

PETERBOROUGH CITY MARKET

With a market charter dating back to the 10th century, Peterborough City Market is housed in a 1970s market hall and has 147 stalls, though only around 55 traders. It is a traditional market selling fresh food and other goods, and is open Tuesday-Saturday. The market is owned and managed by Peterborough City Council.

Established in 2009, Friends of Peterborough City Market is a small voluntary group which has had a strong impact on the relationships between traders, customers, the local authority and other interested parties concerning Peterborough City Market. FOPCM are keen to emphasise the importance of the market for the past, present and future flourishing of the city. They set out the importance of the market as follows: *As the city's largest hub of small independently-owned lock-up businesses, it not only provides everyday commodities at affordable prices including really fresh food with zero packaging - it provides local employment and new business opportunities, reflects the city's multicultural society and supports local farmers and food producers; underpinning local sustainability and enhancing the city's Environment Capital aspirations and credentials.*

The group first formed because traders and customers felt the market was being poorly-managed and there were plans to regenerate the city centre which might have negatively affected the market, for example changing its location or temporarily displacing traders. In 2012 the group asked how much of the 450,000 annual income was reinvested in the market. They were told: none. FOPCM said the income could be better spent and challenged the allocation of money. Cleaning in particular has been neglected. Another issue is rising rents - traders were effectively paying twice by being charged rates and rents. Because of these and other factors, trading has declined significantly in the last 5 years and footfall is down. There is no immediate plan for regeneration of the market but the hall was designed with a limited lifespan and there has been talk of moving the market for a number of years.

In 2013 FOPCM helped set up Peterborough City Market Traders Association, an independent group of traders. Together with the market manager, they set up a monthly Market Forum to bring all people with an interest in the market together. Through this forum, traders and the council in particular can work together and the council and private companies (for example the cleaning contractor) can be held to account. The success of this Forum relies heavily on a) an engaged and organised group of traders and customers b) a market manager who has the trust of traders and customers c) members of the council prepared to listen and act on what they hear. FOPCM are an advocacy and campaign group, carefully treading the line of being a 'critical friend' to the council but also a group with autonomy. Traders rely on Friends because they have built up capacity and expertise on issues of planning and policy, which are often things traders don't have time to get their heads around.

Successes include ensuring a rent freeze for traders, getting new cleaning machines, increasing the promotion of the market and generally holding the council to account. FOPCM

make comparisons with other parts of the city and how they are cleaned – they point out council wouldn't treat main shopping streets like they do the market. FOPCM are insisting on full and meaningful consultation of traders and shoppers in the event of market regeneration or relocation.

The ancient Peterborough Market Charter states that any markets within a certain radius of Peterborough should pay into the city market in order that they do not undermine it economically. On the initiative of FOPCM and the market deputy manager, Peterborough Council are looking into using the market charter to develop accountability on how the market is managed and invested in, to bring licensing money from other market events (e.g. farmers' markets) into the charter in order to go back into market investment.

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