

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor D Bushby

East Ward:

Councillor Mrs J Gubb (Town Mayor)

Councillor Mrs L Hellyer

Councillor J McKenzie (Chairman)

West Ward:

Councillor C Hawkins

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs H Blackburn (Town Clerk)

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)

Councillor P Lawrence (South Ward)

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor J Herron (North Ward – personal).

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

56. PART II CLOSED SESSION

Proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed, the meeting will be held in Part II (Closed Session).

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0)

57. MARKET COMPLEX FUTURE

Councillor Bushby expressed his concern at the decline of the Market Hall in terms of footfall and trader attraction. Simply as a trading Market he did not believe that the present model was sustainable.

He stated that Bideford West did not have a Community Hall / Performance space.

The Market Hall, once cleared, unlike the Barnstaple Market, is an attractive prospect that could be better utilised. Specialist Markets and Events can be staged.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer noted that the change in trading conditions (removal of items at cease of trading) in December 2019, the closure for major cleaning in January 2020 followed by the onset of COVID-19, impacted adversely on the trading base that had not recovered.

She concurred with Councillor Bushby recounting a recent visit to Merton highlighting that a number of the smaller communities and villages throughout Torridge did indeed have flexible / multi functioning hall facilities.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer had supported the successful School Children's Clothing Event, manning the stalls. Following discussions with Tenants, on the day, it was indicated to her that footfall at the Complex increased on the de facto Market trading days similarly the Hall was packed when the Torridge Art Group Event joined the Saturday Market.

The Clerk listed the Events that had been organised with both Tenant lead, and the Event Organiser from 20 November through to Christmas Eve. He noted that there had been strong interest for the Market Late Night Shopping Event to be held on Tuesday, 6 November 2022.

The Clerk also advised that the Events Organiser had been developing an idea for a themed Tuesday Market in the New Year with the onus on food trading and the arts.

Councillor Lawrence suggested to improve the potential of the Hall there would need to be a change to the doors.

He agreed that footfall improved on Tuesdays and Saturdays although he felt it was 50% down (over a period of six years). He also highlighted the importance of the visitor attraction indicating that 25% of his revenue is made during the six weeks of summer.

Councillor Lawrence spoke of the wider benefit of the Events organised throughout the summer, providing the opportunity for tenants to trade or be open.

Councillor Mrs Gubb noted that there had been complaints on occasion from neighbours regarding the sound levels. (Members agreed that the acoustics of the Hall did not benefit from overamplification.) She felt that the temperature of the Hall could be a limiting factor in its overall offer. Councillor Bushby noted that the Listed Building status did not allow for insulation and that the cost of the radiant heaters would not be cheap.

The Clerk advised that the Licence had been amended to allow for the screening of films. The Events Organiser had discussed screening Elf during the Christmas period but including characters and elements of the film to enhance the show.

The Clerk advised that he would be purchasing a TV Licence in the first instance to allow for the screening of World Cup Football matches.

Members indicated their desire to form a Working Group, to consider further the potential for exploiting the Market space. It was agreed to engage with the Events Organiser and convene the Group after the Meeting of Market Management Committee on 10 November 2022.

The Town Clerk felt that the Working Group would lend itself to a brainstorming session that could lead to ideas both for the day and night time economies.

#### 58. RETURN TO STANDING ORDERS

Proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the meeting returns to Standing Orders.

(Vote For: 5, Against: 0)

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Chairman thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.