WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

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MARKET REJUVENATION & SUPERVISION PROJECT SCOPING DOCUMENT JULY / AUGUST 2022

1. Aim

It is the aim of the Council's Markets Committee to achieve a popular Thursday market which breaks even, whilst being mindful of its heritage as a traditional retail market.

2. Background

2.1 In 1240 the Knights Templar were granted, by Royal Charter of Henry III, the right to hold a market in Wetherby known then as Werreby). The charter stated the market should be held on Thursdays.

2.2 The Thursday market continues to this day and, as such, Wetherby has one of the oldest, traditional markets in the country.

2.3 The weekly Thursday market is currently operated by the Town Council. It was operated by Leeds City Council until about 2000 when they were looking to close it due to a loss making situation and the Town Council took it over under a license agreement.

2.4 The Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in February 2020, confirmed the community and Council's support for the market, but also included the following references:

2.4.1 Issues where a requirement exists for enhancement / improvement:
Thursday and Farmer's markets.

2.4.2 Key Objective:
To further develop a vibrant and prosperous market town….

3. Artisan Market

3.1 The Town Council holds a license from Leeds City Council to operate a monthly artisan market on the second Sunday of each month.

3.2 In 2021 the Town Council agreed to change the operator of this market to Little Bird Artisan Markets.

3.3 Since then stallholder attendance at the monthly market has improved by over 500%.

3.3.1 During the first 7 months of 2019, when the market was operated by Otley Town Partnership, there were an average of 7.28 stalls at each market.

3.3.2 During the first 7 months of 2022, when the market was operated by Little Bird, there were an average of 46 stalls at each market.

3.4 There is anecdotally increased customer footfall at, and positive public feedback on, the revised format of the artisan market.

3.5 The monthly, Sunday market does not form the focus of this scoping document and the remainder relates to the weekly, Thursday market only.

4. Current Identified Issues

4.1 There is no on-site supervision of the market after the retirement of the market assistant in early 2022.

- 4.1.1 This has led to health and safety issues being identified in relation to implementation of the road closure around Market Place.
- 4.1.2 Office staff are collecting tolls each week, taking time out from their normal duties.
- 4.1.3 License terms (such as arrival and departure times) are not being adhered to.

4.2 Imminent retirement of Deputy Clerk.

4.3 Fall in stallholder numbers (various reasons given including viability, retirement, health, attendance at alternative markets).

4.4 Anecdotal evidence of a decline in customer footfall (a vicious cycle when combined with a fall in stallholder numbers).

4.5 No marketing / advertising of market taking place, either in relation to recruitment of new traders or to attract new customers.

4.6 No customer needs / market research recently undertaken on which to base future plans.

4.7 Stall erection costs seem to make up a disproportionate amount of the expenditure on the market, especially when compared to the number of stalls that are erected each week.

5. Comparison

5.1 In 2000 (when the Town Council took over operation of the market) there were 18 licensed traders, 4 casuals and one charity stall allocation.

5.2 On 21st July 2022 the market will have 15 traders.

5.3 There are a possible 30 pitches available, although this is dependent on configuration (single, double etc).

5.4 The current fee for an erected single pitch is £22.50 and £19.50 for a self-built stall. Licensed stallholders are offered a free week for each completion of 12 trading weeks on an incentive scheme to attract good attendance.

5.5 Comparison with other local markets reveals the following:

Market	*Toll*	*Notes*
Ripon & Knaresborough	£24.50 Summer £21.40 Winter	Self-built only.
Otley – operated by Leeds City Council.	£14	Friday market, stalls provided.
Pudsey Market – operated by Leeds City Council.	£10	Tuesday & Friday markets, stalls provided.
Selby	£1.25/ft frontage = £15	Self-built only.

5.6 Harrogate Borough Council's Markets Officer recently contacted Wetherby Town Council and reported on the following:
"Our Knaresborough Wednesday market has a large loss of permanent traders since the start of 2022 (12), feedback is indicating reasons are due to retirement, charge of business circumstances or sheer lack of business income."

5.7 The introduction to NABMA's 2015 report "Traditional Markets Under Threat: Why It's Happening and What Traders and Customers Can Do"[1] states:
"Traditional markets are often described as 'in decline'. Nationally, figures indicate that market trading has dropped by nearly £1bn between 2009 and 2014, average occupancy in England is at 46%, and a third of local authorities have reported a decrease in income from their market8. But what does this decline actually mean? And why has it come about?
Various aspects of markets can be said to be in decline: footfall, takings by traders, number of spaces being let, the physical fabric of the building itself. These declines have different causes and solutions but are often conflated generally by local authorities and the media as an inevitable and generalised 'decline'. A 2009 Parliamentary inquiry concluded that the traditional type of market was declining in popularity but that farmers' markets and other specialist and niche markets (food festivals, Christmas and craft makers) were increasingly popular. Research by NABMA9 comparing 2010 and 2011 figures suggests that the situation of markets is comparable to that of the high streets, but makes a distinction between different types of markets."

6. Financial

6.1 Income & Expenditure

Financial Year	*Source*	*Income*	*Expenditure*
2007/08	Taken from Clerk's report.	£25,389	£26,314
2009/10	Estimates taken from Clerk's report.	£24,960	£28,834
2016/17	Annual accounts – does not include any staff time.	£31,677	£36,005
2019/20	Annual accounts – does not include any staff time.	£27,884	£24,725
2021/221	Annual accounts – does not include staff time.	£20,764	£26,363
2022/23	Budget – does not include staff time.	£21,077	£25,528

1 https://wetherbytc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/WetherbyTC/EarHsCariBBChQyz4QNVsBEBxfWjF9CInFDJ_Imo3vySkw?e=dfanKt

6.2 2022/23 Budget

		Last Year - 21/22		Current Year - 22/23				
		Budget	Actual	Brought Forward	Net Virement	Agreed	EMR	Total
111	**Markets**							
1000	Income - Market Thu Tolls	16,088	18,408	0	0	18,310	0	18,310
1013	Income - Artisan Market	238	2,356	0	0	2,767	0	2,767
1040	Income - Miscellaneous	5,800	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	22,126	20,764	0	0	21,077	0	21,077
4102	Stationery	200	240	0	0	250	0	250
4200	Subscriptions & Memberships	298	369	0	0	440	0	440
4206	Advertising	500	0	0	0	500	0	500
4307	Rates	3,373	3,368	0	0	3,368	0	3,368
5307	Coronavirus	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
5700	Stall Erection	19,200	21,185	0	0	19,200	0	19,200
5702	Trailer Costs	0	110	0	0	150	0	150
5704	Stall Maintenance	250	0	0	0	250	0	250
5705	Artisan Market License	238	1,086	0	0	1,320	0	1,320
8888	Miscellaneous Costs	50	0	0	0	50	0	50
	Overhead Expenditure	24,109	26,363	0	0	25,528	0	25,528
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,983)	(5,599)			(4,451)		(4,451)
	Total Budget Income	22,126	20,764	0	0	21,077	0	21,077
	Expenditure	24,109	26,363	0	0	25,528	0	25,528
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,983)	(5,599)			(4,451)		(4,451)

7. Staffing

7.1 The Market is currently managed and administered on a day-to-day basis by the Deputy Clerk, with the Clerk's role including that of Markets Officer, reporting to the Markets Committee.

7.2 The Deputy Clerk is scheduled to retire at the end of September 2022.

7.3 In 2022 Wetherby Town Council commissioned a staffing review by the Local Council Consultancy. The review identified the following points which relate to the staffing needs of the market:

7.3.1 Employment of a market assistant:
"The Market Assistant should be a visible and recognised presence whenever the market operates, serving as a point of reference, as well as being responsible for health and safety matters. The Operations Manager would manage the post. At the proper time, if the market expands, the post could be redesignated as Market Officer."

7.3.2 Employment of a communications officer who would promote the market as part of their role.

7.4 The recommendation for the market assistant is that they be paid at SCP13-17, or £4,979.52/pa, based upon working 8 hours per week.

7.5 The Council has recently agreed to recruit an Operations Manager and the Market Assistant, but this process may take several weeks/months.

7.6 The recruitment of these posts does not address several of the Markets Committee's current concerns about the market:

7.6.1 The Operations Manager's initial priorities may not include the market.

7.6.2 The market assistant's remit will not include consultation about / restructuring of the market.

7.6.3 The short term promotion and advertising requirements of the market. These will fall under the brief of a communications officer, which will not be recruited until further along the restructure process.

8. Stall Erection

8.1 The stall erection/dismantling operating cost is, and has always been, the largest single item of expenditure for the market operation. A 5-year plan for the market, drawn up in 2007, states that "an investigation into the effectiveness and efficiency of this process will be an ongoing task".

8.2 An investment of £25,000 was made by purchasing the stalls and trailers to carry them to and from site. The Council continues to rent a depot capable of housing these items.

8.3 When the Town Council first took over the Thursday market the stalls were assembled and dismantled by a local firm and this operation was supported by one member of the Town Council Team who was paid an additional supplement for this work.

8.4 In 2015 it was agreed that the erection of stalls be completely outsourced to a contractor and this has continued to the present day.

8.5 The Council currently pays £1,800 per month for stall erection (assuming that there are no cancelled markets, for which a discount is made).

8.6 The Council has a rolling contract with its contractor which includes a six-month notice period.

8.7 Initial investigations were carried out into the purchase of gazebos to replace stalls by the current Chair of the Markets Committee in March 2021.

8.8 Moving to a fully self-built market is a nuanced and inflammatory topic which must be carefully considered and managed.[2]

9. Solution

9.1 That an independent, self-employed consultant be brought in on a temporary basis to act as Markets Officer with a view to restructuring the market and making it fit for purpose and for the future.

9.2 Contract term initially to be from as soon as possible to 31st March 2023 with a view to extension, subject to funding and progression of project.

9.3 To be funded using the market assistant salary allocation in the staffing review. Savings generated *if* stall erection costs are removed may be used to provide additional funding / continuation of role.

[2] https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/news/politics/council/harrogate-council-faces-renewed-calls-rethink-impossible-market-rules-knaresborough-and-ripon-traders-2966979

10. Proposed Remit

10.1 Provide weekly, on-site support for market:
- 10.1.1 Collection of tolls.
- 10.1.2 Supervision of pack up in afternoon.
- 10.1.3 Implementation of road closures.
- 10.1.4 Point of contact for traders on Thursdays.
- 10.1.5 Provide a presence on the market from 8am to 5pm.

10.2 Carry out NABMA's diagnostic health check tool and report to the Markets Committee on results.[3]

10.3 Carry out consultation with stakeholders, including the people of Wetherby and local businesses to determine what they want from their market and report to the Markets Committee on results.

10.4 Consult with stallholders on future of Wetherby market and report to the Markets Committee on results.

10.5 Determine whether to move to a system of self-built stalls and if this is agreed:
- 10.5.1 Liaise with stallholders.
- 10.5.2 Oversee purchase, provision and use of new infrastructure (e.g. gazebos) if required.
- 10.5.3 Organise and oversee sale of old stalls.

10.6 Draw up a 3 year business plan for the market in accordance with feedback of consultations.

10.7 Work to recruit new stallholders in accordance with consultation feedback.

10.8 Oversee and implement restructured layout of market if determined as the correct course of action.

10.9 Design and carry out marketing and advertising campaign for market.

10.10 Handover market to Operations Manager / Market Assistant / Communications Officer as per structure identified in 2022 staffing review.

Prepared by Iona Taylor, Town Clerk
20th July 2022

[3] https://wetherbytc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/WetherbyTC/Ed93ugUbhcdHoHgw4-vn2vcBX0Acz7dp3YHHndaydkZ_uw?e=WZbDpT