

	Meeting (No)	Market & Town Hall Committee (3)	
	Date	19th November 2024	
	Document	Ref No	
	Budget Considerations for 2025/26	MTH3/35c	

The following items have been taken into consideration in the draft budget request for 2025/2026.

Marketing & Promotion budget

The Marketing and Promotion budget (4140) for the current year was set at £4650. £2300 has already been vired over to Responsive Maintenance (4417) towards the cost of the replacement handrails for the market square.

During the year we hold 3 special markets, Easter, Summer & Halloween. The Saturday Christmas event is funded by a separate budget. Weekend markets had been discussed but these are not currently viable mainly due to staffing costs and also the fact that Saturday markets have been poorly supported in the past. With the current level of regular traders, space on the market is limited for entertainment and activities. Therefore, the 3 special markets could be scaled back a little to still provide a community focused themed market but to perhaps allow funds to be moved into alternative budget lines to be used towards, other projects within the Market & Town Hall Committee remit, that the committee may wish to achieve or plan towards. The Marketing & Promotion budget (4140) has therefore been reduced to an overall budget of £2000 which would be sufficient to hold the 3 special themed markets for community benefit and to cover any additional items required from this budget line.

Main Community Noticeboard

The main community noticeboard outside the former Post Office is nearing the end of its life and although we have made some improvements to extend its life, this board will need to be replaced in the next financial year. Three formal quotations will be sought as per our financial regulations prior to any commencement of work. To give an estimate of the cost to replace I have obtained the following information & costs:

The current board has an overall display area of 2120mm x 1020mm, however placing notices onto this can be a little precarious, as one side is above the steps at the front of the building, making it difficult to reach up to attach notices. The 2 side opening doors are also large and are a safety hazard when they swing open, especially in windy conditions. I would therefore suggest replacing the current wall mounted timber notice board with a smaller wall mounted aluminium notice board, both to improve accessibility and to increase the life span of the notice board going forward.

- Cost of a wall mounted aluminium notice board
1189mm x 841mm (A0 – will fit 16 x A4) £455 + VAT
Top hinged with door opening stay brackets
Optional pinboard rather than magnetic back board nominal charge

- Cost to remove and dispose of old notice board and to fix new notice board to wall £380 + VAT
- Cost to patch the render on wall - approximately £500

TOTAL £1335 + VAT
(Plus, pin board charge)

It has been suggested that the noticeboard is moved to the Market Square or that we have a second notice board on the Market Square. However, as the official entrance to the Town Hall is at the front of the building the noticeboard needs to remain there as this is where the public go to look for events and where local groups advertise their classes with us. I would be concerned that notices at the rear entrance to the building would be missed. It is unlikely that we would be able to afford 2 new noticeboards in 25/26 so it would be better use of public money to replace the one at the front, as we already have a small notice-area by the back door for important items.

If agreed, this sum will be added to the precept request and funds will be placed into the Community & Environment Committee Noticeboards budget (4315).

Hold Open Devices

Accessibility for the building as a whole is an issue and negotiating some of the doors while manoeuvring a walker or indeed while using a wheelchair or walking stick is difficult. For this reason, it is suggested that a program of fitting 'hold open devices' to some doors, most of which are fire doors, which are sound activated and will automatically shut in the event of a fire alarm sounding, should be implemented over the next few years.

I have contacted the help desk at CWaC to request that 4 'Dorgards', hold open devices, are fitted and they have provided a quote for £1129.67 to do this. The Dorgards are approximately £125/£150 each and as they are battery operated our caretaker would be able to fit them. I would suggest fitting 2 or 3 each year, as budgets allow.

The Asset & Event Management budget (4131) has been reduced to £500 from £1000, and £500 has been moved into the Responsive Maintenance budget (4417) to help facilitate this.

300th Anniversary Market

The committee have previously discussed that they wish to begin setting aside funds for a special market to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Neston Market in 2028. However, the committee needs to discuss the amount, aims and objectives, that it would like to achieve with any funds set aside for this purpose, plus an overall theme for the market, it should also be mindful of the possible lack of space for entertainment depending on the number of regular traders attending the market at the time. The anniversary market must be held on a Friday, rather than an alternative day, as it is a celebration of the Friday market. It would also be sensible to celebrate

this anniversary as part of either the enhanced Easter or Summer Market, when we know footfall will be increased.

I would suggest that this request is reviewed at the end of the current financial year to decide if an EMR could be set up, if an overall budget underspend allows for this. Failing that, a budget request could be made at the end of the 2026/2027 financial year for a set amount to be added to the precept request for 2028/2029, depending on the proposed time of year for the event to take place. It would also be possible to split the precept request over 2 years, depending on the amount required.

Nicky McMahon
Market & Town Hall Manager

13th November 2024