

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**BRIEFING NOTE  
TAVISTOCK GOOSE FAIR 2023**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware Tavistock Goose Fair is scheduled for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The purpose of this report is to provide a brief overview of aspects of this year's event, prior to a more detailed analysis post Goose Fair.
- 1.2 As reported on in the Goose Fair Consultative Meeting Minutes, this year's event has, as with many other events both nationally and locally, been affected by the prevailing economic climate and related challenges, not least rising operational costs and pitch take up.

**2. THE CURRENT SITUATION**

- 2.1 At the recent Fee Setting Meeting a 5% increase on pitch fees was agreed with stakeholders, reflecting a balance between increased costs and affordability. The event continues to welcome new businesses wishing to trade. However, there is a decline in the number of new applications received. In addition, similar to reports arising from last year, some existing traders are also choosing to not return whether it be due to rising costs, a change to their business model, retirement or touring events no longer suiting their financial model so well as in the past. Choices are therefore being made of where/when/how to trade, also acknowledging a rise in the number of events and festivals across the county and nationally.
- 2.2 The combination of factors meant, as a starting position, unallocated lettable rental (as measured against all space available) was until recently higher compared to last year (the first-year post pandemic). That is however not to say that traders will be materially underrepresented at the event as work is successfully continuing as outlined below (para 3.1 refers).

However, the challenges of filling the historic (pre-Covid) footprint remain. Turning to operational costs (excluding refuse) associated with safely delivering the event have either remained level with last year or increased by what would be considered a reasonable amount, approximately £600 across 7 services.

- 2.3 Unfortunately, though the refuse collection fees quoted to the Council for this year's event have significantly increased, to £14,109.00 from the 2022 figure of £10,370.00 (2019 being charged at £5,272.20).

### **3. WORKING SOLUTIONS**

- 3.1 As regards income - focused promotion and exhibitor research have resulted in an increase on pitches being let (para 2.2 refers) and the Works Manager has brought the unallocated lettable space down substantially, to iro to 350sq feet which represents a significant achievement in the circumstances. Recognising the proximity of the event, and to best manage delivery and ensure the historic footprint is at/close to full capacity, Market Road (an addition to the event pre-Covid) will not be included this year. However, the Butchers' Hall and Pannier Market offers are unchanged.
- 3.2 Acknowledging the views of stakeholders, exhibitor feedback has referenced the event being too long of a day due to the evening element. In line with this, year on year the Event Organisers face challenges regarding Exhibitors trading until the event closes. Therefore, and in consultation with the Showmen's Guild who operate the funfair until 9pm, it has been agreed the event would close slightly earlier for 2023, at 9pm. Thereby making the event more attractive to prospective exhibitors and enhancing safety.
- 3.3 A meeting with WDBC (who provide cleaning services) has been scheduled to review the rationale underlying the significant increase in refuse costs with the aim to meaningfully reduce the cleaning costs for 2023, to a figure more comparable to the 2022 event (which WDBC had advised to budget for), for 2023. The changes at Market Road, and new closure time will all form part of negotiations.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Arrangements for the 2023 event are now substantially in hand and a review will be undertaken, in the normal way, post event.
- 4.2 The ongoing commitment of the Council and community partners to continuing to deliver and develop a successful and relevant historic community event on a cost neutral basis is heartening.

**BECKY ROWE  
WORKS MANAGER  
SEPTEMBER 2023**