



Devizes Town Council

www.devizes-tc.gov.uk

RECREATION AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 9th November 2021

Time: Immediately following Planning Committee

Place: Ceres Hall, The Corn Exchange, Market Place

Enquiries: 01380 723333

The Town Mayor: Councillor Gay

Chairman: Councillor Giraud-Saunders

Councillors:	Britten	Corbett	Giraud-Saunders
	Greenwood	Ormerod	Rose
	Stevens	Wallis	Wooldridge
	Pennington	Brown	

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2021 and which have been circulated alongside the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business.

5. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – MARKETING UPDATE

The new Events and Marketing Administrator has now settled into the role and has come up to speed with the administrative software, handling bookings and building up marketing goals.

Since the end of lockdowns and pandemic-incurred restrictions, there has been a marked increase in the bookings made within both the Town Hall and The Corn Exchange. This includes a return of bookings that had to be cancelled as a result of the pandemic. It is becoming clear that customers and clients are now seeking venues to host events in again, but want reassurance that the most up to date guidelines are in place. At all times the Venues department have been following the most up-to-date information provided by the Government.

Since the restrictions have lifted, there has been an increase in bookings of private and celebratory events such as weddings, birthdays and wakes as well as corporate AGMs and corporate celebrations. There has also been a steady flow of repeat bookings from corporate and business channels, including the NHS using the Ceres Hall for Covid Vaccinations.

The Events and Marketing Administrator has drafted a Marketing Plan ([doc 5/1-11](#)) that identifies the Venues' current successes and areas for improvements. Outlined in the Plan are specific initiatives that aim to market the venues and broaden the client base.

Key tools to be utilised are the Devizes Venues' social media pages, creating an easily accessible online platform to encourage new potential clients to make enquiries with regards to venue hire.

Customer feedback is now being regularly requested, through the use of direct requests for feedback being sent to clients once their event has taken place.

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES BOOKING TRENDS

The Events and Marketing Administrator has been studying booking trends over the past year (2021) to discover which events are most enquired after and booked. Data pulled from the booking software, Events500, indicated that meetings are significantly the most common source of enquiries and bookings. Following this, the most common other types of booking are for training purposes.

With regards to celebratory events, the most common types of booking are private functions (i.e. birthday parties, AGM celebrations etc.), which is on a par with wedding ceremonies and receptions. After this, luncheons are the most common type of booking, then wedding ceremonies are the next most common, followed by wedding receptions. Out of the wedding bookings, this indicates that wedding ceremony and reception bookings are the most common.

Research is to be undertaken to establish which venue, the Town Hall or the Ceres Hall, is the most sought-after meeting space. In addition to this, direct communications with clients are going to be established to ascertain why our venues have been chosen for the particular meetings they have been booked for.

Concert bookings have also been increasing; these types of bookings are to be actively pursued, driving towards making greater use of The Ceres Hall as these types of events are very cost effective when considering staffing levels. The Events and Marketing Administrator, with guidance from the Venues Manager, will devise a strategy to market the Ceres Hall as a major concert venue within Wiltshire.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – MARKET MANAGER’S REPORT.

Market Place Activities

The Market continues to do well, supplying quality produce in a friendly atmosphere to the local community and further afield. Footfall looks to be back to the pre-covid times and traders have noticed the continued public support for our quality market over the last 20 months. Attached to this agenda are occupancy rates for each of the Town Council run market areas ([Doc 7/1](#))

We have continued to support the local Police by having the Bobby Van situated on the market, promoting crime prevention and becoming an information point to ask questions of their service. We have also supported the Lawrence Society by providing them with space in the market to demonstrate painting with oils and water colours, adding a bit of theatre to the market; and Wiltshire Air Ambulance week, permitting them to have a gazebo and vehicle on-site to raise awareness of their very worthy cause.

Market Place Europe attended Devizes again this year, once in July and again in October with a 3-day continental market. The weather was not

RECREATION & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

9th November 2021

kind to them this year, both events saw unusual amounts of wind and rain with a petrol crisis during the October event too, but they still came and delivered an event for the town.

Devizes Food and Drink Festival in September was another great success, blessed with amazing weather, and quality traders saw the visitor numbers for the event go back to pre-covid figures.

For next year we are starting to look at attracting non-market events, such as a car show to act as a draw for the town centre, reinforcing the message that Devizes is a great place to visit

Market Place Communal Seating Area

As previously reported the communal seating area has been a success, with visitors and members of the community using the facility. As we move into winter and in line with the Council's decision, the original 6 benches have been reduced to 3 and a local company has been approached to supply the Council with three new benches to replace the ones on hire.

The Shambles – Market Hall

The upper end units continue to benefit from 100% occupancy in the Shambles, with one unit changing hands. One trader has given up one of his units and this was very quickly taken by Angela Cave who also rents a space in the Saturday Shambles Market. Angela will be an asset to the 5-day a week Shambles - her stall is very colourful and she is knowledgeable about her products of Indian silk scarves and throws.

Thursday Markets in the Shambles have done very well and held their own since the reopening following the enforced close down. ([Doc 7/1](#)). For the Town Council-run Thursday and Saturday markets, all 13 lower end spaces have been booked for every week leading up to Christmas. On the other days of the week, the Shambles continues to be hired out by specialist markets for which the Council takes a flat fee.

On Town Council-run indoor market days, where we have not fully let all the lower end spaces, the building continues to support charities including Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Wiltshire Wildlife Society by giving them a free trading space to collect for their good causes.

For a while now the Shambles has been able to support Wiltshire CIL, as the hirer of the Shambles on a Friday has been happy to give them regular free space to create a "living room" area where people from the community can come and talk with somebody about any issue, and not feel so isolated after the pandemic. It is hoped this will continue, but it is likely it will change to a Wednesday.

Devizes Farmers and Artisan Market

In October the Town Council took over the running of the traditional Farmers Market on the first Saturday in the month, with the launch of an Artisan Market alongside it. It is hoped that we will continue to build the market bigger and better by increasing the variety of stalls selling locally produced goods. The winter months are not the ideal time to launch a market, with inclement weather and dark mornings, but we have a core number of 6-8 traders and the intention is to extend this in the spring.

It is noted that the Council has an aspiration to further increase the number of Markets and whilst over time this will be possible, it has been understood that there are significant challenges in doing this. There are already established markets in the area on most days and particularly Saturdays; therefore, to establish a core of regular professional traders will not be easy and will require plenty of incentives which will negate a significant rise in income in the short to medium term for the service.

NABMA Conference Oct 2021

The National Association of British Market Authorities, of which Devizes Town Council is a member, is an organisation that has been established for 100 years. In early October it held its annual conference in Stratford-upon-Avon, consisting of guest speakers and an award ceremony at the end.

The presentations were from market managers, business professionals and Simon Baynes MP, Chairman of the recently formed All Party Parliamentary Markets Group. Simon Baynes was very positive about the future of markets, and stated – later repeating on his Twitter account @Baynes_simon tells #NABMAConf - *“markets can be a model for how High Streets go forward in the future”*

Ojay McDonald CEO of the Association of Town Centre Managers, the membership body that supports and represents the town and city management industry across the UK and Ireland, gave a presentation that went on to say that retail is changing and that we should be engaging with a younger audience. “73% of 4-year-olds own a tablet device” and the “pace of change will accelerate” and therefore as they grow up, they will engage with town centres in a different way.

Karen Bates, Market Manager for Chester Borough Council, is clear that market authorities need to be investing in the future. Chester Market is building a new market scheduled to open in 2022, and their plan is to provide a greater food offer to complement other market products and to develop a communal seating area, adding a further incentive to visit the market and increase dwell time.

In general, what I took from the Conference was that those markets which have been forward thinking and bold in their decision making have gone from strength to strength and seen a renaissance in younger shoppers.

There were several awards given out on the evening for: Best Markets Team, Best Market Champion, Best Market Manager to mention a few. NABMA awarded The Best Market Manager to the Devizes Town Centre Manager “for his dedication to markets, whilst keeping outdoor markets open throughout the pandemic.”

I will continue to do my very best for the town in building, enhancing and delivering quality markets.

8. REPORT FOR DECISION – PARK CAFÉ PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

Recommendation

That the committee considers the current Café performance information and decides if the Venues working party should work with officers to review this performance and future options.

Purpose of the Report

For the committee to review current Café performance and put in place a mechanism for future scrutiny of the café purpose and options.

Background

Since the last report the Café has open fully, with customers now accessing the building so that they can enjoy its services both within the Café and to take away.

Income for the initial six months of 2021/22 was £30,810 with a Net profit after costs, including direct payroll costs of £94. This is compared to income of £18,671 with a Net loss of £546 in the initial six months of 2020/21. Members are reminded that the Café was closed during the 6-week period from 1 April 2020 with the resultant impact on sales and payroll costs.

Gross profit percentage has increased significantly during June, July and August which Officers believe is due to a higher ratio of selling high margin goods in these three months than in April, May and September.

Events normally provided to support the usage of Hillworth Park and as a consequence of the Park Café, have been severely impacted by Coronavirus and ongoing government guidelines relating to numbers. The twilight screening of The Greatest Showman went ahead on Saturday the 4th of September 2021, generating income of £4,412 and costs of £3,728.

Doc [\(8/1\)](#) shows the most recent income and expenditure figures for the Café.

With a change of staffing in the Café, we have seen further efficiencies with a review of stock items to further lower wastage, but at previous meetings there has been support for a member review of the Café. As many of the changes have now had an opportunity to be settled in, officers agree that the time is now right to review if further changes can be made to increase Café trade and what the purpose of a Café in the park is.

Officers would recommend that should the committee be minded to look at the Café operation in more detail, this is done through the Venues Working Party as the Café operation comes under the Venues department's responsibility.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if it wishes the Venues working party to review with officers the Café operation and performance.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Up to date financial and resource information is contained within this report.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

**9. EXEMPT REPORT FOR INFORMATION – RELATING TO
COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES**

10. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Chairman for councillors to ask questions on matters which are not on the current agenda but which are related to matters which have been previously discussed on an agenda relevant to the committee.

At least 24 hours' notice must be given to officers of the intended question. All other matters should be raised on an agenda and the request should be submitted through the Town Clerk.


TOWN CLERK

RECREATION & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE
9th November 2021

Number of Pitches 13 16 13 25
Market Occupancies 2021/22

The Thursday of the Count week	Thursday Lower End Stalls		Weekly Upper Units		Saturdays Lower End Stalls		Thursday Outside Market	
	01/04/2021	4	31%	16	100%	0	0%	18
08/04/2021	4	31%	16	100%	0	0%	16	64%
15/04/2021	10	77%	16	100%	12	92%	23	92%
22/04/2021	10	77%	16	100%	13	100%	22	88%
29/04/2021	11	85%	16	100%	13	100%	22	88%
06/05/2021	11	85%	16	100%	11	85%	21	84%
13/05/2021	5	38%	16	100%	11	85%	23	92%
20/05/2021	5	38%	16	100%	13	100%	24	96%
27/05/2021	8	62%	16	100%	13	100%	25	100%
03/06/2021	10	77%	16	100%	10	77%	23	92%
10/06/2021	9	69%	16	100%	9	69%	25	100%
17/06/2021	11	85%	16	100%	10	77%	24	96%
24/06/2021	8	62%	16	100%	11	85%	24	96%
01/07/2021	9	69%	16	100%	11	85%	24	96%
08/07/2021	9	69%	16	100%	10	77%	22	88%
15/07/2021	9	69%	16	100%	11	85%	24	96%
22/07/2021	8	62%	16	100%	11	85%	23	92%
29/07/2021	7	54%	16	100%	13	100%	24	96%
05/08/2021	8	62%	16	100%	8	62%	21	84%
12/08/2021	6	46%	16	100%	9	69%	23	92%
19/08/2021	6	46%	16	100%	13	100%	21	84%
26/08/2021	9	69%	16	100%	12	92%	22	88%
02/09/2021	9	69%	16	100%	10	77%	24	96%
09/09/2021	8	62%	16	100%	10	77%	22	88%
16/09/2021	12	92%	16	100%	11	85%	21	84%
23/09/2021	11	85%	16	100%	11	85%	22	88%
30/09/2021	8	62%	16	100%	11	85%	20	80%
07/10/2021	10	77%	15	94%	12	92%	22	88%
14/10/2021	11	85%	16	100%	11	85%	21	84%
21/10/2021	11	85%	16	100%	13	100%	20	80%
28/10/2021	10	77%	16	100%		0%		0%
04/11/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
11/11/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
18/11/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
25/11/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
02/12/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
09/12/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
16/12/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
23/12/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
30/12/2021		0%		0%		0%		0%
06/01/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
13/01/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
20/01/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
27/01/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
03/02/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
10/02/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
17/02/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
24/02/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
03/03/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
10/03/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
17/03/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
24/03/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%
31/03/2022		0%		0%		0%		0%

Weeks less covid	29						
Average		68.7%		99.8%		83.0%	87.2%

Doc 8/1

PARK CAFE 2021/22

	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
ACTUAL INCOME	6177	3004	3950	4268	8752	4659	0	0	0	0	0	0	30810
CINEMA INCOME	0	0	0	0	0	4412	0	0	0	0	0	0	4412
BUDGETED INCOME	3402	3591	3591	5141	6124	3667	2986	1436	1134	1550	2797	2382	37800
SPECIFIC PURCHASES	2400	1178	1270	1843	2529	2057	0	0	0	0	0	0	11277
CINEMA EXPENDITURE	0	0	0	0	0	3728	0	0	0	0	0	0	3728
CONSUMABLES	407	228	0	239	130	177	0	0	0	0	0	0	1181
STOCKTAKE +/-	68	31	-74	-380	-94	-142	0	0	0	0	0	0	-590
GROSS PROFIT	3302 53.5%	1567 52.2%	2754 69.7%	2566 60.1%	6187 70.7%	3250 69.8%	0 0.0%	19626 63.7%					
UTILITIES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHIP & PIN	100	54	68	74	150	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	498
BT	42	42	42	42	42	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	252
MISC	764	0	74	40	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	942
PAYROLL *	2815	2822	3164	2694	2379	3281	0	0	0	0	0	0	17155
	-419	-1351	-595	-284	3552	-125	0	0	0	0	0	0	778

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