

APPENDIX L

National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Local Council Forum held at the Town Hall, High Street, Bridgnorth, held on Friday 30th June 2017

Delegates were welcomed by **Councillor Chris Rosling-Joseph, NABMA President**, and **Rob Smith, Chief Executive of the SLCC**. The Town Mayor of Bridgnorth, Councillor Ron Whittle, also welcomed delegates to Bridgnorth and said how delighted he was that the Forum was to be held there this year.

The Forum opened with an enthusiastic presentation on the recent **Great British High Street Award awarded to Bridgnorth**. **Sally Themans** outlined why the entry had been put in, what partnerships were involved, what was involved into the market and what outcomes. Sally started her presentation by showing a fantastic film about all that's good in bridgnorth based on her "Love Bridgnorth 100 best things about Bridgnorth" Facebook promotion which showed the town off at its best. She also showed some local people and visitors to the town in a short film speaking about what they love about Bridgnorth.

She also spoke about the Portas Report and the importance of High Streets and events in the town today. She explained about how the entry was put together, where they took the judges, what was important to promote the town and the follow up to the award being made. She spoke about the ongoing benefits of the win to the town and the publicity it had generated through national press and magazines. Sally explained that businesses in the town had had a presentation on the "digital platform" and the benefits to their businesses and each business had received a £40 voucher toward help from a local company enhancing their digital presence on the internet.

Anne Wilson, Town Clerk of Bridgnorth Town Council, made a presentation on the award to **Bridgnorth for the Best Small Speciality Market in the Great British Markets Awards 2017**. This award was for the Christmas Lighting Up Night which had started life until six years ago, as Carols, a prayer and the Town Crier around a Christmas Tree and now was a major event on the events calendar in Bridgnorth, the amount of people that come and the difference it has made to the town. Anne set the scene with regard to Bridgnorth, the make-up of the Town Council, the budget, precept and expenditure.

Anne continued by explaining about the difference of the markets in Skipton and Bridgnorth to the remainder of England in as much as they are unregulated and she spoke about the Charter Market under the Town Hall. In talking about the Christmas Lighting Up event, she spoke about the Community Events Working Party, the facilitation and administration of the Town Council and how the Working Party came to be. She spoke about the aims of the event for the local and countrywide interest, promoting footfall and increasing tourism in the local economy, and more importantly, to promote partnership working with market activities in the High Street and local arts and crafts, promoting local food and drink. It was the first event on the events calendar to celebrate Christmas and the object was to provide an evening of family entertainment. In linking with the community, the event offered opportunities for businesses to promote themselves through sponsorship and other involvement, including having a stall at the event. The Lighting Up Night offered community groups and organisations to promote themselves to raise much needed funds and the opportunity for the Council and Community Events Working Party to work with and promote all sectors of the community, taking into account their needs and ages. She spoke about new innovations, including Blachere Illuminations' Design a Light competition, the involvement of the Carnival Royalty, Shropshire Council's free car parking on the evening and how businesses are now sponsoring new lighting for Low Town. She spoke about the social media and publicity side of the event and how it is being used to promote not only that particular event but Bridgnorth as a whole. The Lighting Up Night is now one of the

largest events in Shropshire and the number of participants and attendance is increasing year on year, with events over subscribed in terms of space. It has got the foundation of being a market community activities involvement and its drive shows the community what can be done at a low cost. The Town Clerk spoke about other events in the town and the reasons events are put on, including building a sense of community, bringing all sectors of the community together, encouraging visitors and tourists to the town, there is opportunity for inward investment and opportunities for local groups and organisations to raise much needed funds. It was felt that it puts life into the town as whole, creates lasting partnerships and offers the opportunities for the sceptics to come on board.

After coffee, the **Chief Executive of NABMA, Graham Wilson, launched the KPR Midlink Great British Markets Award for 2017**. This was followed by the launch of the NABMA/SLCC Toolkit for local council markets. He spoke about the power a market should have in the markets manual, the markets forum, markets performance and research and markets promotion. He offered information about case studies in Forest Row, West Sussex and Oswestry Indoor Markets, Saffron Walden, Bridgnorth as award winners in terms of markets. He spoke about the NABMA services which included a health check. There were template documents offered, advice on problems with markets, trainings, markets forum and regional training and conferences.

The final session at the Forum was a presentation by **Graham Wilson** on what it means for local council markets to be professionalised, how you improve your markets and what lessons and good practice are available. With regards to professionalising, he spoke about benchmarking, management models and performance accreditation with topical issues currently being business rates, VAT liability, markets manifesto and safety procedures. Helen Ball, Town Clerk in Shrewsbury, spoke about the current VAT issues that Shrewsbury Town Council were having and the possibility that they would have to pay a substantial amount of backdated VAT given a ruling made by the local VAT office and NABMA was challenging this as it could have wide implications for councils and market operators long term. Graham continued by talking about the five year manifesto mission for markets which NABMA and the National Market Traders Federation had, on behalf of the whole retail and wholesale markets industry, looked for various policy issues to be addressed by the government and regional and local levels, as well as parliamentary members and elected mayors and local councillors. He spoke about the importance of safety procedures within a market following the Berlin Market terrorist attack and guidance for crowded places. Information was available through the National Counterterrorism Security Office. Graham continued by speaking about the various management levels within markets and only private, trader owned partnerships, charity, community and company.

At the end of the Forum, the Town Mayor of Bridgnorth thanked everyone for coming and hoped that they had the opportunity to visit the town whilst they were here. The NABMA Chief Executive thanked the Town Clerk and Bridgnorth Town Council for welcoming delegates to Bridgnorth and felt that it had been a very worthwhile event. Graham Wilson invited everyone to have a look at the Charter Market under the Town Hall.

Anne Wilson
Town Clerk
July 2017