

# REPORT TO TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE MARKET HALL REGULATIONS AND FEES

**Report Reference** T-24-13  
**Meeting Date** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Agenda Item** 7  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk



## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The Market Hall refurbishment is now under way with anticipated completion by the end of March. As part of preparing for the reopening of the market, it is necessary to update the council's market regulations and to agree new fees for stalls and venue hire.

## 2.0 MARKET HALL REGULATIONS

The Market Hall Regulations have been re-written and the draft is submitted to this meeting for approval. Previously, the Market Hall Regulations were a combination of policy and the terms of letting stalls at the market hall i.e. traders signed to agree to the regulations and the document also set direction for officer decisions on the management of the building. The revised document is designed to be a policy document and it is intended that more detailed licences will be issued and signed by the traders.

The sections of the revised policy are as follows:

Section	Summary
Introduction	Includes definitions used in the policy
General	Sets out policy in respect of official market days and the general management of traders in respect of access and opening. It also includes the council's priorities for decision making in respect of allocating stalls.
Licences	<p>The first part outlines the process of granting licences. It sets out that the Town Clerk shall determine the precise form of the licence and this is intended to enable licence terms to be varied as necessary when traders are recruited.</p> <p>The second part is more-or-less identical to the existing policy in respect of market fees.</p> <p>The third part contains mandatory licence conditions that must be incorporated in any licences granted. The intention here is that this sets a number of areas of market hall policy and high level expectations. Licences will also contain specific and general provisions that will govern occupation of stalls.</p>

The fourth part sets out a process for dealing with breaches of licences and how the markets officer must deal with them, this is to provide greater clarity in the process.

The fifth part deals with termination of licences, both voluntarily and in the event of a breach of terms. For regular traders this includes a right of appeal.

**Associated Codes** It is the intention to raise the expectation on traders in respect of matters such as marketing and visual merchandising and it is considered that the most flexible means of doing so would be through the issuing of codes/guidance documents. This would enable the markets officer to amend codes as required without it requiring a change to policy requiring committee approval. A trader code of conduct would be a mandatory code, the others would be at the discretion of the markets officer to respond to need.

**Gross Misconduct** This section provides guidance on examples of gross misconduct for clarity

**Complaints** This section details that any complaints about traders will be investigated and clarifies that any complaint about decisions of the markets officer would be dealt with through the council's complaints policy i.e. except where there is a right to appeal (which is for the revocation of a licence for a regular trader) any trader dissatisfied with decisions of the markets officer would complain through the usual process.

### 3.0 LICENCE FEES AND VENUE HIRE

#### 3.1 MARKET STALLS

The refurbishment makes changes to the layout of fixed stalls and enables the re-billing of electricity costs to traders. This will make rents more equitable as the traders not using significant amounts of electricity will not be subsidising those which do. The market will also now have a number of casual stalls available for ad hoc hire. It is therefore necessary to review the licence fee mechanism.

The proposed licensing fees for fixed (permanent) stalls are as follows. This is the annual rent, payable monthly. All rents subject to VAT.

- Café/Bar/Hot Food stalls - £45 per square foot
- Wet stalls (with drainage connection) - £32 per square foot
- Dry stalls - £25 per square foot

Based on these fees, the café would pay a slightly higher monthly fee (c. £10) but also have the additional costs of their energy use. The butcher and greengrocer would pay a lower monthly rent which would likely balance the costs of their energy use. The hairdresser would pay a higher fee but be provided with a sink/drainage which is not provided in their previous unit. Dry stalls would pay a slightly lower monthly fee and likely have minimal energy costs.

The proposed fees for casual stalls are as follows, again all rents are subject to VAT:

- Standard - £30 per day
- Makers Market/Christmas Market/special event - £50 per day

- 10% discount on block bookings (booking four or more days)
- Weekend (Friday/Saturday) - £50

### **3.2 VENUE HIRE**

The hall will be available to hire for a variety of uses outside market hours. The following hires policy and initial fees are recommended:

1. The initial standard hire rate is £17.50 (ex VAT) per hour. This is comparable with hire fees for the Methodist Church Hall and Jubilee Hall.
2. There be a minimum hire/charge period of three hours.
3. A 25% discount would be offered to charities and community organisations.
4. The Town Clerk may waive charges, a record of any charges waived shall be kept
5. Regular market traders will be entitled to a single three-hour hire per annum at no cost to run an event directly connected to their business (e.g. a wreath making workshop) and be offered the community rate for any further hires. At the Town Clerk's discretion this discount may be extended to long-standing casual traders.
6. Discounted hire may be agreed for annual hire agreements at the discretion of the Town Clerk, subject to the approval of the Town Centre Committee Chairman.

[A section of this report has been redacted due to confidential content in respect of ongoing negotiations.]

### **4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The committee should:

- a) Consider approval of the revised Market Hall Regulations
- b) Consider approval of the licence fees
- c) Consider approval of the hires policy