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**Markets Working Group**

**Notes**

**Friday 6 October, 10.00am, Market Drayton Town Hall**

1. **Present:** Cllrs Aldcroft, Hughes, Manton & Nellins

LSD:Dermot McGillicuddy, Siobhan Noakes & Dave Perry

Shropshire Council:Felicity Allan and Kate Gittins

Town Clerk

1. **Notes**

The notes from the meetings held on the 15 September 2023 were agreed.

1. **Market**

The success of the reduced hire charges for the indoor market.

There has been an increase in the number of traders in the indoor market as a result of the reduction in hire charges. The announcement of the continued reduced rate until Christmas is instilling confidence; this needs to be built on to keep the interest going forward. LSD are funding the reduction from their management fee.

The success of the reduced hire charges will be judged by how many traders have been converted to permanent traders. LSD said there are at least four traders who have become regular traders in the indoor market. There is currently only one unit empty on a Wednesday and Saturday.

The extension of the reduced hire charges for the indoor market

Dermott said LSD are prepared to extend the half price stall hire charge for the indoor market stalls until the end of March, if Shropshire Council agree.

It was identified that the issue is not just the hire charges, it’s also the lack of footfall.

Councillor Manton said the long-term future of the market needs to be discussed; the success of the indoor market needs to be replicated for the outdoor market. A plan needs to be in place to keep the momentum going; he asked what the long-term strategy is to market the indoor and outdoor market.

Fliss said the promotion is the responsibility of the managing agent, Kate and herself to support. She would like to see traders incentivized to stay for a longer period.

A discussion took place around the indoor market hall and it not being very inviting and slightly intimidating to enter; as there are more stalls and more people shopping in the market this has improved.

Kate suggested opening the indoor market all week to make it more retail orientated. Councillors referred to the incubator unit for small businesses that was in the town several years ago which failed.

Councillor Hughes said that the confrontational atmosphere needs to stop. It was agreed that everyone needs to work together.

The possible reduction in hire charge for the street market

Dermot said that LSD are prepared to subsidise half price hire charges for the street traders for 6 months, with the approval from Shropshire Council.

Fliss said we need to understand what the problem is with the street market, why has there been a reduction in traders, what is the problem, why aren’t they coming?

Dermot replied that the problem goes back many years. The market does not attract enough people to sustain all those traders; post covid the market has reduced significantly. There are 13 stalls on a good week, if the weather is bad there are significantly less.

Kate suggested we need to get away from the traditional market and improve the quality of the goods sold; she asked if the market is selling what people want?

It was agreed that a survey should be carried out to ask shoppers where they are from, what they buy from the market and what they would like to be available to buy.

Dermot suggested getting professional advice and proposed approaching The Retail Group, an organisation that looks at the market and the town and advises on all aspects of the area, to produce an independent report on the markets which would hopefully lead to the production of a strategy. He also referred to NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities) to which Shropshire Council are members; they carry out market health checks.

Councillor Nellins said the stalls that are doing well are those that have businesses in the town, are there any other businesses that would like stalls; he asked if there could be a campaign to encourage local businesses to have a market stall.

The Saturday market was discussed, and whether the focus should be on increasing street stalls on a Saturday as you could attract more footfall on a Saturday than a Wednesday; the recent Ginger and Spice Festival was an example of increased footfall. It was agreed to continue to focus on the Wednesday market.

How the street stalls are set out was discussed and whether it would look better if they were moved into one area. Dermott expressed concern that some traders would be lost as they will not move.

The production of an action plan/strategy to improve the market

Siobnan circulated a calendar of events for the market, once a month there will a themed seasonal market. The themed events will be on a Wednesday.

1. **Festival of Lights**

To discuss how the festival of lights can link in with the indoor and street market.

The event is organized and subsidised by the Town Council, the indoor market is open throughout the day, events have been organised for outside the market hall.

Details of any stalls that cannot be accommodated on the street to be sent to LSD.

1. **Any other Business**

Bin storage area – an email has been sent to Connexus; no response has been received.

**Actions**

- Explore the option of having a retail report produced by The Retail Group - LSD

- Extend half price rent for indoor market until end of March and Six months half price for outdoor market - LSD

- Indoor traders to be asked if they would like the indoor market to be open all week - LSD

- Monthly themed events to be organized by LSD, first event to be themed around Halloween - LSD

- Traders to be approached to see if they will relocate their stalls to one area in the street - LSD

- Better signage for indoor market - LSD

- A situation evaluation to be carried out to ascertain where the shoppers are from, what they buy, what they would like to buy etc. This will be an ad hoc report from LSD. Kate to send through some questions to LSD to be included in the questionnaire. Draft questionnaire to be circulate to the group - LSD/ALL

* Councillors to talk to shoppers when they have their next market stall on 6th December 2023 – Councillors
* The production of an action plan/strategy to improve the market – All
* Meeting to be held on 31st January 2024, 11am for an update on the success of the reduce rents - All