

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE held at Mountfield, Bridport on Tuesday, 1 November 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: G.J. Ackerman (Chairman)

Cllrs: Miss S.A. Brown	Mrs M.J. Ray
C.M. Ray (ex officio)	K.G. Wallace (until 11.00am)
	Ms S.J. Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr D.G. Rickard, Ray McLaren (Market Superintendent) and Steve Hibbs (Market Traders' Association representative).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the Public Forum.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Cllr: G.J. Ackerman be elected Chairman of the Sub Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2011/2012.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011, which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Miss S.A. Brown declared a personal interest in agenda item 11, due to her involvement with the Christmas Festival. The item was for information only.

5. MARKET OPERATION

- (a) The Market Superintendent reported on the running of the market and highlighted in particular the support for the market over the summer and the success of the Hat Festival.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

- (b) Stall numbers and takings April 2011 to date, ENCL: 2448

The Sub Committee welcomed the information contained in the report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(c) Stalls – registered/casual traders April 2011 to date, ENCL: 2449

The Sub Committee welcomed the information contained in the report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(d) The Town Surveyor provided an update on the following matters: -

(i) Late Night Markets: Steve Hibbs stated that sadly the late night market this year was not a great success and this was something that would now have to be reconsidered for the future.

(ii) Park and Ride:

The Town Surveyor reported that the passenger numbers using the service had increased again this year, even without taking account of the additional two weeks of the service.

West Dorset District Council was thanked for its ongoing support of the service.

(iii) Gas Works

The Town Surveyor updated on the ongoing gas works in the town. Southern Gas Networks was keeping the Town Council informed of progress. It would be necessary to relocate some stalls when the work came further up South Street. This was unlikely now to be before the New Year. Options to relocate regular traders would be looked at and information would be issued to traders as early as possible.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT

The Town Surveyor reminded members of the recent Health and Safety Audit and the Town Council's agreed policy on sitting out licences. The numbers of stalls on a Saturday was excellent, but it meant that it was proving difficult to accommodate any new stalls. New applicants were therefore being advised that, if accepted, they would not be able to trade on a Saturday until there were spaces.

In terms of ongoing issues, members discussed the reported concerns of The Woodman Inn Public House and the need to maintain the required space in front of the agreed seating outside the Public House.

The Town Surveyor said that this issue had been looked at and would continue to be monitored. Members agreed that in this case, and in line with the agreed policy, there was no need for any changes to stall positions.

However, it was important to ensure the maintenance of the required pavement space.

It was noted that this Sub Committee would continue to receive updates on health and safety matters.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and, in line with the agreed policies, the Town Surveyor's actions in responding to individual cases, as raised at the meeting, be endorsed.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND PARKING PERMITS

The Town Surveyor reported that the current conditions were being reviewed and would be submitted for approval to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Town Clerk reported on the position in respect of the parking permits and he was seeking clarification from Dorset County Council on the legal basis for the scheme. It was agreed that the scheme was brought in to assist market traders to be able to remain with their stalls and had generally been welcomed. However, the permits could only be issued where the layout of the road allowed traders to safely park their vehicles. The permits were currently issued to traders able to use them, as part of the management of the market, although, subject to the advice received, it might be necessary to review the operation of the scheme.

RESOLVED:

- a. that the terms and conditions of the market be reviewed and reported for approval to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- b. that the ongoing operation of the parking permits be supported and the Sub Committee receive further reports, should any changes be necessary to the scheme.

8. MARKET CHARGES

The Town Clerk reported that, in line with the process in previous years, discussions would take place with the National Market Traders' Federation, prior to making recommendations on the fees for the next financial year.

Members discussed further support for the market on a Wednesday during the winter. It was noted that last year, the stall fees on Wednesdays during February were no more than £5 for registered traders. The proposal had been generally helpful in retaining numbers and it was felt that it could also be extended to January for 2012.

RECOMMEND:

- a. that the Town Clerk discuss the fees for 2012/13 with the National Market Traders' Federation, to be reported back to the next meeting of this Sub Committee, prior to approval.
- b. that to support the Wednesday market, in January and February 2012 only, the stall fees on Wednesdays to be no more than £5 for registered traders.

9. MARKET TRADERS

The main item raised by the local branch of the National Market Traders' Federation was the need for continued support for the market on a Wednesday. Whilst the figures for the summer were good, the market did struggle on Wednesdays during the winter. The recommended extension of the reduced rate, as in the previous item, was welcomed but it was felt that other initiatives should also be looked at, to bring people into town on a Wednesday and provide support for the market.

Members agreed on the importance of support for the market on a Wednesday and discussed possible initiatives, such as more music and other events, combined with more targeted local publicity.

This was an issue that members would continue to monitor.

RESOLVED: that options for continued support for the Wednesday market, particularly during the winter, continue to be looked at in consultation with the National Market Traders' Federation.

10. ADVERTISING

The Town Clerk reported on the advertising undertaken this year. It was agreed that more localised advertising during the winter would be helpful, for example in parish magazines, to encourage people from surrounding villages to support the market, particularly on a Wednesday.

It was also noted that the market leaflet was due to be updated and there were opportunities for market traders to advertise on the new community web site.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The arrangements for the festival, to be held on Wednesday 7 December 2011, were noted.

12. TOWN HALL

The Town Surveyor reported on the latest position on the Town Hall Heritage and Conservation project.

The update was noted.

13. REGENERATION GRANT FOR BRIDPORT

The Town Clerk reported that West Dorset District Council had agreed a grant of up to £3,000 per town to support initiatives to increase footfall, develop skills, or promote the town centre to new users. The requirements of the grant were to promote the town or attraction of new visitors to the town from outside of Dorset; promotion or encouragement of use of the town centre by local residents and collaborative initiatives in which the significant proportion of businesses will participate and which seek to increase spend in local businesses, or encourage shoppers to stay longer in town centres. Projects must be concluded by March 2012.

The Town Clerk had suggested that some of the funding could be used to support the development of the new community web site. Other initiatives will be looked at and reported to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and potential projects be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

14. BRIDPORT CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

The last meeting of the Chamber was held on 11 October 2011. It was reported that at the meeting before that, the Town Surveyor had made a presentation, which was very well received, on the projects being considered for the new Town Plan.

The update was noted.

The meeting closed at 11:55 am.

The next meeting of the Market and Business Liaison Sub Committee will be held on 14 February 2012