

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- 22/018

Committee:-	Annual Council
Date:-	18 th May 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Market Management
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for changes in the way in which markets are managed.

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to

- a) Agree the market charges set out in 3.3. below, effective from 8th June 2022
- b) Agree to remove the distinction between the general and collectors market with immediate effect.

3. Information

3.1. The Markets Sub Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee have considered how the general and collectors markets might be supported and improved but also made financially stable for the coming year. This report deals with two aspects

- Re-introducing charges for pitches and stalls
- Removing the distinction between the collectors market on a Wednesday and the general markets on a Friday and Saturday.

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3.2. The market will cost in a full year about £28,000 to provide; most of this cost is the labour involved in putting stalls up and taking them down but there is a rates liability of £4000 and other minor costs involved in the service. The Council's net budget allocation for the market is £10,000. To bridge the gap, it is necessary to re-introduce charges to traders, which were suspended at the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

3.3. It is proposed that charge be re-introduced from 8th June, which will give traders nearly three weeks notice. The suggested charge rates are, for general/collectors markets, and for speciality markets organised by KTC:-

- For a 3 x 3 metre pitch with the council providing the stall and tables - £12 plus VAT
- For a pitch where the trader provides their own rig or vehicle - £ 8 plus VAT
- For all new traders – a two week introductory free period (max 2 days trading)
- For casual traders – up to two free days each financial year

These rates are not dissimilar to those which applied before the pandemic. Where there is a speciality market organised or co-organised by KTC, regardless of venue, normal rates will apply unless it is decided otherwise by committee.

3.4. The other proposal is to remove the distinction between the Wednesday collectors market and the Friday and Saturday markets. There is some evidence that some traders will take up this opportunity and increase the number of pitches taken up. It would allow any trader to trade on any of the three market days.

3.5. At present, traders on the Wednesday market are allowed to pack up earlier in the day than on a Friday and Saturday. It is not proposed to change this arrangement for the time being; it does mean that a collectors market trader might not wish to take up stalls on a Friday or Saturday if they have to be there longer. The timings on all three days will need to be kept under review, but any change to them will need to respect the traffic order in place for High St, Gold St and Meadow Rd

3.6. There are public realm works underway at the moment in Meadow Rd which won't finish until the end of May so the current and revised Wednesday market temporarily takes place around the clock in Bakehouse Hill.

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1. Members of the markets sub committee held a consultation event with traders and other interested stakeholders in March and a consultation questionnaire was shared with market traders in April. Both trailed these proposals. Although the volume of responses to the consultation was low, there was a positive response to the proposal to remove the distinction between the Wednesday and general markets, and a recognition that some form of pitch fee was inevitable. There was no consensus about reducing the number of days the market operated on, or as to its location, with some other comments referencing the cost of parking for traders and the need for more teenage markets. (NB A teenage market will take place as part of Kettfest on 2nd July)

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

5.1. At the current rate of occupancy, pitch fees will generate about £9000 in fees in a full year, which will still not be enough to bridge the gap between the budget and the costs of managing the market. Growing the market beyond its current occupancy rate is therefore

critical to ensuring that the net costs can be kept to the £10,000 deficit allowed for in the budget.

- 5.2. A higher charge than £12 would reduce the gap still further but might start to discourage traders from attending, but clearly rates and income would need to be kept under continual review.

6. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is to have thriving market in the town centre.

Background Papers

Consultation questionnaire and responses gathered by Clerk and members
