

**Full Council: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Report for Agenda Item 8: To consider if Malmesbury Town Council wishes to run the Friday Market in Market Cross.**

**1. Situation:**

The operation of a regular Friday market is recognised as a valuable addition to the High Street offer and a market has been running each Friday morning at the Market Cross for the last few years, although it has diminished to just a single fruit and veg stall since 2020. Nonetheless, this stall trades successfully and the owner is flagging an opportunity to regularly have two to three stalls each Friday based on the fruit and veg stall as a permanent attendee and a rotating group of stalls including charcuterie and pies, artisan cheese, gluten free cakes and possibly fish. The expectation is that these stall holders will operate reasonably independently on stall provision and set up/ put down. The stall holders will be able to get discounted parking tickets in Station Yard Car Park.

However, to make this happen the current market licence arrangement needs to be updated with Wiltshire Council from a current single stall temporary week by week licence, which expires in late February, to a continuing 1 to 6 stall market licence.

There are two options:

**Option 1:** MTC becomes the licence holder and administers the market. The licence fee payable to Wiltshire Council for a 1 to 6 stall market is £0 because MTC is a council. MTC would then receive pitch income from the stall holders. This is in the range £12 to £15 each stall each week (but could be slightly higher). A new annual income to MTC could therefore be in the range of £1,500 to £2,000 per annum. Some administration would, of course, be required and if this requires extra paid administration resource the net contribution to MTC will be reduced.

As an alternative to dealing directly with individual stall holders MTC may decide to try and reach a formal management arrangement with a lead stall holder, who would take on dealing with each of the individual stall holders and collecting pitch income while paying a consolidated (but likely lower) income to the Town Council.

**Option 2:** If Malmesbury Town Council does **not** wish to become the licence holder, Malmesbury Town Team will consider becoming the licence holder. This will be at a licence fee cost to the Town Team of £31.50 a week payable to Wiltshire Council for a 1 to 6 stall market. (The Town Team does not qualify for a free licence). In this situation the Town Team would then almost certainly adopt the alternative arrangement open to MTC described above and sub-contract management of the operation of the market to a lead stall holder in return for being reimbursed the licence cost and a small contribution to promotion costs for the market. It would not provide any administration service to the stall holders and the fee payable by the Town Team to Wiltshire Council would preclude the Town Team from securing any additional net income through this arrangement.

Council is therefore being asked if it wishes to implement Option 1 and hold the licence for running a Friday market at the Market Cross.

**2. Proposal:**

That

(i) Malmesbury Town Council adopts Option 1, so achieving a new source for income for the Council.

(ii) The detail of how Malmesbury Town Council manages the relationship and collection of income from stall holders (in principle either directly or through a sub contract arrangement with a lead stall holder) is decided and progressed by TH&F and the Town Clerk for conclusion and implementation with existing and prospective stall-holders by mid February.

### **3. Financial Implications:**

This opportunity to become the market licence holder with Wiltshire Council should result in a small net fee income for Malmesbury Town Council.

However, as with all such arrangements there are risks that stall fee income might not be paid, stall holders may decide not to take up pitch opportunities and there may be a small risk of reputational damage. It is not expected that holding and operating a market licence will result in additional insurance cost, (stall holders will be required to have their own public liability insurance), but this will need to be confirmed. There will also be some administration activity to undertake although the scale of this will depend on which management option is chosen.

Cllr Campbell Ritchie

15<sup>th</sup> January 2022