

## DEPUTATION ONE – FRIENDS OF LEEDS KIRKGATE MARKET

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

SPEAKER: Well, we are the Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market and here we are again. We have been doing this for a number of years now. Nothing seems to have changed, a lot of noises have been made but there is no actual positive action been taken.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind Leeds City Council of their commitment to address poverty, which is to provide health and wellbeing for the people of Leeds. We agree this is a key commitment and we can all work together and do this by providing access to affordable fruit and veg.

I would like to take this opportunity to show you a quick price comparison – this is why we are here, to show the difference.

From a High Street supermarket – and I would like to say it is not one of the little stores round the corner which put 20% extra on – *this (Showed two bags of potatoes)* is £1 at a High Street supermarket. *That* is £1 at Leeds Market.

50 pence, Leeds Market; £1 High Street supermarket (*Showed two bags of oranges*)

*This* is £1 at the market, £2 supermarket. (*Showed two punnets of strawberries*)

This is the best bit, some nice little cherries - £1, £1. (*Showed two punnets of cherries*)

You guys can actually see the difference. I actually spent £5.75 at the supermarket, £4.91 at the market and I also managed to get a quarter of a pound of fresh mushrooms. You can see the difference and why it is so important to the people of Leeds to ensure we can provide access to this fruit and veg.

It is not just fruit and veg; we have meat as well. You have also got to take into account you buy meat from a supermarket, it is probably reared in Czechoslovakia, it has to be dissected over there, it comes over to England, it goes through the process of being chopped up, put into little packs, cellophaned, again distribution centre and then it is straight down to a supermarket. I think you will find that anything in Leeds Market was sat in a field in Yorkshire a couple of days ago going "Moo" to passers by.

You can see the importance of all this. I would also like to say, friends of Kirkgate Market, we have done a survey and we found some of the most poorest areas use the market to get affordable fruit, veg, meat and fish. Please also take into account on a morning if you are walking round Leeds you will see all the little

vans flying around from the market. The majority of the restaurants in Leeds use the market for their suppliers.

There has been a bit of a fiasco lately regarding the car park. Here is a little bit we wrote. The closure of the market's car park to make way for construction of yet another shopping centre is an example of the double standards in this city. Neither Anderson nor the city planned for the impact this would have on market trade. When it finally closed, instead of alternative parking arrangements being clearly displayed, nothing was made available. There was one sign; it was upside down.

Indeed, even the sign that appeared upside down, when that appeared the NCP car park put up their prices.

The management did actually turn round and say "We have made the public aware". They did this by putting something on their internet website. I do not know about you guys but I do not always look at Leeds City Council Kirkgate Market website before I go into town for a bag of spuds.

Now then, what is going wrong with it all? Trade is 40% down, as seen on Look North recently. What has really happened is, about eight years ago the rents got doubled. A lot of the traders, they had to remortgage their houses thinking it is going to change, it is going to change. It has not changed and one by one everything has gone. You used to be able to go in there and buy anything. If you wanted a 19<sup>th</sup> Century French officers outfit you could go in there and say, "Well, what size chest?" It was like E-bay only with real people and we are losing it all. It is all slowly going. It used to make £2m profit a year; it is now making £1m profit a year, but it is still £1m profit which is easing the taxpayer.

What has been put into place to try and stop all this? All the traders have recently received a letter saying they are going to put on a new Kirkgate Management Board, which consists of six Councillors, two indoor traders, one outdoor trader and three independent advisers. However, further down the letter it says, "The Board's remit would not include the ability to make decisions on behalf of the Council. These remain with Executive Board and any delegated powers held by officers." So they have no real powers. What is the point? You are just making people happy by just saying these things.

How can it be made better? Let us be honest, lower rents. Bring it down, raise some standards...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you wind up your speech, please? The red light is on.

SPEAKER: I do apologise. Basically, let us get some standards, let us lower the rent, let us put some money in and, more importantly, let us get some management in there who want to make it work. Thank you for your time. We are the Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.