

Kay's Cards Ltd.
Morecambe Festival Market
Morecambe
LA4 4DW

11.09.2012

Dear Sirs/Madams,

RE: Morecambe Festival Market Cabinet Meeting

My Husband and I have been a Market Trader on Morecambe Festival Market for the last seven years and before us, my Father owned it for twenty-eight years. I worked with my Dad on the Poulton site and remember the hustle and bustle of customers, many arriving by coach. As people's shopping expectations and habits changed, L.C.C. built Morecambe Festival Market which has served us well for approximately the last seventeen years. However, once again we are at a point where customers love shopping in markets but expect more from the experience as they are so accustomed to what supermarkets have to offer.

If you go into Morrisons the fruit and vegetable area is called "Market Place"; subconsciously the customer is in a market but they have been greeted by heating, free parking, automatic doors and free toilets.

If we are going to be part of Morecambe's future we have to move with the times and match the competition.

The question has been posed; where shall a new market be situated?

We have thought long and hard over this and after visiting other markets and comparing them to ourselves, we strongly believe we should remain in our current location and refurbish the existing building for the following reason.

The majority of Morecambe Festival Market's trade comes in summer from holiday makers. Few locals in comparison support us in winter (this may be because of the cold). We believe when a customer sits at home wondering where to go for a run out, they think they are going to a 'seaside' market, where if for example the market is moved next to the Arndale Centre we become 'just another shop', not a day out. We would then lose our important summer trade and the reason the coach companies use to encourage passenger numbers. Moving us could be the death of Morecambe Festival Market.

Heating

Rightly or wrongly, customers believe they are in an indoor market and as such they are shocked when entering and find it colder inside than out. You can debate all you like about it being an indoor or outdoor market on paper, but the important point is the customers think it is an indoor (roof/walls) and expect a certain level of warmth. As traders we understand we sometimes have to suffer working conditions of -2 to -8°C for ten hours a day, four days a week, for three to four months of the year in order to earn a living, customers don't and they are taking their money elsewhere. Thus making it harder for us to make a living and even harder for L.C.C. to keep the market full, losing rent as a result. With

the changing climate we firmly believe we need temporary heating in for **this** winter and permanently fitted heating as soon as financially possible.

Trade lines have changed over the years e.g. you don't buy a watch, you check the time on your mobile. Children's toys have to be branded or computerised and books come on tablets not on paper. This is another reason for heating; the stalls left vacant by watch and toy stalls etc need to be filled by new products, for example hairdressers/nail bar (which has just opened) but how is she going to wash hair when the only thing coming out of her taps in winter is ice.

Free Parking

This is something that could be sorted very quickly. A lot of Councils have already implemented this and are now advertising it. It would be good P.R. for L.C.C. to get in there early and get it on the radio/television etc on how they are helping Morecambe traders. There are several options:

1. First hour free
2. Token 10p for one hour
3. Free after 3pm or 9-10am on market days.

We feel the best would be first hour free; this would encourage the locals to shop with us. At the moment is they go to the Arndale Centre **they pay**, then they move the car to us because they can't carry their heavy shopping from Tesco, then they have to **pay again**. This is the reason they all use one of us, resulting in low footfall. Nobody is going to pay twice to shop in the same town.

We did debate about first half hour free instead of first hour, but this would result in customers running in and using one or two stalls then straight out again. To keep the stalls full the customers need time to circulate around the whole market, ensuring its future.

Personally, we sell cards from 45p each, wrapping paper – four sheets for 50p, making us one of the best value retailers in the area however not when you incorporate the £1.20 per hour car parking charge.

Free parking would encourage more to use us, increasing the market footfall. Whatever is lost in parking charges would be offset by the rent i.e. ten empty stalls equals a £30,000 a year loss.

Coach Parking

Most passengers on a coach trip are of a mature age, because of this we need to make changes to coach drop off and pick up point. I have rung and spoken to several coach companies and they all say the same thing. Older people, some with walking difficulties need dropping preferably next to the toilets or as close to the market as possible. If they are dropped or picked up close to Next they either lose sense of direction, being in a strange town, or physically cannot walk across Morrisons car park and back (taking their life in their hands).

The loss of five car parking spaces in order to build a coach lay by seems a small price to pay when balanced against the increased footfall that coach companies will provide on a daily basis.

Signage/Advertisement

L.C.C. could spend £500,000 refurbishing the market but without plenty of road signs from a few miles outside the market in all directions, people still won't know where we are until they arrive in our car park. This has been pointed out by customers on many occasions when talking with them.

A lot of our customers travel from Wigan/Burnley etc, if they don't listen to Bay Radio or get The Visitor they don't know the Kite Festival or Seaside weekends are on. Morecambe desperately needs advertising boards on lamp posts coming into Morecambe as well as on the prom with 'where we are' and 'what's on'. The Council is doing a lot of work to stage events yet failing to advertise them visually.

Rent payments

As traders we would also like to bring to your attention the issues we are facing regarding the new rent collection process.

We know no matter what we say this issue will not be changed. L.C.C. will continue to collect payment for rent as they see fit even though they broke a system that worked and replaced it with one that has lots of problems. The staff collecting rent do not work in the market so there are constant mistakes on invoices. Traders continually have to check mountains of paperwork L.C.C. send us, then we have to ring [REDACTED] who is never in, before being told someone will get back to us when they have checked the 'problem' out. Previously, any query could be sorted at the office window within minutes, now it can take three to four days of ringing backwards and forwards. To add to this, I'm sure the new system must be costing L.C.C. far more to maintain with the amount of man hours and paperwork that is required as opposed to the old system.

Parking fees costs are costing the high street



Mary Portas' report criticised councils for killing off high streets with car parking charges.

CONGRATULATIONS on winning the £100k, but while councillors celebrate the Portas money, I wonder how many of them have actually read the Portas Report which strongly criticises councils for killing off the high street with car parking charges and the efforts they go to, to enforce them. It recommends innovative tariffs whereby the first one or two hours are free, or schemes where you can redeem the cost of your parking fee when spending money in the town. This is the sort of thing that would bring people back to the high street, and in turn, there will be less and less empty shops. What they lose on car parking charges will be made up over time by the additional rent and rates. Portas also venomously slams councils and planners for allowing a proliferation of supermarkets sound like anywhere you know? To be honest, I'm surprised the MBIs haven't suggested another supermarket for

the contentious former Dome area, it seems to be the limit of their vision. Finally, while they have been chasing this £100,000, who in the council has been fighting for a good slice of the £60m under spent for the North West in European funding? Lancaster City Council have confirmed it to me that they are aware of this massive pot, yet their Morecambe Area Action Plan says there is no money. Perhaps they just mean there is no money for Morecambe as Lancaster wants it for their Williamson and Ryelands Parks regeneration, city centre regeneration, Science Park, the side East regeneration and the new Heritage Park they want to create below the priory and castle. We are just plainly living on the wrong side of the river.

Ian Hughes
Morecambe
Full address supplied

Don't let us go the way of Lancaster Market.

Way forward agreed for Lancaster Indoor Market Hall

COUNCILLORS have agreed the next steps to be taken on the future of the Lancaster Indoor Market Hall, which is due to be vacated this autumn.

This follows a decision last year that talks should take place to negotiate with the council's landlord for the surrender of its lease, and with the traders for vacant possession of the market building by the end of 2012.

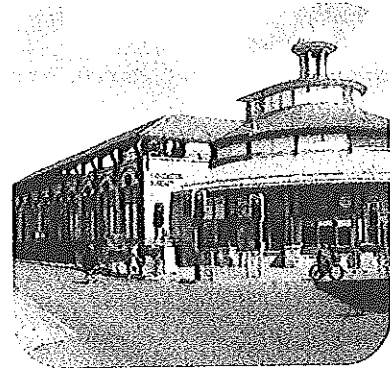
Since this decision was taken, negotiations have continued with both Allied, owner of the market building and the council's landlord, and market traders.

While further negotiations need to take place with Allied to

secure the best possible terms in respect of the market building, the council recognises that the continued uncertainty on the future of the market has caused great difficulties for traders.

Councillors therefore agreed that as a next step, traders should be compensated, with a view to them leaving the building over the next few months. It provides traders with certainty over their futures and provides for them to find alternative premises and keep their businesses running.

This decision was taken following valuation, legal and accountancy advice that it was the best way forward to put the



council in the best possible position to safeguard the interests of taxpayers in the long term.

Negotiations with Allied – owner of the market building and the council's landlord – will continue.

The outcome of these negotiations will be brought back to councillors for further consideration.

Morecambe Action Plan Recommendation



THE HEART

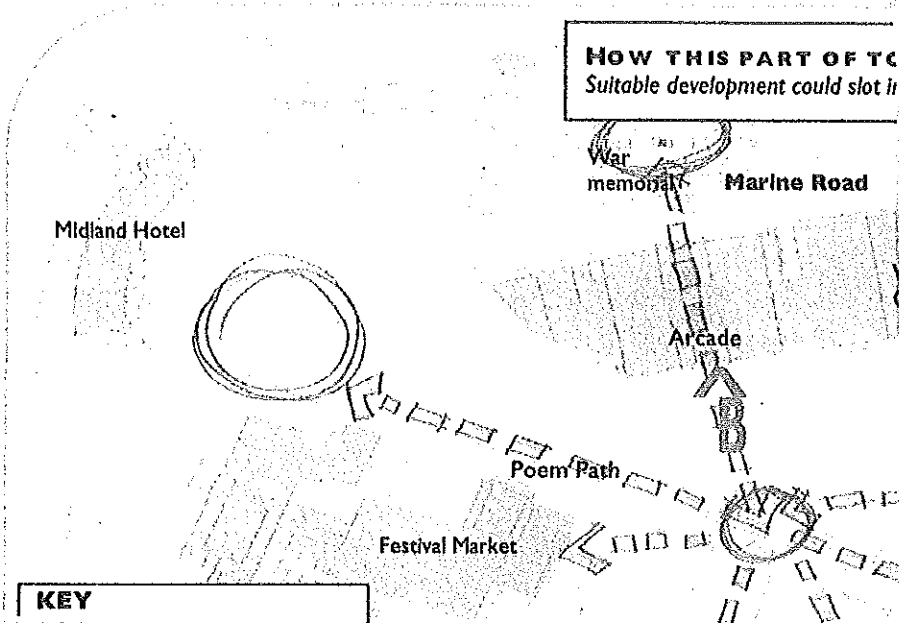
Festival/ Central Drive

One way and another many people who come to central Morecambe arrive at the western end of Central Drive - whether by car, foot, cycle, bus or train.

However there is little sense of arrival or direction as to where to go and what to do. This area is very much part of the town centre yet it feels lacking, hollowed out. Here we need to carve out the basis for a new draw landward of the seafront. It must attract and hold people, including in poor weather. The places and routes for pedestrians should connect well to Victoria Street, surrounding areas and the seafront via

an improved poem path and a refurbished Winter Gardens Arcade. The Festival Market is part of this. This would mean changing parking here, perhaps narrowing Central Drive in parts to provide new parking and new servicing for the Festival Market. It would mean change and redevelopment of land to the rear of the Winter Gardens. Structuring development to encourage pedestrian movement and creating good spaces will be critical. Public and private investment will be required.

'Much of the excess parking lies along the (somewhat mis-named) Central Drive, which also houses the (equally mis-named) Bus Station.'
P Brown



A long road to travel

The issues of public transport and parking are critical to the success of any town centre. This is particularly true of Morecambe, a town and resort gradually climbing it's way back up the ladder from the ravages of recession and lack of investment, plus the unique difficulties experienced by a seaside town forced to compete against cheap flights to the sun and the idiosyncratic trends of the 'staycation' holiday makers and daytrippers.

So as we celebrate the fantastic news the town has, against the odds, secured Portas funding, we need to make sure any decisions that are made regarding transport and parking are sound - and not made without careful consideration. The Hackney Carriage Association proposal to eliminate free parking on a roadside with the creation of a taxi rank solves, perhaps a taxi issue, but this has left traders fuming at the loss of up to 600 potential passing parking trade customers every week. The move would perhaps push shoppers toward paying for parking - or would it push them out of Morecambe altogether? The issue is an unexpectedly thorny one and one that needs looking at from every angle. There is no easy answer and we have a long road to travel before we solve all the issues.

As Ian Hughes points out (see letter to right) It is the Mary Portas report itself that insists free parking, or incentive schemes, are the way forward in getting bums on seats in our cash strapped retail centres. Public transport, including taxis, is also critical and it is these decisions right now that will allow us to get the mix right. Challenges, including the taxi rank debate featuring on today's Visitor page one, must not be addressed in isolation and the residents, the business chiefs, the movers and shakers and politicians of this town must put the pursuit of short term victories aside to ensure the future of Morecambe.

MARKETS are important to Morecambe and in most towns are part of what makes a place busy. The City Council owned Festival Market in Morecambe has been described by market traders as 'technically a covered outdoor market' with temperatures dropping significantly in the winter which is a problem for both traders and customers.

Into the future the Festival Market would benefit from a partial redevelopment and refresh to tackle some of the deficiencies outlined.

Ways need to be found to let management be innovative and re-brand its offer. The building issues need addressing. It should certainly front more closely and actively to the Poem Path and needs much better signage and linkages from and to other parts of the town.

The privately operated Sunday Market is a significant draw valued by many. Ways to sustain and improve this into the future and the benefits it gives are to be explored.

For bus and rail travel see pages 16

Morecambe Action Plan 13
have highlighted the problems we see hear about everyday.

IF parking L.C.C. is better off with a rise in car they need to re-invest some of it back into the market to keep the car park full.

Council £1m better off

by Greg Lambert

CAR parking charges are set to rise by 20p to earn the Town Hall an extra £186,000 – even though Lancaster City Council has underspent this year by £1.12m.

The pay and display price hike is among fundraising ideas to be discussed at the next council cabinet meeting on January 18.

The suggestions are to increase charges by 20p in short-stay car parks for stays of up to one hour, two hours, three hours, four hours and evenings, and in long-stay car parks for stays of up to one hour and evenings.

The £186,600 this could raise is £76,300 more than the amount the council had

...but car park fees set to rise

targeted to achieve from increasing car parking income.

The cabinet will also consider reducing parking permit costs for the public by five per cent while increasing council staff and members' permits for 2011/12 by six per cent.

Staff

But council staff and councillors will still pay about 75 per cent less than the general public for car parking permits. Council workers pay £210 for a 24/7 permit, which normally costs about £800.

At the same meeting at Lancaster Town Hall, cabinet will also be asked to rubber-stamp plans to increase some pest control charges and introduce new fees for some memorial plaques in council cemeteries.

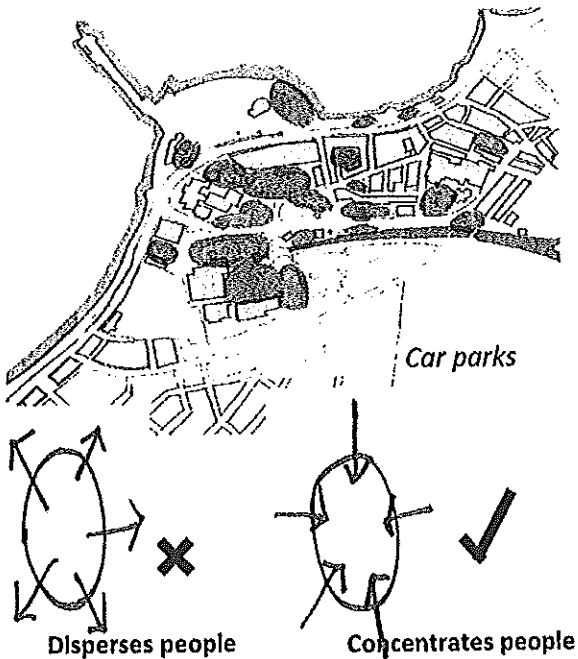
The council is projecting a £1.12m underspend for the current financial year.

The savings include £410,000 on waste collection, £215,000 on the concessionary travel scheme for the elderly and £191,000 on restructuring senior council management over the past 12 months.

This extra money could be put into the council's balance account, increasing it to £2.36m.

A council report says: "It would mean the council has increased flexibility to manage its future position".

■ See Town Crier – Page 8.



Car parking

Sufficient well located, well managed car parking is essential to any town centre but it should not define the place. Unfortunately for Morecambe, in the eyes of many it largely does. The very central part of the town at Central Drive is largely given over to car parking. Further, while the central location of much of the parking is undoubtedly convenient the location of much of it is actually counter to what is needed to make for the strong and vibrant town centre that people want. In most successful centres people park on the edge and walk in. In Morecambe the location of some of the parking has the opposite effect. People park and walk out from these, they disperse and in any one visit many people perhaps only experience a very small part of what is on offer. This pattern of movement is exacerbated by the charging regimes for much of the parking – on and off street – that largely encourages only short stay visits. All this limits pedestrian movements and constrains footfall and in turn expenditures.

It may not be a bad thing to lose some parking spaces for a coach drop off.

We need to stay in the same location so we can benefit from any development of the seafront.

Fronting it up

Plans for new indoor entertainment arena at the former Frontierland site

AMBITIOUS plans have been revealed for a new 2,000 seater entertainment arena and indoor ice rink at the former Frontierland.

The ex-fairground could also become home to a sculpture gallery, 50 apartments, shops and cafes and a spectacular walkway, linking the site to the railway station and the seafront.

InsideLA, a Lancaster-based group of designers, project managers and tradesmen, have unveiled their 'Morecambe Central' project hoping the public will get behind it.

Gary Lightfoot, project manager, called it "potentially the most important development for Morecambe in decades".

The InsideLA team also includes James Halliday, CEO of Lancaster-based digital marketing company 21EV, and Lancaster architect Shaun Graham.

by Greg Lambert

"This proposal would enhance Morecambe's desirability as a tourist destination," said Mr Lightfoot. "With the demise of The Dome a few years ago, Morecambe now has no purpose-built, large auditorium and we think this is a serious hindrance to Morecambe's weekend festival ambitions."

The blueprint for the Frontierland site comes hot on the heels of plans to revolutionise the Polo Tower.

Robert Aitken, an international museum designer from Bare, recently unveiled his vision for a one-of-a-kind 'Digital Tower' to replace the disused former fairground ride.

Mr Halliday said InsideLA would be interested in working with Mr Aitken to make both schemes happen.

InsideLA, who have spent three years developing their

concept, are also in talks with site owners Morrisons.

The land is believed to be available for around £3m. They would also have to obtain planning permission from Lancaster City Council before work could begin.

A spokesman for Morrisons said: "We are continuing our discussions with the council planning department about the future use of the (Frontierland) site and will be considering all options."

"We will be meeting with the planners shortly to consider how the site can be integrated as part of the council's intention for links to the town centre."

Following the closure of The Dome and The Carleton, the Platform is the town's sole remaining purpose-built live entertainment venue. The 1,000-capacity former railway station is operated by Lancaster City Council.



THE PROPOSAL:

- An entertainment arena hosting everything from pop concerts, with up to 2,000 seated and 1,000 standing, to banqueting. Plans include an elevated café/bar and a flat roof with a lido, fully wind-protected by surrounding roof cowling, and with uninterrupted sea views.
- A stylish seafront row of café/gallery/retail units on the ground floor for lease.
- An indoor, recreational ice rink with sea views. InsideLA say they are in talks with an ice rink developer and operator.
- A terraced row of units to be operated as exhibition space, particularly for touring sculpture exhibitions.

- A large, sheltered outdoor area to be used as a weekend festival and events site.
- Fifty first-floor apartments, some of which could be offered as short-term accommodation for event operators and their staff, and ground-floor workshops for lease to local craftspeople and artists. Some could also be provided as housing for residents.
- A spectacular walkway originating at the railway station and leading along the back of the Morrisons supermarket, rising around the south side of the Arena and extending over the seafront to a new pier at the high tide line. This walkway could draw pedestrians from the railway station and the Arndale Centre.