

AGENDA ITEM 10iii

Town Hall & Butchers' Hall Managers Report – January 2025

Town Hall

The Town Hall is currently experiencing positive initial booking enquiries for the upcoming year, and the operating arrangements remain consistent. However, as January tends to be a quieter month for bookings, this period is being used effectively for:

1. Reviewing Events and Trends:

A detailed review of the past year's events is underway, focusing on identifying trends and areas where the Town Hall's functionality and profitability can be expanded in the year ahead. This will help in fine-tuning strategies for future events and improving operations.

2. Deep Cleaning:

January is also being used for deep cleaning of both the Town Hall and Butchers Hall to ensure these spaces are well-maintained and ready for the events to come.

Events split by category

Type of Event	Number of events
Weddings (Ceremonies and Receptions)	9 events
Performances/Concerts	9 events
Civic/Council use	6 events
Private Parties/Evening Receptions	8 events
Ticketed events	5 events
Sales Fayres	6 events
Gala Dinners/Dances	1 event
Community Events	2 events
Exhibitions	2 events
Tavistock Musical Theatre Company events	1 event
Meetings	4 events

1. Event Category Breakdown:

- The majority of events are fairly evenly distributed across different categories, with Weddings and Performances being the most popular, each having 9 bookings.
- Exhibitions and Gala Dinners are the least popular types of events.

- The Town Hall also hosts around 20 community classes, talks, and lessons per month, contributing to over 200 community-focused events annually, such as dance, exercise classes, and local meetings like U3A events. These events are not included in the above chart.
2. Weddings and Event Strategy:
- Weddings are the largest source of income, and there is a plan to increase the number of wedding bookings in the upcoming financial year.
 - Despite weddings being the biggest event category, the average income from weddings dropped by about 34% compared to previous years.
 - The goal is to boost both the number of weddings and the average spend per wedding event to counter the income decline.
3. Projected Income:
- The projected income for the Town Hall for the 2024/25 financial year is between £33,000 and £36,000, which is lower than the £43,462 generated in 2023/24.
 - Despite hosting slightly more events this year, a reduction in average spend per event and fewer weddings has led to a decrease in overall hire income.

In conclusion, while the Town Hall is hosting more events, the slight decrease in wedding bookings and the average spend per event are key challenges for maintaining income levels. Increasing wedding bookings and improving the overall spend per event will be essential for closing the gap in income for the 2024/25 financial year.

The upcoming Tavistock Wedding Fair, scheduled for March 9th, 2025, presents several key initiatives aimed at both generating revenue and promoting the Town Hall as a premier venue for events:

1. Generating Income:

Exhibitor Fees: Businesses interested in participating will be charged a pitch fee, comparable to other sector events. The final amount depends on the number of exhibitors and the size of the pitches, as the Town Hall is still in the process of canvassing and securing more potential participants.

2. Promoting the Town Hall as a Venue:

Increasing Wedding Enquiries: The Town Hall has observed a slight decline in wedding enquiries over the last couple of years, and this event provides a platform to reverse this trend. By showcasing the venue in this context, the goal is to re-engage potential clients.

Self-Promotion at the Fair: The Town Hall will have its own stall at the fair to directly promote both Tavistock Town Hall and Butchers Hall as potential wedding venues and locations for similar events.

Marketing Materials: A large poster will be produced to highlight the available indoor spaces for event hire. This will be displayed at the event and shared across social media channels and the Town Hall website to increase visibility. We will also look to advertise in any appropriate publications.

Overall, the Wedding Fair serves as a strategic effort not only to generate additional revenue through exhibitor fees but also to market the Town Hall as a desirable venue for future weddings and events, aiming to increase bookings and enquiries moving forward.

Butchers Hall

The feedback from traders attending the 2024 market at Butchers Hall has been generally positive, with good trader occupation levels, particularly during the festive period. The markets have continued to offer a diverse range of products, appealing to customers. Key Insights:

1. Trader Occupancy:

The average capacity for in-house markets from April 1st, 2024, to March 31st, 2025, has been around 82%, which is based on a total capacity of 27 traders per market.

This means that, on average, the markets are operating at 82% occupancy, with around 18% of trader spaces remaining unsold.

2. Trader Cancellations:

A significant factor contributing to this underselling has been the cancellation of pitches by traders. These cancellations have made it difficult to fill the vacant spots within a limited time frame, affecting overall occupancy levels.

Below is a table to help illustrate the above points.

Butchers' Hall occupancy levels April 2024 to January 2025	
Traders attended	733 traders
Unfilled pitches	165 pitches
Cancelled pitches	303 pitches

To address the issue of pitch cancellations at Butchers Hall and maintain high occupancy, the following steps and initiatives are being implemented re: Tackling pitch cancellations and identifying repeat offenders:

Identification: A record is being kept of traders who consistently cancel their bookings, particularly those who make multiple bookings early in the year but then cancel close to the event date.

Communication: Repeat offenders will first receive a reminder of their commitment to the market. If cancellations continue, traders will be warned not to abuse the booking system.

Goal: Ensure that more spaces are available for other traders, improving overall occupancy rates, and aiming for as close to 100% occupancy as possible.

New Market Initiatives and Event Offerings:

1. Expansion of Market Offerings:

New Markets: In the 2024/25 financial year, Butchers Hall added two new markets to diversify the offerings and keep the market experience fresh and appealing.

This included:

Book Fair (March 9th, 2024): A successful inaugural event in celebration of World Book Day. It featured book sellers and readings, which will be repeated in 2025.

Craft Fair: Introduced to further broaden the appeal of the market to visitors and traders.

These efforts reflect the ongoing intention to improve the market's attractiveness and keep it vibrant.

2. Upcoming Initiatives:

Youth Market (March 8th, 2025): A new initiative aimed at young entrepreneurs, providing them with the opportunity to present their businesses in a market setting. This event is expected to operate at full capacity and attract young, aspiring traders.

Book Fair (March 2025): Following the success of the 2024 Book Fair, this event will return in 2025. It will continue to promote reading, particularly to young people in Tavistock and the surrounding areas, while also appealing to adults who enjoy books. This event aims to diversify the

audience, attracting individuals who may not typically attend other types of markets at Butchers Hall.

Summary:

By tackling trader cancellations and diversifying its market offerings, Butchers Hall is actively working to maintain high occupancy and sustain public interest. The addition of targeted events like the Youth Market and the Book Fair will also help attract new visitors, ensuring the market remains vibrant, fresh, and appealing to a wide range of traders and customers.

Advertising

The advertising strategy for both Butchers Hall and the Town Hall focuses on maximizing exposure for key events and markets through a variety of channels:

1. Posters and Flyers:

Physical Advertising: Posters are displayed in high-traffic areas such as the main Town Hall poster boards, the Pannier Market, Butchers Hall, and the Market glass doors.

Targeted Audience: This method effectively captures the attention of the usual high footfall in these locations, ensuring that upcoming events are visible to a large number of local residents and visitors.

2. Advertisements in Local Publications:

Wider Reach: Regular adverts are placed in local publications, which extends the reach of the events beyond just the immediate vicinity. This helps attract people from surrounding areas and increases awareness among a broader local audience.

3. Social Media and Online Platforms:

Digital Marketing: Events are also promoted through social media channels and the Town Council website, which allows for real-time updates and interactive engagement.

QR Codes: New QR codes are being incorporated into posters where applicable, enabling people to quickly access more detailed information online using their mobile devices. This provides a convenient way for the public to engage with event details and updates.

Summary:

The combination of traditional advertising methods (posters, flyers, and publications) and digital channels (social media, website, and QR codes) allows for a comprehensive approach to event promotion. This multi-platform strategy ensures that events at Butchers Hall and the Town Hall reach a wide and varied audience, enhancing visibility and engagement with the local community.