



**NABMA**  
the voice of markets

# FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF MARKETS

## **NABMA SUPPORT PLAN FOR MARKETS AND SURVEY 2020 COVID-19**



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# **FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF MARKETS**

**INTRODUCTION**

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Since the outbreak of COVID-19, NABMA has been discussing with the Town Centre and High Streets Policy Team, Cities and Local Growth Unit, support measures for markets and market traders. As a result we have compiled a list of the essential support that we believe is needed to support, sustain and relaunch the markets industry.

The five points for support were set out in the NABMA Support Plan for Markets that was submitted to the Town Centre and High Streets Policy Team in April 2020. They are summarised as:

- Support for Traders and Small Businesses
- A Business Interruption Compensation Scheme – reflecting “lost rents”
- Market Start Back Grant Scheme – to get markets back up and running again
- Business Rates – 100% relief for all markets
- A national support programme to restore markets and market trading

As a result, NABMA was invited to provide evidence of the hardship and risk being experienced by the markets industry. To do this, it undertook an extensive survey of its membership.



## National Survey Results

The conclusions of that survey, completed by 92 operators and representing over 300 markets, are detailed in this report.

In addition, six market operators have provided case studies, that are also included in this report, to give a greater understanding of the hardship and decimation of the markets industry across the country. They represent local and principal councils, and the private sector. They detail their businesses before COVID-19; their current position and financial comparisons and look at how they see the future of their markets and the associated risks. The future of many markets, and that of thousands of small businesses, are being placed at risk as the government and scientists fight against the destructive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NABMA Survey (May 2020) has headlined from over 300 markets that:

- Over 40% of the UK Markets Industry may now be closed for ever
- Only 28% of markets are currently trading
- A reduction in daily footfall of 82% is being experienced
- Unlike many high street landlords, market operators are fully supporting their traders
- 93% of operators since 23 March are offering traders rent free, or support rental packages
- Lost rental income to local authority market operators is up to £300,000 per month, with an average of £46,320 per month.
- On average the cost of business rates, without the 50% dispensation, is costing each local authority on average £100,000 a year
- Before the coronavirus markets had experienced a 23% increase in additional activity
- Hundreds of events have been cancelled with losses of millions of pounds

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**What is abundantly clear is that market operators, mainly local authorities, now need vital financial support from government to offset their huge losses in income and to give support and confidence to start back and invest again in their markets.**

With traders receiving various financial packages for business support then it can be argued that such huge government investment is at risk if local authority markets, that are a discretionary service for local authorities and account for over 80% of the UK traditional markets, now have to close following the pandemic.

It must also be recognised that with social distancing likely to be a condition of markets starting back, and to be in place for many more months, then it will be a long time before income from rents and service charges payable to market operators reach the level of

February 2020. Many operators also now readily recognise that rental incentives will need to be offered to help restore markets and market trading. The financial impact of the pandemic will therefore extend long into the future.

Lastly, if markets are to be a strong attraction and asset in the government High Street agenda for the future then they need support now. It is traditional, continental, Christmas and speciality markets that are proven to create events, atmosphere, colour, footfall and economic benefits. These activities impact on the high street, restaurants, bars and hotels. They have a long track record of success and are the historic heartbeat of local communities.

Therefore NABMA urges government to now support market operators at this critical time with financial assistance.

# FIVE POINT SUPPORT PLAN

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NABMA is the leading markets organisation in the country. For 100 years it has promoted markets on the national stage and also provides a wide portfolio of services for its members.

Recent research indicates that there are 1,173 traditional and specialist markets and 32,4000 traders supporting these markets. In addition, there are 9,000 event traders trading at festivals, fairs and galas.

We estimate that there are 57,400 people employed in the sector. Two years ago, the turnover was around £3.1 billion. In terms of the organisation of businesses, then some 77% are sole traders.

The responses from our Survey are detailed in the five areas of support as requested from government.

## 1. Support for Traders and Small Businesses

It is recognised that government has produced financial assistance through various schemes. This has been important and valued. Until markets can fully return to some normality then it is likely that continued financial support from government will be needed for certain small businesses. It is only proper however that any further opinions on this matter should be conveyed by the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF) following their survey on behalf of their membership.

## 2. A Business Interruption Compensation Scheme reflecting “lost rents”

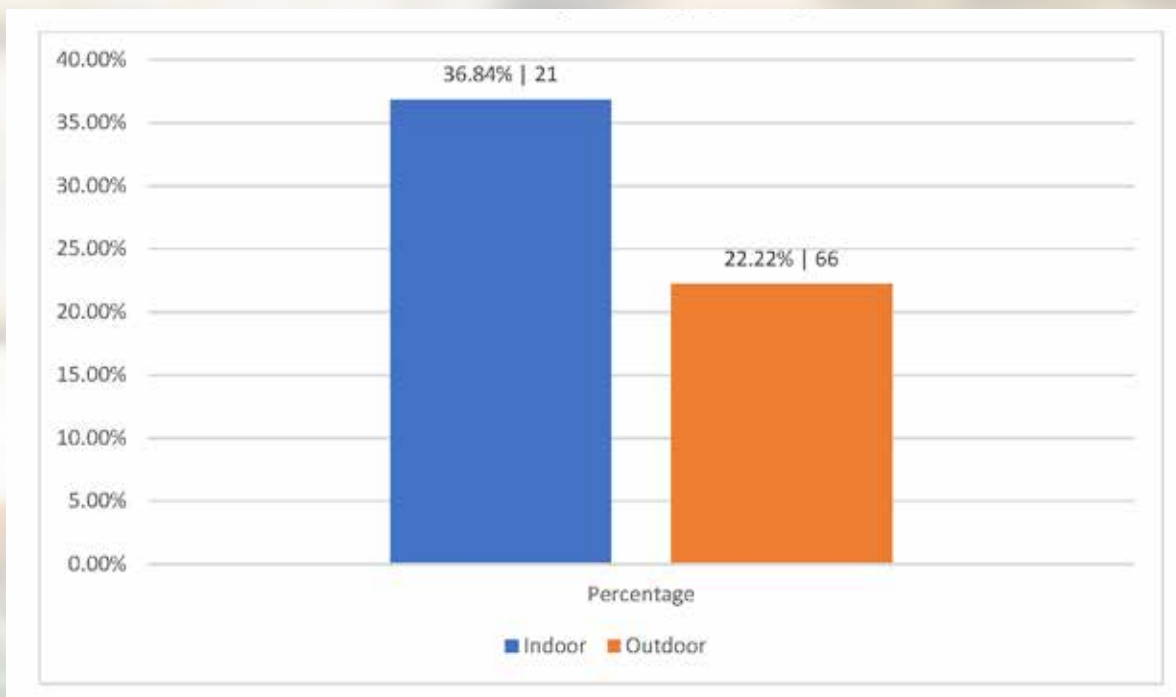
The extent of lost income is considerable ranging from £ 850 per month for the smallest market operator to £342,000 for the largest operator. The average loss of income per month per operator needed to sustain our markets is £46,320.

It is stressed that local authority operators have received no financial support and are also voluntarily absorbing substantial additional costs to assist their traders with deliveries, click and collect and implementing supervision and delivery of social distancing. NABMA members are providing an essential lead in supporting local businesses to keep trading, and to help keep the food chain moving.

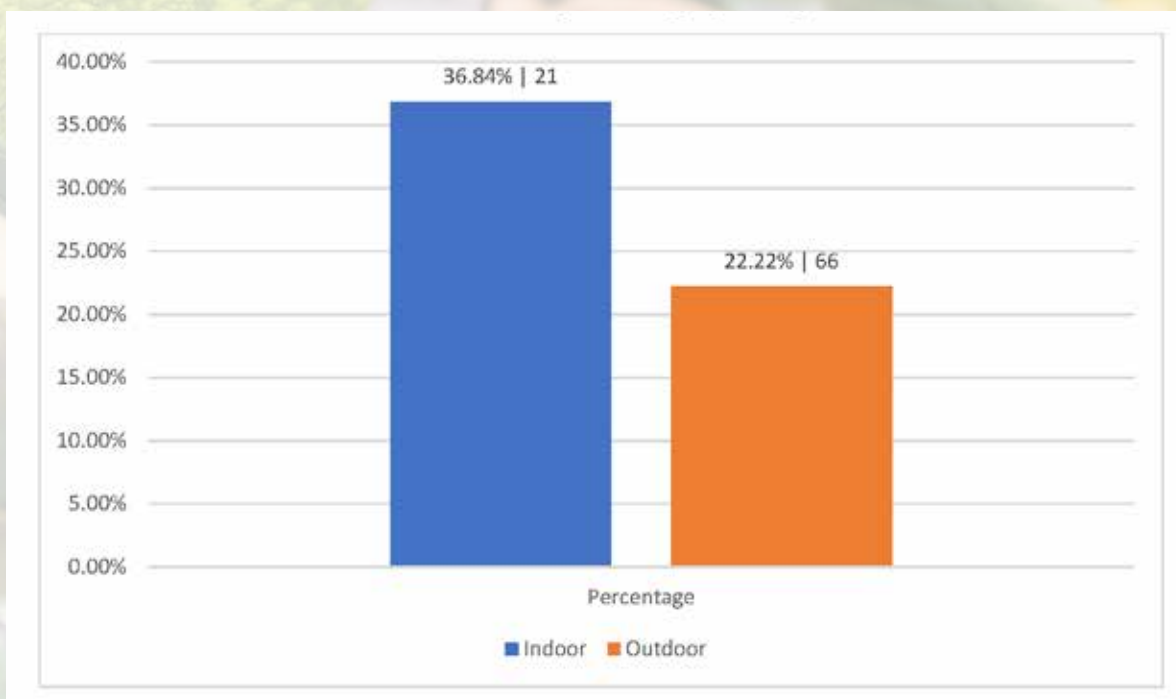
If government financial support is not provided at this time, then the only options for local authorities to recover some costs will be through the annual local government financial settlement or by increasing precepts and local council tax.



## Markets still Operating



## Percentage of Traders still Open at Operating Markets Only



### 3. Market Start Back Grant Scheme – to get markets back up and running again

The key to starting back for operators will be restoring as much of the lost income as possible as highlighted in the above section.

With markets as a discretionary service, and some markets before lock-down being subsidised by their operator, then there is a genuine fear that without financial incentives certain markets may not start back.

With the pressure on local government finance before the pandemic, then the option to shut down discretionary services, or devolve them has long been a risk. If an operator has closed its markets for a number of weeks then the incentive now exists not to start back to save operational costs and potentially dispose of historic and community valued assets for a valuable capital receipt.

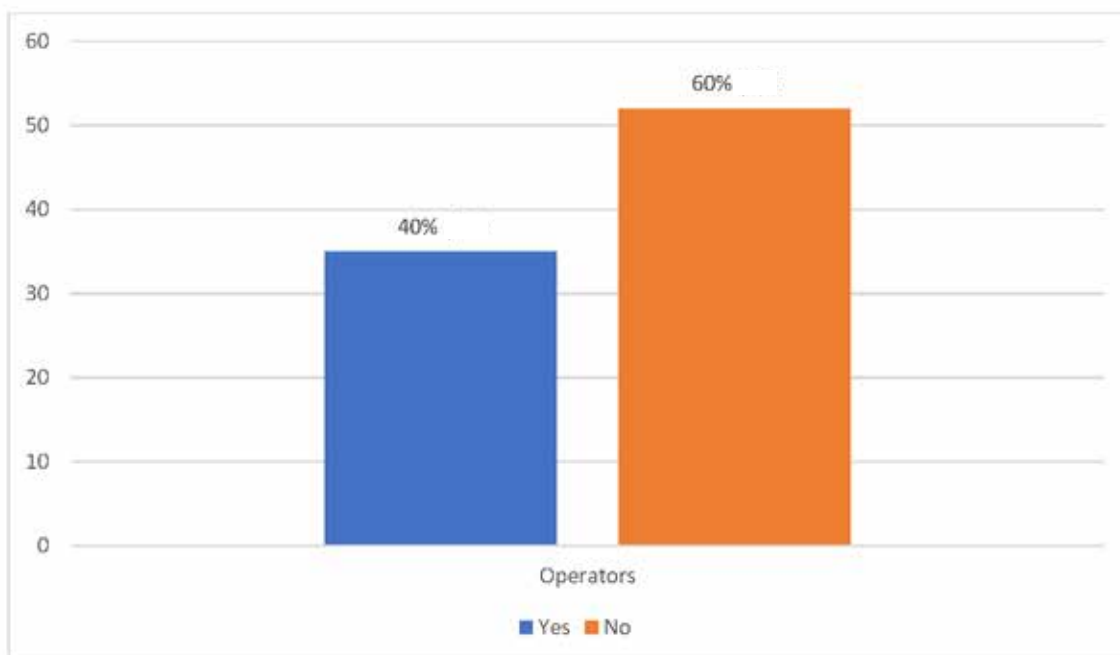
This action is in direct contrast to the government agenda to revitalise town and city centres with markets as a key asset.

**The survey has demonstrated that 40%, or over 400 UK markets, indicate that they may not start back. Incentives to convince those operators to return are essential.**

Market operators will also need to deliver publicity and promotion campaigns to bring back shoppers back to their markets. It will also be important to look for new traders and provide them with training and business support. Major investment in changing infrastructure, introducing and managing social distancing and changing the culture of market trading will be needed.

Without doubt, many businesses and market traders will be lost to the Coronavirus and the industry will need a massive boost when it is time to relaunch. Markets are recognised as part of the renaissance and revitalisation of the high street by government and therefore it is important that a market Start Back grant scheme is available. It is possible that a fund could be established from the £1 billion that is being directed to the Future High Street agenda. Again, such a measure must be available to all market operators.

## Markets at risk of permanent closure



## 4. Business Rates – 100% relief for all markets

NABMA reiterates that help is urgently required on business rates. Given the Chancellor announced the abolition of business rates for many businesses then we need to get local authority markets enjoying the benefits of this measure. At the moment, because of restrictions in the local authority finance legislation, a local authority cannot grant a concession to itself on business rates. This means that struggling local authority markets continue to suffer from the burden of business rates. In comparison, private markets can take advantage of the benefit. We need the government to extend relief to local authority markets.

Our survey has revealed that if the concession was granted to local authority markets then a huge benefit would be derived. That average benefit would be £100,000 a year. This support may be the difference between a market continuing, or closing. It would also provide parity with private market operators.

Within the recent Retail Markets Forum, hosted by government, reassurance was again provided that serious consideration will be given to this matter in the forthcoming review of business rates. Already the LGA have advised NABMA that the terms of reference of the Business Rates Fundamental Review have been published. It includes reference to reliefs. The LGA contact confirmed that “We are meeting with the Treasury team carrying out the review in a few weeks’ time. I am drawing up a list of issues to raise with them and I will include giving LA’s the right to give relief on their own property, particularly markets”.

NABMA formally asks if this important financial benefit to markets can be dealt with separate to the review? It is apparent that the original aim of the Chancellor was to support all markets – legislation has however stood in its way and as a result financially disadvantaged local authority markets over the last couple of years. Can government now expedite this benefit for local authorities within its ongoing package of support to help markets and small businesses?

0%

No markets are able to claim on business interruption insurance

82%

Reduction in footfall for markets that remain open

93%

Zero rents, reduced rents or deferred rents offered to 93% of traders

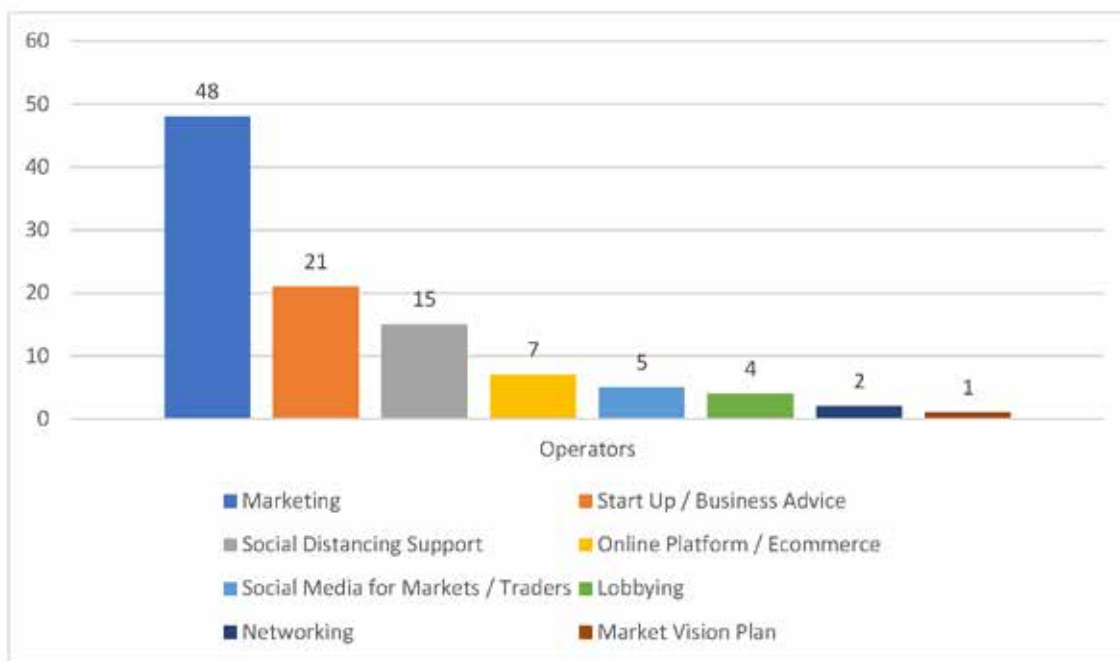
## 5. A National Support Programme to restore markets and market trading

Looking forward to when markets can open again then it is clear that an organisation will need to take a lead to provide support and guidance; be a liaison for government; and deliver training and professional development opportunities for the return of current operators and market managers and, hopefully, a new influx to the sector. The industry, after the lessons to be taken from Coronavirus will undoubtedly need to change, and that will require leadership, support and management.

NABMA would suggest that with its track record of achievement and delivery; its large membership across public, private and community sectors, and its ongoing work programme that it should be at the forefront of Start Back. To do this it will need a financial resource to work with government and deliver a Start Back programme working, with industry partners, and other high street and education leaders.

Our Survey indicates the following support as needed.

### National Support Requirements

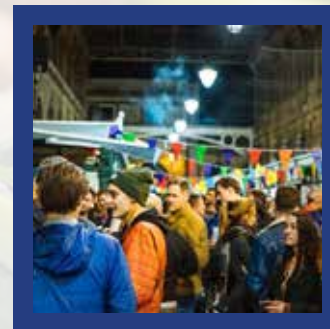


## CASE STUDIES

Alongside the NABMA Support Plan for Markets, and the NABMA Survey, we are grateful to 6 markets that have shared their experiences of trading through the lock down period; the financial impact and their thoughts on the future of their markets.

### NABMA Case Studies 2020

- Case Study 1. Market Place (Europe) Limited
- Case Study 2. Skipton Market
- Case Study 3. Stratford upon Avon Markets and Events
- Case Study 4. Shrewsbury Market
- Case Study 5. Stockport Market
- Case Study 6. Bristol Markets



# NABMA SUPPORTING MARKETS PLAN 2020 – CASE STUDIES

1

CASE STUDY

## MARKET PLACE (EUROPE) LIMITED

Author: Allan Hartwell  
contact: allan@mpel.co.uk

Market Place (Europe) Limited has operated a large number of International Market events each year since 2004. The most operated in one year was 70 market events.

### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

In 2019 we operated 40 specialist market events in various locations around the UK between March and October plus the 5-week Christmas Markets in Belfast and Glasgow. Market Place has around 4,000 traders on its database from around the world and has been responsible for helping small international businesses become established in the UK during the last 15 years.

Each of the 40 specialist markets operate on average for between 4 and 7 days and the Christmas Markets operate on average for 5 weeks each year. Each of our market events was 100% occupied and our average monthly income during 2019 was £75,000.00 + circa £1m/month Nov and December in respect of the Christmas Markets.

On average we would expect a smaller venue to attract around 20,000 people and in a larger City Centre we have had footfall recorded circa 50,000 people over a weekend. The Christmas Markets attract 1.3m people to Belfast and 1.5m people Glasgow. Both events each generate circa £78m gross economic benefit to those City Centres.

We cater for a wide demographic and have genuine traders from various countries selling products typical of their country or region. Our markets have a diverse product offer because of the diversity of international representation. In addition, we work with many UK traders at each of our events.

### CURRENT SITUATION

For 2020 we already had a programme of events like that of 2019 and we had won a new contract for a further Christmas Market in Cheltenham. Our event programme which operates from March 2020 through until December each year has been decimated due to COVID-19 and all events through until the end of May and most through until the end of September have already been cancelled. Being realistic we have little or no expectation of any events being possible before the end of September so at present our income is Zero.

### INCOME COMPARISON

Our average monthly income would have been like that of last year which means that we are currently experiencing losses in the region of £75,000.00 per month. If the Christmas Markets are cancelled, we stand to lose a further £2m with procured site fees due in the region of £200,000.00 still to be paid.

## INVESTMENT IN THE MARKET

We are desperately hoping that we will be able to operate the Christmas Markets. We have made over £500,000 investment in chalets and equipment which is currently held in storage in Belfast for which we still must pay the Rent and Rates. As this is a storage and warehouse facility, we are not entitled to any assistance under the SBRR scheme. We will have to secure an extension to our lease to retain all our equipment in Northern Ireland and will need to incur additional annual rental on that facility. Our losses are not recoverable.

## FUTURE OF THE MARKET

The impact of the Coronavirus longer term will:

- Severely affect our ability to attract international traders which reduces our USP and affects the attraction of our events.
- Large footfall generating events will be one of the last things to come back on stream and yet they are proven tool in town and city centre regeneration in driving footfall and generating economic impact.
- This lack of diversity will mean less events in the programming.
- Millions of £'s in terms of economic benefits will be lost to already struggling town and city centres.
- MPEL have invested significantly in employing and developing a very experienced management team and is determined to retain them but the longer this goes on this may not be possible with continuing and additional support. That experience means that most of our managers earn more than £2500.00/month so after allowing for the NI and Pension contribution we are still paying more than 20% to our staff who are currently furloughed on full pay. I do not think we will be in a position to sustain this kind of commitment beyond September.

# 2

## CASE STUDY

### SKIPTON MARKET

Author: Dave Parker, Chief Officer & Clerk to the Town Council  
contact: [chiefofficer@skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:chiefofficer@skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk)

#### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

Before Coronavirus, Skipton Market operated every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday positioned on Skipton High Street between the hours of 7am and 5:30pm. The market is made up of between 40 and 50 traders (depending on the day of the week) selling a wide range of products. These products include :- ladies and menswear fashions and accessories, hats, scarves, gloves, underwear, ladies nightwear, jeans, outdoor wear, footwear, handbags, fashion jewellery, pet supplies, cheese, jams, chutneys, eggs, ice cream, breads, fruit and veg, fresh meat (including game), fresh fish, sweets, biscuits, cakes, packaged tea and coffee, olives, food van selling hot and cold sandwiches and jacket potatoes, plants, decorated plant pots, garden ornaments and furniture, sporting badges, flags and mugs, stationery products, records, compact discs, dvd's, music related clothing, rugs, carpets, cushions, bedding, gold and silver products, collectable coins, telescopes, binoculars, mobile phone accessories, cleaning products, watch batteries and repairs, canvas prints, metal signs, scenes of local interest depicted on pictures, calendars and fridge magnets, material and bespoke items made from horseshoes and cutlery.

Pitch occupancy rate is 80% on Mondays, 90% on Wednesdays and Fridays and 95% on Saturdays. Average footfall throughout 2019 was over 12,000 on Mondays, over 13,000 On Wednesdays, over 14,000 on Fridays and over 18,000 on Saturdays.

A twice-monthly Farmers Market is normally held on a Sunday at the Town's Canal Basin. A number of other events take place each year, where the Market features. Sheep Day is the main summer event. In winter we have a number of hugely popular Christmas events, including the annual Christmas Markets.

Footfall at Sheep Day is generally c16,000. The Christmas events have footfall ranging from c17,000 to c32,000.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

Since 25/3/2020 we have closed our Monday market operation completely.  
The twice-monthly Farmers Market has been cancelled  
The Sheep Day event scheduled for July has been cancelled.

On Wednesdays and Fridays we now have just three stalls in operation (Cheese and other produce; fruit and veg; fresh fish)

On Saturdays we also have three stalls in operation (Cheese and associated products inc bread; fruit and veg and a fresh meat wagon).

On the remaining three trading days, hours of operation have reduced, with traders leaving around 2pm-3pm.



All of the food vendors now provide a delivery service to customers in the local area and each trader on the market is featured on the market Facebook page at the start of each market day. As an open-air market operating directly on a normally busy High Street, we have implemented strict social distancing zones on the pavements adjacent to the stalls and comprehensive signage is in place.

Additionally, Government guidance and information about the market operation is displayed on stalls, lighting columns and other street furniture across the High Street – even where there are currently no stalls operating.

The Council does have Market staff on site throughout all hours of operation – to monitor social distancing and hygiene – although traders are now well rehearsed in the measures put in place. Footfall on each regular market day is now down to around the 500 mark on a Wednesday and Friday, a little higher (800-1000) on a Saturday. On average this is a 90%+ reduction in footfall.

## INCOME COMPARISON

Total income for the market operation during 2019 was £97,263.

The average monthly income varies by season

Jan to April – Average £5,500/month

May to Aug – Average £10,000/month

Sep – Dec – Average £8,800/month

These figures EXCLUDE income from stall rentals at special events such as Sheep Day and our Christmas Market days.

As the Council has taken the decision to waive all current rents and fees for trading on the Market, the current income level is zero. Given that the highest average monthly income is during the May-Aug period this is particularly worrying at this time.

The Council's Market function is entirely self-sufficient, with no income allocated to the Market from the Council's precept and associated budget. Fixed costs associated with the market continue – staff salaries; lease and infrastructure costs etc – and these are now being met by the Council.

## INVESTMENT IN THE MARKET

Skipton Town Council, in partnership with the Skipton Business Improvement District (BID) and our local District Council had embarked on a new tourism strategy for the Town, including a considerable investment from all partners (alongside a successful bid for Heritage Action Zone funding) in town centre infrastructure – including new digital infrastructure – and a substantial programme of investment in new market events and initiatives aimed at securing the future of the Market.

Whilst this is now even more critical in terms of relaunching the Market following the COVID-19 outbreak, substantial elements of this funding are likely to be no longer available given the need for the Council to re-divert funds to cover the routine running costs of the Market.

The BID has suspended collection of its levy payments and may no longer be able to contribute to the planned investment programmes.

# 2

## CASE STUDY

### SKIPTON MARKET (continued)

Author: Dave Parker, Chief Officer & Clerk to the Town Council  
contact: [chiefofficer@skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:chiefofficer@skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk)

#### FUTURE OF THE MARKET

As a strong market in a normally busy tourist location, Skipton Market should (hopefully) not be at risk of not re-opening, but how it compares trader occupancy wise to 2019 remains to be seen. Much will depend on how social-interaction is allowed to open up – and the desire and ability of visitors and tourists to come back to the Town.

The stormy weather experienced at the beginning of 2020 and the effect of the Coronavirus will have hit many of our traders hard as the number of days they have been able to trade this year had already been greatly reduced in the early part of the year. Many traders were struggling financially before the current pandemic – and our planned programme of investment and redevelopment of the Market had been aimed squarely at resolving this issue.

We would very much hope that the Council will be able to extend incentives to traders and embark on a comprehensive promotional activity to reposition the Market. However, with the current level of losses and a zero income, it is a significant worry that this might not be possible.

With the aid of government funding to support the Council, it is hoped that the bulk of our traders will be able to survive and return to us once the market has become fully operational again.

Without any support, that outcome is extremely uncertain.

# 3

## CASE STUDY

### STRATFORD-UPON-AVON MARKETS AND EVENTS

Author: Pat Matjaszek, Market & Project Officer

contact: pat.matjaszek@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Author: Sarah Summers, Town Clerk - Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council

contact: sarah.summers@stratford-tc.gov.uk

#### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

Stratford-upon-Avon is a picturesque medieval market town on the banks of the River Avon. Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council are both market authorities and together have contracted LSD Promotions to provide the markets held in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Traditional markets are held throughout the year on Fridays and Saturdays in Rother Market, towards the top end of town. Our Friday Charter Market trades fairly well and has a strong core of loyal traders selling produce from fresh fish, ground coffee, bread, fruit and veg, plants and flowers and a diversity of other goods from handbags and shoes to watch batteries or a bath plug. Footfall is definitely weather dependant but committed locals will 'weather any storm' for their weekly supply of fresh produce. The Charter Market typically hosts fifty stalls.

Rother Market takes centre stage once again on Saturdays for the Urban Mix Market. Mix is the right word as it has just about a bit of everything including popular antique stalls. With Stratford being a tourist destination, footfall is usually higher on Saturdays and trade is better than the Charter Market. Urban Mix typically hosts 60 to 70 stalls.

From Easter to Christmas we stage the hugely successful Upmarket which is situated between two key locations in Stratford-upon-Avon. The market is held near the river on Waterside from late March to October and in Bridge Street, the town's main retail area, from October to the last Sunday before Christmas. These markets are held on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays and attract high quality traders and an impressive footfall of residents, local tourists, national and international visitors.

There are themed specials which are held for three days midweek within the school holidays. As well as the market offer there is a plethora of free themed activities for children. A recent example is 'Stratford-upon-Oz', and for July 2020 LSD are planning 'Once upon a Time in Neverland'. Both councils along with LSD Promotions have worked with the NMTF in the hosting of the 'National Young Trader of the Year' competition final on Waterside. It is our hope that the final will go ahead again this year.

Our Victorian Christmas Market with traders dressed in Victorian Costume, is one of the biggest in the UK, with over 300 stalls throughout the town. From the outset, this market was a huge success not only for market traders but for the town's retailers and businesses, particularly for those in the hospitality sector. The event was first held in 2017 over three days. As a result of its success, we plan to increase the event to four days in 2020. There are added elements such as a small funfair, a stage with live entertainment and roving street entertainers. Footfall in 2019 was in excess of 123,000 and this market has won two prestigious awards and is listed on Google as one of the top 15 UK Christmas Markets.

# 3

## CASE STUDY

### STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (continued)

Author: Pat Matjaszek, Market & Project Officer  
contact: pat.matjaszek@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Author: Sarah Summers, Town Clerk - Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council  
contact: sarah.summers@stratford-tc.gov.uk

There are also four special Christmas Thursday Markets in the run up to Christmas. The first complements the Christmas Lights Switch-On event. Not all markets traded well in 2019, mainly due to terribly wet weather conditions which impacted on footfall and there was also a general election.

### CURRENT SITUATION

When restrictions came into place the councils and LSD tried to keep the Charter Market open to provide the community with fresh produce. It worked for one week and when social distancing rules were enforced, traders chose not to come. We have held nothing in the town since that date.

### INCOME COMPARISON

Due to confidential contract details I am unable to provide this information, but I can say that Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council both receive a significant income from their market contract. Both Councils rely on this income to fund other services. That income has ceased completely as a result of the current crisis.

Besides the income to the Councils, the variety of markets and events play a huge role in attracting large numbers of visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon throughout the year, bringing a vital boost to the town's economy.

### INVESTMENT IN THE MARKET

LSD Promotions have made a large investment in new stalls and equipment when they were awarded the contract in October, 2017. They continue to consistently invest in high level promotion of the town both locally and on a national level, as well as developing quality management systems for our markets, events and for our traders. In line with the new contract, both Councils are committed to providing the infrastructure for the Victorian Christmas Market, this includes high level security measures, stewards, traffic management, first aid, entertainment and marketing.

Following consultation with the Councils, LSD had to suspend all markets and cancel and refund some planned events. In partnership with the Councils and other key stakeholders we are all working to plan the relaunch of the markets and the 'opening' of the town when lock-down is lifted.

### FUTURE OF THE MARKET

None of us know what the future holds at this time. LSD, through our market contract, along with Stratford BID are one of only two organisations delivering markets and events for the town.

The BID's future is under threat due to the reduction of income in the current climate. LSD are equally impacted. Together with our traders, our contractor is also experiencing zero income, so some restart assistance will be vital.

In the relaunch we will be taking into account what restrictions may still be in place with regard to social distancing etc. This could affect the type of market that can be offered at the outset.

We will need to consider how to help traders to return to the markets. We believe the offer of lower rents and a robust Communication Plan will assist in the relaunch of markets. As importantly, it will also help relaunch a tourist town dependent on high levels of visitors throughout the year.

With lower rents and a Communication Plan, a workable scheme has been put forward, albeit that this is still in the embryonic stages of development. Initially, the reopen will focus on free stalls for all traders and will include an invitation to any business/retailer in the town that would benefit from such an event.

The two councils have always worked closely and in true partnership with LSD Promotions, and whilst we expect this to continue, we anticipate that financial help will be necessary to support the return of markets to boost the town's economy and for the well-being of the community.

# 4

## CASE STUDY

### SHREWSBURY INDOOR MARKET

Author: Mike Cox

contact: Mike.Cox@shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

#### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

Shrewsbury Indoor Market is an unusual arrangement with indoor units around the periphery of the building, owned and managed by Shropshire Council, and the canopy market consisting of 60 stalls and a number of barrows in the centre of the building, owned and managed by Shrewsbury Town Council. We will focus on the Town Council situation.

The Town Council was formed ten years ago, and during that time we have increased occupancy levels from 60% to a regular 98%. We are proud to have won Town Council Market of the Year in 2012, Britain's Favourite market in 2018 and to be in the top four in 2019.

We operate Tuesday, Wednesday, half day Thursday, Friday and Saturday with the occasional late night Saturday.

The Town Council market consists of a variety of butchers, green grocers, fish mongers, dining areas providing food from Thailand, China, India, locally sourced food and cafés selling sandwiches and cakes. We also have antique stalls, home furnishings, model railway sales, florists, clothes, leather goods, cards for all occasions and an assortment of handmade gifts. The market has evolved over the years to attract a younger customer base, and by acquiring a premises licence, it enabled us to provide entertainment, a wide variety of food, and alcoholic drinks. This created a visitor experience you could not create in a shopping centre or supermarket, which has not only increased visitor numbers, but ensured a turnover of traders was reduced and made us the envy of other towns and cities who host markets.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

Since the current situation arose, we instantly lost all the non-essential businesses which accounted for around 50% of the stalls, the cafés and restaurants changed their working practices to become takeaways, which lasted a week as the public were then strongly advised to stay home, the catering outlets which formed just under 20% of the units then closed.

We have been left with just the butchers, fish monger and Green Grocers which accounts for around 30% of the stalls. However, some of the traders are finding sourcing supplies extremely difficult and so they have reduced the number of units they actually utilise. As more and more enforcement is made to deter people from leaving home, we noticed footfall in particular on a Tuesday and Wednesday reduce significantly compared to previous and so it was decided to reduce the rent to help keep the businesses operating. We also noticed a reduction in new visitors (which was to be expected) but it had quite an impact on customer numbers especially on the normally busy days Friday and Saturday. With footfall adversely affected, the butchers and green grocers have taken to doing deliveries, however they have all said that once the situation improves, they will stop the deliveries as they are too stressful and time consuming. They were doing this to retain their long term customers and look forward to seeing the customers return to the market hall when restrictions are lifted.

The footfall for a typical week last November indicated average number of visits per day as 1084 whereas in April this year we averaged 174.

## INCOME COMPARISON

Income for the market is based on the money banked from January 2019 until December 2019 and then a comparison January 2020 until current date, however we did see a reduction during the severe period of flooding as the town was totally cut off, so the traders have had a difficult year made more problematic with this new pandemic.

We have found the weekly income recently has dropped by 75% and is likely to remain at this level until the restrictions are lifted. Monthly income in April 2020 was expected to be £14,854 and was actually £4,412.

## INVESTMENT IN THE MARKET

Regarding investments, we have spent money on advertising for the market, as we find January to April is a quiet period due to the excesses of Christmas and weather adversely affecting footfall, so we do what we can to raise the profile, during the quieter months.

We are also working alongside the BID with a view to a long-term vision for the town, including the market, and recommending changes that could enhance the visitor experience, not only to the market hall, but the town as a whole. This consultation exercise has now been put on hold.

## FUTURE OF THE MARKET

We found that the market hall was an essential part of the town during the recent flooding. Town centre residents were unable to access supermarkets on the outskirts of town, and so the market become an essential destination for food items.

For this reason we have adopted the advice regarding social distancing within the market, paid attention to regular disinfectant cleans of bannisters, lifts and baskets customers use. As footfall is severely down within the market, we have reduced the rent for those traders still operating to encourage them to stay open during the quiet days.

When restrictions are lifted we will possibly have to continue with certain guidelines to prevent a return of the problem, and it is envisaged we may lose a number of stalls who have failed to make ends meet whilst not operating in the market, as they find it difficult to operate on line.

Those traders who have started deliveries are keen to return to the market, as they appreciate the social interaction, and it is the same with the customers, they enjoy the experience of visiting the market. Some may continue with the deliveries as well as operating in the market, but the majority prefer to be in the market and will cease deliveries.

We will have to work hard to ensure people know we are open for business again, and certain traders will be vociferous regarding the financial support they received (or did not), but that is all part of running a market.

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## CASE STUDY

### STOCKPORT MARKET

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#### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

Owned by: - Stockport Council.

Managed by: - Market Place (Management) Limited under procured contract from January 2019.

Market Place took over the management of the market and immediately closed a loss making very tired open market section which had dwindled to around 6 stalls. This has been replaced by a programme of diverse special event markets and activities.

Stockport Market Hall is one of the UK's finest examples of a Victorian wooden framed and glazed structures affectionately known as the Glass Umbrella. It provides a home for 35 small independent market traders. The Market is fully let despite it being detached from the retail core of the town centre but it forms the catalyst for a regeneration programme based in and around the old Market Place area of the Town.

The Market has seen significant investment by the Council in the last few years and no capital investment is planned during the current management contract arrangement.

Following the development of the Produce Hall into a more modern mixed eatery and street food court footfall has increased and diversified over a wider cross section of demographics.

During the 12months prior to COVID-19 the footfall in the Market Hall was up on the previous year and turnover in stall occupancy was less, meaning a more stable market environment.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

Since the COVID 19 pandemic the Market Hall has closed to the public with just 4 fresh food traders able to continue trading.

The decision was made in the interest of public safety to close the market to the public but to allow these traders to continue to work.

Market Place volunteer staff supported the traders in setting up, not only an order and delivery service, but probably the only drive through market where customers order on line and drive to the market where the order is loaded into the boot of the customers car. Market Place has made its two company vehicles available to volunteers to make the other deliveries.

In the first 4 weeks this service has delivered over 6,000 food boxes sourced from just 4 traders.



## INCOME COMPARISON

Since closure of the Market Hall invoices have still been issued but no pressure has been applied to collect the rents and traders have been advised that the Council is waiting to digest the Governments' various financial packages to see how this will impact not just on traders but market operators and Local Authorities before making any decisions.

Average monthly income during 2019 was £15,509.16, Average monthly income during 2020 £16,597.95.

## FUTURE OF THE MARKET

We are optimistic about the majority of our traders returning when Covid19 permits largely due to our competitive rent strategy and we think that the fresh food traders will continue to support the wider community with the on-line order and delivery service.

We are confident of the future of Stockport Market. Whilst we may lose some trader's we see this as an opportunity to make changes to the market and to try and secure new start-up businesses.



## BRISTOL ST NICHOLAS MARKETS

Author: Eric Dougall

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### SITUATION PRIOR TO COVID-19

Comprising of:

- 3 indoor Market areas located within Grade 1 listed building in Bristol City Centre.
- Occupied by 58 resident traders (operating on licences - all Business Rate registered)
  - Exchange Hall - 15
  - Glass Arcade and other indoor locations - 28
  - Covered Market - 15 resident traders

6 days per week - 9.30am to 5pm - Monday to Saturday (7 days per week in November & December)

Occupancy rate 100% (3 stalls held vacant due to pending development initiative)

6 regular weekly outdoor markets:

- Tuesday and Friday - Street food markets (14 regular traders)
- Wednesday - Farmers Market (14 regular traders)
- Friday and Saturday - Craft, goods and gifts markets (18 regular traders)
- Saturday - Flea Market (20 regular traders)

2 weeks of daily outdoor Christmas Markets in December (24 regular traders)

4 annual Friday Night - large Night Market Events (30 regular traders)

Footfall between 60,000 - 90,000 per week

Offer: Mixed retail, food, fashion, crafts and services offered:

Crafts, fashion, street food, deli, cafes, international goods, sweets, games, jewellery, second hand books, vinyl records, key cutting and shoe repair, cycle good and repairs, stamps, toys, local food produce, rocks and crystal, memorabilia, phone repairs, barbers, clairvoyant.

### CURRENT SITUATION

Indoor Market locations closed since 24th March until further notice due to COVID-19 conditions. All outdoor markets cancelled since 23rd March until further notice due to COVID-19 conditions.

One deli business operating from individual premises within the market footprint is trading through online sales and delivery service.

Footfall - zero, minimum public access to deli trader.

Administration and operational services being undertaken at present by Markets Team:

- Day to Day communication with traders - Government assistance advice, social media group updates.
- Updates on council position re rent deferral support.
- Scheduled check in phone calls to all traders to obtain feedback on individual circumstances.
- Facilitating limited traders access to units to collect stock and mail
- Facilitating planning infrastructure improvements, repairs and essential servicing of the premises.

## FUTURE OF THE MARKET

The future is uncertain but our market is successful and on a firm footing to pick up if trader support and recovery initiatives are established and customers return.

- Situation so dynamic - difficult to gauge impacts
- Keeping a close watch on NABMA members information flow
- Considering practicalities of reopening – indoor and outdoor operations
- Trader GOV support measures are really helping traders for now – to what extent will this support pick up going forward.
- Do not feel at risk of not opening - Will need to meet challenges of restriction once move from current lockdown position.
- Absolute key to success and viability will depend on customer return – short, medium and long term
- Council Small Business Economic Recovery initiatives are developing
- Retail and leisure situation consultation work planning
- Impact of no tourist spend in medium term will have an impact
- Will there be a benefit of localised spending
- Question yet to be answered around trader fee payments for closure period and support initiatives for recovery beyond close down – Council Commercial Exc steer that will be processed through corporate decision pathways.

**NABMA**  
the voice of markets



# **FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF MARKETS**

David Preston  
NABMA Chief Executive  
May 2020

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