

**Minutes of The Gravesend Borough Market Member Working Group**

**Meeting held on** Tuesday, 11 February 2020

**Present** Councillors: Shane Mochrie-Cox (Chair), Helen Ashenden, Ejaz Aslam, Harold Craske, Baljit Hayre and Tony Rana.

Officers: Anita Tysoe – Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) and Lauren Wallis – Committee Services Officer (Minutes).

No.	Item	Action by
1.	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Group</b>	
	The minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 21 January 2020 were agreed.	
2.	<b>Gravesend Borough Market Strategy 2020-2023</b>	
	<p>The Service Manager (Customer &amp; Theatre Services) advised that the changes to the Strategy had been based on the comments received at the last meeting of the Group and the main changes had been more emphasis on eating, drinking, opening times and making the Market attractive to new customer groups such as families. As a consequence, changes had been made to the first objective, the SWOT analysis and included in the actions. The Strategy also included information as a result on the research undertaken on the original Charter. Virginie Whittaker – Town Twinning &amp; Tourism Manager had worked with a historian and had produced an information sheet on the history of the market which included the Charter. The Chair requested a copy of the Charter, the original of which was held at the Kent Archives, be requested.</p> <p>The Service Manager (Customer &amp; Theatre Services) highlighted the emerging weekly themes which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Saturday fresh food market the second of which had been successful.</li> <li>• A Friday antiques and collectors market the first of which had been well received.</li> </ul> <p>Sealeys Estate agents had been advised to find permanent traders for the units mainly near the main door of the market.</p> <p>Following a question from the Chair, Members were advised that the Tourist Information Office would be moving to the other side of the market in a double unit next to The Snug and would include the introduction of a new Market Office which would be manned at key times by a GBC officer. This move would release units suitable for hot food and the new Tourist Office would be more visible and easier to walk into.</p> <p>Members were advised that it was intended to review the staffing hours of the staff who would man the Market Office as a presence would be needed at the end of the day especially if the Market was to extend it hours into the evening. The Chair requested that details of the Tourist</p>	<b>SMCTS</b>

Information and Market Office be included in the Strategy.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) advised that the actions in the Strategy set out that she would be liaising with Andy Rayfield – Communications Manager. There was no budget at present for marketing but she would investigate this possibility. Feather flags advertising the market had been located at appropriate points in the town and had proved successful and also banners across the front and back of the building had been suggested. Posters and flyers had also been distributed and three articles had appeared in the Kent Messenger. A Kent Messenger photographer had been present at the Farmer's Market last Saturday so it was hoped that another article was planned. Two articles had been included in Your Borough which was distributed to all households in the Borough.

The following ideas and opinions were expressed during discussion on this subject:

- The Farmer's Market mainly offered food that people could not buy in the town such as artisan bread, specialist cheeses, fish etc. It was hoped that a wider offering would be attracted as awareness of the market spread.
- Customers and sellers could find out about the Farmer's Market and other events via social media, Facebook, the Council's website and there had been a good response. It was noted that Cllr Rana had shared information on the Facebook page with Gravesend News and Gravesend Real News.
- In addition, GBC officers were focussing on the marketing and advertising of the market.
- Following a question on encouraging traders to take up stalls, Members were advised that in relation to the Farmer's Market, stalls were free to traders who committed to a 6 week attendance. If that commitment was adhered to, the traders would get another 6 weeks free. This offer also applied to the antiques and collectibles market on Fridays.
- It was noted that whilst the Market could hopefully provide a revenue stream for the Council, there could also be other benefits such as increasing footfall in the town centre. In addition, should the popularity of the market increase there might be scope for it to spill out onto nearby roads.
- It was noted that the planned Reef development included building on the carpark near the Market. A comment was made that the residents of the new development could be beneficial for the trade in the Market.
- Following a suggestion about a Boot Fair in the market, the officer undertook to look into this idea but was wary of the Market being in conflict with other Boot Fair events in the town centre. In addition, Boot Fairs held outside did not need Public Liability Insurance.
- The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) commented that the Go Trade funding was due to finish at the end of this year. This funding had been covering the cost of the majority of events.
- A suggestion was made about a Pancake Day event at the Market

and the officer undertook to look into it.

- The advantages for families of evening opening on Fridays and Saturdays were emphasised and the officer advised that this would form part of the review of officer hours as there would have to be a GBC presence if the Market was going to be open later in the evening.
- The officer agreed to look into the restrictions of Sunday trading laws and the effect it might have on the Market and Sunday events.
- A suggestion was made that The Gr@nd be contacted with a view to inviting them to showcase their youth groups and perhaps asking charities to showcase their work.
- It was noted that many events were already being planned by the Council and others for VE Day and the Dickens 150 celebrations.
- A question was asked about the possibility of somehow hiding the metal shutters of the stalls which were pulled down when the stall was closed for business. The officer agreed to look into this.

The Chair concluded that the market needed a consistent offer with regular markets and pop up events to build up a good reputation so residents and visitors to the Borough would know the Market was worth visiting regularly. However, expectations should be for a 21<sup>st</sup> century offering and not a 1940's or 1950's market. He noted that the middle of the market would be a good versatile space for pop up events.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) was asked to update the draft strategy to reflect the discussions and to submit the Strategy to the March 2020 meeting of the Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee.

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