

Minutes of York Market Traders Forum (YMTF) meeting

21st February 2023

Meeting opened at 7.15pm

**Present: -**

Kevin Tuohy

Richard Dransfield

Jana Hall

Martin Spencer

John Taylor

**Apologies received: -**

Jym Harris

Lee Boxall

Rupert Harrison

**Absent: -**

John Mannion.

**Agenda.**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Reflection on Vikings Festival
4. Reflection on St Nicholas Fair
5. Leaflets
6. Commodities and Leases
7. Grants applied for by MIY
8. Other business
9. Welcome.

Meeting opened at 7.15 on Zoom.

1. Apologies.

Apologies received from Lee Boxall, Jym Harris and Rupert Harrison

1. Vikings Festival

Martin Spencer opened the meeting. All present agreed that Vikings Festival brought customers in the market and that in overall it was a busy period. During the discussion it was agreed that comparing to Vikings Festival in previous years, there was not many events organised and this should be addressed.

1. St Nicholas Fair

Christmas Fair in Lincoln and its closing was discussed. Richard Dransfield expressed his concerns regards possibility of York`s St Nicholas Fair being next in line to get cancelled. The general concern by all attendees was public safety due to overcrowding. It was agreed that our priority is to make sure that St Nicolas Fair don`t get cancelled in York. It was mentioned that Eboracum staff walked out on their duties during the St Nicks Fair due to publics antisocial behaviour, everybody agree that one way forward could be potentially focus on different groups of the visitors such as families. The large temporary restaurant on Parliament street was a major talking point and conclusion was that York has enough pubs and eateries and to erect additional one in a place where it causes safety concerns for the public was absolutely unnecessary.

Discussion moved on possible alternatives, experiences and events that visitors and locals might like to have in York during the St Nicks Fair, such as Santa`s Grotto on Parliament, ice rink and other events more directed as entertainment rather than shopping. That would potentially bring more families into town and change the Christmas shopper dynamics. During the discussion the Christmas markets in Europe were mentioned and the striking difference between theirs and UK, as Europe concentrates on bringing on events and experiences rather than focusing on food and alcohol like it is in the UK Christmas markets. Manchester was mentioned as the worst example.

It was agreed that spreading events across the city within walls would be beneficial for everyone and would reduce the overcrowding.

Martin Spencer mentioned the local elections taking place soon and that could potentially there could come some good changes in terms on city turning to be more family orientated. John Taylor mentions Stockeld Park as great example to follow and how rammed with families that place is during the holiday seasons. There was passed message from Rupert Harrison who mentioned that some traders might express disagreement regards possible change of the targeting customer due to their own agendas and products. As example it was mentioned that intoxicated women spend more on good than families.

However, it was agreed by all attendees that something must change or there is a great possibility of York losing its St Nicolas Fair.

1. Leaflets

Kevin Tuohy passed the word onto Jana Hall by asking what is the future vision of the leaflet and its costs. who reported on the £1205 left in our account to be spent on more leaflets. Jana shared the idea of creating general type of leaflet focusing on the ranges that trader have brought this year and new food offers and create it in bright spring colours so the leaflets could last longer period of time. And possibly to add there a simple food recipe for what all the ingredients could by at the market. This initially was Natalie Kirrane`s idea last year, which was considered as very useful to use for the social media channels as well. She suggested to focus leaflet distribution within B&Bs, Air B&Bs, hotels and visitor centres rather than by the train station. Martin Spenser mentioned the INDIE meetings and said that he`d have a conversation there with locals hospitality businesses. It was mentioned that YMTF could ask MIY if their staff could distribute the leaflets or get involved any other way, Jana declined. Also it was previously suggested by Rupert to ask for more money from the CYC, but Jana mentioned that it would be better idea to spend what we have first.

There was discussion about how else the leaflet money could be spent on advertising market; John Taylor speaks about Facebook adverts and explains how that works and what are the benefits of Facebook group or business page. However, taking into consideration that application was made for creating leaflets and possible photo boot post located at the market for visitors to take selfies, the other options were currently put aside.

John suggests to open a markets group on the social media where everyone could take turns in sharing a post about the stalls on the market and what they have to offer. After discussing this Kevin proposes to have a conversation about it with MIY staff.

1. Commodities and Leases

Regards the leases, as Karen Collins from MIY have said last meeting – there could be 2 different options, separate for food court stall holders and other traders. The questions raised, such as- Are leases going to be only for the food traders or for everyone? There was a long debate regards if leases would be a good idea in general. Richard mentioned that he has spoken to Karen about it and she expresses a open mind to suggestions. Kevin Tuohy says that there is the security if given to all a 6 months licenses and that could be a good idea as alternative. It was agreed that reasonable investment would be needed in that case. It was mentioned that Lee Boxall has previously expressed his thoughts on the matter and he thinks that it would be difficult to change commodities if traders given the leases. Especially as we still have commodity issues. It was mentioned that it would make life easier if the commodity issues would get sorted and trader would have a lease, it would be easier to sell business if one wishes to do so. It was mentioned that Rupert Harrison has previously confirmed that other markets allow to do that, but take up to 50% of the profit from sale. After a long discussion it was concluded that leases would be the end of casual trading and Martin suggested to find out trader opinion on this matter before making any conclusions or decisions to bring this up with MIY. Kevin says, he will ask NMTF opinion on this.

1. Grants applied for by MIY

It was agreed that YMTF need to get updates on all the grants applications that MIY have made, eg for solar panels etc. Where do the market and traders stand in this, what bonuses there are for us? It was discussed whether market traders would be moved to Parliament Street to trade when stalls would go under thorough maintenance.

1. Other business

There was a passionate debate regards R&Rs and traders not following the rules, neither market officers implementing the rules. The main issues mentioned were such as - certain individuals packing very early and therefore blocking the view to the stalls behind, the casuals driving onto the market at as early as 7am therefore blocking the entrance and exit for the licenced traders and drivers driving in reverse on Silver street in their large vehicles. It was agreed that these issues must be brought up with MIY during the next meeting and it needs to be addressed as asap.