

Report on	Changes to payment for trading at the Cookstown Market
Date of Meeting	6 th December 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	This report details changes to the method of payment for traders at the Saturday Cookstown market.
2.0	Background
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council purchased the Cookstown Market Rights in April 2021. These rights allow a market to take place every Saturday in the town centre. Market traders have for many years set up their stalls in and around the William Street / James Street areas of the town. The market rights predate the street trading legislation, and trader's trade on a more informal basis and not under the street trading legislation.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There are no reserved pitches at the Saturday Market. No one has a right to any particular pitch, and Council do not allocate pitches. Pitches are secured on a first come first served basis. However, a number of traders have traded at roughly the same location for a number of years.
3.2	Historically the previous Markets Right's owner charged pitch rates between £10 and £25 depending on the size of the trading stall. The pitch rates remain unchanged.
3.3	Council has employed a Markets Officer to collect the fee every Saturday morning and issue a receipt that gives the stallholder the right to trade that day. The traders have historically paid their pitches in cash. Since October 2021, the Council has rolled out a cashless system for the collection of fees. The Markets Officer accepts payments each Saturday via bankcard through the Council's handheld device. This system was chosen because it was felt to be the safest and most convenient method of payment for both traders and Council staff.
3.4	The feedback from this has been generally positive, with the numbers paying by this method increasing every week. However, a number of traders have complained that they cannot make payment by this method. At present Council still accepts payments by cash, but the aim is to move to a cashless system.

3.5	To accommodate those traders who do not wish to pay the Markets Officer each Saturday by card, an alternative cash payment system could be considered as a transitional measure. This is likely to involve an upfront payment for a set period, for example per calendar month with the trader paying in advance for the pitch at one of the Council Offices. A trading receipt for the period in question would be issued. This receipt is for the 'right to trade' on a Saturday during this period but does not give any guarantee of a space as the market is operated on a first come, first served basis. The trader will need to produce this receipt each Saturday in order to trade but it is hoped that all traders will move to the card system paying directly on each trading day.
3.6	Given the additional administration costs, there will be no refunds for any Saturday that the trader does not attend the market. For traders who still wish to pay by cash on the day such as "one –off" traders it is requested that an additional administration fee is applied in addition to the pitch rates. It is requested that an administration fee of £5 is added to cash payments taken on the day.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: There may be an increased administration cost incurred in processing receipts from traders who wish to pay upfront for their pitches at the Council Offices.
	Human: There is the potential for a greater administrative burden for those wishing to pay upfront and on site with cash.
	Risk Management: In order to ensure safety of Council staff it is important that payments are moved to a totally cashless system as soon as possible.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that members note the movement to cashless payment, and agree the upfront method of payment in advance for right to trade and the additional administration fee for cash payments made at the market.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Letter issued to traders over cashless payment.