

FACTSHEET ON KIRKGATE MARKET



A treasure for the city of Leeds...

- Leeds Kirkgate Market is one of the largest covered Markets in Europe and can be traced back as an open Market to the early 19th century.
- Most of the Market is now 'listed' by English Heritage due its special architectural and historic interest
- Some 1029 traders work in the Market and there are 420 indoor units alone
- Over 200,000 people from across Leeds and beyond visit the Market weekly
- Shopping at the Market is considerably cheaper, more ethical and more environmentally friendly than shopping in big supermarkets
- Supporting the Market benefits everyone with the annual profit – over £1million a year – reinvested by the Council across the City

...now suffering from years of decline, neglect and mismanagement

- In 1975 part of the Market was practically destroyed by fire and replaced by temporary stalls (the so-called 1976/1981 bottom area) that are now dated
- In the late 1980s a public campaign which more than a quarter of a million people signed up to forced the Council to abandon its proposed redevelopment of the Market that would have seen it relegated to the ground floor of a big shopping centre.
- High rents and service charges undermine traders businesses, the number of empty stalls has increased from 45 in 2005 to 70 in 2009.
- Over the past 10 years the Council has spent just £760,000 on repair and maintenance – about one year's income from the service charge paid by the indoor traders. Some years it has invested as little as £18,000.
- Despite a leaking roof in need of major repair, only £100,000 has been spent patching it up in these 10 years.
- Compare this with the £7million spent on re-paving and beautifying surrounding city centre streets in the last few years.
- Customer numbers are dropping – since 2006 about 25,000 less people come to the Market weekly (an 8.5% reduction).

The Council is finally starting to act, but much more needs to be done

- The Council has promised to invest £250,000 in the next 2 years
- A business support scheme has been introduced and a new manager is being sought
- Efforts to work in partnership with the traders have started and there are plans to form a consultative group but more needs to be done to use the valuable expertise of traders
- The fear remains that the Council is waiting for a new development opportunity once the property recession is over that could see the Market we love turned into just another shopping centre

Turn page for what can you do to help the Market.....

WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP THE MARKET

There are many things that you can do to help the Market that do not necessarily involve a lot of time or commitment:

- Make the Market your main place for shopping and promote the Market to family, friends, colleagues, strangers, in your workplaces and local communities
- Talk with the traders, give them your support, find out how they are doing, ask what they think is wrong and what should be done
- Write to your MPs and local councillors to show your support for the Market and demand that they give the Market's future a higher priority.
- Send a letter to the local press highlighting your concerns or celebrating the Market
- Join the Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market email list and facebook group to be kept updated of news to do with the Market and the campaign. Check our blog regularly.
- Use Freedom of Information Laws to ask the Council for information on issues that particularly interest you about how the Market is being run, etc. You can use www.whatdotheyknow.com or contact us or the Council directly at cs.freedom.of.information@leeds.gov.uk
- Contribute financially to the campaign to pay for leaflets, running cost of meetings, etc.
- Become a member of Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market group and tell others about it

But if you have the energy and/or time you can:

- Come to campaign meetings
- Help with publicity and specialist advice for example in promotion and the media, website design and maintenance, planning, law or finance.
- Write a short article for the campaign website for example on your recollection of how the Market used to be, on what you use the Market for.
- If you are a trader contribute to the blog with news about the Market. You could have your own weekly column!
- Contribute to the website with media content: make videos, photographs, recordings, etc.
- Help with writing a "people's history of the Market" that celebrates its contribution to public life by interviewing traders, customers, collecting old and new photographs etc.
- Design, translate leaflets/posters/shopping bags and distribute or display
- Organise fund raising events
- Make links with similar groups across the UK like Friends of Queens Market and Friends of Brixton Market
- Set up your own stall at the Market.

Our next meeting: 4th May 2010, 5.30pm

Victoria Pub, 28 Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3DL

More information about the campaign and the group at: <http://kirkgatemarket.wordpress.com>.

Contact us – tel: 07943114036; email friendsofkirkgatemarket@gmail.com