

**Policy & Resources Committee**

---

<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 November 2016</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Charter Market Rent</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager</b>

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide background and a recommendation relating to a request for a rent free period received from the Secretary of the Thame Market Traders Cooperative. (Appendix 1).

**Background**

2. As reported to the Community, Leisure and Recreation Committee (with updates by e-mail), Oxfordshire County Council's Highways department scheduled significant maintenance works on the footpath between the Upper High Street and Upper High Street car park which was due to commence on Tuesday 11 October 2016.
3. It was anticipated that the work would take 15 working days. Work actually commenced on Thursday 13 October, with weekend working scheduled to make up time. Three consecutive markets dates of 11, 18 and 25 October 2016 were expected to be affected.
4. The extent of works means that during this period the Tuesday Charter Market needs to use the whole area of the car park including the north east side road running along the car park. Council Officers have been working closely with the Charter Market Co-operative to minimise the impact of the planned maintenance works. The Farmers Market held on 11 October 2016 was relocated to the area by the Town Hall to increase operational space. Highways have implemented a road closure of the north east side road, police assisted with removing cars to prevent any overnight parking on the Monday night and the Fire Watch Manager has assisted with emergency access. Officers had issued letters to businesses, residents and permit holders informing them of parking restrictions. The maintenance team has undertaken road closure operational requirements of placement of signage and no parking cones.
5. The Market Traders have worked hard to ensure all traders are accommodated within the required layout. However, approximately 5-7 traders have indicated that they will not attend the market while the maintenance works are taking place.
6. The temporary loss of immediately adjacent parking, both in the car park and on Upper High Street itself, has impacted on trade.
7. Market tolls are collected every week for the whole trading area whether stall holders trade or not.

**Resource Appraisal**

8. The Council charges a fee of £1,342.32 per week on the Market Traders Co-Operative. A reduction of three weeks in total would be a total impact of £4,026.96. In normal circumstances 39 stalls and the community stalls are organised by the Market Traders Co-Operative Limited. Officers recommend that the Council recognises the operational disruption caused by the Highways work and consider, as recompense to the Market Traders, that a 50% rent reduction be provided, at a cost to the Council (for 3 weeks) of £2,013.48.

9. As at 25 October, it appears that the work may not be complete in the 15 working days defined, and may impact on a further 2 market days. For each market day impacted beyond 3, there would be an additional cost impact of £671.16
10. The request for funding for half term activities of £300 will be allocated from the Market publicity budget.

**Legal Powers:** Food Act 1984, s50

**Recommendation:**

***The Committee is asked:***

- i) ***To consider the Officer's recommendation to charge the Market Traders Co-operative half the weekly tolls as recompense for the operational disruption during the period the Highways works are carried out at the Upper High Street.***