

MARKETS BOARD

Thursday, 15 May 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Markets Board held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor,
West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 15 May 2025 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Philip Woodhouse (Chairman)
Deputy Henry Pollard (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Alderman Alison Gowman CBE
Deputy Madush Gupta
Gregory Lawrence
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP
Wendy Mead OBE
Jason Pritchard
Hugh Selka
Deputy Oliver Sells KC
James Tumbridge
Mark Wheatley
Deputy Paul Martinelli
Chris Hutchinson

In Attendance

Julie Gibbs – City Surveyor's Department

Officers:

Ben Milligan	- Director of Markets
Gregory Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk
Dan Ritchie	- City Surveyor's Department
Emma Beard	- City Surveyor's Department
Julia Kanji	- City Surveyor's Department
Andrew Little	- Chamberlain's
Afsana Rahman	- Chamberlain's
John James	- Chamberlain's
Steven Chandler	- City Surveyor's Department
Andrew Fothergill	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Dept
Raquel Pinto	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Nighat Qureshi.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Gregory Lawrence had been granted a dispensation to speak on all matters concerning the London Central Markets (Smithfield) other than: (i) those in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest as a shareholder or director of any company which holds a tenancy in the market; and (ii) those which would affect only him personally or his business interests as opposed to the generality of tenants within the market.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

The Committee received an Order of the Court of Common Council dated 25th April 2025 appointing the Committee and setting its terms of reference for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED, that - the Order of the Court dated 25th April 2025 be received.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chair in accordance with Standing Order No 28.

Two expressions of interest were received from Philip Woodhouse and Deputy Oliver Sells.

A ballot was therefore carried out, and the following results were announced:

- Philip Woodhouse - 10 votes
- Deputy Oliver Sells – 3 votes

Philip Woodhouse having received the majority of votes, was duly elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.

At this point in the meeting, Gregory Lawrence moved a Vote of Thanks to Deputy Henry Pollard, the immediate past Chairman.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY –

Members of the Markets Committee wish to record their sincere thanks and gratitude to

HENRY POLLARD

for his excellent work as their Chairman.

AS Chairman, he has been active in all aspects of the work of the Board, showing great drive and commitment to ensure its success.

THE Chairman took the role at a pivotal time in Market history. Colocation proposals were being explored in earnest via Policy and Resources Committee, and the Chairman provided fair and firm challenge for Markets and the industry to strike a balance between current operations, and a new market vision. The Chairman's strong relationship and rapport with officers and tenants alike opened doors in setting direction and resolving conflicts. In this volatile and uncertain

time, he has managed the Board's deliberations and executed its duties with strength and fairness. He presided over the Board's debates in an exemplary and courteous manner allowing full consideration of not only routine Board business such as the Markets Business Plan, Revenue and Capital Budgets and Rent Negotiations but also of more complex external matters that affected the Board such as the future market development and climate action strategy.

WITH regularity the Chairman has advocated the cause of markets, being an uncompromising voice in championing food security and the wholesale industry in general. His work has taken him across the country, and indeed abroad to build an industry knowledge and expertise that officers and tenants alike admire and respect.

HIS involvement and advocacy in the future of markets and the food industry to date has been testament to his diligence, professional manner and skills of tact and diplomacy. He has built trust with the tenant's associations, being a transparent and approachable Chairman. His Chairmanship of the day-to-day, as well as his influence and advocacy over future direction has broken barriers with the tenant's association as well as within the City Corporation. He has been seen as a Chairman that will protect the interests of tenants and those of the City Corporation.

ON many occasions the Chairman has robustly defended the Board's work, and indeed its very existence. He has promoted the work of the Board across Common Council and hosted visits to the markets by the Lord Mayor and other high-profile dignitaries. His work as Chairman has been an exemplar of good governance.

FINALLY, in congratulating their former Chairman upon an enormously successful term of office, his colleagues wish to thank him for his determination, openness and commitment, and to express the hope that, with continued good health and happiness, he can continue to serve the City Corporation for many years to come.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chair in accordance with Standing Order No 29.

Deputy Henry Pollard being the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

The Deputy Chairman thanked the board for their kind vote of thanks and reflected on his rewarding experience with the Markets Board over the past years. The Deputy Chairman praised the officer team for their dedication through challenges and thanked the Board for their support. The Deputy Chairman also acknowledged the Court's decision on the future direction and emphasised the importance of ensuring food security for stakeholders in London and the Southeast.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank Members for the faith placed in his election as Chairman and looked forward to working with all members and officers for the benefit of the Markets and the City of London. The Chairman also welcomed new Members to the Board.

RESOLVED- That Deputy Henry Pollard be elected as Deputy Chairman of the Markets Board for the year ensuing.

6. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising:

There was strong agreement amongst Members that planning for the Christmas auction should begin earlier this year due to last year's success. The need to secure the £3,000 budget and formalise the event as an annual fixture, ideally funded through Destination City was also emphasised. Officers confirmed that planning was already underway, with meetings held to review last year's event and coordinate with the events team. This year's auction would require a larger budget due to increased safety and crowd control needs, likely involving external agency support. The goal is to finalise plans by August.

Suggestions were made on notifying local cafés to boost trade and ensuring Licensing and Port Health officers inform all trading license holders for awareness.

7. **UPDATES FROM THE GENERAL MANAGERS**

Members raised concerns over the glass canopy panel which collapsed outside core hours, which raised safety concerns. Officers explained that netting would be installed across the entire canopy due to uncertainty about the cause, though inspections found no clear fault. The Board requested clarity on risks, replacement timelines, and communication with traders. Officers agreed to write to members to clarify this and the risks involved.

The Chairman also wanted to formally put the Board's thanks to Mark Sherlock for his service as he departs the City.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

8. **THE MARKETS DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN UP-DATE REPORT**

The Board received a report of the City Surveyor and Director of Markets on the progress made during Period 3 (December-March) of 2024/25 and key improvement objectives outlined in the Markets' Business Plan 2024/25.

Members noted that the report covered December to March and included three KPIs one detailed in paragraph 9 and agenda item 15 (non-public), showing an improved position. One amber indicator was noted in paragraph 10.

A question was raised about vacant office space at Billingsgate. Officers explained that while the space was marketed on-site, past efforts with external agents were unsuccessful due to the location and environment.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

9. THE CITY SURVEYOR'S WHOLESALE MARKET RISK UPDATE REPORT

The Board received a report of the Director of Markets which provided the Markets Board with assurance that the risk management procedures in place within the Markets Division were satisfactory and that they met the requirements of the corporate Risk Management Framework

The Board reviewed a snapshot of current risks for the Markets Board. It was noted that the recent canopy incident had not been included in the report due to existing mitigations. Members raised concerns about the recurring canopy issues, questioning why full netting had not been installed earlier. Officers clarified that the glass was designed to shatter into small, less harmful pieces and that previous laminated panels had already been replaced. They explained that the cause of the latest failure remained unclear, and that netting was the most practical mitigation, especially given the Market's future.

Concerns were raised about the fragility of the condenser water system, especially with summer approaching, as overheating could halt refrigeration and disrupt market operations. Officers assured the Board that the system was being closely monitored and maintained, with reduced dust levels improving conditions. Although the risk was rated as a 6, some questioned whether this was high enough, but Officers explained that ongoing mitigation justified the score. They emphasised that the cooling system was critical to the market and was treated as such by the onsite maintenance team.

Members questioned the clarity of the risk report's "flight path" visuals, asking that these be removed as they were confusing. Members also questioned the lack of detail on the parliamentary bill risk. Officers acknowledged these issues, explaining that the flight path was a generic, system-generated view and not always helpful. Officers committed to improving the clarity of risk descriptions and confirmed that corporate risks were reviewed by senior management and escalated as needed. The Board requested visibility of the wider corporate risk assessments related to the parliamentary bill, which Officers agreed to address in the confidential session.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted

10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

The Chairman extended an invitation to the Board to join him, the Deputy Chairman and the Lord Mayor at New Spitalfields's Market for a visit.

Members also noted that an episode of Clarkson's Farm was filmed at Smithfield's and noted that the visit was extremely successful.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2025 were approved as a correct record, subject to one amendment.

14. GENERAL MANAGERS' UPDATES

The Board receive updates from the General Managers of Smithfield, New Spitalfields and Billingsgate Markets.

RESOLVED, that – the report its contents be noted.

15. DEBT ARREARS- MARKETS

The Board considered a report of the Director of Markets which set out the level of debt arrears in connection with services provided by the City Surveyor's Department at Billingsgate, Smithfield and New Spitalfields Markets.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

16. TENANCIES AT WILL AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Board received a report of the Markets Director in respect of at Tenancies at Will that have been granted at the City of London's Wholesale Markets and on lease assignments.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

17. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were no urgent items.

19. MARKETS CO-LOCATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update in respect of the Markets Co-Location Programme.

The meeting ended at 12.28 pm

Chairman

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