discussed during the closed session of the meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 3:51pm