

MARKET MANAGEMENT GROUP

MONDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 2.02PM

PRESENT: Members: Councillors Ellis, J Mallinson and Nedved.

Officers: J Meek – Corporate Director of Economic Development
E Gillespie – Principal Accountant
C Furlong – Chartered Legal Executive
M Walshe – Property Services Manager
R Plant – Democratic Services Officer

ALSO

PRESENT: Mr A McLetchie – Ryden Property Consultants

MMG.08/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were submitted.

MMG.09/20 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED - That Councillor Nedved be appointed Chairman of the Market Management Group for 2020/21.

MMG.10/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest affecting the business to be transacted.

MMG.11/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Market Management Group held on 2 April 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

MMG.12/20 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

MMG.13/20 MANAGING AGENT'S REPORT

A copy of the Managing Agent's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. In presenting the report, Mr McLetchie advised that the Market had been closed to the public in mid-March following the implementation of the Government restrictions. As such all stallholders ceased trading until mid-June with the exception of those who were able to provide takeaway or delivery services or were essential food providers. At that time the Market operated on reduced staffing level to allow it to function and cover health and safety requirements.

Throughout the lockdown period a large number of Stallholders raised their concerns regarding the implications that restrictions had on their ability to trade and as such they submitted requests for relief in relation to rent and service charges. Tenants had been directed towards the Government assistance package that had been made available to small businesses and it was Ryden's understanding that all tenants who had applied had been successful in their applications for grant funding.

As expected the Market had seen a number of tenants leave over the course of the summer and as such occupancy levels had reduced, however, a number of new occupiers commenced trading and a number of craft stalls took space at weekends on a trial basis.

Following the announcement on 1 November regarding further lockdown measures, Ryden's were considering the number of stalls which could continue to trade in some capacity and how the Market could operate to accommodate those traders.

The following aspects of the report were highlighted and discussed:

Minor Repairs and Decoration:

During the lockdown period staff were able to carry out minor maintenance, cleaning and decoration tasks which would normally be difficult to address.

Roof and External Fabric Maintenance Works:

A quarterly inspection and minor maintenance contract was in place to identify and address ongoing repair issues to the roof areas. A fuller external fabric inspection utilising abseiling contractors had been carried out in March where various areas of loose sandstone were identified and repaired during the inspection.

Scotch Street Gates

The concertina gates at the Scotch Street entrance to the Market had been difficult for members of staff to open and close. Replacement on a like for like basis given the listed status of the building would be expensive, the new maintenance operative had been able to bring them back into a reasonable working order and the condition of the gates would be monitored.

Public Toilets

The public toilets needed refurbishment and better baby change/feeding facilities would also be of benefit. A significant investment would be required to carry out a comprehensive refit and upgrade. The toilets had been opened very early following lockdown with the support of the City Council who provided resources to employ a toilet attendant. This had been vital for the city centre and for the Market.

Financial

There had been an increase in arrears due to issues arising from lockdown and Ryden's were working with tenants to establish mutually agreeable repayment schedules.

Social Media

Traditional methods of advertising remained valuable, but it was believed that a strong social media presence was vital to the current digital age to promote to younger generations. Facebook continued to be used to promote the centre's businesses and events and Instagram has been highlighted as a valuable outlet for expanding the Market's profile and targeting younger audiences. This had been difficult in recent months as events could not take place and promotion was difficult to undertake.

Prior to lockdown the Market had been approached by a media student from Carlisle College who was interested in working with the Market to develop the online presence as a way of building their work experience portfolio. This had not been progressed but may be an affordable way of expanding social media offering moving forward.

The Market Management Group urged the managing agents to keep the Market open for business if possible and to continue to allow the public to access the stalls that were able to

trade. They also discussed the access into the Market from Wilkinsons and hoped that a resolution could be reached which allowed the public to access the market from the shop.

RESOLVED - That the Managing Agent's report be noted.

MMG.14/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be transacted.

MMG.15/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That arrangements be made for the next meeting of the Market Management Group to take place in April 2021 via Teams.

[The meeting ended at 2.35pm]