

PRESENT:

North Ward

Councillor D Bushby (Chairman)

East Ward:

Councillor Mrs J Gubb (sub Councillor Mrs L Hellyer)

Councillor J McKenzie

South Ward:

Councillor S Inch (sub Councillor C Hawkins)

Councillor D Ratcliff (South Ward)

Market Tenants: Ms E Hilton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)

Mr C Farris (Development Officer)

1 x Tenant

Councillor McKenzie indicated that he was not well enough to Chair the Meeting. Members agreed to Councillor Bushby assuming the Chair for the Meeting.

107. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors C Hawkins (West Ward – personal), Mrs L Hellyer (East Ward – personal) and J Herron (North Ward – personal).

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

There were no declarations of interest.

109. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

The Tenant asked that whilst social media was being utilised to promote events could posters and banners be used also, noting that the Farmers' Market planned for this Sunday 17 April 2022 had no visual indicators around the Town.

The Development Officer provided an example of a poster / banner that would be deployed prior to the forthcoming Event. He indicated that there are many Farmers' Market around, that there is a lot of competition.

He had originally advertised for traders in January but had not met with a great response and has now a database of eighty local producers.

It was only last week that he had sufficient numbers to confirm the holding of the Event. It is, though a start; eleven traders each with two tables. He will site the banners / posters outside the Angling shop on the railings (at the top of Grenville Street), one on the main Market gates, two at Morrisons and in Appledore, Instow also.

Enquiries have been received through social media.

If the Event is regarded as a success, it will become a regular event, notwithstanding the TDC Economic Project Officer's initiative to stage Farmers' Markets / food festivals on the Bideford Quay.

The Tenant noted that the white (ceiling) areas of paint in Butcher's Row need attention.

The Chairman felt that the work could well sit in a winter project schedule for the Maintenance Team.

The Tenant asked if hanging baskets or bunting could be introduced.

The Chairman noted that hanging baskets would be deployed outside, which improves the overall appearance and that he would investigate bunting, given that the Town will be bedecked for the Platinum Jubilee Memorial.

#### 110. MINUTES

Proposed by Councillor Bushby and seconded by Councillor McKenzie, that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 3, Against:0, Abstention: 2:)

#### 111. ACCOUNTS

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie seconded, and

RESOLVED: That the lists of payments for 14 April 2022 (including 31 March 2022) be approved.

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0)

#### 112. CHAIRMAN'S / MARKET ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Clerk provided Members with a report written by the Maintenance Supervisor that provided a means of alleviating the torrential water / flood water impact upon the gutters by introducing more downpipes and spreading the (water) outflow. He indicated that the work would be carried out in house.

The Chairman led the Members in their acquiescence.

#### 113. TENANT COMMITMENT TO CORE HOURS

The Clerk had placed the item on the Agenda given that the Units in the Hall and Butcher's Row had not been fulfilling their commitment to Tuesday – Saturday trading, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm, minimum.

He reminded Members that there had been consultation / agreement to the Tenancy Agreement introduced 1 April 2021.

In mitigation, he stated the first quarter is always quiet, despite rising from the Lockdown restrictions, COVID-19 was still evident and there had been absenteeism, almost a domino effect, through illness; a number of tenants, though have maintained their commitment / attendance. He added that it had been a late Easter but visitors were now returning; not being open diluted the visitor attraction.

Members had sight of correspondence received, prior to the Meeting, from a tenant who had indicated that there was a general demoralised mood pervading through the Market. They had suggested that hours trading, and absences should be fixed to the premises and put the onus on meeting the weekly hour commitment.

Councillor Ratcliff indicated that this was a perennial problem and believed that the Committee should be disbanded and that a Market Partnership should be formed providing for the Council to step back, still responsible for building, Health and Safety, tenancies, rent but providing for the Tenants / Traders to have more input; there have been many complaints.

Discussion followed with Ms Hilton confirming that the Hall would be full, this Easter Saturday (with the Art Crafts, colouring competition, storytelling and Easter Bunny).

The Chairman felt it was a radical thought. The Development Officer believed that less than a handful of tenants provided ideas and participation beyond their respective tenancies and often did not talk to each other, let alone work together.

The Clerk indicated that investment had been made into the Development Officer role which is entering its second year. With future events, including the Committee's investment in the cinema set up: screen, film provision, comfortable chairs to bear fruition. The work taken to update the License that would provide for greater opportunity / offer.

Councillor McKenzie spoke about the Market as a trading offer against the opportunity to exploit the Market Hall as a Community building with future events planned. He felt that post COVID-19 was not sufficient time; Barnstaple Market is in a similar position. It is a poor situation. The Council continue to support the Market noting the investment in the doors and the very fabric of the building.

Ms Hilton indicated that not being open had a knock on effect; she observed that one trader will simply leave at 12.30 pm and this does encourage others to simply leave, also.

The Development Officer revisited the idea of the Workshops providing for working and trading, throughout the Tuesday to Saturday, reiterating the core hours of 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. It is simpler to market through Google / social media the core opening given the three distinct commercial levels.

Ms Hilton spoke of instances of disquiet amongst the tenants that was not altogether harmonious. She had sent out an invitation for the Tenants to attend (this evening's) Market Meeting where opinions could be expressed yet only one tenant had taken up the opportunity.

The Development Officer indicated that everyone has his (and the Clerk's) contact E mail and telephone number. Few do contact. They run their businesses although only thirty per cent do (their own) marketing.

The Market Hall is full on Saturday, which will highlight the potential, with a good commitment for the Farmers' Market on Sunday. There is continued interest in the Market as a visitor attraction and trading opportunity.

Councillor Mrs Gubb asked why, given the tenancy agreement, that tenants were not being held to account.

The Clerk intimated that with the Lockdown, the slow return in confidence of visitors, the poor first quarter visitor attendance and illness no action was taken. He explained the process within the terms of each tenants' agreement, where non-compliance with the agreed core hours, in the first instance, would trigger an advisory letter reminding the Tenant of their commitment. Should the Tenant's position not change after another month a subsequent letter containing a final warning and, after a further month, a month's notice to quit.

Ms Hilton spoke of her need to earn an income and others also yet the offer was being undermined by the non-attendees.

It was noted that the Café was not opening on a Thursday, which was now the Coach tour / operating day. Discussion followed on the Café facility, its offer and the need for it to be open on Thursdays.

The Chairman led the Members by instructing that an individual letter must be sent to all Tenants reminding them that they must adhere to the core hours. Where some tenants choose to ignore their commitment, they undermine those that are committed. He added it was too early to abandon the Development Officer initiative.

Discussion followed on the dispiriting impact of the Market Hall, on non-trading days the chasm that is presented with an empty hall, but for the Studio Units. There are areas that require lifting including the Perspex boards in the footwell adjacent to the Market Street entrance.

The Development Officer, having arranged the Farmers' Market has facilitated twelve other Events and has established what now can be done. Whilst considering other specialist markets, organising one event takes time, he would look to organise a Beer Festival and Market Memories.

With the latter he was looking at a grant funding bid application to Historical England of up to £10,000. The grant is a perfect fit, looking at working class communities' relationships with historic buildings. He spoke of how everybody has their memories of the Market and as a means to commemorate the 750 year Market Charter he was looking to reach out with oral, video and written media.

He observed that Timmy Mallett, an English TV presenter, broadcaster and artist had visited Butcher's Row recently.

#### 114. DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

The Development Officer indicated that the essence of his report had been covered in the previous item.

#### 115. TENANT / TRADER REPORT

1. Ms Hilton explained that she had worked with the Torridge Arts Crafts leader and the Market Officer to provide for the Easter Saturday Event. Thirty market stalls had been booked, including ten through the Council. It had taken two hours to mount the 200 colouring competition pictures; she would be wearing the Easter Bunny costume, that is a perfect fit.

2. Ms Hilton reiterated that Butcher's Row would benefit from a paint refresh, especially outside Units 3/4. The windows similarly are dirty, opaque and need cleaning. (The Chairman indicated that this could be addressed once the downpipes had been installed.)

She reiterated the request for bunting that could be introduced to brighten up the thoroughfare.

Ms Hilton referred to the January 2020 closure of the Hall for a deep clean in noting that the road dust does severely impact Butcher's Row.

3. Ms Hilton had been speaking to the Development Officer about naming Saturday Markets (still open to traditional traders) with a focus i.e. Art Crafts when hosting the Torridge Arts and Farmers / Food when attracting purveyors of said commodities.

4. Ms Hilton again noted that coach visitors had been heard to express disappointment that the Café facility was not open on Thursdays; people have simply turned on their heels and left.

She believed that it was self-fulfilling: without the offer there would be no customers, there would be no sustainability.

The Chairman concurred providing an example of a change of outlet ownership, had seen a variation in offer / trading times that resulted in customers choosing to go elsewhere with the resultant loss of trade. Should the Tenant not be open, given that it is the Market Café he questioned whether it could be taken on, opened by another.

He repeated his concern that the Café was not open on Thursdays and further that a coach load of visitors (to the Market) was lost.

He reiterated the need for change of commitment to sustain the visitor attraction; everyone must commit.

Councillor McKenzie made reference to the newly updated Café offer at the Tiverton Market; he spoke of consistent quality and (being) open.

Councillor Inch stated that tenants must commit to opening. He noted that the public will switch off.

The Development Officer confirmed that he has a database of potential new tenants, those that have submitted Unit enquiries.

The Chairman concluded that there must be a wholehearted commitment by the Tenants to their tenancy / core hours which has to be clear in the letter.

5. Ms Hilton indicated that there are a few tenants who do not want the Play Area. She felt, though that the colouring books needed replacing, the pencils are blunt and need attention, the Jenga must go and often the Chess pieces are abandoned and look untidy. She had spoken to the Market Officer and should like to introduce (two) bean bags / story area and train table. She believed that the facility should not be open to teens but restricted to the under fives.

The Clerk reflecting on its introduction asked Ms Hilton to provide details from which he could place orders.

#### 116. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PART II

Proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed, it is advisable, in the public interest, that the public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting; the tenants were instructed to withdraw.

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0)

#### 117. CHAIRMAN'S CONFIDENTIAL REPORT INCLUDING STAFFING MATTERS

There is a confidential minute associated with this item.

#### 118. TENANT / TRADER

There is a confidential minute associated with this item.

#### 119. 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

**BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Pannier Market Accounts as at 31 March 2022**

PV NO			ALLOCATION	VAT	NET	TOTAL
1	4	R Coombes	Petty Cash		67.50	67.50
2	2/03	T Wade	Refund cost of water overpayment		325.00	325.00
3	25/03	M Hurford	Refund of Deposit / overpayment of rent less electricity		118.09	118.09
4	25/03	TDC	Market Licence Application Fee		100.00	100.00
7	31/03	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	130.49	652.49	782.98
8	31/03	RGB	Maintenance Items	106.56	532.78	639.34
9	31/03	Jewson	Maintenance Items	8.82	44.09	52.91
10	31/03	Ashton Electrical	Replacement of immersion thermostats	61.97	309.86	371.83
11	31/03	Westward IT	Install additional access points / configure	48.00	240.00	288.00
12	31/03	J Fisher	Market cover		30.00	30.00
13	31/03	C Farris	Social Media costs (Mar 22)		30.00	30.00
14	DD	Vodafone	Line Rental (Feb 22)	4.50	22.51	27.01
15	DD	triangle	Line / Fibre Rental (Feb 22)	9.72	48.62	58.34
16	CC33	Diamond BFG Ltd	Maintenance Items	9.34	46.64	55.98
				<b>370.06</b>	<b>2,567.58</b>	<b>2,946.98</b>

**Bank Balances at 31 Mar 22 - Current Account 1,164.47**  
**Bank Balances at 31 Mar 22 - Deposit Account 44,140.67**

**Financial Year 2022/2023**

**BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Pannier Market Accounts as at 14 April 2022**

1	12/04	Devon Bahustrades	Laminate safety glass		154.00	154.00
2	19/04	Torrige District Council	Supply collection of sanitary bins	7.75	38.74	46.49
3	19/04	Torrige District Council	Business Rate 1A B Row		573.85	573.85
4	19/04	nabma	Annual subscription: 2022/23		384.00	384.00
5	19/04	RGB	Maintenance Items	78.60	393.02	471.62
6	19/04	DCS Pest Control (Cornwall) Limited	Service contract for Rats and Mice: 24 Apr - 24 Jul 22		120.00	120.00
7	19/04	Westward IT	Install PC, keyboard, mouse, monitor, FOC switch & install Wi Fi software	60.00	300.00	360.00
8	19/04	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	10.11	50.58	60.69
9	DC01	Morrisons	Cleaning Items		30.00	30.00
10	DD	Vodafone	Line Rental	4.50	22.51	27.01
11	DD	triangle	Line / Fibre Rental	9.72	48.62	58.34
				<b>170.68</b>	<b>1,961.32</b>	<b>2,132.00</b>

**Bank Balances at 12 Apr 22 - Current Account 8,103.40**  
**Bank Balances at 12 Apr 22 - Deposit Account 40,000.40**