



STARTFORD-UPON-AVON REGULAR MARKETS AND EVENTS CASE STUDY APRIL 2020.



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Briefly describe your market(s) during 2019 before Coronavirus – days, type, number and type of traders, occupancy rate, footfall?.

Stratford-upon-Avon is a picturesque medieval market town on the banks of the River Avon. Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council are both market authorities and together have contracted LSD Promotions to provide the markets held in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Traditional markets are held throughout the year on Fridays and Saturdays in Rother Market, towards the top end of town. Our Friday Charter Market trades fairly well and has a strong core of loyal traders selling produce from fresh fish, ground coffee, bread, fruit and veg, plants and flowers and a diversity of other goods from handbags and shoes to watch batteries or a bath plug. Footfall is definitely weather dependant but committed locals will 'weather any storm' for their weekly supply of fresh produce. The Charter Market typically hosts fifty stalls.



Rother Market takes centre stage once again on Saturdays for the Urban Mix Market. Mix is the right word as it has just about a bit of everything including popular antique stalls. With Stratford being a tourist destination, footfall is usually higher on Saturdays and trade is better than the Charter Market. Urban Mix typically hosts 60 to 70 stalls.

From Easter to Christmas we stage the hugely successful Upmarket which is situated between two key locations in Stratford-upon-Avon. The market is held near the river on Waterside from late March to October and in Bridge Street, the town's main retail area, from October to the last Sunday before Christmas. These markets are held on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays and attract high quality traders and an impressive footfall of residents, local tourists, national and international visitors.

There are themed specials which are held for three days midweek within the school holidays. As well as the market offer there is a plethora of free themed activities for children. A recent example is 'Stratford-upon-Oz', and for July 2020 LSD are planning 'Once upon a Time in Neverland'. Both councils along with LSD Promotions have worked with the NMTF in the hosting of the 'National Young Trader of the Year' competition final on Waterside. It is our hope that the final will go ahead again this year.

Our Victorian Christmas Market with traders dressed in Victorian Costume, is one of the biggest in the UK, with over 300 stalls throughout the town. From the outset, this market was a huge success not only for market traders but for the town's retailers and businesses, particularly for those in the hospitality sector. The event was first held in 2017 over three days. As a result of its success, we plan to increase the event to four days in 2020. There are added elements such as a small funfair, a stage with live entertainment and roving street entertainers. Footfall in 2019 was in excess of 123,000 and this market has won two prestigious awards and is listed on Google as one of the top 15 UK Christmas Markets.



Describe your market operation at the present – stalls still open, additional services being provided, footfall etc?

When restrictions came into place the councils and LSD tried to keep the Charter Market open to provide the community with fresh produce. It worked for one week and when social distancing rules were enforced, traders chose not to come. We have held nothing in the town since that date.



Your average financial income from markets each month during the 2019 calendar year, and at the present time?

Due to confidential contract details I am unable to provide this information, but I can say that Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council both receive a significant income from their market contract. Both Councils rely on this income to fund other services. That income has ceased completely as a result of the current crisis.

Besides the income to the Councils, the variety of markets and events play a huge role in attracting large numbers of visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon throughout the year, bringing a vital boost to the town's economy.



What investment have you made, or are planning in your markets and how is this now affected?

LSD Promotions have made a large investment in new stalls and equipment when they were awarded the contract in October, 2017. They continue to consistently invest in high level promotion of the town both locally and on a national level, as well as developing quality management systems for our markets, events and for our traders. In line with the new contract, both Councils are committed to providing the infrastructure for the Victorian Christmas Market, this includes high level security measures, stewards, traffic management, first aid, entertainment and marketing.

Following consultation with the Councils, LSD had to suspend all markets and cancel and refund some planned events. In partnership with the Councils and other key stakeholders we are all working to plan the relaunch of the markets and the 'opening' of the town when lockdown is lifted.



How do you see the future for your markets? Are they at risk of not opening; what incentives are you considering to attract traders back; what town centre partnerships are they part of?

None of us know what the future holds at this time. LSD, through our market contract, along with Stratfordward BID are one of only two organisations delivering markets and events for the town. The BID's future is under threat due to the reduction of income in the current climate. LSD are equally impacted. Together with our traders, our contractor is also experiencing zero income, so some restart assistance will be vital.

In the relaunch we will be taking into account what restrictions may still be in place with regard to social distancing etc. This could affect the type of market that can be offered at the outset.

We will need to consider how to help traders to return to the markets. We believe the offer of lower rents and a robust Communication Plan will assist in the relaunch of markets. As importantly, it will also help relaunch a tourist town dependent on high levels of visitors throughout the year.

With lower rents and a Communication Plan, a workable scheme has been put forward, albeit that this is still in the embryonic stages of development. Initially, the reopen will focus on free stalls for all traders and will include an invitation to any business/retailer in the town that would benefit from such an event. The two councils have always worked closely and in true partnership with LSD Promotions, and whilst we expect this to continue, we anticipate that financial help will be necessary to support the return of markets to boost the town's economy and for the wellbeing of the community.

