

Victorian Market Stakeholders/Traders Group Meeting

Unit 15, Victorian Market
 Tuesday 14th May 2019 at 5.00pm

Present: Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie (**IM**), Cllr Janet Campbell (**CJC**), , Jo Murray (Victorian Market Manager) (**JM**), David Haas (Inverness City Area Manager – Highland Council) (**DH**), John Ewart (The Milk Bar, Victorian Market) (**JE**), Caroline MacKenzie, Inverness Souvenirs, Market Arcade, Victorian Market (**CM**), Mike Smith (Inverness BID) (**MS**), Clare Armstrong (Inverness Chamber) (**CA**), Jane Cuthbert (MCM Investments, Queensgate) (**JC**), Hilary Tolmie (Business Support – Highland Council) (**HT**)

Apologies: Provost Helen Carmichael (**HC**), Cllr Richard Laird (**RL**), Cllr Graham Ross (**GR**), Cllr Bet McAllister (**BM**), Kasia Pogodzinska (Saffron Oriental Food, Market Hall, Victorian Market) (**KP**), William Morrison (William Morrison Jewellers, Market Arcade, Victorian Market), Malcolm Fraser (Duncan Fraser Butchers, Queensgate Arcade, Victorian Market) (**MF**), (**WM** Jackie Cuddy (Eastgate Centre) (**JCE**), Colin Craig (Oil and Vinegar, Union Street) (**CC**)

Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie in the Chair

No.	Item	ACTIONS	Action
1.	Action Plan Review	<p>The main purpose of this meeting was to review and update the Action Plan that was approved in May 2017. JM and some of the other Stakeholders were not involved in the original discussions.</p> <p>On reading through the Action Plan JM has observed that the Victorian Market is now more of a Tourist Attraction than when the Action Plan was original conceived. On talking to the Traders it appears that trade is less predictable during the months out with the Tourist season.</p> <p>During the course of the meeting the following topics were discussed:</p> <p>Footfall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourists visiting the Market tend to take photographs and then leave – how can this footfall be converted into sales? • Cruise liner tourists have less time to spend browsing as they are normally on a strict itinerary. Coach trippers tend to have more time to spend. • The Market is advertised in the bedroom packs in each hotel/B&B room. • JM has previously been in contact with the Hotel Association and will contact them again. 	

- Tour Operators are promoting the Market.
- An Exhibition on the History of the Market would be interesting for the tourists as they do pay a lot of attention to the roof and to the structure.
- Advertising on route along the riverside would be helpful to tourists along with a street map featuring adverts for the various shops.
- **JM** to add a downloadable map of the City Centre to the website for visitors to download before they arrive.
- The website could also contain links to the ICA, Heritage Trail and the AR plaques.
- **JM** has obtained quotes for a Victorian Market map which she will discuss at the next Traders meeting. She will ask the traders to partly fund as the quotes are very high.
- 10% of the footfall comes from the Church Street Entrance the rest is split equally between the other entrances.
- **JM** has designed some temporary wayfinding signage within the Market listing all the units. This should help increase footfall to the Market Hall.
- It was suggested a pre-recorded tannoy message going out every so often would also help footfall through to the Market Hall.
- The more challenging aspect is attracting the locals to the Market which the current Action Plan focuses on and it should continue to do so.
- It is a fundamental target to turn the Victorian Market into a key destination for both Tourists and Locals alike and this underpins any business Plan going forward.
- **JE** suggested that people waiting at the Barbers/Hairdressers to be taken could be given a buzzer like in restaurants which would go off when it is their turn leaving them free to wander about the Market while they wait.
- Everyone is attracting a different customer at different times of the day and it is maximising this as much as we can.
- Need to be realistic about opening hours and when customers are about.

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Project & Funding

- The Stakeholders agreed it was essential that the project starts to get underway as it was 2016 when talks started.
- Key thing being the transformation of the Market Hall and stakeholders felt all resources should be committed to this.
- It is essential to have a timeline stating where we want to be at in three years'

time but it is also essential to know what can be achieved in the next six months.

- DH reaffirmed that the Members of the CIAC are committed to the development of the Market in principle and there is money set aside but a solid Business Plan must be produced before the funds can be released. A report will go to the CIAC.
- JC questioned if the redevelopment would be eligible for any funding from the Town Centre Fund – DH confirmed that this is being looked at.
- City Deal monies is not available as it will be focussing on a different area of the City.
- Specific goals need to be in the right order and it was suggested that an Aspirational Chart should be displayed to show progress and attainment of key stages.
- The Entrances are disappointing and not noticeable but JE feels it better to put resources into making the inside different so people want to come in.
- Need to have a plan for the next three years with what is achievable in the next 6 months, year etc.
- Key dates and actions need to be reviewed every meeting.
- Useful to separate the short term goals from the long term goals and the Stakeholder group should only concern themselves with the long term goals.
- Priorities are making the entrances more visible, the Market Hall and toilets.
- Need to be bold in our aspirations.

Management and Stakeholder Group

- The Traders on the Stakeholder Group feel the Market Manager is being pulled in all directions and has spent a lot of time dealing with historical issues and being distracted by the day to day running of the Market. There should be someone appointed to deal with the operational day to day problems. This would free the Market Manager to drive the projects forward.
- There is now a Project Board in place
- The Stakeholder Group is a vital part of the process.
- Linked to this is also the role of the individual business within the Market
- **IM** advised that there could be a review of the Chair and make-up of the Stakeholder Group if necessary.
- The Traders also need to be involved and have their say.
- Operational and day to day problems should be discussed at the Trader Meetings.

Tenancy Framework

- The new Tenancy Framework is now in place – **JM** to circulate
- At present the Victorian Market has an eclectic mix of tenants
- We want to impose and control the mix of businesses within the Market and **JM** has started to look at ways to create a space for a certain type of business or an natural evolution of change and the different routes we can go down. Each route will be different and take a different time to research. This will all be shared and discussed with the Stakeholders.
- The Market Hall and the Arcade are different with the Hall lending itself to food and beverage outlets and the Arcade to jewellery for example .
- Two options:
- Go direct to the Food and beverage industry or
- Market the units separately to see who comes.
- **JM** has spoken to various potential tenants who want to bring their business to the Market but due to various reasons withdraw their application.
- In a fortunate position that we are able to take a long term view and have a strategy.
- The Market Manager is an ‘Asset Developer’ and will develop the tenant mix.
- If the Market Hall was mainly food and beverages opening hours would be extended .
- Evening trade would target the locals

Other Comments

- It was questioned if the current Action Plan was still relevant and if it should have been reviewed earlier.
- **DH** felt that it is only in the last 6 months that we have been in the position to review it but from now on it will be reviewed regularly.
- The Action Plan should be reviewed at every Stakeholders Meeting.
- The Stakeholders need to step away from discussing operational matters.
- Future Meeting should have a single item agenda
- The Stakeholders have a lot experience between them and this should be utilised.
- The Action Plan will use as the basis for discussions going forward.
- If any Stakeholder has something they wish to discuss at the next meeting please let **JM** know.
- **JM** to extrapolate to some detail from the Action Plan to create a working

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		<p>document for going forward. This will show progress for each topic going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If having a single item for each meeting then it can be discussed in detail. • JM to make plan for the meeting for the next six months. • JC asked about the reality of the proposals? DH confirmed that it is hopeful that a proposal can be presented in the second half of this year that could see a big transformation. This needs to be developed with the Stakeholders and the businesses. There is a real opportunity for this to happen. The money has not been allocated by the Committee yet but the money is in the CGF to be allocated once a plan comes forward. • There are operational funds available to deal with the smaller issues and DH suggested that if anyone has any suggestions on what can be done in the short term to improve the Entrances this can be discussed at the next meeting. Other topics could include Tenancy Mix, Heritage Trail. • Need to be clear what is short term and long term. • In the short term work can be undertaken that will not be compromised by the long term works eg the stonework repairs to the Academy Street Entrance. • It was suggested that BT are selling old red telephone boxes – JM to investigate the possibility of getting one for the Market. • JM also investigating getting a post box for the Market. • JM has investigated a Floral Entrance but too expensive. • Seating is crucial but needs to fit in with the Fire Plan so not easy to implement now. • JM commended CM on how helpful she is with Tourists. <p>All the Stakeholders agreed that this was a very productive meeting and should be the way future meetings conducted. It was agreed that the meetings for the next six months be arranged and that future meetings should focus on one topic. Entrances (not Academy Street) to be discussed at the next meeting. DH and JM to bring options to improve the Entrances to the next meeting.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>JM</p> <p>JM</p> <p>DH/JM</p>
5.	AOCB	Date of the next meeting tbc	
		The meeting ended at around 7.30pm	