

Dorset Council Grant for Market Area Enhancement

Working Group Meeting

Working Group Chairman: Cllr Colin Stevens

Monday 23rd September 2024 at 5:30pm
in the Pavilion, Woodhouse Gardens

NOTES

In Attendance

Cllr Colin Stevens	Cllr Noc Lacey-Clarke
Cllr Steve Hitchings	Cllr Alan Cross
Cllr Byron Quayle	Cllr Rosemary Holmes
Cllr Maggie Putt	Cllr Sheila Chapman
Cllr Terry Clarkson	Cllr Yvonne Miéville
Cllr Hugo Miéville	Roger Carter
Mickey Westwood	

1. Apologies

Dr Sylvia Hixson Andrews

2. To consider the consultation responses

Alan said he didn't think there was anything new from the consultation responses and noted there was a lot of comparison to Wimborne and the pedestrian area they have.

Noc was surprised at the number of businesses were against the proposals, including those in the specific area, and felt we needed to talk to them and consider their views.

Hugo felt the responses were mainly positive and thought the council should be pleased with this.

Mickey commented on the largely positive feedback from the consultation and wondered if it would be worth approaching businesses who are not in favour and discussing it through with them.

Byron said businesses he had spoken to felt they would lose the stop and go nature of their customers/businesses. Colin said a lot of businesses said they weren't aware of the consultation, which Maggie said too.

Roger wondered what the Dorset Council will make of the responses.

Sheila mentioned that she felt more parking would be possible at the Marsh & Ham if the space was reconfigured. She said a lot of day trippers are dropped off by the Information Centre and they often comment on the amount of traffic in the town centre.

Nicci remarked that, from looking at the post codes, a lot of people from outside Blandford Forum were positive about it.

A general discussion was held about disabled parking in the Market Place and on Salisbury Street.

3. To consider any further ideas of what types of usage there will be in the Market Place

Colin asked if anyone had any ideas to add to the suggestions put forward in the consultation responses.

Noc said he thought we should have someone who is experienced in market analysis and putting on events who should run the pedestrianised area and the Corn Exchange as a business. Sheila said she strongly agrees with Noc.

Hugo suggested a covered, seating area and there doesn't have to be something happening there all the time.

Roger wondered about the logistics and storage of items that need moving for other uses/market days.

4. To discuss next steps

Noc suggested that we find out how much it would cost to have a member of staff to deal with the bookings and events for the Corn Exchange and pedestrian area. He also asked about some storage options to be costed up, including decorated storage units/shipping container. Nicci raised concerns about that in a conservation area.

He advised that we need to speak to Jon Andrews, showing the evidence of consultation responses, and that we aim to carry out the trial period at the time of the Corn Exchange reopening.

Colin made the point that it may be difficult to purchase those units prior to the trial period being approved by the Dorset Council.

Jon mentioned storage is an issue and we don't have a forklift truck/storage facility, etc. Hugo asked if tables and chairs would be easier to move than picnic benches.

5. Any other business

Noc said he is pleased to be fully involved with this project now.

6. Date of next meeting

The notes will be the basis for a discussion at the full council meeting scheduled for Monday 30th September 2024.