Agenda No

9(i)

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
27 January 2021

Officer: Mike Cox – Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager

MARKETS UPDATE

Purpose

To update the Council on the current situation within the Indoor and Outdoor Markets.

Update

Since the 5 January 2021, the indoor and outdoor markets have only been open for essential goods only.

For the Indoor Market, this means food outlets (fruit and veg, butchers, fishmongers, bakeries and whole foods) along with cafes providing a takeaway service only, although a number of cafes have found that as with previous lock downs and advice to stay home, footfall is diminished greatly.

The Sunday Market initially had six stalls deemed essential, but after the previous lock down, most found it not viable to open up, and only two stalls opened initially and then closed due to the lack of customers.

The indoor market normally has 260 units per week available. We currently have 97 being utilised, which is also reflected in the income received.

Trends

We have found from previous experience that the public do abide by the guidelines and stay away. The essential traders have had to adapt to ensure they remain in business by developing a delivery service. It was wonderful to see that the fruit and veg stalls were also supplying, fish and meat from within the market hall stalls, and the meat and fish stalls reciprocating the purchases. Some of the stalls even employed traders who were deemed non-essential and unable to open, as delivery drivers, thus keeping a wage coming in.

We found that once the restrictions were lifted, the customers soon returned to the market to a reasonable level.

Future concerns

Nationally there have been discussions, that markets should be closed to help reduce the risk of spreading the infection.

We have found that the public enjoy shopping in the market for essential produce as they feel safe, the market caters for local people who want to minimise their time outside, and as mentioned, the market is now doing deliveries to local and vulnerable people.

Because of these factors, Shrewsbury Town Council and the National Association of British Markets Authorities and the National Market Traders Federation have made representations to Government to keep markets open during the lock down and to also allow traders to operate similar to supermarkets.

It is becoming apparent that some of the more mature in age traders, are finding the series of lockdowns increasingly draining and difficult to cope with. Some traders are already seeking to sell their businesses on, or thinking about retiring in the near future. It could be that the market loses some stalls that are in short supply within the town centre, and they will not be replaced with something similar.

Another issue is that with all the lock downs taking place, traders have not been able to take their 2-week holiday break. If the lock down is extended, we may find some traders will have to have their holidays carried over into the new financial year.

Officers are doing what they can to ensure traders who are in take their breaks and that the number carried across into the new financial year is minimal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) That the contents of the report are noted.