

AGENDA ITEM 11b

TOWN HALL & MARKETS CONSULTATIVE GROUP

NOTES OF THE MEETING of the **TOWN HALL & MARKETS CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on **WEDNESDAY** the **8th DECEMBER 2021** at **5.00pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road.**

PRESENT

Representing Tavistock Town Council

Councillors P Squire (Chairman)

Councillors A Hutton (Mayor ex officio), B Smith

Representing Market Traders' – Mr. R Jones and Mrs. S King

Representing shops in the Pannier Market surround: None present

Representing Users of the Town Hall – None present

Representing BID – Mrs J Sanders

Representing the Chamber of Commerce – None present

Officers – Town Clerk (TC), General Manager (GM), Town Hall & Events

Manager (TH & EM), Market Reeve & Designated Premises Supervisor (MRDPS)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs G Parker, P Ward and Ms. C Rickard.

2. CONFIRMATION OF NOTES

- a) The Notes of the Meeting of the Town Hall & Markets Consultative Group held on Tuesday 21st September were received (Appendix 1).
- b) There were no matters arising.

3. REPORTS - The Consultative Group received the following verbal reports;

- a) Pannier Market

Matters discussed included:

- The MR informed members of the positive footfall in the Pannier Market and also the festive opening hours, and explained what additional events were happening across the Pannier Market and Bedford Square.
- It was reported that Dickensian Evening had been a success from the perspective of the Pannier Market and Butchers' Hall, with traders reporting good feedback. It was commented that the additional spacious aisles in both Markets had helped with coping with customer numbers, allowing room for browsing and aiding with facilitating social distancing.
- The MR reported on the current table configuration within the Pannier Market, stating at the beginning of the first lockdown it

was operating at around 115 tables from a previous capacity of 177, and with some modifications that had not compromised trader and public safety, was now operating at 145 rentable spaces.

- It was explained that the Pannier Market had participated in National Christmas Jumper day as promotional tool, and traders had also organised a Christmas Elf trail.
- The MR discussed Bedford Square trading, with reports that since re-opening back in April 2021, Bedford Square had been used for varying activities, showing an increase in income in compared to 2019.

b) Town Hall & Event Management/Works

Matters discussed included:

- The TH&EM reported that the in-house Butchers' Hall Christmas Markets to date had favourable footfall during the festive period. This calendar of activities was also supported by the Miss Ivy Christmas Markets. It was explained that the venue was still operating on a reduced capacity re: trader numbers in line with the Council's operational decision to continue to facilitate social distancing.
- It was advised that the Butchers' Hall dates had been released for 2022 activities including all Arts Market, in-house events and dates booked by external hirers.
- The TH&EM provided a positive update that the last quarter capital works relating to cladding the Butchers' Hall clearstory windows and repairing the rain water goods had appeared to have solved the problems regarding water ingress. It was explained that the situation was being monitored and that the scaffolding would be removed at the end of March 2022 if no further issues occurred.
- It was explained that the markets and events team would be honouring all bookings for the first quarter of 2022 but that due to capacity and resource challenges, no further bookings would be taken during this period, as endorsed by Full Council.
- The TH&EM discussed the issues that were occurring regarding water ingress in the Town Hall and explained what the anticipated timelines were for rectification.

c) Guildhall

Matters discussed included:

- The General Manager reported that the Guildhall had now opened with a soft launch on Saturday 4th December 2021 with the aim that the official launch would be around the end of the first quarter of 22, determined by the soft launch feedback/covid-19.

- It was explained that the VIC operations had now transferred across to the Guildhall with provisional opening hours of Tuesday to Saturday 10:00 – 16:00, for the VIC and Gateway Centre.

d) Operational matters and Fees and Charges

- The General Manager reported on aspects pertaining to staffing and recruitment. It was explained how challenging it had been recruiting, especially in the hospitality sector and how this had led to policy decisions such as the Town Hall not taking additional bookings. An outline of the overall markets and events team operational structure was explained and that TTC were advertising two roles within that structure, Town Hall & Events Manager and Duty Officer, as well as the Community and Compliance Officer vacancy. The Town Clerk then gave an overview of the difficulties in recruitment at a national level.
- It was explained that the current Town Hall & Events Manager was transferring over to the vacant Works Manager position, and that this transition would be staggered while undertaking the recruitment process for the above posts. The TH&EM was thanked by the Chair and others for the work in developing Butchers' Hall and managing the Town Hall and wished her well in her role as Works Manager going forward.
- A discussion was held around fees and charges, with a particular focus on market tolls. It was explained that there had been no increase within the Pannier Market for 7 years, due to a number of mitigating factors, but that there had been an investment of over 1M specific to capital improvements to the built infrastructure and its surrounds (market complex). It was explained that there was anticipated to increase the tolls by £1 from April 2022 and that the tolls would then form part of the ongoing schedules of fees and charges review on an annual basis. Market representatives understood the principles around the increase and the amount suggested and felt it was reasonable in the current circumstances. The Town Clerk also explained how HMRC had recently changed the guidance in relation to VAT and the possibilities of how this could affect Markets nationally and that any future decision making would need to take this into account if the current position were to change.

4. CAPITAL UPDATE

The General Manager briefly reiterated earlier points covered off in relation to the Guildhall Gateway Centre and capital works in Butchers Hall and the Town Hall. In addition, an overview was provided around the challenges facing the museum specific to structural repairs and dry rot and the impact this might have specific to budgets and timelines for reopening.

5. EVENTS

a) Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022:

It was reported that TTC were looking at options regarding how best to celebrate the forthcoming Queens Platinum Jubilee. It was explained that it was imperative that it would encompass a community driven celebration inclusive of all stakeholders. Plans had already been implemented specific to planting schemes and erecting a Beacon on Whitchurch Down Beacon.

b) Garden Festival 2022:

It was explained that the Garden Festival now renamed Tavistock Country Show would go ahead across the early May Bank Holiday Weekend. The dates being; Sunday 1st and Monday 2nd May 2022. It was reported that initial plans had been drawn up and that it was the intention to use all of the Market Complex, including Bedford Square and Guildhall car-park for this event.

c) Goose Fair 2022:

The message was reinforced that Goose Fair would return in 2022 with further changes and improvements being planned, after review from Officers and feedback received from stakeholders as per the briefing note previously submitted to Council in the last quarter of 2021. It was reported that one aspect of concern was securing a third suitable park and ride site for 2022.

d) Christmas light switch-on/Dickensian Evening 2021:

It was explained that the Christmas lights switch-on was a success regarding attendance for its short duration but there were concerns relating to aspects of safety, specific to public/traffic and that if a future event of a similar nature took place, from TTC perspective, a review of the traffic restrictions and numbers of stewards would be essential. BID explained that the event had been attended by more than expected and that they would review the situation specific to the above concerns and how best to combine events re: Trees of Lights and Dickensian Evening going forward. The resource issues specific to turning the lights on in mid-November were also discussed, re: maintenance and replacement costs for infrastructure.

6. ANY MATTERS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PANNIER MARKET TRADERS, PANNIER MARKET PERIMETER SHOPS, AND / OR TOWN HALL USERS

- A Market representative reported on how footfall was positive from a Pannier Market perspective during the Christmas light switch-on and Dickensian Evening and thanked everyone involved in the partnership activity.
- A request was then made regarding purchasing additional lifting/loading equipment for use of Pannier Market/Butchers' Hall

traders. It was agreed that additional equipment would be sourced and purchased in the first quarter of 2022.

7. ANY MATTERS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TAVISTOCK BID

- The BID Manager thanked TTC for their continued support and raised one concern regarding parking on Market Road. It was agreed that a memo would be issued to traders and perimeter shops and BID by the MR advising that options were being considered regarding resurfacing, line marking and parking enforcement signing of Market Road.

8. ANY MATTERS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

No one was in attendance.

9. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

No urgent business brought forward.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 8th March 2022 at 5.00pm at the Council Chamber (subject to the pandemic position), Drake Road.

The Meeting closed at 6.00pm.

Signed.....

Chairman

Dated.....