

**STONE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Town Clerk**

Les Trigg

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5 November 2018

A meeting of the **ESTATES SUB COMMITTEE** will be held in **St Michael's Suite at Frank Jordan Centre, Lichfield Street, Stone** on **Tuesday 13 NOVEMBER 2018** at 7:05pm or on the rising of the Planning Committee, if later.

I trust you will be able to attend.

Les Trigg  
Town Clerk

Councillors: I. Fordham (Chair), M. Green (Vice Chair), Mrs J. Hood, Mrs E. Mowatt, Mrs J. Farnham, T. Jackson and G. Collier

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations Received**
3. **Representations from Members of the Public**  
  
To consider representations from members of the public on items to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation
4. **Market Strategy**  
  
To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached) to inform the Committee of the deliberations by the Markets Strategy Working Group and to consider their recommendations.
5. **Notice Boards and Fingerposts**  
  
To consider the current position with respect to the provision of updated notice boards and finger posts in partnership with Stafford Borough Council
6. **Signage at Frank Jordan Centre**  
  
To receive an update on replacement signage at the Frank Jordan Centre

7. **High Street Bollards**

To receive an update on the High Street bollards

8. **Reports of Working Groups**

- Market Strategy

9. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next item of business is discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate

10. **Hub Charges at the Frank Jordan Centre**

To consider the confidential report of the Town Clerk (attached)

Will any Councillors who wish to speak at this meeting, but are not members of the Sub-Committee, please inform the Chairman before the start of the meeting

Members of the public are welcomed to attend the Estates Sub-Committee Meeting as observers and/or to make representations to the committee in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation. Details of this scheme are displayed in the Council's notice boards and are also available from the Town Council.

## **Stone Town Council – Estates Sub-Committee**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

### **Market Strategy**

### **Report of Town Clerk**

#### **Introduction**

1. At its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, the Sub-Committee determined to set up a working group to consider a pricing strategy for the Town Council's markets and to report that strategy to this Sub-Committee for consideration (Minute EST18/039).
2. On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the Sub-Committee widened the scope of the Market Pricing Working Group to cover the production of a Market Strategy (Minute EST19/005).
3. The purpose of this report is to refer the recommendations of the working group for consideration by this Sub-Committee.

#### **Background**

4. The working group considered a number of aspects of the Council's current market operation focusing in particular on the marquee arrangements, which represented the main cost, and the charges in the light of the declining number of traders choosing to use the market. These are considered below.

#### **Marquee Arrangements**

5. During the time that the working party was considering its options, the current contractor responsible for putting up, taking down, and storage of the Council's marquees gave notice that they no longer wanted to undertake the work. Resulting from this, an alternative contractor was employed at short notice at a similar price to the outgoing contractor.
6. When the marquees were collected from the old contractor and inspected, however, it was clear that the remaining life of the existing marquees was very limited.
7. The Council approved a budget of £7,000 in February for the replacement of the Council's marquees. This has been utilised and, following a competitive procurement exercise, new marquees ordered at a cost of just under £6,000. These should be available for use early in the new year.
8. Currently, marquees are provided for the Tuesday and Saturday markets, but not for the Friday market. It is proposed that this arrangement should continue.

## **Charging**

9. The Council has received some criticism from market traders for the level of its stall charges. These are currently £30.60 for a 3m x 6m pitch on the Friday market (no marquee provided) and £42.60 for a 3m x 6m or 3m x 3m marquee on either the Tuesday or Saturday markets. Erection of the stalls on Tuesdays and Saturdays costs the Council £25 per stall, subject to a £50 minimum charge.
10. The working group noted that the Friday market was not currently experiencing any significant demand problems, so did not consider that any changes to either the arrangements or pricing was necessary at present.
11. Similarly, the Saturday market is oversubscribed on the day of the Farmers Market and needs no changes, although a priority system for allocating stalls to traders is proposed, as set out below.
12. The working group did, however, consider that a reduction in prices for markets on other Saturdays and on Tuesdays may result in more traders attending, resulting in a more vibrant market with the income from additional traders at least partly offsetting the loss of income from reduced process.
13. The working group recommend that Tuesday and Saturday market charges should be reduced, on a trial basis, to the same level as the Friday market (£30.60 per stall) with a 50% surcharge for the Farmers Market Saturday (£45.90).
14. This change in charge level should be introduced at the same time as the new marquees are brought into use.
15. In addition, the Town Clerk was asked to look at whether stall holders should in future be asked to pay for their stalls in advance, rather than collecting cash on the day.

## **Farmers Market Day Priority**

16. As mentioned above, demand is always high for stalls at the Saturday market that coincides with Stafford Borough's monthly Farmers Market in Stone High Street. Currently there is no agreed priority system for allocating stalls on the day, which can result in difficulties in deciding between traders when stalls become available.
17. It is suggested that the Council adopts the following priority order for allocating stalls. In all cases, only one marquee per user will be permitted unless otherwise stated:
  - a. The Council itself, when a stall is required for public consultation purposes only.
  - b. Traders<sup>1</sup> who regularly attend Saturday markets when it is not a Farmers Market day.

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<sup>1</sup> Trader in the context of this list means a market stall selling goods to the public. It does not include stalls set up for promotional purposes.

- c. Traders who regularly attend the Council's Tuesday or Friday markets.
- d. Traders who regularly book stalls at the Council's other events, such as late night shopping evenings.
- e. Other traders based in or near Stone.
- f. Other traders based outside Stone.
- g. Stone based organisations.
- h. Second stalls for any traders in categories b or c above, where they book a second stall as part of their regular booking (in the priority order stated).
- i. All other users.

### **Conclusions**

- 18. The working group has considered a number of aspects of the Council's markets operations, and has recommended a strategy for adoption.
- 19. The working group should review the success of this strategy in due course, and recommend any adjustments to the Sub-Committee which it considers may be required.
- 20. Currently, the Town Clerk exercises some discretion to vary stall prices in order to maximise the benefit to the Council, for example, where a regular trader could be lost. It is suggested that this discretion should continue.

### **Recommendations**

- 21. The Sub-Committee are asked to support the following proposals for recommendation to the General Purposes Committee:
  - a. Charges at Tuesday and Saturday markets should be reduced to £30.60 per marquee, with a 50% surcharge for the Farmers Market Saturday (£45.90), effective from the introduction of the new marquees. (Paragraph 13)
  - b. The Town Clerk be asked to examine and, if considered practical following consultation with the Markets Working Group, implement a system of payment in advance for market stalls. (Paragraph 15)
  - c. A priority order for allocation of stalls on Farmers Market Saturday is adopted, as set out in the report. (Paragraph 17)
  - d. The Working Group monitors the success of this strategy, and reports back on any required changes in due course. (Paragraph 19)
  - e. The Town Clerk continues to exercise some discretion to vary stall prices where necessary for the overall benefit of the Council. (Paragraph 20)