



Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

Date: Wednesday, 30 June 2021
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: MS Teams Virtual meeting with Outside Broadcasting

Membership: (Quorum 3 from each Authority)

Jean Dunseith, Alistair Chisholm (DTC), Janet Hewitt (DTC), Susie Hosford (DTC), Tony Lyall (DTC), Robin Potter (DTC), Dave Bolwell, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Nick Ireland, Molly Rennie (DTC), Jane Somper, Roland Tarr, John Worth, Frances Hogwood (Dorchester Town Council) and Stella Jones (DTC)

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ (Sat Nav DT1 1EE)

For more information about this agenda please telephone Democratic Services on 01305 224175 or David Northover, Democratic Services Officer d.r.northover@dorsetcc.gov.uk



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Members of the public are invited to access this meeting with the exception of any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda. **The link below will provide the means for the press and public to view proceedings on the day.**

MS Teams Outside Broadcasting Service Virtual meeting link –

https://youtu.be/Cu-NM2KMf_E

Members of the public are invited to make written representations provided that they are submitted to the Democratic Services Officer no later than **8.30am on Monday 28 June 2021**. This must include your name, together with a summary of your comments and contain no more than 450 words.

If a Councillor who is not on the Board wishes to address the Board, they will be allowed 3 minutes to do so and will be invited to speak provided that they have notified the Democratic Services Officer by **8.30am on Monday 28 June 2021**.

Please note that if you submit a representation to be read out on your behalf at the committee meeting, your name, together with a summary of your comments will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Please refer to the guide to public participation at committee meetings for general information about speaking at meetings included as part of this agenda (see agenda item 4 - Public Participation).

Recording, photographing and using social media at meetings

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At the Annual Meeting of Dorset Council on 4 May 2021 it was agreed that all council meetings that were not executive in nature, would continue to be held virtually from 7 May 2021 until such time as social distancing requirements were removed (currently scheduled to be lifted on 19 July 2021).

Where a decision was required, committee members would express a ‘minded to’ decision in respect of recommendations set out in officer reports, with decisions being taken under officer delegated authority in the light of ‘minded to’ decisions expressed by members in the virtual meetings.

Accordingly, this meeting has those arrangements in place.

AGENDA

Page No.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman for the remainder of the year 2021/22.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year 2021/22.

3 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4 MINUTES

5 - 10

To receive and **note** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registerable or personal interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

11 - 12

To receive any public questions or statements on the business of the Dorchester Market Joint Informal Panel.

7 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

13 - 18

To consider the market's financial outturn for 2020/21.

8 MARKET OPERATIONS

An opportunity to consider and discuss an update on Market Operations and what this entails.

**THE FORMAL MEETING TO BE FOLLOWED BY AN INFORMAL
AND CONFIDENTIAL PANEL SESSION ON FUTURE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR DORCHESTER MARKETS**



DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021

Present: Cllrs Jean Dunseith, Alistair Chisholm, Janet Hewitt, Susie Hosford, Tony Lyall, Robin Potter, Dave Bolwell, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Nick Ireland, Molly Rennie, Jane Somper, Roland Tarr and John Worth

Also present: Cllrs Stella Jones and Ray Bryan

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting): Adrian Stuart - Clerk to Dorchester Town Council, Graham Duggan, Bill Wilberforce and David Northover

Public Guest Speaker

Grant Jones

15. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received at the meeting.

16. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 were confirmed.

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

18. Public Participation

There was no public participation at the meeting.

19. Cornhill Market arrangements

The Panel were pleased to hear from Grant Jones – on behalf of the Cornhill market traders – about what was happening in Cornhill; how things were being done there and what his experiences – and those of other traders - were.

Given the limitations in being able to run the market as had been done prior to the pandemic, trade - in terms of sales, browsing and passing trade – had all been curtailed significantly over the recent months. Whilst this was generally understandable, every effort had continued to be made to ensure what trade possible was maintained, with social distancing rules being applied. Despite the hardships experience, there was still a keen appetite for pitches when

these became available, with up to 20 further prospective traders being known of and this was being actively pursued. A meeting between Mr Jones and officers was due to take place to discuss this and see what might be achieved. It was hoped that more pitch sites might be able to be identified if at all possible to accommodate the interest shown, but this could only be achieved if practicable.

Options for how this market – and Dorchester markets generally – could remain vibrant and viable going forward were considered and where any expansion might be able to be accommodated - i.e. the bottom of South Street near the Cenotaph, but road width constraints; the need to take account of competitive vendors in established shops and; access issues all being factors for consideration.

The Panel saw this as welcomed news and in recognising how popular the Cornhill market was hoped to see a resurgence in trade and interest when normality returned. They acknowledged there was a loyal and dedicated patronage of the stalls - having been located there as The Barrow – for numerous years – and saw no reason why his shouldn't continue to thrive into the future.

The Panel thanked Mr Jones for his valued contribution and positive approach.

20. **Finance Report**

The Panel considered the current projected outturn position for 2020/21 and were asked to agree the 2021/22 budget proposals.

What the operational issues and financial implications had been for the Dorchester Fairfield market, the Cornhill Market, the Farmer's market and the Car Boot, the reasons for this and how these had been managed were described, together with what influences there had been on the budget being presented.

The total projected expenditure was forecasted to be marginally over Budget: a potential cost of £44,118 against a budget of £41,958. The main reason behind the slight overspend was due to electricity costs, of which there was no specific budget, now being addressed as part of the proposed 2021/22 budget.

There was projected to be a significant deficit on the gross income budget. Current projections indicated potential income of £79,530, against a budget of £123,240.

At Ensor's request, and so as to better reflect current trading conditions at the Market and to assist Ensors with their cashflow, it had been agreed that the monthly on account payments received from them would be reduced from £5,000 to nil per month with immediate effect, for the remainder of 2020/21, with payments reverting to £3,000 per month from April 2021.

From proceeds gained, the sum available for distribution was forecast to be £79,530, against a net budget of £123,240 with the allocation of this being:

- Dorset Council - £46,722 (against a budget of £67,821),
- Dorchester Town Council - £25,158 (against a budget of £36,519) and
- the transfer to the Car Boot Reserve of £7,650 (against a budget of £18,900).

In particular, mention was made of the condition of Fairfield's The Linnies and its practical application. Whilst in a state of disrepair and with significant repair work required for the northern Linnies in particular, the southern ones were still regularly used on market days and for car boot sales. Although an ongoing maintenance commitment, there were seen to serve a useful purpose and contributed to the historic and cultural landscape of the market. In seeing the benefit of them, a suggestion made that they might be adapted to accommodate some artisan craftwork i.e. pottery workshop or the like, was taken on board by officers in any discussion they had with Ensors in addressing the practicalities of maintaining these features for such purpose.

Whilst not being listed, as they were in the Conservation Area, how they were managed would need to be addressed in that context, with consent being necessary for any alterations. The Panel asked that they be provided with a report – following discussions with Ensor's – over how The Linnies might be best managed going forward and what considerations needed to be taken into account in doing so.

What was happening with town centre retail and custom and significant changes to retail habits accounted for much that was being seen with the finances, as well as the part the pandemic was playing in the ability to operate the markets as beforehand and the consequent reduction in footfall.

Whilst disappointing, the Panel recognised, and accepted, the reasons for this and the bearing this had on the budget.

Resolved

That the current projected outturn position for 2020/21 be noted and the 2021/22 budget proposals be agreed.

Reason for decision

The need for a budget for 2021/22 to be agreed.

21. Appointments to Car Boot Fund Panel

The Panel made appointments to the Car Boot Fund Panel in its role as providing the means for assessing and allocating proceeds to successful applicants. Officers provided a brief understand of how this Fund was managed and explained that the composition of the Panel had historically been two members each from both authorities i.e. these being the Chairman/

Mayor and Vice Chairman/ Deputy Mayor. On the basis that this Panel might benefit from a more local representation it was agreed

Resolved

That Dorchester Town Councillors Molly Rennie and Susie Hosford and Dorset Councillor John Worth be appointed to the Panel for the ensuing year.

22. Administration of the Panel

The Panel were updated on the provision of how, and by whom, the Panel was to be administrated going forward and noted that discussion was still on going in that respect – particularly in terms of legal responsibilities and commitment - with a recommended outcome on options being presented to the Town Council in the first instance as soon as practicable.

23. The future of Dorchester Markets

The Panel considered what options there were for the future of Dorchester markets - in terms of trading activities; locations; popularity and footfall; access; legal and contractual commitments and obligations; and cultural and social community considerations - with a report from the Town Clerk facilitating this discussion and the panels understanding.

The fundamentals of the market – its purpose, its heritage and its legacy – and what it had to offer to the town in terms of economic, social and civic benefits together with how it had been managed, how it was being managed and what visions there were for its future, were all considerations.

As a market town, of the County Town, it was something of which to be rightly proud and was considered an asset in providing an opportunity for traders, a boost for the local economy and was a business seedbed. The Panel understood they all played their part in attracting footfall locally and from visitors afar and acted as a means of social service - providing value for money goods that were not necessarily able to be sourced by other means. It was community focused, vibrant and stimulated local contact, being adaptable in reflecting changing needs and trends.

The Panel appreciated having the opportunity to be able to review of issues considering that, as well as the economic benefits to be gained, the social and welfare benefits of the market were of considerable value too. Whatever options were available, it was accepted that the markets should be invigorated so as to provide something unique and relevant to the customer of today, to meet their expectations - were that be more street food outlets, demonstrations or heritage exhibitions.

This would go a long way to ensuring their viability was maintained and gave a valid reason for people to continue to visit it in the numbers previously seen. It was accepted that the pandemic had seriously affected what could be done in the recent past, but they saw no reason why this trend couldn't be reversed going forward.

Consideration would be given to the differing scenarios and various options with regard to trade, performance and management of the different market entities, in identifying and assessing how this could be best achieved so as to serve as some basis for how the markets could operate successfully going forward.

The Panel acknowledged the benefits of what the markets brought to Dorchester and what they each had to offer in their own way, not only as an entity – as a means of trading goods, services and produce which might not otherwise be readily accessible directly between suppliers and public - but their wider value and contribution too, in attracting visitors to the town and as a social and community asset. Moreover, in being an historic market town, the essence of maintaining a viable and successful market was critical to the fabric and vitality of Dorchester.

Issues for consideration would be how the markets operated; how they could best adapt to meet the needs of today's consumer; what the means of doing this would be; what arrangements were necessary to achieve this; what rental, licencing and contractual arrangements were necessary to secure their continuation; and how they could improve their efficiency to ensure viability was maintained.

Most importantly the Panel wanted to see them successful and continue contributing to the economy of the town and be seen as a social and community asset for years to come and there was a considerable will to see these valued assets succeed.

It was considered that with the backdrop of the pandemic, now was the right time to reassess and re calibrate what was being done and the process for doing it. Whilst the principles on what to do, how to do it and, where it should be done were accepted, it was recognised that there was a need for any further detailed discussion at this stage should be held by a Working Group in confidential session so that finances and commercial contract arrangements could be discussed, whilst respecting the sensitivities of this. This would allow Members to increase their understanding of the current position and to express a view on which of the options for managing the market should be examined in more detail. This, in turn, would allow officers to gather evidence to answer Member questions and develop options that might be considered more formally at a future meeting. It would also allow a more detailed proposal to be discussed when Dorset Council commenced its Asset Review programme.

An assurance was given that whatever options were considered, there would be a need for this to go through a formal decision process – in a public forum setting – with no decisions being taken discretely. For now, those options would be considered and assessed, with any recommendations being then formally considered by both the Town Council and Dorset Council before any implementation was considered.

Resolved

That the future of the Dorchester markets be noted and the principles behind what was trying to be achieved accepted with any Working Group consideration and assessment of options being formally recommended to Dorchester Town Council and Dorset Council for their consideration and, as necessary, implementation.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the transparent governance of the assessment and decision making process.

24. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items for consideration at the meeting.

25. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 30 June 2021.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.10 pm

Chairman

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Dorset Council

Covid-10 Pandemic – Addendum to the Guide to Public Speaking Protocol for Planning Committee meetings – effective from 29 July 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the council has had to put in place measures to enable the council's decision making processes to continue whilst keeping safe members of the public, councillors and council staff in accordance with the Government's guidance on social distancing by applying new regulations for holding committee meetings from remote locations.

The following procedures will apply to planning committee meetings until further notice, replacing where appropriate the relevant sections of the Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committees:

1. While planning committee meetings are held remotely during the Coronavirus outbreak public participation will take the form of written statements (and not public speaking) to the Committee.

2. If you wish to make a written statement it must be no more than 450 words with no attached documents and be sent to the Democratic Services Team by 8.30am, two working days prior to the date of the Committee – **i.e. for a committee meeting on a Wednesday, written statements must be received by 8.30am on the Monday**. The deadline date and the email contact details of the relevant democratic services officer can be found on the front page of the Committee agenda. The agendas for each meeting can be found on the Dorset Council website:-

<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

3. During this period the council can only accept written statements via email and you should continue to bear in mind the guidance in the public speaking guide when preparing your representation.

4. The first three statements received from members of the public for and against the application (maximum six in total) will be read out together with any statement from the town and parish council, by an officer (but not the case officer), after the case officer has presented their report and before the application is debated by members of the Committee. It may be that not all of your statement will be read out if the same point has been made by another statement and already read to the Committee. This is to align with the pre-Covid-19 protocol which limited public speaking to 15 minutes per item, although the Chairman of the Committee will retain discretion over this time period as she/he sees fit. All statements received will be circulated to the Committee members before the meeting.

5. This addendum applies to members of public (whether objecting or supporting an application), town and parish councils, planning agents and applicants. **The first three statements received from members of the public, for and against the application, (maximum six in total) will be read out, together with any statement from the Town and Parish Council, in its own right.**

6. Councillors who are not on the Planning Committee may also address the Committee for up to 3 minutes by speaking to the Committee (rather than submitting a written statement). They need to inform Democratic Services of their wish to speak at the meeting two working days before the meeting – by the 8.30 am deadline above - so those arrangements can be put in place.

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Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel 30th June 2021 Financial Outturn Report 2020/21

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Haynes, Customer and Community Services

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Kevin Evans

Title: Senior Accountant

Tel: 01305 225188

Email: kevin.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Head of Community and Public Protection (Dorset Council), in consultation with the Town Clerk (Dorchester Town Council) and with support from the Property and Finance Divisions of Dorset Council, be authorised to agree a reduced fee for the years 2020/21 and 2021/22 with the operators of the Cornhill Market.

That members of the panel approve the income and expenditure statement for 2020/21.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable Members of the Panel to consider and approve the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021.

1. Executive Summary

Markets in Dorchester have operated since Anglo Saxon times, and are prescriptive. Under an agreement dated 1984 the markets are managed by Dorset Council for the benefit of Dorset Council and Dorchester Town Council with operational oversight carried out by the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel. The Markets income and expenditure is held within the accounts of Dorset Council. The Panel receives a report on the annual budget and the annual outturn.

2. Financial Implications

As detailed in the report.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

None.

4. Climate implications

None.

5. Other Implications

None.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW as the fall in income was anticipated.

Residual Risk: MEDIUM as there could be a further loss of income.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

None.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Outturn 2020/21.

9. Background Papers

Financial statements from the Market Operator (Ensors).

1. Budget 2020/21

1.1 The Panel agreed a budget for 2020/21 at a meeting on 29th January 2020. The expenditure budget was set at £41,958, with the income budget at £165,198, leaving a budgeted surplus for distribution of £123,240.

2. Outturn 2020/21

2.1 Actual expenditure incurred during 2020/21 totalled £40,654, against a budget of £41,958, giving an underspend of £1,304. This was mainly due to an insurance rebate of £1,877 (wall damage) and lower than budgeted costs against the Market toilets budget.

- 2.2 Included in the £41,958 total expenditure budget was a line for Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) with a budget of £19,600. This line had a nil variance in 2020/21. Actual R&M expenditure incurred was £15,011, with the balance of £4,589 being transferred into the Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve.
- 2.3 The total income accounted for during 2020/21 was £87,303 against a budget of £165,198, leaving a significant income deficit of £77,895. The main underlying reason for this shortfall is the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in particular the effects of the numerous lockdowns & restrictions imposed during 2020/21. The total deficit also includes a £4,800 Bad Debt Provision relating to the unpaid Farmers Market Licence Fees from 2018/19 & 2019/20.
- 2.4 Within the overall £77,895 income deficit was a shortfall of £39,672 from the Market Operators contract (Ensors). Income from both the Market and Sunday Car Boot was particularly suppressed during Spring 2020 and January-March 2021, when nationally imposed restrictions, due to Covid-19, prevented the normal operation of the Market activities.
- 2.5 For 2020/21, there was a 50% reduction in the budgeted income contribution of £47,824 in relation to Fairfield Car Park income. Again, this was due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.
- 2.6 At present there is a significant debt outstanding relating to Cornhill Market. Preliminary discussions with the operators have identified that the operator was unable to operate the market for significant parts of 2020/21 and that much of this debt will therefore not be recoverable. The operator has also highlighted that there is significant risk that they will not be able to make payments during 2021/22 due to the impact of the pandemic on local retail and footfall. The market did not qualify for support under the Government's various grant packages. A recommendation is included that a reduced fee is negotiated with the operator. It would be prudent to assume no further income from this source until negotiations have been concluded.
- 2.7 The final net surplus for distribution in 2020/21 was £46,649 against a budget of £123,240, a shortfall of £76,591. The distribution of this is as follows....
- £5,095 to the Sunday Car Boot Reserve (against a budget of £18,900)

- £27,010 to Dorset Council (against a budget of £67,821)
- £14,544 to Dorchester Town Council (against a budget of £36,519)

3. Reserves Position 2020/21

- 3.1 The balance carried forward on the Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve, as at 31/03/2021, is £27,654. This is comprised of an opening balance of £23,065, plus the unspent R&M 2020/21 budget of £4,589.
- 3.2 The balance carried forward on the Sunday Car Boot Earmarked Reserve, as at 31/03/2021, is £15,625. The Covid-19 pandemic significantly suppressed Car Boot income during 2020/21, in turn reducing the reserve transfer to £5,095. There was a draw down in advance made during the year of £10,444 to fund grant awards during 2020/21, so there was a net decrease in the reserve of £5,349. This reserve is used for community awards.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

	(A) Budget 2020/21 (£)	(B) Outturn 2020/21 (£)	(C) Variance (£)
EXPENDITURE			
Premises			
Repairs and maintenance	19,600	19,600	0
Electricity	0	2,836	-2,836
Water	0	292	-292
Insurance	2,200	-998	3,198
Grounds Services	0	0	0
2/7 share of actual costs of toilets	2,200	808	1,392
	24,000	22,538	1,462
Supplies and Services			
Subscriptions	636	716	-80
Security Costs	0	77	-77
	636	793	-157
Recharges			
Dorset Council	15,634	15,634	0
Dorchester Town Council	1,688	1,689	-1
	17,322	17,323	-1
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	41,958	40,654	1,304
INCOME			
Rents			
Market Operator Contract	-48,000	-23,667	-24,333
Car Boot	-21,000	-5,661	-15,339
Cornhill Traders	-25,974	-25,974	0
Rents- Corn Market and Cafe	-21,150	-10,823	-10,328
Farmers Market	-750	4,800	-5,550
Rival Market Fee	-500	0	-500
Recovered Costs	0	-2,066	2,066
Fairfield Car Park	-47,824	-23,912	-23,912
TOTAL INCOME	-165,198	-87,303	-77,895
SURPLUS	-123,240	-46,649	-76,591
DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS			
Sunday Car Boot Reserve	18,900	5,095	-13,805
Dorset Council	67,821	27,010	-40,811
Dorchester Town Council	36,519	14,544	-21,975
	123,240	46,649	-76,591
Market Maintenance Earmarked Reserve			
Balance b/f 01.04.2020	23,065		
Transactions 2020/21	4,589		
Balance c/f 31.03.2021	27,654		

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