

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Market Committee meeting held on Monday 25th June 2007 in the Assembly Rooms, Swaffham.

Present: Cllr S. Matthews (in the Chair)

Councillors:- D. Butters, P. Darby, D. Harman, T. Jennison, S Lister,
F. Sharpe, I. Sherwood, D. Wickerson.

Market Representatives:- Mr D Hackett, Mr C. Smith
Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop
Deputy Clerk: Mrs M Meyrick
Market Superintendent: Mr I Livesey

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1. Cllr P. Wade and Mr M. Whitehair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MARKET MEETING

3.1. The minutes of the Annual Market Committee Meeting of the 28th June 2006 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

3.2. The minutes of the Market Committee Meeting of the 30th June 2006 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. TOWN CLERKS ANNUAL REPORT

4.1. There are four long standing bills amounting to £561.34 which will be taken through the County Court process, unfortunately there is no guarantee of success. There was an account mentioned this time last year, now there are two more. The Town Clerk assured the Committee will be given priority in the coming weeks as the correct message needs to be sent out to some traders who have for whatever reason decided to walk away from their pitch leaving a debt to pay. There is still a debt from the French Market waste clearance back in October, which will continued to be pursued. There was a discussion on how the Council can receive payment from the French Market organisers Marché de France. It was thought there would be difficulty as the company was a French based company and the UK court system has no jurisdiction in France.

4.2. Overall due to the success of the incentive scheme introduced a few years back the long term debt has been reduced to 25% of what it was three years ago. In general most of the traders pay on time or well in advance and enjoy the rewards that this now brings. Swaffham's Market fees are reasonable compared with other local markets. The income for the first time in three years has increased, although, taking into account RPI increases in site rent the income in real terms has only just kept pace with inflation.

4.3. The Farmers Market has been put on hold for the time being as it struggled from day one on the first Wednesday each month. The Mayor and the Town Clerk recently attended a meeting of Norfolk's Larger Councils in Wymondham. There was a very interesting talk by a Councillor involved in the running of a successful Farmer's Market who has run the farmers market for the past seven years. This is something that will be discussed with the Market Superintendent and the Market Committee in the coming

months. The representatives from Wymondham would gladly come to talk to the Market Committee as it is believed that Swaffham could learn from their experience.

4.4. The market still needs to fill gaps to survive and perhaps the biggest gap is that of the auction which finished at the end of April. Enquiries have been received including one from a well known local man Peter Wing who offered to take on the Auction for six months free of rent. Nothing has been followed up in writing as the view of the Committee needed to be sought before taking this enquiry any further. Money has been spent on advertising, but again this has not been productive.

The issue of the auction was discussed at length. It was felt that the auction was one of the main attractions to bring people to Swaffham market that made it different from all other markets in the area. Some trader's takings have been cut by 30%-40% since the auction had ceased. There followed a lengthy discussion. Cllr Sherwood proposed and Cllr Sharpe seconded to place an advert in the local press advertising for an experienced auctioneer at 3 months free rent.

It was unanimously agreed to advertise in the local press for an experienced auctioneer to come to Swaffham with an incentive of 3 months free rent but with the stipulation of a 6 month commitment.

4.5. There is not much wrong with the Market policy, but this is a crucial period from now until Christmas. The Committee will need to come up with ideas just to sustain the Market at its current level. The Committee will have to be innovative if numbers are to be increased to what they were even five years ago.

5. MARKET SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Once again the past year has been a very interesting to say the least, keeping the market as full as possible has been somewhat of a challenge at times. It's a lot harder to manage now than when there were no spaces available. The market has 19 empty spaces at the moment and is still proving very difficult to fill the gaps. The inquiries are few and far between, in saying that we have 3 or 4 new traders applying for licences. House names in marble, home made cakes etc, a new bag stall which is 30ft to replace Mr Mel Truman who unfortunately died suddenly. The Town Council sent flowers and the Superintendent attended the funeral on behalf of the Council.

We are still having problems with a stall outside Woolworths. The trader has not answered the letters that were sent to him regarding where his van is parked and the issue of customers having to use the church walk to buy from his stall. He also appears to have someone else running the stall but we have not been informed who he is as stated in the market rules. It is usually an indication that the stall is going to change hands which is not allowed as he has not been a licensed trader for 5 years.

The trader on ES 5 has been given notice by the council as he has not paid his rent since April even though he was given several opportunities to do so. Unfortunately the auction is no longer going and we have not as yet been able to find anyone willing to take it on. The Market Superintendent has spoken to Steven Roberts and M & C auctions who both said they were very interested but due to their commitments with other auctions they did not have the time needed to run one at Swaffham. Options that have been put to the superintendent are as follows: -

- Farmers market
- 2. Car boot sale
- 3. Move the remaining stalls nearer to the main market and close the gap which has been left by the auction.

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Mr Warth has requested to move sites because rain drives directly into his stall and also he has complained that the vegetable stall drives away his customers because he shouts his wares? There have been two new licences issued one for Wissey Valley foods which sells home made cakes pies etc. and one for a trader who sells house names etc in marble as well as fireplaces.

The olive stall has been asked to move to accommodate a new bag stall which is 30ft long and with a trailer. An inquiry has been received for a vinyl & carpet remnant stall to come on the market. The superintendent has asked the existing rug stall if he had any objections to this which he did as he sells remnants to be made into rugs. The superintendent failed to see how this would affect him as he does not sell lengths of carpet only rugs. Mr Charlie Smith CE 29 is willing to stand for market representative. An area of concern is that traders are not turning up if there is a slight chance of rain, this makes the market look empty.

6. ELECTION OF TRADERS REPRESENTATIVES

6.1. The election of Market representatives took place. Mr Dave Hackett and Mr Mark Whitehair were re-nominated and Mr Charlie Smith was nominated to take a place on the Market Committee.

It was unanimously agreed for Mr Dave Hackett, Mr Charlie Smith and Mr Mark Whitehair to be Market Representatives on the Market Committee for 2007/08.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1. A letter has been received from Mr T. Warner who had a market pitch on the Swaffham Market. It was regarding the termination of his license and a query regarding an outstanding payment for his pitch. A letter of termination was not received until the 25th June and a trader has to give 1 months notice, this is within the rules and regulations of the market. All traders have been given an updated copy of this. A discussion followed.

It was agreed to charge Mr Warner the full amount with 1 months notice from the date of the letter received.

8. OPEN FORUM

8.1. The downturn in the market was discussed and the possible causes. The regeneration of Swaffham didn't help as this caused a lot of disruption not only for the traders but also shoppers as well. In the past a market stall would be a family business but that is not the case now, there are no youngsters coming into the market trade.

8.2. The issue of refuse from the market was discussed. The cleansing contract was changed from the 1st April. The refuse lorry is no longer on the market all day but from 3pm every Saturday. This means that refuse is collected on the corner of the Assembly Rooms until the refuse lorry is in position, it was felt that this is unsightly. The committee discussed various options.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to investigate the Net scheme that is used by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

8.3. The Market Superintendent was commended on the report for this evening and for all his hard work throughout the year.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1. The next meeting will be on Monday 17th September at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.06p.m.

_____ Chairman