

GENERAL MANAGERS' UPDATES

Billingsgate Market

Cleaning

Since the last meeting of the Markets Board there have been two new starters within the cleaning team. Though not specifically about cleaning, I have received a further written complaint regarding the lack of gritting on a Monday morning during the recent cold weather. Gritting and winter maintenance falls within the remit of the cleaning team. The site was gritted before the end of the shift on the Saturday and then overtime was paid on the Sunday to ensure that this was 'topped up'. Although the market is not open on Sundays and Mondays, the facility effectively operates 24/7.

Cleaning standards continue to be amongst the highest priorities for our tenants and all stakeholders at the market.

Staffing

We currently have four vacancies within our cleaning team following a partially successful recruitment campaign. By the time the Board meets in January, I expect a further campaign to have been launched to fill these positions. In the meantime, we have covered these roles with agency staff. We have been more successful in recruiting to our three vacant constable positions. At the time of writing, we await final documentation from all three appointees before a start date can be agreed early in the new year. The vacant Electrician post remains extremely challenging to recruit to.

Energy

As Members will recall, tenants were offered a workshop/seminar on practical tips they can use to minimise energy use. There was limited interest, which could possibly be attributed to the time of year. Tenants will be offered a further opportunity during the first quarter of 2023. The data we collect locally indicates that the trend line for energy use on the service charge continues to fall; although for individual tenants it continues to rise slightly.

Health & Safety

All accidents continue to be recorded and investigated promptly. in line with City of London Corporation standards. Our local H&S team continue to meet quarterly with the support of tenants, Trade Unions and other stakeholders.

Daniel Ritchie - General Manager

New Spitalfields Market

Staffing

We have recruited a General Maintenance Operative who will join the team on 16th January. One further General Maintenance Operative and the Electrician post remains vacant. We have appointed 2 new Market Constables, both expected to join the team in January, leaving one vacancy to fill. In January 2023, our current Business Administration Apprentice will complete their qualification and we are looking to recruit a new apprentice in the Spring.

Health and Safety

Following a recent increase in forklift truck related accidents at New Spitalfields Market, a full review of our site safety controls, and our traffic management plan have taken place. The three recent incidents were not caused by any site-specific system failings. However, we will be introducing additional controls. They include additional signage for pedestrians and vehicles (look both ways, pedestrians crossing etc). Additional marked pedestrian walkways around the market's perimeter and additional pedestrian crossing points at higher risk areas. The aim being to encourage pedestrians to always use these safety systems and for them to be clearly marked with signs, to keep Forklift operators vigilant. All improvement works have commenced, with completion expected by March 2023.

Cleanliness

In July 2022 we joined the other Markets in outsourcing our Pest Control program when our in-house operative retired. The transition has been successful, and tenants have a dedicated telephone and email address for reporting concerns or sightings. In October 2022, the tenants Premises Compliance Inspections were taken over by the new Markets Compliance Team; formed under the Target Operating Model (TOM). This has seen a period of transition at the market while the Graduate EHO, responsible for carrying out our inspections, is trained and becomes familiar with the site. During a routine inspection by an Environmental Health Officer from the London Borough of Waltham Forest, one of the tenants was closed after being issued with an Emergency Hygiene Prohibition Notice. Whilst they have since re-opened, having passed a re-inspection, it provided us with an opportunity to look at how we can better manage the Premises Compliance and Pest Control adherence of tenants.

Pest Controllers are now sending us regular 'red flag' emails alerting us to any specific concerns they identify on a tenant's premises. The tenant then receives a letter from myself, highlighting our concerns and their responsibilities under the lease and as a food business operator. The Market Compliance Team are also notified. The Environmental Health Practitioner, managing this new team, has also included a few additional fields in the standard Premises Compliance form, which will increase the focus on housekeeping and cleansing. The new fields also require the Inspector to upload photographic evidence. I feel confident that, with this improved approach, we should not see a repeat of the recent tenant closure.

Energy

New Spitalfields Market has been in the City of London's top 5 performing sites for the past 2 years, seeing a 13% reduction in usage since 2018/19. This was primarily achieved by switching all communal area lighting for more efficient LED solutions. Since December 2021 there have been 3 Energy Workshops hosted at the Market, aimed at furnishing tenants with the information needed to implement energy saving opportunities within their premises.

A meeting was facilitated between the Energy Team and the New Spitalfields Market Tenants Association in October, so they could share more information on the Solar farm and its expected benefits once operational. At present we are awaiting correct invoices for the periods relating to October and November electricity usage. Once these are received, we will have a better understanding of how the most recent price increases will impact our tenants.

Emma Beard – General Manager

Smithfield Market

Following the fork lift truck accident in early July, the Corporation submitted a formal response to the HSE on the 14th November 2022. This consisted of: (i) a Poultry Market traffic management plan and a safe system of work, which detailed control measures implemented to ensure pedestrians and vehicles circulate in a safe manner; (ii) a traffic management plan map detailing pedestrian routes, barriers and traffic management arrangements; (iii) a map detailing traffic management road markings and pedestrian signage (iv) a file of photographic evidence to support the traffic management plan and all the controls implemented.

The HSE formally responded on the 15th November, confirming that they were pleased with all actions the Market had taken and that they complied with the improvement notice. Accordingly, their records were updated and the case closed. The operation and activity within the Poultry covered and service ways are regularly monitored, by both the Security and Operations Managers, to ensure continuing compliance and exceptions are raised with the General Manager. The traffic management plan is also an agenda item within local Health & Safety meetings.

Recruitment is almost complete at Smithfield. Two staff have been appointed to the Security Team; one is currently working on site under agency, and one is pending paperwork completion through the HR department. The agency member will be transferred onto the permanent payroll imminently. Recruitment to the wider Markets cleaning function is ongoing and this will include cleaning supervisors. Current vacancies at Smithfield are agency resourced but these employees will potentially be transferred to the permanent team, subject to satisfactory performance and references and the conclusion of the recruitment process.

Energy – the solar farm is now providing power to the grid and will therefore contribute some relief to energy prices from the 1st January 2023. The Energy team are facilitating a Teams event for CoL staff on the 19th January, to answer questions on exactly how the farm will benefit sites. An Energy workshop is also planned for tenants at Smithfield towards the end of January or early February, with dates to be confirmed.

Christmas trading at Smithfield was good and customers benefitted from free parking during Market hours for 13 nights up until Christmas Eve. Peak occupancy in the car park was reached on the 22nd December 2022, with 422 spaces occupied out of a maximum of 530. 2019 recorded a 418 uptake; 2020 - 371 uptake and 2021 – 285, evidencing a positive recovery and use of this concession.

Cleaning – no items of note.

Mark Sherlock - General Manager