

Report for West Oxfordshire District Council

Retail & Charter Markets

at

Carterton

Chipping Norton &

Witney

June 2023

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Part 1 – Background & Context

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wild Property Consultancy has been commissioned to provide this report, with recommendations for the improvement of three markets in West Oxfordshire District. This commission is from the Market Towns Officer.

1.1.2 We have been requested to consider these three markets.

- Twice weekly Charter Market at Witney;
- Weekly Charter Market at Chipping Norton;
- Weekly retail market at Carterton

1.1.3 In reaching our conclusions and providing our recommendations we have followed this methodology:

- A desktop review of the research papers on markets nationally, covering the markets associations, the Institute of Place Managers and other recognised bodies. These provide the UK context for this assessment and references are included where appropriate.
- Site visits on at least two occasions to each of the three markets, the subject of this report.
- Site visits to other markets in the region, to act as a comparison.
- Stakeholder engagement, to assess opinion from traders and opinion from within each town, in order to create a future vision for the markets.

1.1.4 The report has been split into the following three sections:

Part 1: Background and Context

Part 2: Appraisal and Performance Analysis

Part 3: Recommendations

Appendices: Providing more in-depth responses to the questions put to stakeholders and including the SWOT Analysis.

1.2 Wild Property Consultancy

- 1.2.1 Neil Wild, a Chartered Surveyor (since 1993) and Member of the Institute of Place Management (2016), brings considerable experience of the commercial property market together with in depth knowledge of Landlord and Tenant law and property values across the county.
- 1.2.2 Neil is the owner of Wild Property Consultancy which has hundreds of property-owning contacts and regularly brokers leases, brings landlords and tenants together and is a big supporter of local businesses, facilitating engagement with local stakeholders. This has been gained through his property consultancy work as well as rejuvenation and high street consultancy for the Oxfordshire District Councils which brought many empty and underutilised properties back into use.
- 1.2.3 In the Vale DC, Neil worked with Wantage Town Team (2013 to 2018) to manage the occupation of vacant units, including two successful pop up 'Flashops' and support for the Mix Community Space. This contributed towards the town winning the Great British High Street Awards in 2014.
- 1.2.4 In Cherwell DC, his work included Banbury Town Coordination (2014-18), which drew together private and public sector stakeholders including three tiers of local government, independent retailers, landlords and property agents, to leverage private sector finance and set up three meanwhile spaces, reducing the number of empty shops in the town from 53 to 38 (2014 to 2018).
- 1.2.5 As part of the Bicester Town Centre Expansion, Neil represented the town's key landlords (Sainsbury's and Cherwell DC) to help coordinate the town centre development 2009-18, including managing key town centre property, liaising with over 40 different businesses, and creating the Bicester Traders Forum for independent retailers.
- 1.2.6 In South Oxfordshire DC, Neil worked on the Wallingford Empty Shops Project 2015-16, securing agreement with the landlords, enabling two meanwhile units for six organisations.
- 1.2.7 Wild Property Consultancy is one of the Delivery Partners for Meanwhile in Oxfordshire (2021-2024), a project utilising £1.70 million of Government funding, appointed by the Oxfordshire District Councils and OxLEP.

- 1.2.8 As Chair of the Banbury and District Chamber of Commerce (2018 – current), which works with 150 members, Oxfordshire’s business leaders, local government and OxLEP, Neil has extensive networks across the county that can be drawn upon.
- 1.2.9 Nationally, Neil is a member of the Government commissioned High Streets Task Force (2020 to 2024) to provide specialist guidance and advice to Local Authorities, BIDs and other stakeholders.

1.3 Context

1.3.1 Town centres

Markets function within the economic and social fabric of a wider setting. This ‘place’ sets the dynamic, putting the market within an economic and social context. As is widely reported, high streets, town and urban centres are changing, mainly as a result of the way we shop being different – a change that goes back many years but exaggerated through the pandemic. There is much background research and reports on such changes. As a result of our professional practice, we are well positioned to understand these changes and their impact on a particular place. There are a variety of approaches and solutions on offer to bring together a strategy or series of approaches to facilitate change and help the place adapt to meet the needs of its community.

Whilst each place is unique, there are certain conclusions that are being reached nationally across the place management industry which are helpful to set out, as they are relevant to this study and put the recommendations of this report in a wider context. These conclusions draw on the research from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Future of Retail, Future of High Street Discussion.¹

- Towns need to transition to become unique places, driven by the needs of the local community.
- Independent Businesses need significant support and resources. These businesses are doing great work in their community and became the subject of newfound appreciation during lockdown where they supported local communities and their social fabric.

¹ [All Party Parliamentary Group on the Future of Retail, Future of High Street Discussion July 2021](#)

- Councils and other stakeholders require a shift in focus, in the way we view High Streets and town centres. The key is to move beyond shopping and to view the landscape as being about green spaces, socialisation, experiences, hospitality, food, and health and well-being. This shift is necessary because of the increased tendency for people to shop online. Then, if the non-shopping aspects are right and well-integrated, then retail will thrive because people will come to the destination.
- The biggest mistake of the 20th century was designing High Streets exclusively around the car. We need to get cars out and make town centres more walkable and attractive. If we can do this, we can create places that are really in the heart of communities where people want to meet, drink, socialise, and do business.
- Markets and events fit within this changing context. Markets go back hundreds of years and their existence is to be encouraged and enhanced but their re-integration requires proactive support so they serve the needs of the community and at same time, complement other place based curation and activity.

1.3.2 Markets

Markets are at the heart of local communities and are a part of local history. Town markets are a crucial part of town vibrancy.

The Institute of Place Management (IPM) at Manchester Metropolitan University conducted a comprehensive review of the published evidence regarding town markets which demonstrated, unequivocally, that markets contribute to the economic, social and political health of towns and cities.² This review was at the request of the National Association of British Market Authorities and, as part of the High Street UK2020 project.

As a result, there are plenty of national resources to draw on for Councils to assist in the setting of strategy for all their policy affecting the town centre and rural economy.

² [Markets Matter, Reviewing the Evidence and Detecting the Market Effect. Institute of Place Management 2015](#)

Two national organisations represent the markets industry. The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA), which focuses on market operators—local authorities, private operators, community interest companies and charities—and the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF), which supports market traders across the UK. Both organisations currently meet the Government through the Retail Forum and the all-party parliamentary markets group.

Markets are part of the history and tradition of many towns and cities in the UK. The most recent survey of the markets industry indicates that some 1,150 traditional retail markets are now trading, and they are the outlet for an amazing more than 32,000 small and medium-sized enterprises.³ They exist through charters from the Crown, custom and practice and statutory legislation. In addition, numerous specialist markets, continental and Christmas markets generate essential footfall for town and city centres and support local economies, tourism, hospitality, and employment.

The NABMA 2022 survey⁴ was the first meaningful assessment of the state of the markets industry since the pandemic. The main headlines and questions arising from the survey of 241 markets were, first, that stall occupancy has fallen from a national average of 77% (2017-18) to 72% (2021-22). Traditional outdoor retail markets and outdoor experiencing the greatest decline. Less than half of these, trading at a surplus.

Markets feature heavily as part of town and city centre regeneration for a number of local authorities. As well as the economy, markets also have a strong connection with other strategic policies of a Council. It is important therefore to determine how to direct funding to deliver successful and modern markets with the market industry needing to attract new and younger traders.

From our own Oxfordshire experience, we know that markets provide a fantastic opportunity for individuals and small businesses to begin and further their journey as town centre businesses. Many councils have reported to us whilst undertaking our research that markets have thrived during and since the pandemic as customers have appreciated the outside space and are keen to support locally based traders. The journey for a trader might lead in a variety of directions, depending on the person and their objectives – what is

³ Hansard Markets and Market Traders (Review of Support) Debated 17/1/23, Simon Baynes MP [Markets and Market Traders \(Review of Support\) - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

⁴ [NABMA-Survey-2022.pdf](#)

important is that each market provides the right opportunities and experience for each endeavour.

Drawing on the IPM report, markets are significant in the following ways.

➤ **Markets Matter Economically.**

- The markets industry is a significant employer nationally and at a local level.
- With low barriers to entry, markets are excellent business incubators and they support business formation. This not only supports local economic development and diversity of retail offer but also encourages individual empowerment - a stepping stone into enterprise for those furthest from the labour market.
- Markets positively impact on town centres. Markets can generate footfall increases of around 25% for town centres⁵.
- Markets increase retail sales, with significant numbers of market visitors spending money in other shops.
- Income from markets supports wider local authority services.
- Markets support inter and intra-generational economic mobility. Many market traders are family businesses and employ extended family members on either a part or full-time basis and the emergence of youth markets and the 'teenage market' is generating income for young people.
- Markets provide employment and self-employment opportunities that are open to all. Markets provide entry-level employment that can assist relatively unskilled or under-capitalised individuals and have proved attractive to immigrant communities.
- Markets create multi-use and multi-scale economic environments, promoting commerce and competition. Through markets, small and micro businesses have direct access not just to individual consumers but to larger businesses to whom they can become suppliers. This provides diversity of offer and encourages co-location and competition.

⁵ Markets Matter, p 22

- Markets contribute to making other businesses viable. There can be significant earnings for farmers who attend markets with increased profit margins whilst these and other markets offer income opportunities for local businesses that contribute to their sustainability.
- Markets increase town centre resilience. Resilient towns respond and adapt to change. Representing more flexible and adaptable retail space, markets can respond quickly.
- Markets attract tourists, offering an enhanced tourist experience as they allow visitors to take part in the everyday life of the place they are visiting.

➤ Markets Matter Socially

- Markets are places of social interaction. Used by all sections of society, markets are where people of different incomes, ages, genders and cultures can meet together and interact.
- Markets facilitate community cohesion and social inclusion. Because of the ease of becoming a trader, markets have traditionally been attractive to new arrivals. They encourage newcomers to become part of the community and are spaces of diversity.
- Markets are crucial to the distinct identity of a town or area. They embody a community and set it apart from those without such an asset. They are a key part of the experiential identity of the place.
- Markets animate vacant or underused space. Whether on a street, a market place or vacant premises, markets create vitality and animation, drawing customers and onlookers. Their layout can encourage exploration and discovery.
- Markets benefit disadvantaged communities. The presence of local markets offering affordable and fresh produce can increase choice for people in deprived areas and improve their quality of life and help address social problems. The benefits and functions of markets are particularly significant in relation to the growing cost of living crisis.

- Markets contribute to community development. The small business nature of markets, their entrepreneurial character and integration with the community promotes community development and connectedness.

➤ Markets Matter Politically

- Markets promote sustainability. Environmental and ecological benefits arise from selling locally-sourced products and through serving local communities who mainly walk or use public transport.
- Markets offer food security. The network of wholesale and livestock markets and the number of businesses involved in retail markets provides food resilience and a vital link between urban and rural economies.
- Markets promote community health. The availability of fresh and affordable food, opportunities for social interaction and participation in leisure activities enhance physical and mental well-being.
- Markets are places of innovation, experiment, and education. The low operating costs, smallness of scale, availability of stalls and the fluidity of markets encourage traders to take risks and try ideas and products that may not be viable elsewhere and provide the opportunity to educate shoppers in how to use and learn more about the product.
- Markets engage people in society. The fact that markets are organised and regulated ensures participation by people from all backgrounds. This agglomeration and active engagement in shared activity has mutual benefits, both commercial and social and secures an active response from shoppers.
- Markets are flexible. They can respond rapidly to change with new innovations such as Teenage Markets, night markets, and extended trading hours.
- Markets shaped the world we live in and are part of our cultural heritage. The concept of a 'market town' is ancient and familiar and continues to have a profound effect on town and city centre performance - determining our very geography and culture.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 1 – what is the wider town strategy?**

Markets are an extremely valuable asset to a specific place. They have potential for tremendous benefits across the social, economic and political spectrum. They need to form part of the wider strategy and vision for that place – something we will consider when we set out our recommendations and next steps.

1.4 Types of Markets

1.4.1 Traditional Retail Markets (TRMs)

TRMs take place both indoors and outdoors with a broad offering including food, household goods, clothing and the like. This diverse and affordable offering distinguishing them from more focused markets such as farmers markets and other speciality markets.

TRM's are particularly important to lower income, marginalised and vulnerable people, providing access to good quality, healthy and affordable fresh food, opportunities for social and cultural interaction and relatively low-cost and accessible trading.⁶

Their stall numbers have been declining and the other trend is that the age profile of the market trader is getting older.

The reasons for this decline are multiple - upshot of poor management, changing tastes and natural retail trends in which independent businesses generally struggle.⁷

It is fair to suggest that local authorities have often failed to make the right connections with wider policy agendas and have tended to limit themselves to a regulatory role; granting licenses and making sure that markets meet health and safety regulations. Their management has not been in the hands of those with curation and marketing skills.

⁶ Adrian Bua, Myfanwy Taylor and Sara González, Measuring the Value of Traditional Retail Markets

⁷ [Gonzalez, S and Waley, P \(2013\) Traditional Retail Markets: The New Gentrification Frontier? Antipode: a radical journal of geography, 45 \(4\). 965 - 983.](#)

➤ **Item for Reflection No 2 – where does the responsibility sit?**

The future of the market cannot be left to chance or solely to the work of a specific local authority markets officer or to the business plan of the market operator. Within the Council there needs to be a responsible markets team where support and different skill sets can be drawn.

1.4.2 Farmers Markets

Farmers Markets are a regular event in a town or city when local farmers or their representatives come to sell their produce directly to consumers. The theory being that cutting out middlemen, farmers receive a higher profit and shoppers receive the freshest and most flavourful food, with minimal food miles, and local economies prosper. The particular market defines the term “local” according to the agriculture of its region and communicates that definition to the public. Farmers markets also implement guidelines and operating rules that ensure the farmers market consists principally of farms selling directly to the public, products that the farms have produced. Often these markets take place monthly, although some are more regular.

1.4.3 Food & Speciality Markets

In many towns there is an exciting range and variety of additional street and outdoor markets taking place throughout the year, often within a wider programme of town events. These markets may be one offs, Christmas, quarterly or more regular events. Often these markets are themed and aim for a large number of stalls, with the event to draw a large crowd. Chipping Norton holds a large Christmas market with over 75 outside stalls, entertainment as well as indoor events and activity. Carterton’s Christmas lights switch on within the market place attracts 4,000 persons.

The latest of the three NABMA Surveys highlighted an increasing number of traders going to market events rather than standing at traditional Markets and traders working only on a part time basis.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 3 - Can we mix the markets?**

For instance, where a town market is low in trader numbers and mix, could one combine a retail market with a farmer's market, to boost stall numbers and appeal?

In the majority of cases nationwide, retail market and farmers markets fall on different days. In successful towns, they are part of the town's calendar and branded in a similar way but usually held on separate occasions.

In Henley on Thames, once a month the farmers markets falls on same day as the charter market. The two markets are situated adjacent with customers mixing freely from one to another.

Farmers market cooperative, Thames Valley have a strong preference for a Friday or Saturday for a farmers market.

We refer further to this in our recommendations. There is scope for mixing, provided it is within the overall brand for the town.

1.5 **Methods of operation**

There are different approaches to the mode of operation which include the following;

- Unitary or District Council
- Town or Parish Council
- Private Market Operator
- Trader Operated (private company, cooperative)
- Other (social enterprise, Trust)

The NABMA survey included identified that by far the majority of the markets are local authority run.

1.6 The Oxfordshire & Cotswolds Market Experience

1.6.1 Below we set out the main Oxfordshire and Cotswold towns with their market offer and method of management, beginning with the three towns the subject of this report and then others follow alphabetically.

Carterton

Weekly retail market (Thursday) which originally began in 1973 and is now situated on the Market Square. Previous locations have been built upon as part of town expansion. The market is operated by the Town Council.

Chipping Norton

Weekly retail market (Wednesday) operated by the District Council situated on the lower side of the High Street (Market Place). The monthly farmers market has temporarily ceased due to the building works in the former Nat West. In addition, there is a large Christmas market run by a group of local businesses with a financial grant support from the Town Council. The town has a long history of a weekly market and since local government reorganisation in 1974, the market has been under WODC responsibility. A WODC review in 2019 noted the challenges brought about by Nat West and HSBC closures and by out of town development including the budget food store Aldi and by the attraction of the M&S and connected shops with parking on London Road.

Witney

Twice weekly charter market (Thursday and Saturday) operated by the District Council and a monthly farmers market (Fridays) operated by Thames Valley Farmers Markets.

Abingdon

Weekly outdoor charter market (Town Council) plus monthly farmers market (Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative).

Banbury

Twice weekly retail charter market with 12-15 stalls and a monthly farmers market (District Council operated). These take place alongside Town Council and BID run speciality markets.

Bicester

Weekly retail charter market (a trader run cooperative) with 25 – 30 stalls, including community and youth stalls with discounted rates.

Cirencester

Twice weekly retail charter market (Town council facilitated with Cotswold Market operating), with other private operators running speciality markets throughout the year – all coordinated by the Town Council.

Charlbury

A weekly food market run by the Town Council and a large quarterly farmers market by Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative.

Deddington

Monthly farmers market (volunteer run, Community Interest Company). 40 outside stalls plus indoor craft market on same day with 25 stalls. Deddington Farmers' Market was given Farmer's Market of the Year 2020 & 2021 by the Oxfordshire Prestige Awards and named The Third Best UK Farmers' Market by National Geographic Magazine Dec 2017.

Eynsham

Weekly country market via a cooperative social enterprise.

Henley on Thames

Weekly charter market and twice monthly farmers market, and a monthly craft market, operated by the Town Council as well as additional speciality market events by trader groups. Once a month the farmers market falls on the same day as the charter market.

Kidlington

Twice weekly retail charter market (trader run) with up to 12 stalls.

Moreton in Marsh

Weekly outdoor retail market, privately run by Cotswold Markets, approx. 30 stalls.

Stow on the Wold

Farmers Market. Monthly (twice monthly during summer) via Fresh n Local.

Stroud

Twice weekly retail market plus the weekly farmers market. Farmers market is operated via private operator Fresh n Local. The farmer's market is multi award-winning and is well known as one of the biggest, busiest and most popular farmers' markets in the UK.

Stratford upon Avon

A range of markets including traditional street market every Friday, a Saturday "urban mix market" and a Sunday "upmarket". Markets operated privately by LSD Promotions in conjunction with the Town Council

Thame

A range of markets run by the Town Council. Weekly charter market, monthly local produce market and other specialist markets throughout the year.

Wallingford

Weekly outdoor retail charter market, Town Council operated plus occasional additional street and speciality markets during the year. Approx 12 stalls.

Wantage

Twice weekly outdoor retail market, Town Council operated with 8 – 10 stalls.

Warwick

Weekly outdoor retail market operated privately by CJ Events with the District Council.

Woodstock

Twice monthly farmers market, operated by Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative. Approx. 12-15 stalls.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 4 – Good Partnership Working**

This list does not do justice to the successful partnerships between Council and private operator in many of these towns. In Cirencester, the Town Council have significantly expanded their overall market offer since 2015. The regular markets are delivered by the private operator, Cotswold Markets, but the Town Council has a team of three staff working alongside this private company to also commission additional specialist markets. The Town Council staff also enhance the promotion and marketing of the markets, they liaise with the traders, creating an excellent rapport and relationship and they ensure the markets are curated in line with the Town Council place management strategy – not the whim of the market operator. The market square is a stage upon which to present a series of activities on an almost daily basis – the Town Council holds the responsibility for this and works with private operators to deliver it.

| EVENT | WHERE | WHEN | TIME |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Charter Markets | Market Place | Mondays & Fridays | Until 3pm |
| Indoor Markets | Corn Hall | Sunday to Thursday | 10am - 5pm |
| Antiques & Collectibles | Corn Hall | Fridays | 8am - 3pm |
| Craft Market | Corn Hall | Saturdays | 10am - 4:30pm |
| Arts & Crafts Market | Market Place | Saturday 1st | 9am - 5pm |
| Farmers' Market | Market Place | Saturday 8th | 9am - 2:30pm |
| Bands in the Park | Abbey Grounds | Sunday 9th | 2:30pm - 4:30pm |
| France at Home Market | Market Place | Saturday 15th | 9am - 5pm |
| France at Home Market | Market Place | Sunday 16th | 10am - 4pm |
| Bands in the Park | Abbey Grounds | Sunday 16th | 2:30pm - 4:30pm |
| Farmers' Market | Market Place | Saturday 22nd | 9am - 2:30pm |
| Twilight Market | Market Place | Saturday 22nd | 6pm - 10pm |
| Vintage & Artisan Fair | Corn Hall | Sunday 23rd | 10am - 4pm |
| Bands in the Park | Abbey Grounds | Sunday 23rd | 2:30pm - 4:30pm |
| General Market | Market Place | Saturday 29th | 9am - 5pm |
| Indoor Market | Corn Hall | Saturday 29th | 10am - 4:30pm |

Information correct at time of going to print
Listings are subject to change

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July Markets (Image: Cirencester Town Council)

Markets in July - Cirencester

Part 2: Appraisal & Performance Analysis

2.1 Methodology

Our appraisal and analysis are derived from desk top analysis, site visits, interviews and observations. As well as visits to the three markets the subject of this study, we have made specific visits to other markets in the region for the purpose of this study including; Banbury, Bicester, Cirencester, Deddington, Moreton in Marsh and Woodstock as well as the farmers market at Witney and the Country Market at Eynsham.

Our analysis covers the economic, social and political considerations arising from the Markets Matter Report, referred to in Section 1. Our specific measurement has included:

- Capacity of market (max possible No. of stall pitches).
- No. of stalls present (on days visited, with an average taken if necessary)⁸.
- Occupancy (the Capacity divided by the No. of stalls present, expressed as a percentage).
- Trader Mix (the No. of unique stalls⁹ in relation to the Capacity, as a factor of 1).
- Footfall generated (market customer counts over an hour, multiplied for the duration of the market).
- Distance travelled by trader (in miles from home or storage unit, as appropriate).
- Turnover per stall (where the trader has provided such information in response to our survey question).

The results are set out in the following ways;

- Table of results alongside comparisons with six other local markets.
- Trader interview responses, in tabular form.
- Key comments from specific stakeholder interviews.

⁸ Where a specific stall (such as fruit/veg) has more than one pitch, the total no of pitches taken is used for this purpose, for instance a fruit/veg usually takes x4 stalls and we have used 4 in this instance.

⁹ In this instance fruit/veg would be counted as x1 stall

The analysis is similar in approach as other financial indices for town centres which predominately cover footfall, empty shops and town centre trader mix. The above metrics complement the NABMA toolkit designed for market operators to measure the economic performance of specific traditional retail markets.

2.2 Analysis Matrix

| | Town Population | No of Stalls | Occupancy (%) | Trader mix | Frequency | Footfall (per market) |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Carterton | 17,000 | 10 | 50% | 0.25 | weekly | 108 |
| Chippy | 7,000 | 12 | 60% | 0.40 | weekly | 272 |
| Witney | 30,000 | 14 | 70% | 0.45 | Twice weekly | 470 |
| Banbury | 50,000 | 22 | 73% | 0.40 | Twice weekly | 615 |
| Bicester | 38,000 | 29 | 91% | 0.69 | weekly | 780 |
| Cirencester * | 20,000 | 25 - 50 | 80% | 0.80 | Twice weekly | 800 |
| Deddington | 2,000 | 44 | 96% | 0.70 | monthly | 1,044 |
| Moreton | 5,000 | 49 | 95% | 0.57 | weekly | 2,050 |

➤ Item for Reflection No 5 – Market Data

The markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney are by far the smallest in terms of stalls and occupancy.

The footfall at Witney market is reasonable, compared to its comparatively small market size, suggesting this is a strength to build upon.

Carterton not fulfilling its potential, given the overall size of the town's population and has by far the lowest score for Trader Mix.

* Cirencester market is between 25 stalls (Monday) and 50 stalls (Fridays)

2.3 Financial Data

- 2.3.1 This section covers the financial data from WODC relating to the markets at Chipping Norton and Witney.
- 2.3.2 Annual income is the rent from stall holders and covers the year to January 2023.
- 2.3.3 Costs incurred includes – refuse removal and disposal, business rates and a share of the market manager.¹⁰

Income & Expenditure Table for Chipping Norton and Witney:

| | Annual Income | Refuse collection | Business Rates | Gross Profit | Staff allocation | Net Income p.a. |
|--------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Witney | £ 40,100.00 | £30,000.00 | £ 4,990 | £ 5,000 | £ 5,705 | (£ 700) |
| CN | £ 16,500.00 | £13,000.00 | £ 1,572 | £ 2,000 | £ 2,853 | (£ 850) |
| | | | | | | (£ 1,600) |

➤ Item for Reflection No 6 – Financial Data

At over £50,000 the annual income is good, with room for expansion in the size and frequency of markets on offer throughout the year, this income can be enhanced significantly. This provides interest for private operator involvement with a fee to be paid to the Council provided refuse arrangements can be rationalised. In Bicester, the market traders each take their rubbish away with them.

2.4 Interviews with Market Traders & Other Stakeholders

We have conducted interviews with each stall holder for all three markets and their comments have been added alongside the specific questions asked. For ease these are included within the Appendix.

We have also conducted interviews with customers and town shoppers, shopping centre managers, town businesses, council officers and members, private market operators, market and representatives from other towns. These are also included within the Appendix.

¹⁰ These costs reflect information from WODC Officers

We urge you to read each of these in full as they provide a useful insight. A summary for each town is included below:

2.4.1 Carterton

- Limited size and limited stall variety with poor footfall.
- There is no regular Carterton based trader at the market, the closest is Wantage based.
- No in-town market signage.
- Opportunity to bring to bring in more customers looking for a bargain who are shopping at the nearby supermarkets and parking adjacent to the market.
- Special events draw in 4,000 people – demonstrating the town support for gatherings and events.

2.4.2 Chipping Norton

- Doesn't reflect well on the town.
- The market site location is a disadvantage.
- The orientation of stalls and curation is poor.
- The main road is a barrier and traffic emissions for traders is a concern.
- Existing building works is an understandable short-term disruption but has acted as a catalyst for traders to leave and reduce size of market.
- Nothing to encourage shoppers to linger (dwell time is low).
- No electrical supplies for stall holders.
- There is no CN based trader at the market.
- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Christmas in Chippy market event is example of how well a special event market can be delivered.
- Ease of pedestrian navigation around the town is poor.
- Local businesses want to see a successful market but recognise changes required.

2.4.3 Witney

- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Reduced footfall at this end of town due to shop closures.
- Limited local business taking part in the market.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Stalls holders have to self-erect the stalls, which are cumbersome, heavy and require a van for transportation.
- Stall holder financial takings are positive demonstrating potential for market expansion.
- High Street closure and lack of clarity about it, creating town wide uncertainty and impacting customer satisfaction.
- No obvious connection between charter market and other market events, such as the Town Council's running of the Corn Exchange (and their indoor craft markets) and the proposals at Marriotts Walk.
- Thames Valley Farmers Market restricted in their efforts to promote Witney Farmers Market with much reduced signage permitted compared to other towns in which they operate

Part 3: Recommendations

We are inserting into the Recommendations, the six Items for Reflection paragraphs contained in Sections 1 and 2 of the Report. This is for ease of reference and because these items lead into the Recommendations.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 1 – what is the wider town strategy?**

Markets are an extremely valuable asset to a specific place. They have potential for tremendous benefits across the social, economic and political spectrum. They need to form part of the wider strategy and vision for that place – something we will consider when we set out our recommendations and next steps.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 2 – where does the responsibility sit?**

The future of the market cannot be left to chance or solely to the work of a specific local authority markets officer or to the business plan of the market operator. Within the Council there needs to be a responsible markets team where support and different skill sets can be drawn.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 3 - Can we mix the market types?**

For instance, where a town market is low in trader numbers and mix, could one combine a retail market with a farmer's market, to boost stall numbers and appeal?

In the majority of cases nationwide, retail market and farmers markets fall on different days. In successful towns, they are part of the town's calendar and branded in a similar way but usually held on separate occasions.

In Henley on Thames, once a month the farmers markets falls on same day as the charter market. The two markets are situated adjacent with customers mixing freely from one to another.

Farmers market cooperative, Thames Valley have a strong preference for a Friday or Saturday for a farmers market.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 4 – Good Partnership Working**

This list does not do justice to the successful partnerships between Council and private operator in many of these towns. In Cirencester, the Town Council have significantly expanded their overall market offer since 2015. The regular markets are delivered by the private operator, Cotswold Markets, but the Town Council has a team of three staff working alongside this private company to also commission additional specialist markets. The Town Council staff also enhance the promotion and marketing of the markets, they liaise with the traders, creating an excellent rapport and relationship and they ensure the markets are curated in line with the Town Council place management strategy – not the whim of the market operator. The market square is a stage upon which to present a series of activities on an almost daily basis – the Town Council holds the responsibility for this and works with private operators to deliver it.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 5 – Market Data**

The markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney are by far the smallest in terms of stalls and occupancy.

The footfall at Witney market is reasonable, compared to its comparatively small market size, suggesting this is a strength to build upon.

Carterton not fulfilling its potential, given the overall size of the town's population and has by far the lowest score for Trader Mix.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 6 – Financial Data**

At over £50,000 the annual income is positive, with room for expansion in the size and frequency of markets on offer throughout the year, this income can be enhanced significantly. This provides interest for private operator involvement with a fee to be paid to the Council provided refuse arrangements can be rationalised. In Bicester, the market traders each take their rubbish away with them.

3.1 Methodology

This section draws together our research with a set of recommendations and next steps. Our aim is to produce recommendations that are easily deliverable in the short term and practical to implement, as well as complementing a wider town vitality strategy over the longer term. We know the pressing financial constraints on all local authorities and have avoided unrealistic proposals. However, we do urge the District Council to implement change and foster better collaboration with other stakeholders – a staffing resource rather than an expensive fixed cost. There is no easy fix or simple set of solutions. Studies have been done before and if the solution was simple, they would have been fixed. Nevertheless, our research shows that there are successful markets across several of our neighboring towns, and we need to draw on their experiences. Many are keen to support and share their practices.

3.2 Engage Key Partners - Partnership Approach

Successful towns build strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders each with a keen interest in delivering a vibrant and dynamic town centre. Efforts by individual stakeholders on their own leads to an incoherent set of policies. This is a key piece of advice often shared by the High Streets Task Force to local authorities commissioning advice from their panel of experts.

In Witney there is already evidence of separately planned initiatives – each positive on their own – but arguably lacking an overarching strategy. For instance, the Town Council’s use of the lovely Corn Exchange is proving very successful but is there opportunity for shared promotion of the town charter market and the Town Council’s craft markets?

Also in Witney, the booking of Cotswold Markets for a Christmas fair on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th December is an exciting step for Marriotts Walk. It will be the first time the Walk has put on a market - will this appear as a separately promoted and branded event at one end of town, in competition to the weekly retail market? This is not to suggest that two-day event nor the other themed markets under discussion should not occur, but how will they all complement one another? There needs to be a clear programme of market events covering all town activity.

There is an active Town Council in all three towns each already proving to be a strong activator of positive intown initiatives. Typically, a District Council will need to instigate partnerships which might need assistance from Members to initiate and staffing support to take forward.

In Chipping Norton, the partnership might start with **District and Town Council** and **business representation** forming an action plan and working on an agreed strategy for town markets. This might be a good springboard into future informal joint working or at least to formulate a joint understanding and vision.

In Witney, there are more obvious additional stakeholders to include at the outset, where a town partnership should include:

District Council

Town Council

C of Commerce

Marriotts Walk

The town partnership should, as a starting point, create a single market events programme which can be shared with the public, using a single brand logo and town branded signage – underlining the joint working and joined up approach. Others may join the Partnership as the initiatives develop, such as Woolgate Centre (who do not have any current market plans or aspirations but who ought to form part of the discussions).

In Carterton, the Town Council is leading the town centre market initiative. The Officers need support and resources. We would recommend here a partnership with local **businesses and community** representation with strategic support from the **District Council**.

3.3 Engage with the Micro Businesses

We have been impressed with the support provided by the team at Cirencester Town Council to the town's market traders and town retailers. The council staff know each by name, they use social media with videos to promote the products and offers and they have a clear Balance of Trades Policy, providing clarity for possible competing businesses. This all takes place in parallel with the private operator, Cotswold Markets, organising the bookings and practicalities of the market. The Town Council ensure their own policies and vision for the market place are followed and activated. There is no hiding behind the private operator's style of management – instead the Town Council takes the lead.

3.4 Engage the Community

Each town has a catchment eager to engage and enjoy the benefits of their town centre. Many people are becoming tired of online retailing and want a fresh and real world shopping experience. There are many socially conscious individuals, looking for ways to reduce their carbon footprint and support an eco and environmentally positive way of life. Themed markets such as vegan fares, eco fares, re-use and zero waste are becoming more the norm. Youth markets, twilight and night markets are popular.

The weekly retail markets serve a loyal customer base. The cost of living crisis means that these markets are an important place for customers' weekly shop. This doesn't mean the markets only serve a specific demographic but it is a fact that retail markets provide access to affordable and healthy food often at lower prices than in stores.

Regular engagement with the community, understanding these trends and responding appropriately can be undertaken through the partnership approach recommended.

Community and customer inclusion within such a Partnership is encouraged.

Our research confirms there is a strong community and sense of town pride in each of the three places. Connecting with the community will lead to fresh ideas and innovation. The Council need to play a key role as instigator and then facilitator, allowing others to take the lead. Christmas in Chippy is an example of a very well organised and significant town event

already in the annual calendar. This proves such a themed market can be repeated perhaps on a smaller but more regular scale.

The pedestrian friendly High Street in Witney is causing a great debate in the town. Engage with the community and use the space for themed markets and street fairs.

Carterton has a fantastic community. The town might learn from other places. Levenshulme Market in Greater Manchester was only five years old when it won the Best Small Outdoor Market Award in 2020¹¹. It has a huge impact on its area making environmental improvements to its trading site by improving verges, introducing planters, cycle racks and wall art. The directors engage with local organisations and schools about career plans and becoming independent traders. This is a market that has changed the dynamics of an area, and its environment, by creating a vibrant community hub. It represents a real team effort. All profits from the market go back to helping the market operate in a socially, environmentally and financially sustaining way.

3.5 Animate & Green the Space

The community come into their towns for a variety of reasons, including to enjoy the pleasant environments. The public realm and in particular the market squares should provide space for seating with trees to provide shade and tables and chairs to enjoy a drink. These market squares are also a stage upon which a series of events can be held, including the regular markets but also other animation. In Cirencester on non-market days, there is often a large NHS bus in the square to provide a drop in health facility and information point. On other days there is a coffee vendor or series of planned street entertainers and musicians. Some towns plan a specific programme of entertainment, alongside the market and also as a separate large event within the market square. In Wantage a series of musicians would set up and play next to the market each Saturday market day, the town called these Wantage presents.... this being an important first step.

Retail markets are a great way to support a town in its transition towards a zero carbon economy through locally grown produce and facilitating more pedestrian friendly streets.

¹¹ [Great British Market Award Winners 2020 Announced! - NABMA](#)

Carterton has a lovely market square. It attracts a huge crowd for specific town events, celebrations and occasions of remembrance. The elements are there for attracting smaller crowds on a more regular basis.

On one side of the square in Carterton is an attractive green space. This is hidden from view on market days. Consider the curation and layout of the market, so the square's permanent and attractive features are enhanced and can be appreciated.

Chipping Norton is challenged by the main road and the lack of greenery. Town centre building works are a positive step for specific properties but have shrunk the size of the market and split it in two. Further building works may impede it further. A catalyst for positive change is needed here. An expansion in the specific town locations for market stalls will help create an excitement and encourage new traders to join the regular weekly markets.

In Witney the Corn Exchange is situated adjacent to the market square and offers excellent scope to act as a base for outdoor entertainment. The fish and chip shop next to the market square loses half of its outdoor seating and window frontage on market days. Consider ways of including the business into the market and enhancing its seating. Witney has a peaceful pleasant environment enhanced by closure of traffic through the High Street. Yet the road behind which provides a vehicular access to Langdale Street is scruffy with bin bags and vans parked.

3.6 Set up a Markets Team

This structure is for the Council to determine and we anticipate funding and staffing allocations will present challenges. Our research suggests that a team approach works best. One person to be the strategic lead Officer covering markets across the District then in addition a specific Officer for each of the three markets. We would suggest approaching the Town Council in each instance as it is possible that these specific Officers could be Town Council employees. Their role to be the liaison with traders, encourage new business, marketing and social media. They would have the support of Council teams for road closures, signage to be erected as required, and to have a marketing budget. A cross council approach will hopefully assist with a collaborative role enabling a shared set of skills. A reduced or

adapted version of the above, if financial constraints dictate, would be more appropriate than the current arrangement.

3.7 Join NABMA

The District should join the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) which is an umbrella organisation that helps, advises and promotes markets and events nationally. All market operators, council, private or otherwise should join for their excellent advice and help offered to members. They encourage collaboration and have the ear of Government and are constantly campaigning on behalf of the industry.

3.8 Private Market Operator

Meeting and discussions should take place with a private Market Operator. This should take place in parallel with the creation of a Town Partnership. We are advocating that the local authority retains the strategic management of its markets but outsources the operational management, to a formal medium- to long-term joint venture between the public and private sector. This model is useful where the local authority lacks the in-house capacity and capability to effectively manage the markets, and where external investment in stalls and infrastructure is required.

We imagine the private operator taking on the operation of the weekly market in Chipping Norton - assisting with the change of locations as well as the charter market in Witney.

They could take on the farmers market in Chipping Norton unless Thames Valley will reintroduce the market on a new pitch.

The selected operator should join the partnership. They should not be left in charge but to be given directions by the Markets Team. The operator would supply, erect and dismantle the stalls, take bookings and promote the opportunity. The operator would want to have an option to run other themed and speciality markets within each town.

As we have underlined already, outsourcing the markets and then stepping back is not going to work.

The private operator would assist Carterton by taking on themed markets in the market square.

3.9 Practical Steps

The following are solid steps forwards, in some cases capable of being implemented immediately.

Carterton

| Objective | First Steps |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Create a brand | <p>“Market Carterton”</p> <p>Make the market stand out, stand tall and stand proud.</p> <p>Introduce flags and bunting on market day.</p> <p>Banners and signposting.</p> <p>Aim to have events in the market on other days – not as competing markets but to encourage the use of the outside space</p> |
| Connect the market to the town | <p>Encourage those who live locally to be represented as stall holders. Not necessarily existing town retailers but those living locally with a vision and passion to operate a micro business. Try and encourage a new generation of stall holders to emerge.</p> <p>Build on the town’s history. Horticultural industry so as well as the fruit and veg, have stalls selling tomato chutney and other specialist produce. Encourage local producers, farmers and other local food connections to have stalls on market day. Carterton could have a combined retail and farmers market.</p> <p>Encourage more food sellers – to complement not compete with the existing cafes. If the burger van is inconsistent, find one that will commit to come each week and have two or three options. Not simply “fast food” or chip based offer, but also more wholesome food or vegan food.</p> |
| Carterton presents... | <p>Wantage and other towns have introduced music alongside the market. Encourage local bands, musicians to play music each week. Allow them to promote their music. Thought will need to go into</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | <p>the layout/curation of the square to facilitate this and for the music not to be too loud to prevent conversations amongst friends who gather to enjoy the atmosphere.</p> |
| Promotion | <p>Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Market Carterton” typeface (logo) and use as part of in-town finger posts and banners.</p> <p>Continue to advertise the opportunity to take on a stall, rent free.</p> |
| Improve market layout/curation | <p>Ensure benches can be used rather than the stalls impeding use.</p> <p>The green space is hidden behind a stall.</p> <p>Vets practice completely hidden each market day - open up the vet frontage so not hidden behind the stalls. A slight move of the card trader’s pitch and van will overcome. Relocate vans so not within the square.</p> <p>There must be a call for a pet food and pet accessory supplier to have a stall, given the position of the vets.</p> |
| Local Businesses | <p>There are very few shops in the town centre relative to the size of the town’s population. The market is an excellent opportunity for locally based aspiring business people to take the first steps on their journey. Advertise the opportunity, the free rents and the support on offer.</p> |
| Suggestions | <p>Encourage local community groups and charities to take part.</p> <p>Ask Forces Support to have a stall as a micro charity shop.</p> <p>Uniformed organisations (Scouts, Guides, Cadets).</p> <p>Carterton Educational Trust.</p> <p>Crocodiles of the World, situated at Brize Norton.</p> <p>Farm centre at Frilford and Cogges Manor Farm, nr Witney.</p> <p>Play Association play day in the square.</p> <p>Town has a wealth of sports club – how about a boxing demonstration from local club?</p> |
| Enhance use of the square | <p>Introduce permanent wooden stalls along side the wall of the Factory Shop -act as an easy way for a semi permanent pitch.</p> |

Chipping Norton

| Objective | How |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Create a brand | <p>“Chippy Markets”</p> <p>Emphasise on the plural – a range of markets in the town.</p> <p>The market is to be encouraged. Christmas in Chippy demonstrates the potential.</p> |
| Appearance & Curation | <p>Introduce new locations for town wide markets.</p> <p>Relocate Wednesday market to the High Street (outside Boots).</p> <p>With a second phase and expansion to Middle Row.</p> <p>Retain the existing market location for special events which require a wider open space (See below).</p> |
| Connect the market to the town | <p>Current traders travel a long distance and their takings are not high – this is not sustainable. Encourage those who live locally to be represented as stall holders. There are many local people and businesses who run stalls at the Christmas market for example.</p> <p>Build on the strong community links.</p> |
| Farmers Market | <p>Reintroduce the once a month Saturday Farmers Market with immediate effect in new location of High Street and look to combine with the former WI market.</p> |
| Operational | <p>Add in electric points in specific locations.</p> |
| Promotion | <p>Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Chippy Markets” typeface (logo) and use as part of in-town finger posts and banners.</p> |
| Practicalities | <p>Involve the Town Council in a wider town discussion about events and markets throughout the year.</p> <p>Take up TC offer for use of toilets for traders.</p> |
| Suggestions | <p>Use the Christmas in Chippy example and operate from multi sites depending on the specific market and day of the week.</p> <p>Twilight markets.</p> <p>Sunday quarterly antiques market (connecting the town back to the antique shops from the past, which have now closed).</p> <p>Annual beer festival with Hook Norton support – encourage other local breweries to take part.</p> |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| | <p>Short outdoor theatre productions – in conjunction with theatre, to help promote forthcoming events.</p> <p>Include these outdoor market sites as part of the literary festival.</p> <p>Book event</p> <p>Outdoor theatre performance</p> <p>CN Choral society</p> <p>CN Vintage Sports Car Club</p> <p>CN Railway Club (50th year in 2024)</p> <p>Cycle Repair Stands – repair hub?</p> <p>Re-use and eco fair</p> <p>Farm ED – farm and food education – not for profit organisation on Burford Road just outside the town – encourage their participation.</p> <p>Chipping Norton news stall / Build Chippy Better stall</p> |
| Town Council | Partner with the Town Council |

Witney

| Objective | How |
|-----------------------|---|
| Create a brand | <p>“Market Witney”</p> <p>Connect the potentially different markets across the town under a single brand, with a single vision and programme of events.</p> |
| Appearance & Curation | Utilise the attractive market square as a positive asset for the market. Utilise the benefits of the outside seating at Corn Exchange and the coffee shop and the fish and chip shop. |
| Witney presents... | <p>Wantage and other towns have introduced music alongside the market. Encourage local bands, musicians to play music each week. Allow them to promote their music. Encourage dwell time.</p> <p>This could develop into a Saturday twilight music event with food stalls.</p> |
| Practicalities | <p>Involve the Town Council in a wider town discussion about events and markets throughout the year.</p> <p>Agree with TC, the use of Corn Exchange toilets by traders.</p> |
| Promotion | Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Chippy Markets” typeface (logo) and use has part of intown finger posts and banners. |
| Operational | Engage in a discussion with private operator to take on the running of the twice weekly market but set clear criteria and aims/objectives for this to ensure there is a town wide focus and plan. |
| Local business | Encourage local business and locally based individuals to take part in the markets. Witney shops have expensive rents. Demand for the small units is high. The market offers excellent introductory opportunity for micro businesses to start their journey. Advertise the opportunity, introduce special offers for new traders. |
| Local butchers | There is evidence of antagonism towards fresh meat vendors at the town markets. This needs to be addressed. A farmers market cannot operate properly without a fresh meat vendor. A clear Balance of Trade Policy will help. |
| Use of High Street | Formulate a plan for use of High Street for special event markets such as food and craft fairs. |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Suggestions | Create a strong brand that can be used for all markets in the town. Proactively encourage local traders to take part. Discounts will be needed on re-launch to encourage participation. |
| Town Council | Partner with the Town Council |

3.10 Market Rights

When change is planned for markets it is important to consider the implications of any market rights issues.

Markets rights enable a market operator whether public or private sector, to potentially control the setting up of other markets within a defined area. Many market operators, in both the public and private sectors, take these responsibilities seriously and have adopted policies to control the setting up of markets. It is important that, as part of the consideration of an alternative model, a market operator considers the extent to which an existing markets rights policy can be accommodated.¹²

4. Conclusion

Markets breathe life into a town centre and provide positive energy. They epitomise the hustle and bustle of daily life. They are commerce in action. A customer looking for a one off bargain, or vital to one's weekly shopping on a budget or somewhere unique for lunch, the market environment is an enticing and wonderful experience. The high street is a very competitive environment and for any retailer, including markets, to survive they have to ensure they are providing what the customer wants. In addition to regularly reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of its operation, it is also important for market traders, the operators and local authorities to look for innovation and good practice from others around them. There are many towns in the region who would be delighted to offer support and advice to share the lessons they have learnt and experiences of promoting and growing markets. There are some excellent examples that we have given in this report. We encourage the Officers and Members at WODC to take up these offers of support and visit as many places as possible.

¹² From Retail Markets Management Models

Photographs



Carterton Market (30/3/23)



Carterton Market (6/4/23)



Carterton Market – vets practice frontage blocked



Carterton Market Square – Delightful green space, hidden



Carterton Market Square, War Memorial



Chipping Norton Market Day (26/4/23)



Chipping Norton Market Day (29/3/23)



Chipping Norton Market Day (26/4/23)



Chipping Norton Market Day (5/4/23) – the builders hoarding in background



Chipping Norton Market Refuse (29/3/23)



Additional pitch location – High Street Crown & Cushion



Additional pitch location - High Street Boots



Additional pitch location – Middle Row



Witney Market (30/3/23)



Witney Market (30/3/23)



Witney Market, view from High Street (13/4/23)



Witney Market, view from High Street (30/3/23)



Witney Market (vans blocking adjacent business)



Witney Market (vans blocking adjacent business)



Witney High Street (closed to cars)



Side street from Market Square

Appendix

Stakeholder Representation – we have had conversations with the following persons and grateful for their time and assistance.

District Wide

Duncan Enright Deputy Leader of WODC and the Executive Member for the Economic Development Portfolio

Pat Bliss, markets manager, Licensing team

Carterton

Nicholas Leverton, Town Counsellor and former town mayor.

Kay Linnington and Katie Zasada, Town Council

Chipping Norton

Patrick, Jaffe and Neale

Mayor Sandra Coleman and Luci Ashbourne, Town Council

Susan, an employee at Ticketty Boo

Nicola Edginton, Mark Making

Nathan, business owner Pie in the sky

Flower shop

Geoff Saul, Counsellor

Emma Kennedy, the Branch

Keith Ruddle, Chipping Norton News

Witney

Sharon Groth, Town Clerk, Town Council

David Gambier, Great Experience Travel Group and Witney Chamber of Commerce

Iain, an employee at Edgars

Rob Steere, Woolgate Centre Manager

Simon Jones, Marriotts Walk, Centre Manager

Others

Chris Gregory, Heartflood

Paul Almond, Banbury Town Council and former Street Scene at Cherwell District Council

Dermot McGillicuddy, LSD Promotions

Dave Joynes, Cotswold Markets

Richard Gould, Bicester and Kidlington Market Traders

Becky Coles, Cirencester Town Council

Alice Hemming, Cooperative Futures

David Busby, Thames Valley Farmers Markets

Nicci Taylor, Henley on Thames Town Council

Interviews with Market Traders

We interviewed each stall holder on each of the three markets. Their comments and suggestions should be considered and reflected upon.

Carterton – Interviews with Market Traders

| | |
|---|--|
| No of stall holders | 5 |
| What other markets attend | All attend at least three markets per week |
| How far travel from (one way) | Average distance travelled, 33 miles. Closest is the card retailer with 18-mile journey from Wantage. Hot food seller travels the furthest, 58 miles from Ledbury. Total of 334-mile round trip by 5 traders. |
| What additional stalls would you like to see | Deli, artisan products, picture framer, regular hot food (as existing one not consistent). |
| How well out of 10 (10 highest and 1 lowest) is the market promoted to public | Positive comments about the sign on way into town (part of the Carterton welcome sign) but otherwise limited positive responses. Average of 1 – 3 out of 10. |
| How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants | There is much scope for additional stalls. Very limited footfall. Those traders present are all fairly long-term traders. |
| Takings | Four traders responded. X 3: £200 - £300 X1 £500 |
| Council support | Admin is fine. Limited social media as TC has limitations on allowing trader comments on Facebook page. No in town signage. One trader had signs printed but not allowed to erect. |
| Other observations | Worst performing market for some of the traders. Market situated within triangle of supermarkets. Former locations better (town developments have led to changes). |
| How else can we help: | Increase footfall, better publicity, wider variety of stalls. Rent free for up to x4 weeks per year (allow holidays) Rent free /reduced rent for new traders |

Chipping Norton – Interviews with Market Traders

| | |
|---|--|
| No of stall holders | 8 |
| What other markets attend | All attend at least one other. 5 out of 8 attend another market most days. |
| How far travel from (one way) | Average distance travelled, 39 miles. Closest was within 20 miles and furthest 70. Total of 630-mile round trip by 8 traders. |
| What additional stalls would you like to see | Hot food, coffee – increase dwell time. Vegan food, pet food, cold meats and more deli offer. |
| How well out of 10 (10 highest and 1 lowest) is the market promoted to public | Average score: 2.50. No promotion. Other comments – need to promote alongside a strategy for whole town. |
| How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants | Unanimous response of the market being self-organised (by stall holders). One trader suggested a re-location to better site (less slope) but others resigned to existing tricky trading locations. Lack of toilet facility. |
| Takings | Six traders responded. x2: under £100 X2: £200 - £300 X1: £300 - £400 X1: £1000 + |
| Council support | Much appreciation and loyalty to Pat Bliss notwithstanding the poor promotion. |
| Other observations | Tricky site, on a slope. Exposed to weather and traffic – wind and traffic emissions (next to traffic crossing, static vehicles with engine running) Need to retain vans alongside the stall to provide shelter and anchor down. Worst performing market out of those attended by traders. No electric provision. |
| How else can we help: | Remove the hoarding (due to building works) which limits the pitches, splits the market in two parts and prompted retirement by 2 traders. Rent free for up to x4 weeks per year (allow holidays) Rent free /reduced rent for new traders Promotion and advertising In town signage Shuttle bus from villages |

Witney – Interviews with Market Traders

| | |
|--|--|
| No of stall holders | 9 |
| What other markets attend | Majority do 3+ in a week. Picture framer and plant stall only attend Witney. |
| How far travel from (one way) | Average distance travelled 30 miles. Closest less than 3 miles (the relatively new cake stall) and furthest is 69 miles. Total of 532-mile round trip by 9 traders. |
| What additional stalls would you like to see | Regular plant and cut flowers stall (existing Thursday trader is infrequent due to family circumstances). Hairdresser, cold meats, bric a brac, coffee, pet food. Artisan and crafts. One trader suggested an additional fruit/veg stall at other end. |
| How well out of 10 is the market promoted to public | Average score: 1.50 out of 10 (out of six expressing a score). One trader expressed satisfaction as has regular repeat customers. |
| How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants | Most keen for the high street to be re-opened. One trader happy with closure and suggesting use the space for stalls instead of traffic. Most not advocating a return to pre covid layout where central area had stalls. One trader been coming 4 weeks – had limited introduction and assistance with practicalities. Stalls are generally a bug bear for many. Require a van due to their size. Too heavy for average person to self-erect. Intimidating for new entrants. Lack of toilet facility. |
| Takings | Five traders responded. X1: £100 - £200 X1: £300 - £400 X1: £900 - £1,000 X 1: £1,000 X1: £2 - £2,500 |
| Council support | Appreciation and loyalty to Pat Bliss notwithstanding the poor promotion. |
| Other observations | One trader aspiring to have own shop after period of market trading. Cheese seller noted that customers prefer quality over value. |
| How else can we help: | Bring in more stalls, fill in the gaps. |

Comments from Pat Bliss, WODC Licencing

Chipping Norton –

The Charter (for Market and Mop Fair) has been in place for many centuries.

The market which I have known for several decades is at present in the midst of external building works which have cut the ground area and made access difficult. A number of traders stopped trading as there was not sufficient space.

Chipping Norton lower car park is on a quite considerable gradient and this does curtail some pitches especially during building works.

Chipping Norton was hit by the closure of the two big banks, by the market, which served the town and surrounding communities.

For many years all the outlying villages were served by buses and a regular bus run was always present on Market Day and weekends. The idea of people shopping, drinking, socialising etc in Chipping Norton is fine but the people who would use the town need their cars to get into Chipping Norton and therefore need parking.

Parking is a big issue in Chipping Norton and the recent change from WODC to OCC has made it difficult and likely to get worse. The whole of the top car park is always full and would be difficult to use for any other purpose.

Witney –

Again this and the Fair are within a Charter.

Loss of footfall has been noticeable since the High Street was closed to traffic.

The use of WODC Gazebos has been a problem as they are far too heavy for most stall holders and we have allowed traders to use their own as long as they are safe and in keeping. Unless WODC are willing and able to handle and erect the Gazebos they are not a good idea for the future.

To run further markets within the Town, the Square or on the Green would be for WTC and OCC as they are in charge of these areas except on Thursday/Saturday Charter Markets.

We do have several enquiries at present and hope to set up further stalls in the centre of the Market which was cleared and spaced out due to Covid.

With both Towns, the idea of other smaller individual markets is fine but needs to be closely monitored for Health & Safety, Public Liability, Food & Hygiene etc.

Interviews with Other Stakeholders

Carterton – Interviews with Other Stakeholders

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Appearance & Curation | Too few stalls. Pleasant market square. |
| Community Value | |
| Operational | Consistent |
| Promotion | Lack of in town signage, finger posts |
| Practicalities | Former locations better |
| Suggestions | |
| Town Benefits | Provides a market town narrative and connects back to its formation (horticultural business) |

Chipping Norton – Interviews with Other Stakeholders

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Appearance & Curation | <p>Not good visually</p> <p>Vans and stall backs create a barrier</p> <p>Slope doesn't facilitate increased dwell time</p> <p>Hard to see from High Street</p> <p>Not a good advert for the town</p> <p>Limited stall mix</p> |
| Community value | Forms part of the weekly routine but disappointing offer and mix of stalls. Loyal customer base. Sells products not available elsewhere in town centre. |
| Operational | <p>Disruption from the building works</p> <p>Potential for further disruption when HSBC developed.</p> |
| Promotion | <p>Little if any promotion of the market to public/visitors/tourists.</p> <p>Council have left it to its own devices and its own fortunes.</p> |
| Practicalities | <p>Arguably in wrong location – sloping site, exposed to elements and road noise and road pollution</p> <p>No electrical supplies (other than from local shop keeper)</p> <p>Discussion on markets quickly linked to town centre accessibility.</p> <p>Market on a slope is part of the overall challenge of navigating round town on foot.</p> |
| Suggestions | <p>Create a common branding for each stall.</p> <p>Add stall mix with offer to help increase dwell time – food stalls with seating.</p> <p>Create boards with “The Chippy Market – on Today” (or similar) for the stall holders to use as wind breaks instead of the vans, while making it look appealing and being advertising at the same time.</p> <p>A town with strong community spirit. Engender some of this spirit with local involvement.</p> <p>Town Council willing to consider market support and operation, provided costs covered.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Suggestions (continued) | <p>Ensure the proposals from the LCWIP complement the accessibility to/from the market's location.</p> <p>Consider re-locating the market. Look how Christmas in Chippy is run and locations of market stalls.</p> <p>Best way to implement change is to start afresh with new location.</p> <p>Enhance the long stay parking, build a second tier.</p> |
| Town Benefits | <p>Other town traders keen to see it be successful but at present operating below par and potential. Willing to see changes in operation and location for sake of improvements.</p> |

Witney - Interviews with Other Stakeholders

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Appearance & Curation | <p>This end of town has become quieter. Loss of some key retail units and significant empty units.</p> <p>Benefit of two adjacent cafes (Corn Exchange and Coffee #1) with outside seating</p> |
| Community value | <p>Question over competition with town retailers (butcher) and whether extra stalls will negatively impact.</p> |
| Operational | |
| Promotion | <p>No in town promotion</p> |
| Practicalities | <p>Loss of traffic to High Street is suggested to be leading to a loss of customers although opportunity for improved street scene and more pedestrian friendly town centre on back of the changes.</p> |
| Suggestions | <p>Include music and other entertainment</p> |
| Town Benefits | |

2.6 SWOT ANALYSIS

ASSESSING: CARTERTON WEEKLY RETAIL MARKET

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designated market square, fully pedestrianised 2. Adjacent to town centre parking 3. Large town 4. On the spot Town Council with designated staff support | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. limited local businesses taking part 2. Limited existing footfall 3. No clear branding 4. No income generated, as rent free to traders 5. No link to a wider town centre strategy 6. Limited community group representation |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growing town with new housing 2. Lovely square with attractive public realm 3. Limited retail provision in town centre, provides a unique opportunity for more traders on the market 4. Close to supermarkets and car parking, opportunity for more trade 5. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups 6. Build on the RAF connection and the war memorial situated within the market square 7. Chance to improve curation and layout 8. Space exists for more stalls. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing strength of the three town supermarkets 2. Potential for additional supermarket 3. Strength of Witney town centre – draws people away |

SWOT ANALYSIS

ASSESSING: CHIPPING NORTON WEEKLY RETAIL MARKET

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long standing market presence in town centre 2. Loyal customer base 3. Long standing traders present 4. Town with strong pride and community strength 5. Compact town centre – enabling cross visibility | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No local businesses trading 2. Practically difficult site 3. Busy road cutting through the small town 4. No or little promotion to the public 5. No branding 6. Poor visibility from top side of High Street 7. Poor curation of stalls, compounded by site impracticalities 7. Building works on adjacent property causing disruption and disjointed layout – led to cessation of the farmers market 8. Loss of parking spaces when market trading 9. No electric points 10. No other regular town markets or events (apart from Christmas) 11. No clear town centre strategy 12. Loss of farmers market, compounds bad news |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growing town with new housing 2. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups 3. LCWIP provides opportunity to improve street scene for pedestrians 4. Build on the success of Christmas in Chippy 5. Town Council willing to support 6. Options to re-locate and add to the pitch locations throughout the town | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing pressure on town car parking due to new housing on edge of town 2. Reliance on traders who travel great distance to reach the town 4. Older generation traders who may retire 5. Potential for more building work disruption from HSBC renovations 6. More residents travelling away from town for work, less shopping on midweek days |

SWOT ANALYSIS

ASSESSING: WITNEY CHARTER MARKET

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long standing market presence in town centre 2. Loyal customer base 3. Long standing traders present 4. Town with strong pride and community strength 5. Attractive market square 6. Positive buildings and uses adjacent | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only 1 local business trading 2. Footfall drops at this end of town centre 3. No or little promotion to the public 4. No branding 5. No connection with Town Council operated Corn Exchange with its own craft market 6. No other regular town markets or events 7. No clear town centre strategy |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growing town with new housing 2. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups 3. High Street pedestrianisation provides chance for additional markets 4. Town Council willing to support | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loss of trade due to high street road closure 2. Reliance on traders who travel great distance 3. Older generation traders who may retire 4. Markets at Marriotts Walk will draw people away and highlight weakness of the charter market |